

Anthology of all the Principal Upanishads of the Atharva Veda

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English Exposition by:-

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Language: English.

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To My Most Beloved Lord Ram

A humble word of dedication

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent— it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be his very own is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the Lord's holy feet, and finding no words to express my profound gratitude to him, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

Finally, I pay my greatest obeisance to Hanuman, the enlightened devotee of Lord Ram, whom I regard as my Guru (a spiritual guide), without whose blessings this effort would not have borne fruit.

May, 2022

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Author

Anthology of all the Principal Upanishads of the Atharva Veda

Introduction

Benediction

Gayatri Upanishad

The Atharva Veda's eight Kandikas (sub-sections), from 31 to 38, of the Gopath Brahman are collectively known as the Gayatri Upanishad. These eight Kandikas have been numbered 1-8 for the sake of convenience here. It is conversation between sages Maudgalya (who belonged to the lineage of sage Mudgal) and Glav Maitreya (who belonged to the lineage of sage Mitrayu). It reveals the great knowledge pertaining to the Supreme Being, called the Savita, whose visible manifestation is the celestial Sun and other primary units upon which the entire edifice of creation and its auspicious survival is based, such as the fire, wind, moon, day, heat and warmth, clouds, electric, Pran (life consciousness factors), the Vedas and the fire sacrifice. The dynamic aspect of this Supreme Being is known as Savitri much like the rays of the Sun which help to spread the heat, energy and light of the latter even to the farthest corners of the world.

A famous Mantra dedicated to the Sun God is also called Gayatri Mantra because of the fact that it was the first such Mantra revealed by the creator Brahma in the composition style called Gayatri and became synonymous with it.

There are other Upanishads with a similar line of exposition, such as the Savitri Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad (Canto 5, Brahman 14) of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition.

Kandika 1

1. Once, sage Glav Maitreya (accompanied by his retinue of disciples) came to the hermitage of another renowned sage Maudgalya who was honoured by the title of 'eleven Aksha'¹. He watched the disciples of the latter sage and, in his false sense of pride and vanity of being superior in knowledge, wondered sarcastically, 'What does this person Maudgalay teach his disciples?' (1).

[Note—¹The title 'eleven Aksha' indicated a sage who had not only obtained control over his ten vital winds collectively called the Prans—the five main Prans such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaana, and the five subsidiary Prans such as Nag, Kurma, Krikar, Devdutta and Dhananjay—but had also attained self-realisation by activating the dynamic energy of the Atma, the pure consciousness called the 'self'.]

2. The peeved disciples approached their master (Maudgalya) and submitted, 'Oh Lord! The guest that we have today has cast aspersions on you and has expressed doubts about the level of your knowledge, erudition and wisdom. He has called you Agyani, i.e. one who is ignorant.'

Maudgalya asked them, 'Is he an expert and acclaimed himself?'

The disciples replied, 'Oh yes, sir. He is an expert preacher of the three Vedas' (2).

3. Sage Maudgalya said, 'Oh dear! Call his most wise and learned disciple who aspires to excel in metaphysics near me' (3).

4. The obedient disciple summoned one such expert disciple of the guest sage and presented him to his own teacher. The teacher asked the disciple of sage Maitreya, 'Oh dear! What does your teacher teach you?'

The disciple replied, 'Sir, my teacher is an expert teacher of the three Vedas' (4).

5. Maudgalya enquired, 'Oh dear! Since all the Vedas reside in my mouth (i.e. I know them by heart and can repeat them flawlessly orally) why does your teacher say that I am an Agyani (i.e. that I do not know them, that I am not learned)? Does he not know how one gentleman should behave with another; is he not aware of the etiquettes to be followed when dealing with another man of stature? All right. Now I shall ask a question, and if he cannot answer it then it means that he does not teach the Vedas (5).

6. Oh dear! If he is ignorant he would say that the knowledge which the teacher gives to his disciples and others relates to Savitri¹. Go and tell him that sage Maudgalya whom you have called ignorant (Agyani) wishes to ask you one question. If you cannot answer it satisfactorily, then you would have to suffer severely for one year (for insinuating another sage, and for misguiding your own disciples)' (6).

[Note—¹The word Savitri literally means the rays of the Sun which is known as Savita. Knowledge pertaining to the supreme Brahman and the pure Consciousness is like the Savitri because it enlightens the spiritual aspirant and shows him the light of Truth.]

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Kandika 2

1. Sage Maudgalya instructed his disciple—'Dear, go to sage Glav Maitreya and say "Oh Acharya (a teacher of the Vedas; a religious instructor)! Please teach me about 'Savitri-Gayatri'¹ having twenty four subtle centers and twelve nodal points, whose eyes are represented by 'Bhrigu-Angira'², and in which the entire creation rests or upon which the whole world is founded".' (1).

[Note—¹The *Gayatri* is particular style of composition of hymns, called a Chanda, of the Vedas. The first Mantra ever revealed by the creator Brahma to sage Vishwamitra was in this style and was dedicated to Savitra, the Sun God who is a manifestation of the Supreme Being with all his dazzling splendour vividly on display. This Mantra is extremely important because it is capable of bestowing immortality and liberation to its followers. Because of its great spiritual importance, the Mantra itself became synonymous with the Chanda, and the Savitri Mantra came to be known as Gayatri Mantra.

Savitri is literally the rays of the brilliant Sun as viewed in the middle of the day when it is at the peak of its glory, splendour and brilliance. The visual and the most dynamic aspect of Brahman, the supreme transcendental Being, is therefore Savitri, and the latter is conceptualised as a Mother Goddess. While Gayatri is associated with the beginning of creation represented by Brahma, Savitri is associated with the growth

and development of creation represented by Vishnu. Therefore, Gayatri is associated with the morning Sun and Savitri with the mid-day Sun.

²Bhrigu and Angiras were two renowned sages who were self and Brahm realised.

Sage *Bhrigu* is a well known sage and seer who appears in a number of Vedic and Purnaic works. His name 'Bhrigu' is derived from the root word 'Bhrij' or 'Bhraaj' which literally means to roast or burn, and therefore it could mean the sage, who was a fire sacrifice priest, had some mystical powers which allowed him to kindle the altar fire. According to mythological history, the patron God of lightening, Lord Maatarishwan, brought the celestial lightening down to earth and taught three priests the art of kindling the sacred altar fire using the Aranis ('the fire sticks' used to kindle fire by vigorous rubbing together). These three priests were the Bhrigu, the Angiras, and the Atharvan.

Sage Bhrigu has been described as the 'Manas Putra' of Brahma, the creator. [That is, Bhrigu was born as the son of Brahma because the latter wished in his mind and heart, the 'Mana', to have a son, a 'Putra', rather than the usual process by which a son is born, i.e. the physical process of procreation by intercourse.] He is also stated elsewhere as being the son of Indra (the king of Gods). The Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 3, Anuvak 1 describes him as 'Bhirgu Vaaruni', i.e. the son of Varun (the Water God). He was the father of Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation. That is why Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, is also known as Bhargavi, the daughter of Bhargava, or Bhrigu. In other births he is regarded as the father of Shukracharya, the moral preceptor of the Demons. He is also said to be the father of sages like Chavanya.

He was one of the ancient sages after whom a lineage was established—and his descendents assumed his name as their surname or title. It is 'Bhargava' or 'Bhrigu'. Some well known names of sages who followed him in this lineage are sages Jamdagni and Parashuram.

He once tested the Trinity Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) and determined that Vishnu is the best amongst them and alone deserves worship. He is one of the four sages (the others being Marichi, Atri and Kashyap) who had elaborately described the Vakhanas Aagam followed by some Vaishnav sects (followers of Vishnu worship).

He performed severe austerity and penance at a place called Bhrigu Kaccha located on the banks of river Narmada where it merges with the Arabian Sea. It is situated in the Broach area of Gujrat state of western India.

He is credited with composing the tome of astrology and horoscopes known as 'Bhrigu Sanhita'. It is said to contain a data base of all possible horoscopes that can be created by considering all possible permutations and combinations of the nine planets and twelve zodiac signs.

The third chapter, called Valli no. 3, of the famous Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is revealed by Varun to Bhrigu when the latter approached his father Varun to ask him the method by which Brahm can be realised.

Angira— A brief life-sketch of sage Angiras is given as a note no. 2 of verse no. 8, question (Canto) no. 2 of the Prashna Upanishad which is Chapter no. 1 of this volume.

Since the Gayatri Mantra is dedicated to the Sun God who is an embodiment of Fire, the reference is being made to these two sages Bhrigu and Angira because they worshipped the sacred fire. At the time of creation, the Sun God took up his residence in the eye of the body of the first creature. Since the sun is a crucible of celestial fire and these two sages worshipped the fire, they are honoured by saying that they are like the two eyes of this Gayatri knowledge.]

2. Sage Maudgalya's disciple went to the camp of sage Maitreya and asked this question of him, but the latter could not reply. Then the confident disciple politely rebuked him, saying, 'Oh Lord! You had called Maudgalya an Agyani (an ignorant), but you could not answer a single question he asked. Now you would have to bear its consequences; you would have to suffer for one year as punishment' (2).

3. Sage Maitreya summoned his disciples and instructed them—'All of you can go home now if you so wish. I had the temerity to call Maudgalya incompetent; I could not answer his one question. Now I shall go to him and appease him, ask for his forgiveness so that he feels calmed down and become pleased with me' (3).

4. He took some Samidha¹ in his hands and approached sage Maudgalya in the early hours of the morning with a sincere request for being taught the metaphysical knowledge which he lacked. He pleaded, 'Oh wise and learned teacher! I am Maitreya'.

Maudgalya asked, 'Say, why have you come?'

Maitreya replied humbly, 'I had called you incompetent. I could not answer the question you had asked me. Now I have presented myself to serve you and fully please you'. (4).

[Note—¹Samidha is a gift taken by the disciple as a token of respect for his teacher and to indicate to the latter that he is being approached with some sincere query in mind which the teacher, true to tradition, is bound to answer].

5. Maudgalya said, 'You had come here with ulterior motives (to prove me junior to you in knowledge, which shows that you are haughty). In spite of it, I shall give you a chariot of auspicious thoughts that would take you to your desired spiritual destination. [That is, I shall now preach you noble thoughts which would act as a vehicle that would take you to your destination.] Take it (or ride upon it)' (5).

6. Maitreya felt reassured and gladly submitted, 'Your auspicious words are most welcome and they have removed my grave fears. I shall obey your instructions diligently, and in full'.

He paid his due respects to Maudgalya in a proper way and went near him. Then he enquired, 'Oh wise and learned teacher! What is the quintessential and primary element of Savita (the Sun God as a manifestation of the Supreme Being) that is to be selected, revered and accepted by all spiritual aspirants? What is the Bharga of this deity (i.e. what is life infusing essence that gives this deity its importance)? How do experts in this branch of metaphysics describe its sublime authority, powers and potentials? How do they describe the element 'Dhi' in this Mantra (i.e. the hymn called the Gayatri)? How do this deity (Savita; the Sun God) inspire the elements and enter the realm of the heavens to move in it freely?' (6).

7. Maudgalya replied, 'The hymn of the Vedas called the Gayatri Chanda is the acceptable form of this deity. [That is, these hymns embody all the virtues and magnificent qualities represented by the celestial Sun. When one uses these hymns to worship the Lord, he is in close contact with the object of worship.]

Scholars and experts in this knowledge assert that food is its Bharga. [That is, the main importance of the Sun God for which he is worshipped and lauded in the Vedas is his quality of helping grow food on earth by way of regulating the seasons, rainfall and the cycle of day and night, by providing light, heat and energy etc. that

are absolutely essential for cultivation and growth of food which sustains all forms of life on earth.]

Karma (efforts and deeds) is the basic element called Dhi because it is the Karma that enables all success in life. It is Karma that enables this deity to keep on moving in this creation. [As is obvious here, even food requires an effort to be procured and eaten. Life would come to a standstill and a naught if there the creature did not make any effort.]’ (7).

8. Hearing this, Maitreya respectfully asked Maudgalya to elaborate further—‘Oh wise and learned teacher! Please tell me what is Savita and what is Savitri¹?’ (8).

[Note—¹An entire Upanishad called ‘Savitri Upanishad’ of the Sam Veda tradition is dedicated to this theme, and it is Chapter 13 of the second volume in this series.]

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Kandika 3

1. Sage Maudgalya preached—‘The Mana (mind) is the Savita, and the Vaani (speech; the spoken word) is the Savitri. [That is, it is the mind that inspires speech; it is the mind that makes the creature speak what he says.]

The Mana and the Vaani stay together; they cohabit. They are like a couple. [That is, one always speaks what the mind wants him to speak.]

One is the womb of the other. [The words to be spoken are conceived in the mind, and knowledge of words and language helps the mind to decide how to express itself.] (1).

[Note—In this Kandika, Savita is regarded as the universal Inspirer, while Savitri is the element that is inspired, the dynamic aspect of Savita. So for example, if the mind is the inspirer, the words spoken by the creature is the manifestation of the dynamic abilities of the mind, and hence it is the Savitri. The same logic can be extended to all the following verses.]

2. Agni (fire) is Savita, and Prithivi (earth) is Savitri. [It is the fire that is latently present in the bosom of earth that enables the latter to harbour life. If there was no heat and warmth on earth, there would be no life on it. Further, fire is an integral part of the cycle of food production, growth, its preparation for consumption and its digestion.]

Both Agni and Prithivi coexist; they stay together like couples. One is the womb of the other. [If earth is to foster life, it must invariably harbour fire in its bosom. The fire needs a base and crucible to survive, and the earth provides a vast reservoir for it. The proof lies in the fact that if the fire took up its residence in the sky it would be blown away by its arch enemy, the wind element. Since the basic virtues of fire to provide warmth, heat, energy and light as harbingers of life are most evident on earth, it is deemed to be its womb because life can exist only on earth and not in the far away planets or stars.] (2).

[Note—If Savita is regarded as the universal Inspirer called the fire element, then earth would be the Savitri because it represents the dynamism of fire on display. It is on earth that the fire burns ferociously, and not in the sky where it would be immediately blown away by the wind.]

3. Vayu (wind) is Savita, and Antariksha (the deep recesses of the sky) is the Savitri. [The air element pervaded throughout the sky; there is no corner of the sky where there is no air. The air element is not visible, but its visible manifestation is the sky.]

Both Vayu and Antariksha stay together; they cohabit; they are like couples. One is the womb of the other. [Wind is always generated in vacant space and not in solids. The sky and wind element are both inseparable from one another much like the fire and the earth elements.] (3).

[Note—If Savita is regarded as the universal Inspirer called the wind element, then sky would be the Savitri because it represents the dynamism of wind on display. It is in the space of the sky that fierce storms blow, thereby putting on display the power and punch of the wind element.]

4. Aditya (the celestial Sun) is the Savita, and the Duloka (the heavens) is the Savitri. [The Sun is the visible manifestation of the Supreme Being. The rays of the sun spread out in all the direction of the heavens where the Supreme Being symbolically has his abode. The illumination that the sun provides to the sky and the countless objects present in the latter, such as the moon, the planets and the stars etc. is a metaphoric way of saying that the Supreme Being is making his presence felt even in the remotest corners of the universe.]

The Aditya and Duloka coexist; they cannot be separated; they are like inseparable couples. [Obviously, one cannot ever imagine the presence of the Sun except in the sky.]

One is the womb of the other. [The sun rises, moves and sets in the bosom of the sky. Hence, the sky is its womb. Likewise, the sky is visible in the light of the sun; hence the latter is like the womb of the former.] (4).

[Note—If Savita is regarded as the universal Inspirer called the Sun, then the heaven would be the Savitri because it represents the dynamism of sun on display. It is in the vast recesses of the sky that all the planets, the moon and the stars shine to showcase the power and potentials of the sun to even light up the remotest corners of the universe.]

5. The Chandrama (the Moon) is Savita, and the Nakshatras (the stars) are the Savitri. Where there is the Chandrama there would be the Nakshatras. They cohabit; they are like couples; they invariably accompany each other. [The moon is always seen in the night, and the stars too are visible in the night sky. Since the presence of either of them indicated the night sky as opposed to the day sky, they are like inseparable couples.]

One is like the womb of the other. [When one sees the moon, one is certain to see the stars. On the other hand, the moon gets its glory because it is surrounded by lesser bright objects called the stars in the sky, for had it not been so the moon would also have been like one insignificant stars amongst the countless ones in the night sky. So, each gives importance to the other.] (5).

[Note—If Savita is regarded as the universal Inspirer called the Moon, then the stars would be the Savitri because they both complement each other in the field of astrology and astronomy. The position of the Moon in the astrological chart has great significance as it is believed to exert its influence on the other stars to determine the destiny of an individual.]

6. The Day is Savita, and the Night is Savitri. Where there is a day, there is bound to be a night. These two units of creation coexist; they are like inseparable couples who cannot be separated from one another. One is the womb of the other (6).

[Note—The sun shines in the day time, and it is a prelude for the night. The day and the night move continuously in an endless and seamless cycle. It is not possible at all to have a continuous day or night. The day is likened to the Savita because when the sun rises in the morning it wakes up the creature and inspires him to get involved in the daily grind of life. The night is the Savitri because only after a hard day's toil would a man find the importance and value of rest and sleep.

The sun rises from the dark bowls of the night, and hence the latter is like the womb which produces the new sun the next morning. It is the day that leads to the sun setting and the night emerging, so it is the creator of the night. Had there been no day and sun, there would have been an endless darkness of the night and the term 'night' itself would become irrelevant.]

7. Heat and warmth (Ushnaa) is like the Savita, and cold (Sheet) is like Savitri. Both coexist in this creation. Where there is heat and warmth, cold would not be far away, and vice versa. They are like couples who might look temporarily separate from one another but cannot be permanently separated. One is the harbinger of the other; one creates or leads to the other (7).

[Note—This observation is very evident in the cycle of seasons—we have the summer season followed by the winter season, and vice versa. The summer season is compared to the Savita because it is during this period the days are the longest and a man finds more time for his activities. The warm rainy season is when crops are grown and harvested. It is the time when the man is inspired to do all outdoor activities which would become difficult once frigid winter sets in. Hence, warmth and heat are symbolic of the Savita aspect of Nature. Since the cold days are bound to follow suit, these two aspects—heat and cold—are like couples. For a temporary phase they appear to be separated from one another because summer and winter cannot exist together, but they are bound by a thread of inseparability so much so that one is bound to follow the other religiously and seamlessly.

The efforts made during the warm time bears fruits that are enjoyed during the winter season, so the cold time is the revelation of the benefits of the summer season. Hence, the favourable environment created by the warmth and heat of the summer season produces results that are enjoyed when there is extreme cold and much of outdoor physical activity is not practically feasible.

There is another way of interpreting this verse. Heat is associated with anger and vengeance, while cold is linked with peace, calmness and tranquility. When one becomes angry it is said that he has done something in the heat of the moment. Warmth is the precondition for the body remaining active. So, the element of heat and warmth are the universal inspirer which motivate all actions. After every phase of anger there is the phase of remorse and cool; after every energetic activity there is the need to cool down, rest and recuperate. So, these two elements coexist and are inseparable from one another.]

8. The clouds are the Savita, and the rains are the Savitri. [The rain is created from the cloud. The cloud is therefore the inspirer, and the product of this inspiration is the rain.]

The cloud and rain go hand in hand; they cannot have separate existence; they are like a couple. One is the creator of the other (8).

[Note—There cannot be any rain without the cloud, and the cloud that has any relevance is the one which brings rain. Hence, they both complement each other; one would lose its significance in the absent of the other.]

9. The electric is the Savita, and its lightening is the Savitri. [The lightening is the dynamic principle of electric. It is the body of the electric that inspires the lightening

to shine and streak in a dazzling brilliance. Had there been no such thing as electric and had it not possessed such stupendous powers as it does, there would have been no lightening. The electric is not visible as such, but its presence is made evident by the lightening just like no one can see the wind but its presence is obvious during storms.]

Where there is electric there would be lightening; they coexist and cohabit. They cannot be separated from one another. One produces the other (9).

[Note—There cannot be any lightening without the presence of electric, and lightening shows indisputably and unequivocally that there is electric that has caused it. The electric is the inspirer and the lightening is the result of this inspiration; lightening is the dynamism and energy of electric on visible display.]

10. The Pran (life infusing forces of Nature) is the Savita, and the food is the Savitri. [Only living beings need food, so Pran is the universal inspirer that motivates the creature to search for food, to grow it, to cook it and to eat it. The food that is grown, collected, cooked and eaten is the result of dynamism shown by Pran. If no effort is made, there would be no agriculture and no crops.]

Where there is food, there is Pran (life). They coexist and cannot be separated. They are like a couple. One is like the womb (creator) of the other (10).

[Note—When a living being wishes to live, he must have food, and therefore he makes effort to grow it and procure it. All life on earth rests on food; so food is the creator and sustainer of life. Food is needed by living beings only and it is grown by them only. At the same time, the food has any value and relevance for the living being because it can sustain life; if the food does not show this unique ability to support life, no one would pay any heed to it. For instance, any food that is harmful for health is abhorred by all, whereas people fight for food that would help them live in this world.]

11. The Vedas are the Savita, and the Chandas (the poetical style of their composition) are like the Savitri. [The Vedas are the body of knowledge which symbolize the Supreme Being, but this body is revealed in the form of the Chandas, because it is the hymns composed in the various styles in which the Vedas have been revealed or have come into existence that make the text of these Vedas accessible and comprehensible for the human being. Had there been no Chandas, the Vedas would have remained unknown, or so abstract and mysterious that no living being would have been able to either learn them or teach them to others. In essence, the Chandas are the medium which have been singularly responsible in the revelation of the sacred knowledge that has been encapsulated in the verses of the Vedas that use the Chandas for this purpose. So, the Supreme Being inspired great sages and seers to reveal the magnificent secrets about him in the form of hymns composed in various styles called the Chandas. The Chandas are, in other words, instruments for the manifestation of the dynamism and the mystical knowledge enshrined in the Vedas. The Mantras of the Vedas, or their hymns, which are given shape in different styles of poetry known as the Chanda, have great mystical powers which would have remained useless and untapped if there were no words weaved in the form of different narrative styles, the Chandas, to reveal them for the benefit of human kind.]

Where there is the Veda, the Chanda must always be present (because for the simple reason that the Vedas were composed in the Chandas). They coexist; they cannot be separated from one another. One gives rise to the other (11).

[Note—In order to read, learn and understand the Vedas, and use their hymns in practice, it is most important to have a perfect knowledge of the Chandas and their intricate nature. In ancient times, the only scripture studied and taught were the

Vedas. So it was assumed that if a man was an expert in the Chandas he must also have studied the Vedas. If one was chanting any hymn, then it surely must be from the Vedas. Hence, they coexist.]

12. The Yagya (fire sacrifice or any other religious ceremony) is the Savita, and the Dakshina (donations given during such rites) is the Savitri. [When one did a fire sacrifice, he was inspired to make charities. He not only paid the fee to the priests but made general donations and set aside funds for noble causes such as feeding the poor, constructing shelters, gardens and digging wells for drinking water etc., besides giving liberal alms to the poor which he would not otherwise have normally done. So the Yagya is the inspirer that propels him to do noble deeds. The success of the Yagya and the fame it gave to the patron depended upon the Dakshina that were given during such rituals.]

They live together and cannot be separated. If there is a Yagya, the Dakshina must accompany it (because without making charities the fire sacrifice and other forms of religious deeds were deemed to be futile and they did not yield any desired result.)

One was the creator of the other (12).’

[Note—If one desired to benefit from any religious deed such as the fire sacrifice or any other form of ritual collectively called Yagya, he was ordained to make charities. Similarly, if the word spread that a particular person is making huge donations, it was deemed that he is performing some great sacrifice. In fact and in practical terms, making charities in itself is like performing some great fire sacrifice because parting with wealth is not an easy thing to do under normal circumstances.]

13. At the end of this discourse, Galva Maitreya said to Maudgalya—‘Oh great teacher! I have been greatly obliged by you; I feel very grateful to you and sincerely thank you. I am a Brahmchari (a student disciple), and I am presenting myself before you to serve you. This Brahmchari (i.e. me) have become fulfilled and satisfied with the knowledge I was seeking’.

Saying this, Maitreya got up and strolled around in an exuberant mood. He had discovered a great truth of metaphysics, and exulted in this new-found wisdom—‘Ah! Now I have come to realise that this Brahmchari (i.e. myself) who has become acquainted with these great inspirers and their dynamic principles (as described in the foregoing verses) would not have a short lifespan. He (i.e. I) would live a long and fruitful life (marked by true knowledge that would lead to his, i.e. my, ultimate emancipation and salvation)’ (13).

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Kandika 4

1. Sage Maudgalya said to Maitreya—‘The universal divinity known as Brahm has manifested itself as the ‘Sri’ (the virtues of majesty, glory, splendour, grandeur and magnificence) of creation. Brahm is the foundation and support of this creation; the entire edifice of creation rests upon Brahm and owes its existence to the latter. Brahm is the shelter and succour for this creation.

In order to access this divine entity, it is imperative to do Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance and rigid self control). So, I advise you to do Tapa because if one accepts the vows of Tapa, he is established in the Truth. [That is, if one exercises the greatest of self control, if one diligently follows the rules of conduct as laid down in

the scriptures, if one strives to cleanse himself of all worldly taints that scar his pure self, if one gets rid of delusions and acquires true knowledge, one is surely able to see or get acquainted with the Absolute Truth known as Brahm.] (1).

2. That holy Being known as Savita created the Brahmin (those who are well-versed in the knowledge of Brahm) with his association with Savitri. [Here, the creator Brahma is referred to as Savita, and his dynamic knowledge has been personified as the divine female counterpart Savitri. The off spring is the Brahmin, the learned one. Therefore, the Brahmin has the gene of Brahma in him, and it is the gene of knowledge that is exclusive and refined.]

The creator gave this Brahmin the Mantra of Savitri. Hence, the word ‘Tattsa-viturvarenayam’ is the first phase or stanza of the divine Mantra known as Savitri Mantra. [In other words, Brahma told his off spring about his noble lineage. He told the Brahmin that he is born from Savitri, his symbolic divine Mother who represents the divine knowledge that the creator possessed, and which was subsequently divulged by him. In other words, the Brahmin is a personified form of Savitri, and as a dutiful son he must protect the dignity of this divine Mother at all costs. By initiating him with this Mantra the creator baptized him, and infused in him the Spirit of divinity that would not only be his identity but would also offer protection to him against evils. Thus, ‘knowledge and its teaching’ was the forte of true Brahmins.] (2).

3. The divine Being known as Savita blessed the earth with ‘Rik’. [The word Rik means worldly assets. Here it refers to the creation of the first Veda called the Rik or Rig Veda. This sentence means that the supreme creator impregnated the earth with all sorts of natural wealth and minerals; he empowered the earth with the primary body of knowledge to enable the earth to create and sustain its own life and ecosystem. He made the earth self-sustaining and self-reliant. Everything that was needed for life to thrive was liberally given to earth. The creator ensured that the creatures that would come to live on this earth would be well-provided for.]

From this Rik evolved (was created) Agni (the fire). [That is, after blessing the earth with its endless supply of material wealth, the creator injected the element of fire in it. He did it because all the wealth would have been useless had there been no life on earth. And fire is an important pre-requisite for life to survive anywhere.]

From Agni evolved the ‘Sri’. [The fire was symbolised by the great fire sacrifices. With warmth and heat, life began to appear and thrive on this earth in all its multifarious forms. The glory, power, magnificence and grandeur of the creator began to reveal themselves in the form of these myriad varieties of colourful life forms, which are collectively called Sri here.]

From the Sri evolved the woman. [In other words, the dynamism of the Supreme Being as revealed in this world was personified in the body of the woman. There is a very interesting message here—since this creation with all its magnificent charms and exciting allurements is a delusory mirage created by the creator, it follows that the woman who personifies this aspect of creation also presents a charm that is equally delusory and entrapping. A man who gets entangled with this world can never hope to find emancipation and salvation, and this would also apply to his involvement with the woman.]

From the woman evolved the couple or the need to form a union. [The enticements of the colourful world attracted the creature towards themselves. The creature got hooked to them. This created a chain of desires and a never-ending list of unsatisfied goals. The lust for a woman is similar in nature; it is rarely satisfied.]

This union or conjunction created the off spring. [The numerous attractions of the world first made the creature desire for one thing, but this first step set off a chain reaction. More was needed and new desires were created. The man was not satisfied with the products of Nature, and he started to create things artificially to satisfy his hunger for more. We have artificial man-made food, countless objects of daily use, numerous artificial man-made attractions which we find more alluring as compared to the products offered by Mother Nature.]

From this off spring evolved or arose the cycle of Karma and Tapa (hard effort and labour). [In order to fulfill one's desires, one needed to make an effort, and this involved hard toil and personal sacrifices.]

From the Tapa evolved the Satya or the awareness of the Truth. [When the creature could not find peace even after hard labour, he wandered why it was so. So, this led to the realisation of the 'truth' in him. He realised that peace and happiness do not come with this world, so what is the great idea in pursuing it relentlessly. Instead, he must search the means of permanent and real peace. So begins this journey inwards, towards his truthful inner 'self'.]

From this Truth arose Brahm, i.e. the knowledge of the ultimate Absolute Truth (which is his own Atma or pure conscious self, and which Truth is narrated in the Vedas). [When a man meditated upon his 'self', he realised what true peace and bliss was. This made him self-realised and enlightened. He came to know the Absolute Truth about his own self as well as the rest of this world. This made him 'Brahm realised' too; the awareness of Brahm rose within his inner being. In other words, being 'self-realised' and being 'Brahm-realised' were the two sides of the same coin.]

The knowledge of the Truth was personified as the Brahmin. Since this knowledge requires the greatest of self-restraint over the sense organs and being constantly wary of falsehood and delusions, it was associated and synonymous with 'Vrat'—i.e. observing strict vows of auspicious thoughts and be ever vigilant against evil ones.

Hence, it is the rigorous practice of strict Vrat, i.e. it is by steadily following the rules and tenets of an auspicious and righteous way of life that a Brahmin acquires glory and majestic powers. It is this eclectic virtue that gives a Brahmin his exalted position in society. It is this virtue that makes him feel fulfilled and accomplished. It is an inalienable part of the character of a true Brahmin (3).

4. An expert who understands and accepts the esoteric meaning of this first step of the divine Savitri Mantra as narrated in this Kandika, and preaches it to others, his family tradition remains uninterrupted and continues uniformly for a long time, and he himself remains steady and uniformly exalted. [That is, his family and its members gain a steady reputation of being wise and learned, and he himself remains immune to delusions created by so many paths and philosophies created out of ignorance of the ultimate Truth of Brahm. He is so steady in his knowledge that nothing bothers him, and his own reputation as an expert in the essence of the Vedas spreads far and wide.] (4).

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Kandika 5

1. The second step of Savitri Mantra is 'Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi'.

The divine Lord named Savita (i.e. the creator Brahma) established a union between the Antariksha (the sky and its vast space beyond the upper atmosphere of the earth) and Yaju. [The word 'Yaju' refers to the second Veda called the Yajur Veda. This Veda principally consists of rites. The offerings made by saying the hymns of the Yajur Veda were intended for the Gods who are supposed to inhabit the Antariksha. These Gods are junior in the hierarchy of Gods.]

The Yaju was closely associated with Vayu (the wind). The latter had close association with the clouds; the clouds with the rain; the rain with the herbs and other plants; the herbs and plants with the animals; the animals with Karma or efforts; Karma with Tapa (hard toil and labour); Tapa with Satya (truth); Satya with Brahm or the knowledge of the Absolute Truth; this knowledge is closely related with the Brahmin (i.e. the Brahmin is supposed to know the reality of Brahm); and the exalted Brahmin has a close association with the strict codes of moral conduct and religious way of auspicious life, collectively called the religious 'Vrats' (or religious duties and obligations). [The fire sacrifice was usually done to please the Gods in ancient societies that were predominantly agrarian as they totally depended upon the mercy of the forces of Nature for their survival because these forces affected agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry. These Gods were personified forms of the various forces of Nature. The fire sacrifice needed the use of hymns to do various rituals. The hymns that were used belonged to the Yajur Veda as this Veda was especially dedicated to the conduct of the fire sacrifice. The forces of Nature, when benevolent and helpful, produced adequate rainfall and well regulated seasons, which in turn meant all-round well-being and happiness for the people. This was interpreted as the fire sacrifice being successful and the Gods pleased. It so happened that the Brahmins were the only class of people who were expert in this field just like we have generations of people working as 'Smiths' who are regarded as being naturally gifted in the skills pertaining to their trade, be it as goldsmiths or as ironsmiths.]

It is the strict practice of these Vrats, i.e. it is the strict adherence to a life of auspiciousness and righteousness that makes a Brahmin so honourable and revered. It fulfills him and it bestows him with steady fame and honour (1).

2. An expert who understands and accepts the esoteric meaning of this second step of the divine Savitri Mantra as narrated in this Kandika, and preaches it to others, his family tradition remains uninterrupted and continues uniformly for a long time, and he himself remains steady and uniformly exalted. [That is, his family and its members gain a steady reputation of being wise and learned, and he himself remains immune to delusions created by so many paths and philosophies created out of ignorance of the ultimate Truth of Brahm. He is so steady in his knowledge that nothing bothers him, and his own reputation as an expert in the essence of the Vedas spreads far and wide.] (2).

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Kandika 6

1. The third step of Savitri Mantra is 'Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayaat'.

The divine Lord named Savita (i.e. the creator Brahma) established a union between the Duloka (the heavens) and Sam. [The word 'Sam' refers to the third Veda called the Sam Veda. This Veda principally consists of musical hymns that require special skills to recite. These hymns are meant to please the superior God who lives in

the heaven. Since Brahm, the Supreme Being, is the Emperor of all the Gods, these hymns are primarily aimed to honour him. Since only the best can be offered to the Emperor, these hymns are considered as the best form of tribute offered to the Lord. They are sung most melodiously and in an enchanting manner because they are meant for the Lord of the world.]

The Sam was closely associated with Aditya (the Sun God because the latter is a visible manifestation of Brahm and the Viraat Purush, the invisible and all-encompassing macrocosmic gross body of Brahm). The latter had close association with the brilliant rays of the sun. [In other words, the rays of the sun symbolically spread the magnificent glory of Brahm in every corner of creation by illuminating them and removing darkness.]

The rays were closely related with rains. [As is clearly known now, the rains depend upon the heat of the sun which evaporates water from the oceans and transforms it into rain. The heat of the sun is transmitted by the medium of the rays.]

The rain is very closely related with vegetation and herbs; the latter with the animals; the animals with Karma or efforts; Karma with Tapa (hard toil and labour); Tapa with Satya (truth); Satya with Brahm or the knowledge of the Absolute Truth; this knowledge is closely associated with the Brahmin (i.e. the Brahmin is supposed to know the reality of Brahm); and the Brahmin is closely related with the strict codes of moral conduct and religious way of auspicious life, collectively called keeping of the religious Vrats.

It is the strict practice of these auspicious Vrats, i.e. it is the strict adherence to a life of auspiciousness and righteousness that makes a Brahmin so honourable and revered. It fulfills him and it bestows him with steady fame and honour (1).

2. An expert who understands and accepts the esoteric meaning of this third step of the divine Savitri Mantra as narrated in this Kandika, and preaches it to others, his family tradition remains uninterrupted and continues uniformly for a long time, and he himself remains steady and uniformly exalted. [That is, his family and its members gain a steady reputation of being wise and learned, and he himself remains immune to delusions created by so many paths and philosophies created out of ignorance of the ultimate Truth of Brahm. He is so steady in his knowledge that nothing bothers him, and his own reputation as an expert in the essence of the Vedas spreads far and wide.] (2).

[Note—The Gayatri Mantra has been expounded and elucidated upon in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14, as well as in other Upanishads, such as the Savitri Upanishad which is entirely dedicated to it, the Maitrayanyu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7, the Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, Section 12, verse nos. 1-9 belonging to the Sam Veda tradition, and Narsingh Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 5-9.

The full Mantra is OM BHURBHUVAHA SVAHA¹, TSAVIURVARENYAM², BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAH³, DHIYO YO NAH PRACODAYAT⁴. It means 'OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahm. He is the lord of creation of the terrestrial, the celestial and heavenly worlds. I offer my oblations to you. That Brahm is luminous like the sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on the righteous and noble path'. The four phrases of the Gayatri Mantra are clearly marked by small numerals in this Mantra. This Mantra appears in the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).]

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Kandika 7

1. Only an expert and competent Brahmin is eligible to accept this divine and esoteric knowledge that is supreme in essence and form. It is only a competent Brahmin who can access it, accept it, implement it and experience its effect and truthfulness (1).

2. The Brahm is closely associated with the Akash or sky. Brahm fills the sky and pervades in every corner of it. [In other words, the sky is the closest analogue of Brahm. The sky showcases some of the grandest virtues of Brahm—such as it being eternal, steady, endless, infinite, fathomless, measureless, indescribable, indefinable, immutable, indivisible, all-encompassing, all-pervading, immaculate and untainted inspite of harbouring countless heavenly bodies, essentially invisible but becoming visible for the benefit of the world, and so on and so forth.]

The sky is closely associated with the air element; the sky accepts the air and it is filled with air; the sky is impregnated with air.

The air is closely associated with Jyoti or light; the air accepts light and illumination and is filled with it. [This fact is evident during thunderstorms. The clouds move due to strong air currents, and it is during great storms that lightening strikes. Its thunder rumbles and echoes far and wide, and its sound is carried to distant places by the wind blowing in that direction. It is a well known fact that sound travels through the medium of the air in the form of waves.]

The lightening is closely associated with rain. When one accepts lightening, one would also accept rains. The rain is pregnant with lightening; the lightening is harbinger of rain. [Only a dark rain-bearing cloud would show streaks of lightening. So lightening and rain are closely related with each other. When there is lightening, rain is always there; both accompany each other. A thick rain-bearing bank of cloud harbours lightening in its body. One cannot exclude lightening when there are heavy rains, and vice-versa.]

The water of the rain is closely associated with the earth. The earth receives the water of the rain, it provides the water for the formation of rain, and the earth itself is surrounded and submerged in an ocean of water. The earth's existence depends upon water and rain.

The earth is closely associated with food. The food covers the surface of earth; it is grown on earth and it perishes on earth. [The term 'food' is not restricted to plants and vegetables only but also to animals. Each specie of animal is the food for the higher specie. The verse refers to the food chain which spreads across the globe.]

The food is closely associated with Pran, the vital factors that sustain all forms of life on this earth. Pran is fully dependent upon food; the food virtually eclipses Pran and controls its existence. [There would be no life without food.]

The Pran is closely associated with the Mana (the thinking mind and emotional aspect of the heart of a creature). The Mana derives its strength and energy from the Pran; it owes its existence on the Pran. [This is because only as long as there is life in the body would a creature think and have emotions. A dead body has no thoughts or emotions.]

The Mana is closely associated with Vaani or speech. The Mana controls the Vaani fully. Whatever a creature speaks is a manifestation of his Mana—i.e. it shows what he thinks and what his emotions are.

Vaani is closely associated with the Vedas. It is the faculty of speech that enables a man to recite the hymns of the Vedas, teach them and learn about them. The Vedas were traditionally transmitted by the oral method, necessitating the need of perfection in speech and highlighting its significance. [The Vedas would have remained unknown had it not been for the faculty of speech. Further, the faculty of speech would have lost its importance if it was used only for the pursuit of the world devoid of any spiritual content.]

The Vedas are closely associated with the Yagya or the fire sacrifices. No fire sacrifice could be done without the invocation of the Vedas and their hymns.

A wise and learned person who understands this secret is blessed with the presence of the twelve Mahabhuts¹ in his own self. He becomes an expert in the performance of the fire sacrifices. [Since the great elements of creation called the Mahabhuts are established in him, i.e. he becomes self-realised and understands that his own body is a microcosm of the entire creation with his own Atma being a personification of the supreme Brahm, he is deemed to be doing the fire sacrifice even while meditating upon his 'self' inspite of the fact that he is not doing any external ritual of the physical form of the fire sacrifice. This fact is affirmed in Pran Agnihotra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.] (2).

[Note—¹The twelve Maha Bhuts have been listed in this Kandika. They are the following—Brahm, Akash (sky), Vayu (air or wind), Jyoti (light), Aapo (water), Bhumi (earth), Anna (food), Pran (life or the vital winds that sustain life), Mana (mind), Vani (speech), Vedas, Yagya (fire sacrifice) = 12.]

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Kandika 8

1. Those who think that they are experts in performance of formal rituals associated with fire sacrifices are actually ignorant ones. [This is because they are mechanical in carrying out their duties and do it as means of earning money. They have no idea of the philosophy behind these fire sacrifices nor do they know the hidden meaning of the hymns they so enthusiastically recite.]

The fire sacrifice (Yagya) is established and gets its empowerment and authority from the Vedas. The Vedas are established in and dependent upon the Vaani or speech (because they have to be incanted or recited properly during the fire sacrifice to make the latter bear fruits).

The speech is established in and dependent upon the Mana or the mind. [It is the mind that inspires and enables the man to recite the hymns of the Vedas. These Vedas are to be known by heart and this directly involves the faculty of memory in the mind. The heart is closely linked with the process because it makes the man completely involved in the process of recitation; the renderings become soulful and beseeching if the heart coordinates with the mind. If the mind is disturbed, it obviously would affect the recitation of the Vedas.]

The Mana is established in and dependent upon the Pran or the vital life forces and consciousness present inside the body. [To sing or chant the hymns of the Vedas, one needs energy and strength which is provided by the vital winds called Pran present in the body.]

Pran is established in and dependent upon the Anna or food eaten by the man. [This is very clear. If one has not eaten for a prolonged time, one would feel so weak and low in energy that not only would he not be able to recite the hymns loudly but

would even have difficulty in recalling the verses in the first instance. He would stumble over the words and speak in an incoherent manner. The importance of food in this particular context has been beautifully explained in Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, section 7.]

Anna or food is established in and dependent upon the Bhumi or earth. It is on earth that food is grown.

The Bhumi or earth is established in and dependent upon the Aapo or water. [The earth is filled with water in the form of the ocean. Nearly three-fourth of the area of the earth consists of the ocean. The land mass seems to be virtually floating on this ocean. The life on earth is sustained by water, and the food is also dependent upon water. If there is no water, if there is a drought, there is famine.]

The importance of Aapo or water lies in the presence of the Tej or fire. Water is dependent upon fire for its powers to be manifested. [It is the heat of the sun and the latent fire present in the earth that helps in the evaporation of water that ultimately forms the rain. This rain helps water to reach the areas of the earth where the rivers and the ocean have no reach. Further, fire is needed to keep the earth warm, and only warm water can be conducive to harboring life in its vibrant forms. This is proved by the fact that those areas of the earth which are covered by ice have no forests and animal life. Water is dependent upon the mercy of the fire, for should the fire so wish it can very easily evaporate the entire treasure of water on earth and the latter would parch dry to death.]

The fire or Tej is established in or dependent upon Vayu or air. [Air is both a friend of the fire as well as its enemy. To light a fire, air is needed to be blown into the fire pit. But this air can also blow out the lighted fire should it wish to do so. The fire needs a constant company of fresh air to remain lighted. If the air is removed, the fire would be immediately extinguished.]

The Vayu or air is established or present in the Akash or sky; the air is dependent on the sky for its existence. [Air is invariably present in the open space of the sky, and both are usually treated as having almost the same characteristic features—such as the quality of being formless, omnipresent, all-pervading, all-encompassing, infinite, eternal, fathomless, measureless, colourless, taintless, free from all corruptions, pure and immaculate etc. Wherever there is the sky, the air is deemed to be present, and vice versa. Air cannot dwell in solids, it can only live in the open space represented by the sky, and therefore the sky is a pre-requisite for the survival of the air.]

The Akash or sky is established in or dependent upon Brahm for its existence. [The sky is infinite itself, but there must be something or some entity which harbours this sky. Even as all the units of creation need some kind medium to support them, the sky too needed it. The sky harbours everything that exists in this creation, but it needs some medium for its own base; it cannot exist in total void, it cannot hang in a vacuum, it must have some foundation of its own. This foundation or resting place of the sky is Brahm. In other words, this Brahm must be larger than the sky to accommodate the latter. So, Brahm encloses the sky from all sides; Brahm is like the moat around the fort. There is nothing outside Brahm. This fact of Brahm enclosing the entire creation from all sides has been explicitly affirmed and explained in the *Shwetashwatar Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9, and Canto 6, verse nos. 2, 9. In fact, the sky was the first of the five Bhuts or the primary elements created by Brahm in the beginning of creation, the others being air, fire, water and earth in decreasing order of subtlety and increasing order of grossness. Everything in creation was created by Brahm, and this product cannot

supersede the creator. The glories of Brahm as the highest citadel of authority in creation and as the Lord of all that exists have been elaborately explained in the *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*.]

Brahm is established in a Brahmin. That is, Brahm finds his glory and divinity manifested in the form of a learned, self-realised, erudite, enlightened and wise person known as a Brahmin. [That is, a true Brahmin is a representative of Brahm and is an embodiment of the virtues that Brahm stands for. The Brahmin is an embodiment of the divine and eclectic knowledge that pertains to Brahm, he exemplifies the glories and authority of Brahm—i.e. he is a Brahm-realised person. If he does not fulfill this criterion, he is not fit to be called a Brahmin. The qualities of a Brahmin that determine who a true Brahmin is have been enumerated in the *Vajrashuchika Upanishad* of the Sam Veda tradition, as well as in the *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 14 of Krishna Yajur Veda.]

In this way, a wise and learned person who knows the essence of these twelve Mahabhuts¹ attains great fame and honour, achieves the reward of being auspicious, and obtains success in his spiritual pursuit. He attains an exalted stature in this life which is no less than that lived by the Gods in heaven. He is freed from all sins and their evil effects, and consequentially achieves immense honour and acclaim (1).

[Note--¹According to this Kandika, the twelve Mahabhuts or units of creation are the following—Veda, Vani (speech), Mana (mind), Pran (life; vital winds), Anna (food), Bhumi (earth), Aapo (water), Tej (fire), Vayu (air or wind), Akash (sky), Brahm (the Supreme Being), Brahmin = 12.]

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Anthology of all the Principal Upanishads of the Atharva Veda

Preface

‘Come! Step forward and move ahead of those who are standing with you. Come! Try and attempt to reach those who have moved ahead of you, have excelled you’. (Atharva Veda, 2/11/4).

‘Peace be on earth; peace be in the sky; peace be in the heaven; peace be in the waters; peace be upon the plants; peace be upon the trees. May all the Gods grant me peace. May peace be generated by these all-encompassing invocations. I humbly pray to all that is evil, all that is terrible, all that is cruel, to be peaceful, and grant us tranquility’. (Atharva Veda, 19/9/14).

‘Vedanta (Upanishad) teaches the basic philosophy of all religions; this philosophy is no monopoly of any particular religion. This is why Vedanta will become the universal religion; convert it into universal treasure. Vedanta must not remain as the closed preserve of a group of narrow-minded people.’ (Swami Vivekanand, complete works, 2/109).

‘That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all’ (The Holy Bible, New Testament, 1John 1/3-5).

‘Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people, for all the earth is mine’ (the Book of Exodus, 19/5, the Old Testament, Holy Bible); then ‘I will certainly be with you’ (the Book of Exodus, 3/12, the Old Testament, Holy Bible).

‘This is the scripture whereof there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil); Who believeth in the unseen, and establish worship, and spend of that We have bestowed upon them; These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful.’ (The Holy Quran, Surah ii, verse nos. 2-5). ‘And believe in that which I reveal---and part not with my revelations for a trifling price, and keep your duty unto Me; Confound not the Truth with falsehood, not knowingly conceal the Truth’ (the Holy Quran, Surah ii, verse nos. 21-42). ‘Read: And thy Lord is the most bounteous; Who teacheth by the pen; Teacheth man that which he knew not’ (the Holy Quran, Surah xcvi, verse nos. 3-5). O Lord! In thee we put our trust, and unto thee we turn in repentance, and unto thee is the journeying (destination) (the Holy Quran, Surah lx, verse no. 4).

‘Truth only succeeds, not the falsehood’ (Mundaka Upanishad, 3/1/16).

The present volume contains all the thirty one **Upanishads of the Atharva Veda**. The sequence in which they appear in this volume follows the true Vedic tradition as laid down by one of the major Upanishads, viz. the ‘Muktikopanishad’, in its Canto 1, verse no. 57. It says—

_____प्रश्नमुण्डकमाण्डूक्याथर्वशिरोऽथर्बशिखाबृहज्जाबालनृसिंहतापनीनारदपरिव्राजकसीता_
 शरभमहानारायणरामरहस्यरामतापनीशाडिल्यपरमहंसपरिव्राजकान्नपूर्णसूर्यात्मपाशुपतपरब्रह्म_
 त्रिपुरातपनदेवीभावनाब्रह्मजाबालगणपतिमहावाक्यगोपालतपनकृष्णहयग्रीवदत्तात्रेयगारुडानामथर्ववे—
 दगतानामेकत्रिंशत्संख्याकानामुपनिषदां_भद्रं_कर्णेभिरिति_शान्तिः_॥५७॥

‘There are there are thirty one Upanishads in the Atharva Veda as follows—(1) Prashna, (2) Mundak, (3) Mandukya, (4) Atharvashiras, (5) Atharva-shikha, (6) Brihajjabal, (7) Nrisinghtapini, (8) Narad-parivrajak, (9) Sita, (10) Sharabh, (11) Tripadvibhuti-mahanarayan, (12) Ramrahsya, (13) Ramtapini, (14)Shandilya, (15) Paramhansa-parivrajak, (16) Annapurna, (17) Surya, (18) Atma, (19) Pashupat, (20) Par-Brahm, (21) Tripura-tapini, (22) Devi, (23) Bhavana, (24) Bhasma-jabal, (25) Ganapati, (26) Mahavakya, (27) Gopal-tapini, (28) Krishna, (29) Haigriv,(30) Dattatreya and (31) Garud’.

The Upanishads speak about the absolute spiritual ‘truth’ irrespective of the Vedas to which they belong, or who the Rishi (sage or seer) was who taught them. Their language and conceptual style may vary from one to another due to various reasons, such as the different Rishis who explained them or the period of time when they were pronounced, but since they are speaking about the universal ‘truth’ which is always the same and immutable, their essence is invariably the same.

This volume is the fifth and the last one in the pentamorous series consisting of five volumes, with several parts to a volume, of all the 108 Upanishads arranged and presented for the reader in true Vedic tradition.

The Upanishads are the perennial philosophy of life and its truth, and they endeavour to teach the spiritual seeker the way to access this eclectic truth, to realise who he actually is, and find eternal peace, happiness, contentedness and bliss for himself by reaching his goal of spiritual liberation and deliverance once and for all. The amazing aspect of the Upanishads is that though they talk and preach about the same subject they appear fresh every time one reads them, and their philosophy is as applicable now as they were when they were first conceptualized. Each reading provides a newer insight to the secrets of life and the way to unravel them.

Now let us have a very brief pre-view of each of the Upanishads that appear in the Atharva Veda.

To introduce this volume, I’ve selected the **Gayatri Upanishad** appearing in the Atharva Veda’s Gopath Brahman. Gayatri is regarded as the crown jewel of all Mantras, and it an apt prayer to start the mystical journey of the Upanishads belonging to this Veda. This Upanishad is included as the ‘introductory benediction’ in the very beginning of this book.

Chapter 1--Prashna Upanishad—This Upanishad is the Brahman of the Pippalaad branch of the Atharva Veda. It describes the six answers given by sage Pippalaad to queries raised by six other sages. First, Kabandhi enquired about Pran (the consciousness that infuses life and mobility in creation) and Rayi (the entity in which the Pran resides and which gives effect to the dynamism of Pran; the Prakriti or

Nature). The second question was asked by Bhargava pertaining to the chief life supporting factor in creation, the factor which forms the foundation and basis of life in this world. The third question was asked by Kausalya, the son of Ashwal; it was in six parts and related to the origin of Pran. The fourth query was raised by Gargya and it was in the form of five questions pertaining to the relationship between Parmatma (the Supreme Being) and the Jivatma (the living being). In the fifth question, Satyakam wished to know about the worship of OM, the divine symbol of Brahm. And finally, the sixth question was asked by Sukeshaa in which the latter wished to know about the 16 Kalaas or aspects of the Purush, the cosmic Male.

Chapter 2—Mundak Upanishad—This Upanishad belongs to the Shaunak branch of Atharva Veda. It has three Cantos called ‘Mundaks’, and each Mundak has two sections. The word Mundak refers to shaving of the head, implying shedding of all ignorance and its attendant delusions from the Mana (thinking mind and emotional heart), and instead filling it with truthful knowledge of the Reality. It has been taught by sage Angira to sage Shaunak.

The first Mundak is related to the Paraa and Aparaa Vidya—the former being the knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm which is the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation, and the latter refers to that body of knowledge that is known and which can enlighten the aspirant about the Paraa Vidya which is the knowledge of the transcendental Brahm. In this second category come the four Vedas—the Rik, the Sam, the Yajur and the Atharva, and the fire sacrifices.

The second Mundak compares the creation of the multi-dimensional world from Brahm with sparklers springing out from a burning fire. It also describes the world’s end just like these sparklers dying off. It cites the analogy of the bow and arrow to describe how an aspirant can use the medium of OM, the bow, and his Atma, the arrow, to attain the knowledge of Brahm. The glorious virtues of Brahm and the importance of attaining the latter are also discussed.

The third Mundak compares the body as the tree on which two birds representing the Parmatma (the Supreme Being) and the Jivatma (the living being) are sitting. It goes on to stress that knowledge of Brahm, or the knowledge of the Absolute Truth is possible only when the inner-self of the aspirant is pure and cleansed of all evil thoughts and other worldly contaminants that act as millstones around the Atma. It concludes by enumerating the immense spiritual rewards obtained by diligently and honestly pursuing Brahm Vidya, the eternal and blissful knowledge of the truthful Brahm.

Chapter 3—Mandukya Upanishad—In this Upanishad, the greatness and divinity of the ethereal word OM has been described. It is proclaimed here that OM is the best and the most honoured address for the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Upanishad describes the various subtle and sublime aspects of OM, and how it relates to the various aspects of creation. It goes on to describe the world as the visible manifestation of the invisible Brahm who has no attributes. The entire creation is the habitat of the cosmic Brahm, and the seven Lokas (divisions of the world) are its seven aspects or branches or manifestations. In this revealed form, Brahm’s mouth are the various Indris (sense organs of the body of the creature), the Pran (the vital winds representing the life consciousness in this body), the Antahakaran (the inner self and the subtle body) etc.

Chapter 4—Atharvashir Upanishad—This Upanishad has seven Kandikas or short Cantos. It is a sort of dictionary or ready reckoner which succinctly defines the various epithets or adjectives that are used to describe the glorious and magnificent virtues of the Supreme Being also known as Brahm. Here, the Supreme Being is named Rudra which also happens to be one of the names of Lord Shiva, but as Kandika 4 explains, the word Rudra refers to a divine entity whose most sublime and eclectic form is known easily to enlightened, wise and realised souls, but which is very inaccessible for all others.

In Kandikas 1 and 2 as well as in Kandika 3, stanzas 1-2, Lord Rudra himself declares that he is the supreme Lord of creation, and as such each unit and phase of creation such as the Sun, the Moon, the Gods (representing the various forces of Nature), the Bhuts (the primary elements), the animate and the inanimate things, the visible and the invisible, all the worlds such as the terrestrial, the nether and the heavenly, the minutest and the most colossus, the most humble and the most powerful, as well as the past, the present and the future and beyond are all manifestations of Rudra. In fact, the entire creation is a vivid depiction of the magnificent glories and stupendity of Rudra. It is Rudra who gives each unit of creation its glory, magnificence, virtues and worth.

Kandikas 2 and 3 are in the form of liturgical hymns sung by the Gods in honour of Rudra who is a personification of the dynamic aspects of the supreme transcendental Lord known as Brahm wherein the greatness and divine virtues of Brahm are outlined.

Kandika 4 defines all the epithets used to describe the Supreme Being, such as the terms OM, Pranav, Sarwavyaapi (all-pervading), Anant (endless), Tarak (one which gives emancipation and salvation), Shukshma (minute; subtle), Shukla (lighted; white), Krishna (dark; hidden), Vidyut (electric; light; energy), Param Brahm (the Supreme Being), Ek (the only one), Rudra, Ishan (the Lord), Indra (the king of the patron Gods of creation), Maheshwar (the great Ishwar or Lord) etc.

Kandika 5 essentially outlines the all-inclusive nature of Rudra who is Brahm, the Supreme Being, personified.

Kandika 6 outlines the genesis of creation and establishes that this creation has emerged from one supreme transcendental Brahm known as Rudra.

Finally, Kandika 7 extols the importance of grasping the teaching of this Upanishad because it briefly and precisely enlightens an aspirant about the divine virtues of the Supreme Being.

Chapter 5—Atharva-shikha Upanishad—This Upanishad is entirely dedicated to the theme of OM. OM is a synonym of the supreme transcendental Brahm as well as is the greatest of Mantras that is used as a standard medium for meditation and contemplation that aid in one's spiritual progress. This Upanishad builds upon the Atharvashir Upanishad in as much as it describes more finely the various components of OM, the ethereal word representing Pranav or the supreme Brahm. It elaborately deals with the concept of OM in a comprehensive manner. Kandika 1 elaborates upon the concept of OM by describing all its components along with the relevant Vedas, the patron Gods, the Chandas or style of composition (metres), the sacred fires, and the symbolism of colours. In effect, it outlines the genesis of creation in the context of the primordial sound of OM. Kandikas 2 and 3 elaborate upon other divine and glorious virtues of OM, such as it being the illuminator of the spiritual path of a seeker, as representing all the four states of existence of consciousness, as a bestower of mystical powers, as an infallible instrument for the realisation of Brahm and the

true 'self', as the progenitor of the entire creation, including all the Gods, and such other concepts with special emphasis on their metaphysical connotations.

In effect, this present Atharva-shikha Upanishad marks the culmination of meditation and contemplation or Yoga involving the use of the divine Mantra OM when the spiritual aspirant has attained perfect and exemplary quietude and blissfulness. He is then deemed to have attained Shambhu or Brahm-hood. It is a natural progression from the earlier stages of enlightenment when he had realised Brahm in his form as Rudra and Ishan that has been narrated in Atharvashir Upanishad.

So we can safely conclude that this present Atharva-shikha Upanishad is the 'tip or head' ('Shikha') of that body of knowledge which was initiated by its cousin Atharvashir Upanishad. In a sense, this Atharva-shika Upanishad rounds off the teaching of the previous Atharvashir Upanishad.

Chapter 6—Brihajjabal Upanishad—This Upanishad describes the Tej or the radiant splendour and divine glory of the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm, the Absolute Truth, besides which there is nothing in this world. The very thought that there can be something else besides this Absolute Truth (Brahm) is itself a delusion arising out of extreme ignorance of its reality. This Brihajjabal Upanishad is equivalent to the tip or head or the citadel of all Vedic teachings because it removes all shades of ignorance and delusions. It has eight Brahmanas or Cantos.

Brahman 1 describes how the creator Brahma desired to create, and how this basic notion of having a 'desire' was at the root of Brahma getting embroiled in the cumbersome and entangling process of the affairs of creation. This is followed by a conversation between sage Bhusund and Lord Kalagnirudra, one of the divine forms of Lord Shiva, in which the Lord outlines how the creation came into being from the five symbolic dynamic but subtle forms of the Supreme Being. He describes how the five primary elements, the five types of cows and the five forms of 'Bhasmas' or sacred ashes that are metaphors for five qualities in creation have come into existence.

Brahman 2 elaborates upon two primary concepts of metaphysics and how they form a couple that compliment and supplement each other. One is the concept of Agni or the fire element and the Soma or the elixir of life known as the water element without both of which life would not have come into existence, and the other is the concept of Shiva and Shakti, the cosmic Consciousness and its dynamic aspect respectively. It describes the various connotations of these four units and the finer nuances of meaning attached to them. Besides this, the significance of the term Bhasma (ash) is very succinctly described in this Canto.

Brahman 3 is an exposition, first, on the proper way to produce the sacred Bhasma (ash) and in this it bears close resemblance to two other Upanishad of this genre—i.e. the Kalagnirudra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, and Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda traditions, second, on the religious importance and significance of the cow and answers the confounding question why the Hindus regard the cow as holy, and third, it describes in detail the process of doing the fire sacrifice using the holy cow's dung as an offering to the consecrated fire of the sacrifice as an oblation.

Brahmanas 4 and 5 are an extension of Brahman 3 and they describes in minute detail how, when and by whom the Bhasma, the sacred ash, is to be worn on the body in the form of the Tripundra—the three lines marked on various parts of the body, especially the forehead. This Tripundra is a symbol worn by the worshipper as a token of his having accepted the supreme transcendental Brahm, in his manifestation as

Shiva, as his primary deity and Lord, as well as a sign of his own purification, his vanquishing of sins and protection from their evil consequences, and his initiation into the fold of seekers of Mukti (liberation and deliverance) by symbolically establishing the mark of the Lord on his own body. The immense spiritual rewards of wearing the Tripundra on the body by the worshipper are outlined in Brahman 5.

Brahman 6 describes five astounding mystical powers of the sacred Bhasma (the holy ash of the fire sacrifice) by illustrating them citing a story from the Purans. Each power is like an honoured title or an epithet assigned to the Bhasma. Hence, this Brahman describes the 'Naam Panchak' or the five names by which the Bhasma is known. For instance, the first power is its ability to give life to a cursed man who is condemned to death (verse nos. 1-4). The second is its power to eliminate the curse of horrific sins (verse nos. 5-6). The third is its power that established a unique similarity between Lords Vishnu and Shiva and to provide all round welfare and auspiciousness to a devotee (verse nos. 7-11). This power is endorsed by Lord Vishnu himself. The sacred Bhasma is so powerful that various Gods stand around to attend the devotee who wears it, and it is a bestower of all wisdom, erudition and knowledge to its wearer—these two additional facts bring the total number of glorious virtues of Bhasma to five (verse no. 12).

Brahman 7 describes two things—one, the importance of the Bhasma and the Tripundra as revealed to king Janak by Brahma, and to sage Pippalaad by Vishnu and Kalaghirudra (from verse nos. 1 to 7), and two, the importance of the Rudraksha beads as revealed to sage Sanatkumar by Lord Kalagnirudra (in verse no. 8).

Finally, Kalagnirudra enumerates the profound metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of Brihajjabal Upanishad in Brahman 8.

This is one Upanishad which highlights why the cow is held in high esteem and treated as sacred by the Hindus. In this context, Brahman 1 and 3 are very explicit.

Chapter 7—Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad—This is a revealed Upanishad as it is a discourse given by Prajapati Brahma, the creator, to answer certain questions asked by the Gods. It expounds upon both the Saguna and the Nirguna aspects of the supreme transcendental Brahm (i.e. on the formed aspect of Brahm having specific attributes as well as the unformed, invisible, attributeless and cosmic aspect of the same Divinity). It lays emphasis on that aspect of Brahm which is very dynamic, most powerful, invincible and strong, and which had revealed itself as a half lion and half man incarnation to save the devotee named Prahalad from the tyranny of his demon father Hiranyakashipu. Since a 'man' is the best in the higher order of living beings, and the 'lion' in the lower order of creatures, the form of the Supreme Being as half man and half lion is to depict the fact that he represents the best of everything in this creation.

The 'Tapini' group of Upanishads is the one which mostly deal with the details connected with Upasana (meditation) of a particular deity to whom they are dedicated, and by whose name they are known. The word 'Purva' refers to the commentary on this Upanishad as narrated by the renowned sage Adi Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820).

The Upanishad is divided into five sections called 'Upanishads' themselves, and have a total of 77 verses or Mantras.

In Canto or Upanishad 1 it is described how there was only the causal water everywhere before this creation came into being, how the creator Brahma emerged atop a divine lotus that came out of this water, and how Brahma had done Tapa

(severe penance and austerity) to initiate the process of creation. It was then that he 'saw' or realised or obtained the powerful Nrisingh Mantra by whose dynamic powers he was enabled to start the process of creation. This Upanishad refers to this Mantra revealed in the Anushtubh (or Anushtup) Chand style of composition. A parallel is drawn between the four steps or lines of this divine Mantra, and the earth, the semi-Gods in the lower heaven (called the Antariksha), the higher Gods such as the Vasus, Rudras and Adityas in the upper heaven (called the Duloka), and Brahm. Again, the four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva) are also symbolically represented by these four lines of the Nrisingh Mantra. Then the Upanishad sings the eulogies of the profoundness and greatness of repeating this Mantra, and enumerates the immense rewards got there from. The four steps of this Mantra are also likened to the various things and beings in creation, such as fire, gods, vital airs, the sun, the moon, the Trinity Gods, and so on. A devotee can have a divine vision of the deity by repeating this Mantra.

Canto or Upanishad 2 describes how the Gods conquered sin and its consequence death when they were preached this Nrisingh Mantra by Brahma the creator. Then meditation using the divine Mantra OM as representing Pranav or Brahm, and its synonymous nature with the four Vedas and the sacred fires is narrated. It is followed by the method of using this OM for the purpose of Nyas (investiture). Then follows a detailed exposition on each of the words of the Nrisingh Mantra.

Canto or Upanishad 3 describes the Beej (seed) and Shakti (dynamic power) of the Nrisingh Mantra. Prajapati Brahma asserts that Maya (the power of creating delusions) is its Shakti, and the Akash (the sky) is its Beej. It is from Maya Shakti that Brahma can create, and it is from the Akash that everything sprouts and expands because the vast cosmic space of the sky is the crucible that harbours the entire creation, right from its primordial stage to its birth, growth and development, and till its conclusion.

Canto or Upanishad 4 deals with the 'Angamantras' or subsidiary Mantras. They are OM, the Savitri Mantra of Yajur Veda (same as the first part of the Mahanarayan Upanishad, 15/2), the Laxmi Mantra of Yajur Veda. This is followed by the famous 'Nrisingh Gayatri Mantra'.

Canto or Upanishad 5 describes the powerful Sudarshan Chakra or the discus like weapon of Lord Narsingh. The Sudarshan Chakra is held by Lord Vishnu, the second of the Trinity Gods who is the protector of creation. This discus has six, or eight, or twelve, or sixteen or even thirty two spokes with corresponding teeth. The esoteric method of meditation connected with them is also narrated. Finally, a long litany of benefits got by worshipping Lord Narsingh with the Mantra is described.

A minor Upanishad called 'Nrisingh Shat-chakra Upanishad' describing the Chakra (wheel of worship) dedicated to Lord Nrisingh is included as an addendum no. 1 of this Chapter.

Chapter 8—Narad Parivraajak Upanishad—This is major Upanishad dealing exclusively with the concept of Sanyas—the life of complete renunciation and dispassion, and one that deals with the monastic way of life. It was enunciated by the great celestial sage Narad, and is revealed in the form of nine 'Updeshas' or teachings which we shall call Cantos in this Chapter.

It is a combination of prose and verses composed in the Anushtup Chanda (metre) style.

In Canto 1, the sages Shaunak and others have asked sage Narad about the way by which a person can find freedom and deliverance from the endless and stubborn fetters of this material. Narad, in his answer, starts with giving a detailed account of the four Ashrams and Varnas (phases of a man's life and the classes in which the society is divided), and their relevant laws and tenets.

In Canto 2 sage Shaunak has asked Narad to give a detailed account of the sanctified process, of the formalities and procedure to be followed in accepting the life of Sanyas.

In Canto 3 sage Narad has asked Brahma, the creator, to describe the virtues of those who are eligible to accept the life and vows of Sanyas, and Brahma answers him in detail. In this process, Brahma explains the concept of 'Aatur Sanyas'—i.e. about an aspirant who is very eager to accept the rigorous vows of renunciation as a means of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Cantos 4 and 5 explain in detail the due diligent process of accepting Sanyas and its tremendous importance and significance for the spiritual aspirant. The various types of Sanyas and their differences are enumerated in Canto 5.

Canto 6 deals with the eclectic concept of Turiyateet (which is the transcendental state of existence) and how to obtain it. It also highlights the various aspects of daily life of an aspirant who has accepted the vows of Sanyas.

Canto 7 describes the different types of Sanyasis and the laws of conduct that they are adjured to follow.

In Canto 8 Brahma extensively explains to Narad the divine Mantra OM pertaining to Pranav or Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being. This Canto has a unique metaphysical importance in as much as it elaborately describes the various forms of Brahm, or better still we can say that it describes elaborately the various terms or adjectives usually employed to address Brahm, the Supreme Being. Perhaps this is the only place where all the esoteric epithets used for Brahm have been comprehensively explained under one roof.

And finally Canto 9 marks the culmination of one's spiritual search when he is enlightened about the supreme transcendental Brahm. Hence, this Canto attempts to narrate about this Brahm. It also describes in the process the signs of a self and Brahm realised ascetic, and how he obtains the ultimate destination for his self. This Canto concludes the most profound of Sanyas Upanishads.

Chapter 9 is Sita Upanishad—This Upanishad was revealed as a dialogue between the Gods and Prajapati Brahma, the creator. In it, Sita, who was the divine consort of Lord Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and hence a personification of the supreme transcendental Brahm, has been established as the personification of the eternal cosmic dynamic powers of Brahm revealed as Shakti and called Mother Nature at the cosmic level of creation. This dynamic Shakti of the Supreme Brahm is omnipotent and universal, and it is responsible for creation, sustenance and conclusion of creation. The supreme, transcendental Brahm, who has revealed himself in the form of Sri Ram, utilises the services of this cosmic energy and majestic power to exercise his authority in the world. This Upanishad describes Sita as the primary Nature, the meaning of the word Sita, her divine and ethereal un-manifest form as well as her form with a litany of divine attributes. It lists her righteous and noble virtues, the various connotations and forms of Shakti and its embodiment as Sita, and all other such metaphysical and philosophical aspects pertaining to Sita, the Mother Goddess.

Besides this, it is the only Upanishad which describes the classification of the Vedas into four parts, and other scriptures that came into being along with the Vedas as primary sources of knowledge.

Chapter 10—Sharav Upanishad—This Upanishad was revealed as a discourse between sage Pippalaad and the creator Brahma. It describes the greatness of Lord Shiva in his form as Rudra.

The word ‘Sharav’ literally means the killer or slayer. It also means one who provides liberation and deliverance to the creature. In other words, Sharav is that form of the Supreme Being which instills fear in the heart of evil and pervert creatures, and kills or eliminates their evil tendencies on the one hand, and provides them with freedom from the torments of the world on the other hand. The word also refers to ‘the Lord who shines in the heart of his devotees’. According to legend, Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, the half man and half lion incarnation, to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting his own son Prahalad because the child was a devout follower of Vishnu. After having killed the demon, Nrisingh started roaming in the forests, striking terror in the hearts of all the creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of ‘Mahadev’ as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called ‘Rudra’, the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

Presently, when sage Pippalaad asked Brahma who was the senior God amongst the Trinity consisting of Brahma himself, Vishnu and Shiva, the latter replied that it is Rudra, or Shiva. Hence, this Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Rudra in his manifestation as Sharav, and is therefore named ‘Sharav Upanishad’.

The Gods have praised Sharav and established the latter’s superiority. This Upanishad describes the immense rewards of being enlightened about the esoteric secrets and of the real and truthful form of Lord Rudra, along with the special norms to be observed while studying this eclectic philosophy. It also highlights the oneness between Shiva as Rudra and Vishnu.

Chapter 11—Tripadvibhut-Maha-Narayan Upanishad—This great Upanishad was revealed as a discourse given by Lord Vishnu to the creator Brahma. Brahma had asked the Lord to disclose the secrets of the ‘Param Tattva’, the Supreme Principle and the Absolute Truth of creation, by knowing which everything becomes known, and which provides the spiritual aspirant with Mukti or Moksha (liberation, deliverance, freedom, emancipation and salvation). It primarily deals with the supremacy of Brahm, the Supreme Being in creation and called by various names such as ‘Brahm’, ‘Maha Narayan’, ‘Adi-Narayan’, ‘Narayan’, ‘Maha Vishnu’, ‘Viraat Purush’, ‘Brahma’, ‘Hiranyagarbha’, and so on.

This Upanishad derives its name from the fact that Brahm, the Supreme Being, is also known as ‘Maha Narayan’, and he is said to have four ‘Paads’, literally meaning limbs but implying aspects or forms or branches of the same Brahm. One of the Paad is the creation as is known and dominated by the Bhuts (elements); it is the comparatively grosser aspect of Brahm. The other three Paads are of subtle nature. Hence the name ‘Tripadvi + Bhut + Maha Narayan = Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad.

The main thrust of this Upanishad is to emphasise the point that though Brahm is said to exist in all these forms, basically it is a 'non-dual' and an immutable divine entity that remains uniform and universal. It is this Brahm that exists as the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness and the universal Truth of creation. The question as to why then does the essentially non-dual Brahm appear to have duality and various evident forms that cannot be denied or wished away is emphatically answered and explained in detail in this grand Upanishad. It is this eclectic non-dual Brahm that is so much extolled and revered by the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is this non-dual Brahm that is the aim of attainment of all spiritual aspirants and seekers of Truth. [Refer Canto 1, paragraphs 5-6; Canto 2, paragraphs 1-8, 12, Canto 3, paragraphs 1-6; and Canto 4, paragraphs 1-6.]

The Upanishad belongs to the 'Devdarshi' branch of the Atharva Veda (refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 2), and is in the style of long narrative prose as opposed to the system of verses that is usually employed in the Upanishads.

The Upanishad consists of a total of eight Cantos divided into two main sections—the first is called 'Purva Kanda' consisting of four Cantos (nos. 1 to 4), and the second is called 'Uttar Kanda' consisting of another four Cantos (nos. 5 to 8).

Canto 1 describes what is meant by the enigmatic and most esoteric term 'Brahm', who he is or what it is. It enumerates the grand characteristics and magnificent divine qualities that make Brahm so unique and enigmatic entity in creation that is lauded and revered by the scriptures, besides describing the four Paads of Brahm, literally meaning the limbs of Brahm, and implying the different eclectic forms or aspects of Brahm, both at the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic level of creation. The four Paads of Brahm have been beautifully explained in this Upanishad elsewhere also—viz. Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6, and Canto 8, paragraph no. 4

Canto 2 expands upon the discussion of Canto 1 and narrates the two basic forms of Brahm—the 'Nirguna' or 'Nirakar' form which refers to that aspect of Brahm which is without any attributes, is indefinable and invisible, and is beyond the reach of mind, intellect and imagination, and the 'Saguna' or 'Sakar' form which displays characteristics quite the opposite of Nirguna—viz. it has definite attributes, is visible and verifiable, is comprehensible and described by the scriptures. In the course of this discussion another very important principle concerning Brahm is explained—the concept of Advaitya or non-duality. Included in this Canto are the description of the Genesis of Creation and the all-inclusive and all-pervading nature of Brahm as the Viraat Purush. The concept of Advaitya in the context of Brahm having different Paads and forms as Nirguna and Saguna is further explained in Canto 8 (paragraph nos. 2-7).

Canto 3 describes the 'Mool-Avidya'—literally the primary cause of ignorance of the Truth, and the various units of measurement of time on the celestial scale such as the length of one life of Brahma the creator, the length of one life of Vishnu, the length of one life of Viraat Purush, and the length of one life of Adi-Narayan. This measurement helps one to understand the *relative nature* of the terms 'birth and death', or 'creation and destruction', or 'day and night' etc. on the cosmic scale. This Canto also explains why Brahm appears to have multifarious forms, and cites a beautiful analogy of the crystal appearing to be red when in proximity with the China Rose flower. It then illustrates the formless omnipresence of Brahm by citing the example of the Fire.

Canto 4 further elaborates upon the concept of Advaitya or non-dual nature of Brahm which was first introduced in Canto 2. It explains why Brahm is imagined or

visualised to have a dual form whereas it is not the truth as explained in Canto 3 along with enumerating some of the grand divine qualities of Brahm that make the latter so holy and unique. It also outlines the path leading to Mukti or Moksha (liberation, deliverance, freedom, emancipation and salvation).

Canto 5 answers three very pertinent spiritual questions—viz. (i) How and why does Avidya (ignorance or lack of true knowledge) reappear once it has been destroyed or eliminated?, (ii) Why does a creature remain deluded and trapped in this world of artificiality, and how to get rid of it and become freed?, and (iii) What is the path to Mukti—or liberation and deliverance from this ensnaring world. In the process it describes in graphic detail the path taken by a devotee of Lord Vishnu when he leaves the gross mortal body and embarks upon his spiritual journey to reach the highest echelons of heaven where Vishnu resides, the heaven known as Vaikunth.

The description is continued in the next two Cantos, Canto no. 6 and 7, as well. These three Cantos, viz. 5, 6 and 7, describe in graphic detail the most fascinating journey undertaken by the spiritual traveller as he crosses the various layers of heaven, called Vaikunth, the abode of Lord Vishnu, en-route to his final destination to the Lord Adi-Narayan, the primordial and primary Lord of creation, the Supreme Being who is also known as Adi-Maha Vishnu.

Canto 6 describes the path through many Vaikunths which are traditionally regarded as being the abode of Lord Vishnu, the Lord who is considered as being synonymous with the Viraat Purush, the Supreme Being and Brahm personified. So by describing more than one Vaikunth the Upanishad alludes to the relative nature of existence and extends the ‘philosophy of relativity’ enunciated earlier in Canto 3.

Further, by citing a number of instances such as the existence of a number of Universes and many Vaikunthas (Canto 6), different time scales (Canto 3), the many Paads of Brahm (Canto 1), and the simultaneous existence of both Saguna as well as Nirguna Brahm the Upanishad highlights the fact that the actual and real Truth, though being always and irrevocably ‘one, immutable and unchangeable’, does appear to have more than one meaning, and a man who gets deluded by this dichotomy and schism is the one who is under the spell of Maya and Avidya.

The second half of Canto 7 is dedicated to the description of the Sudarshan Chakra and the Narayan Yantra which is a worship instrument used in mystical forms of worship of Lord Narayan or Vishnu. All the Mantras used in their construction are given in full along with their location and meaning.

Canto 8 essentially describes the following topics as a sort of summary of the preaching of this Upanishad—(i) the non-dual or Advaitya nature of Brahm (paragraph nos. 1-3), (ii) the four Paads of Brahm (paragraph no. 4), (iii) the proclamation, called the Mahavakyas, of a Brahm-realised person (paragraph nos. 5-6), (iv) the attainment of Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance), (v) the two great forms of Yoga, viz. Saalamba and Niraalamba (paragraph nos. 8-9), (vi) the importance of Bhakti or devotion (paragraph no. 12), (vii) how to have the knowledge of the Param Tattva (paragraph nos. 13-14), and (viii) who a true Guru (teacher) is, and his importance.

The Upanishad concludes by emphasizing the profound spiritual benefits of studying and implementing its teachings.

Chapter 12—Ram Rahasya Upanishad—This Upanishad is dedicated to the eclectic and divine theme of Lord Ram and unfolds the great metaphysical and spiritual secrets pertaining to the Lord who has been established here as being a visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental divinity known as Brahm. It has a parallel in Ram's other Upanishad, the Ram Tapini Upanishad, with the only difference that this present Upanishad has been preached by Hanuman, who is considered as the greatest devotee of the Lord and the most erudite expert on this theme. The Upanishad has five Cantos.

Canto 1 introduces the subject when different seers and sages approached Hanuman and requested him to preach them the great metaphysical and spiritual truths about Lord Ram and how to worship him to invoke his blessings. This Canto emphasizes that the hymns composed by all the great devotees of the Lord have equal importance and effect, and they are equally valuable as the ones appearing in the scriptures. A number of such hymns have been included at end of this Chapter. It is stressed here that the various Mantras of Lord Ram have the same metaphysical import and divine mystical powers as the Mantras of the Vedas devoted to Brahm for the simple reason that Lord Ram is none but the Supreme Being himself personified.

Canto 2 is a unique section because it elaborately describes all the Mantras of Lord Ram, starting from the one-letter Mantra to the longest ones having forty seven letters, along with how they have been conceptualized and how to worship and meditate upon the Lord with them.

Canto 3 is another fascinating one in which the mystical charm instrument/apparatus called a 'Pooja Yantra', which is like a Talisman, is used for invoking divine intercession to help the worshipper to accomplish astounding feats and acquire stupendous supernatural powers which would have been impossible otherwise. This Yantra is much like any modern-day electronic instrument having an electronic circuit which is used by a man to enable him to acquire tremendous powers and potentials, and achieve successes in numerous exercises which would have been virtually impossible for him to achieve with his mere physical body and mind. This Canto describes how this Yantra is constructed, and how to worship or use it.

Canto 4 elaborately narrates the sanctified process for accepting the different Mantras of Lord Ram along with the strict codes of conduct and rules that are to be followed for their application by the devotee worshipper. These Mantras are used for dual purpose—viz. for doing formal religious rituals during sacrifices as well as for the purpose of doing Japa (repetition of the holy Mantras) for achieving specific aims.

Finally, Canto 5 describes the metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of Lord Ram's Mantras, especially the six letter Mantra (OM Ramaye Namaha), and what benefits the worshipper can expect by using this Mantra with due faith and reverence. It establishes the supremacy of Lord Ram's Mantra over all other Mantras, and espouses the fact that the well known, universal, ethereal, divine and sacred Mantra OM is also the Mantra for Lord Ram. This final declaration by Hanuman winds up this very fascinating Upanishad.

Chapter 13—Ram Tapini Upanishad—The Ram Tapini Upanishad supplements and compliments the Ram Rahasya Upanishad. It consists actually of two Upanishads—viz. *Ram Purva Tapini* which is the preceding Upanishad and makes up the first half, and *Ram Uttar Tapini* which is the subsequent Upanishad and makes up the second half. Both are included in this Chapter as Sections 1 and 2.

There is no basic difference between the 'Purva' and the 'Uttar' Ram Tapini Upanishads except the fact that they are like the fore and hind parts of the same

scripture. Besides this, the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad lays stress on ritualistic forms of worship as it describes elaborately the worship instrument known as the Ram Yantra which is used in mystical and ritualistic forms of worship. This instrument is like a geometrical diagram and it contains all the esoteric Mantras of Ram and other Gods incorporated in it, thereby standing for the creation and all forms of divinity in a miniature form. On the other hand, the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad is based on the principles of Vedanta and lays stress on meditation upon Lord Ram using his divine and all powerful Mantras.

Both these Upanishads however emphasise that Lord Ram is known as the 'Tarak Brahm', i.e. he is a personification of the Supreme Being whose blessing provides the creature Mukti and Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul), and that the Lord's Mantra is therefore known as the 'Tarak Mantra' as it enables the creature to attain this spiritual goal.

Section 1—The 'Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad' is composed in the 'Anushtup Chanda' style of verses, and there are in all five elaborate Cantos in it.

Briefly, Canto 1, Canto 2 and Canto 3 till verse no. 15 describe the esoteric secret meanings and different connotations of the various names and Mantras, including the Beej Mantras, of Lord Ram, along with their spiritual significance and the relevant prayers that are employed to honour and worship the Lord. To highlight the great importance and significance of the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, Canto 2, verse no. 2 asserts that it is the seed from which the whole universe has emerged like a huge banyan tree that is born from its seed. The Beej Mantra is the root or seed from which the rest of the Mantra is constructed, and it is like a formula in any field of science that helps one not only to understand and unravel the secrets of that particular field but also to implement these unique principles of science in practice—the only difference being that the field of study and practice here is spiritual and metaphysical.

The story of Ramayan, which is a sort of biography of Lord Ram, from the Lord's forest sojourn till his victory over the demons at Lanka and his return to his capital at Ayodhya to be crowned its King-Emperor, is outlined in Canto 4, verse nos. 16-31.

The next phase of this great Upanishad begins from Canto 4, verse no. 32 and lasts till Canto 5, verse no. 6 wherein the worship Yantra of Lord Ram, called also as the 'Bhupur Yantra', is described in graphic detail in a step-by-step method as how to construct it, the placement of various Mantras in it, and the steps involved in formal forms of worship using this Yantra.

The worship 'Yantra' of Lord Ram is in the shape of a geometrical diagram that is made to accommodate various divine Mantras that are charged with cosmic energy and dynamism that helps this creation to survive on its own steam. The Yantra is a sort of magical Charm or Talisman used to harness the dynamic cosmic powers that remain beyond the reach of ordinary men, and which, once tapped, can empower the person with supernatural powers and authority. Like any other modern-day gadget or machinery, it has a complex structure with numerous components, and to make it effective it is of paramount importance that the art and skill of its construction and usage be thoroughly mastered. Otherwise it is as useless as any other electric, electronic or mechanical gadget or machine that is either not properly made or is not properly operated. But once correctly made and used, the Ram Yantra, also called the Bhupur Yantra, can prove to be a panacea for all problems faced by the Lord's devotee and spiritual aspirant. It is an instrument or apparatus in the pattern of a geometrical diagram used for formal forms of worship of the Lord, and is regarded as the whole universe in a miniature form.

The Upanishad concludes by outlining the immense pecuniary and spiritual rewards obtainable by having sincere devotion for and diligent worshipping of Lord Ram in Canto 5, verse nos. 7-10.

Section 2—The ‘Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad’ is in the form of a dialogue between sage Yagyavalkya and some sages led by Brishapati, Bharadwaj and Atri. It has six Cantos. Its major part is in the form of prose as it is a dialogue. The subjects covered in this Upanishad are the following—

Cantos 1 and 4 describe the spiritual and metaphysical importance of the ‘Avimukta Kshetra’—the site that provides spiritual Mukti (liberation and deliverance) to the soul of a creature. Two sites have been given this honour—one is in the terrestrial world in the city of Kashi or Varanasi located on the banks of river Ganges, and the other is in the body of the spiritual aspirant itself. The latter location is in the forehead, between the two eyebrows and situated at the root of the nose. These facts are narrated in Canto 4 in detail. While Canto no. 1 is revealed as a dialogue between Yagyavalkya and sage Bharadwaj, Canto no. 4 is in the form of a dialogue between Yagyavalkya and sage Atri.

Canto 2 narrates the metaphysical importance of the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’ and its similarity to the Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram. The eclectic and spiritually empowered ‘Tarak Mantra’ of Lord Ram is compared with and treated as being a synonym of the Pranav mantra OM that relates to the supreme transcendental Brahm. This Tarak Mantra is powerful and potent enough to give the creature his final Moksha (emancipation and salvation) by ensuring that he crosses this vast ocean-like world of a continuous cycle of birth and death and their attendant miseries and torments in which he had been trapped for generations. This Canto is revealed as an answer that sage Yagyavalkya gave to sage Bharadwaj when the latter wished to know about the Tarak Mantra.

Canto 3 is an exposition on the four divine Paads or aspects of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, by way of description of the four states in which the consciousness exists in this world—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, Sushupta or deep sleep state, and Turiya or the state that transcends the the Sushupta state. Another interesting aspect of this Canto is that it asserts that Lord Ram and his brothers Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan are none but the four letters or aspects of the ethereal Mantra OM manifested in their forms. Then it goes on to assert that Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, is a manifestation of Mother Nature known as the primordial Prakriti. This Canto is an extension of the discourse Yagyavalkya was giving to Bharadwaj.

Canto 5 lists the forty-seven great Mantras of Lord Ram which have the potentials of ensuring a man’s all-round spiritual welfare. They were taught by Lord Ram to the creator Brahma, and were revealed for the benefit of sage Bharadwaj by sage Yagyavalkya.

Finally, Canto 6 winds up this Upanishad by highlighting the immense spiritual benefits of pursuing it diligently and honestly. Once again, this Canto is an extension of the question-answer session between sages Yagyavalkya and Bharadwaj. This Canto lauds the stupendous spiritual powers and greatness of the Mantras of Lord Ram which are described as being superior to and far more powerful than any other Mantra dedicated to any other deity.

Chapter 14—Shandilya Upanishad—This Upanishad derives its name from sage Shandilya who approached the ancient sage Atharva to learn the details of the various aspects of Yoga (meditation) and Brahm, the invisible but the divine and sublime

Supreme Being. The knowledge was then passed on to the line of disciples of sage Shandilya who then named this Upanishad in the honour of their Guru.

The Upanishad has three Cantos of which the first one is the largest, occupies the greater part of the text, and deals with the concept of Yoga in a comprehensive manner.

Canto 1 has eleven sections and a total of ninety-seven verses. It deals comprehensively with the philosophy of Yoga and its practice. It explains the various terms associated with the philosophy of Yoga with a metaphysical perspective, and a reading would show how implementing these in practice can actually lead to an overall improvement in the life and personality of the practitioner. Briefly, its Section 1 defines the eight-fold path of Yoga, and the ten aspects of Yam (self-restraint of the sense organs and the mind), section the ten kinds of Niyams (spiritual orders and regulations), section 3 outlines the eight Asanas (sitting postures) of Yoga, section 4 deals with the details about the various Naadis (nerves and veins), the Kundalini (the coiled subtle energy center at the base of the spine, called the 'serpent power' because of its coiled nature and its latent dynamism), and the ten vital winds called the Prans, and it explains how these Naadis are de-clogged and activated with the help of the energy of the Kundalini and the vital winds, along with the process to do so, section 5 deals with the eligibility for Yoga and then goes on to describe the preliminaries of Pranayam (breath control), section 6 compliments the previous section and completes the discussion on Pranayam, section 7 is dedicated to Hath Yoga and describes how to cleanse the blocked Naadis, the method of doing Pranayam, rules governing food during Yoga, various Bandhas (closure of body apertures) and Mudras (postures), and the manifold benefits of Yoga such as attainment of various Siddhis (mystical powers), sections 8-9 describe the five kinds of Pratyahars (restraining the mind and withdrawing it from involvement with the sense organs) and Dharmas (convictions and beliefs), section 10 narrates the two kinds of Dhyana (remembrance and concentration of the mind), and finally section 11 deals with the eclectic concept of Samadhi or total absorption in meditation.

The second and third Cantos primarily deal with the esoteric but eclectic concept of the supreme, transcendental and divine Brahm. The second Canto is the shortest with only one section having six verses, while the third and the last Canto has two sections with twenty-one verses. Hence, there are in all fourteen sections and one hundred twenty-four verses.

Canto 2 is pre-eminently a summary of Advaitya Vedanta and deals with the eclectic concept of the non-dual Brahm, the Supreme Being and the cosmic Consciousness which is the universal theme in all the Upanishads. It outlines some of the unique qualities of Brahm, and asserts that it is a divine entity that cannot be defined, is beyond the faculty of speech and the comprehension of the mind, and is invisible but nevertheless omnipresent in this creation.

Finally, Canto 3 builds up on the theme of Brahm and in section 1 answers the question as to how the one and non-dual Brahm can assume the form of this multifaceted world of such immense diversity. Section 2 elucidates the different meanings of the term Brahm.

Chapter 15—Param-Hans Parivrajak Upanishad—This Upanishad describes the special eclectic and divine qualities and unique characteristics of a Parivrajak (i.e. a Sanyasi; a renunciate ascetic, monk, mendicant or friar) who has reached higher state of spiritual realisation when he becomes self and Brahm realised, is internally very pure, pious and holy, and hence honoured by the epithet of being a 'Param Hans'.

This title draws its name from the legendary Swan which is regarded as pure, holy, discriminatory and the wisest amongst birds because it has the mystical ability to pick up water and leave behind water, or pick up pearls from an assortment of gems. The Swan lives in clean water and none of the impurities of the water ever affects it.

The Upanishad outlines the necessary qualities that entitle a spiritual aspirant to be called a 'Parivrajak' (a Sanyasi), and then elevated to the stature of being called a 'Param Hans Parivrajak' which is a rare honour, the method of attaining this exalted state of existence, his way of life, what his state of mind is, how he thinks and behaves, what is the significance and symbolism of his renouncing everything in this world, including the important signs of religion such as the sacred thread, the tuft of hair on the head etc., and other such relevant topics.

It also describes how the Sanyasi reaches the climax of his spiritual pursuit by obtaining Mukti or Moksha which is liberation and deliverance from delusions and ignorance that leads to emancipation and salvation of the soul by realizing who or what the supreme transcendental Brahm essentially is, and how his own 'self' is this Brahm personified.

The text is in the form of an interrupted long prose. Therefore, for the purpose of this narrative it has been divided into seven paragraphs based on one major central idea that is covered in a particular paragraph.

It is a revealed Upanishad as it was preached by the primeval Lord known as Adi-Narayan (i.e. the primary form of Lord Vishnu which is also known as the Viraat Purush) when he was approached by Brahma, the creator of this world, to learn about the concept of a Param-Hans Sanyasi.

Chapter 16—Annapurna Upanishad—The Annapurna Upanishad is a fairly long one with five Cantos having a total of three hundred thirty-seven verses. It is a dialogue between sage Nidagh, the ascetic disciple who wished to know how to obtain spiritual liberation and deliverance, and sage Ribhu, the enlightened one and the most exalted amongst those sages who were Brahm-realised.

This Upanishad is a brilliant exposition on the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta, the eclectic philosophy of non-duality, and it focuses on the Atma, the pure conscious 'self', the realisation of which is Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance of the creature) from all the fetters having their origin in delusions and ignorance. Since this Atma is no other entity but the supreme Consciousness of creation known as Brahm, the Upanishad emphasizes that to be truly enlightened, wise and learned one must be self-realised and Brahm-realised simultaneously. In fact there is no difference between these two divine states of existences. The Upanishad describes how a fully self-realised and enlightened person feels, how he experiences a profound sense of blessedness when he has truly understood the Atma (the pure consciousness) and other spiritual Truths.

The Upanishad derives its name 'Annapurna' from the fact that it opens with the praises of Goddess Annapurna, the divine Shakti or the majestic power of the Supreme Being which provides nourishment to all, in the form of an invocation or introductory. The Mantra dedicated to Annapurna was divulged to sage Ribhu by his father, and it has twenty-seven letters. Ribhu had worshipped Goddess Annapurna persistently day after day using this Mantra, and she finally appeared before him to bless him and grant him the boon of 'self knowledge', or the divine and eclectic knowledge pertaining to the Atma, the pure consciousness. This made sage Ribhu 'self' and 'Brahm' realised, most fulfilled and attained soul.

Goddess Annapurna is none other than Goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer, nourisher and protector of this creation. It is Laxmi who fulfills all the desires of the creature and provides him with nourishment and welfare in this world. Hence she is honoured as ‘Annapurna’—literally one who fills the granary and provides food to this world. She represents the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being by which he takes care of this creation.

This Upanishad is an elaborate discourse on the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta—or the principles of non-duality, and how a wise and enlightened aspirant gains true knowledge and attains the state of true liberation and deliverance from all the spiritual fetters that tie down an ordinary creature to this gross world and an equally gross body. During its long rambling discourse, the text describes and explains many relevant spiritual and metaphysical topics, such as for instance the concept of various states of existences (such as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta, Turiya and Turiya-teet), the concept of ‘Bhrama’ (delusion and misconception about any given thing or situation; spiritual delusions), of what constitutes the various ‘Sankalps’, ‘Vasanas’ and ‘Vrittis’ (worldly volitions, passions and inherent mental tendencies brought to this life from the previous life) that a creature harbours in his inner self, and how to overcome them, the concept of ‘Mano-naash’ (conquering the mind and the sub-conscious and their stabilization as well as dissolution through diligent practice), of ‘Sanyas’ (the life of renunciation and detachment), of ‘Jivan Mukta’ (to be spiritually liberated even while alive and having a gross body), of ‘Videha Mukti’ (to be spiritually liberated without the interference of the physical gross body), of how to overcome the various faults and temptations of this world, of what is really meant by the various names that are assigned to the basically indivisible and uniform ‘sky element’ known as the ‘Akash’ (such as the subtle forms of the sky known as Ghatakash or the sky present inside an empty pot, Mathakash or the space within the walls of a monastery etc), and many other such important topics that any student of metaphysics must be well conversant with.

Chapter 17—Surya Upanishad—In this Upanishad it is affirmed that the Sun and the supreme transcendental Brahm are one and the same, that the Sun is a visible manifestation of Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Upanishad begins with naming the Rishi (the seer or sage who had first conceptualized this eclectic doctrine and composed the hymns in honour of the Sun God), Devta (the patron deity of the hymns to whom the prayers are offered), Chanda (the poetical style employed in composing the hymns) etc. The famous Gayatri Mantra is verse no. 2 of this Upanishad. Verse nos. 3-6 outline the origin of this creation from the Sun God, emphasizing in its course that all the Gods of the Trinity as well as the supreme Brahm are represented in visible form of the Sun. Verse no. 7 describes the eight-letter divine Mantra of the Sun God. It is called the ‘Suryaasthakshari Mantra’. Finally, the benefits of repeating this Mantra are enumerated in verse no. 8. It is to be noted that this Upanishad gives results when its Mantras are offered to the Sun God in the Hindu month of Ashwini (roughly October) when the Sun is in the asterism of Hasta. It is believed that this empowers the worshipper to overcome the fear of death also.

Chapter 18—Atma Upanishad—This Upanishad is dedicated exclusively to the theme of the Atma, the cosmic Consciousness that is at the root of life in the entire creation. The Upanishad expounds upon the three aspects of the Atma which is a cosmic entity that is primarily non-dual, immanent, omnipresent, single (i.e. without

any company), immutable, indivisible, universal and uniformly one and wholesome as well as the common denominator in all units and aspects of this creation.

The *first* aspect of this universal Consciousness is known as the 'Atma'. The Atma is that aspect of creation which is its quintessential truth and soul, and without which this creation and its constituent units would have neither any meaning nor any substance whatsoever. The Atma is the cosmic Consciousness that pervades in each and every single unit or aspect of this living world, and without which this existence with all its myriad forms, its magnificent varieties, its stupendous charms and beauty, and its vibrant dynamism would just have no meaning or relevance. Without the Atma the gross body of the individual Jiva, the living being or the creature, would not be alive and active; the body and its components would be dead had there been no consciousness in them. Hence, broadly speaking, the term 'Atma' is applied to the soul of existence; it is synonymous with life and its magnificence, beauty, vitality, dynamism, energy and vibrancy. It is like the 'atom' in the physical sciences which is at the core of all elements in this creation, and nothing is imaginable without the atom.

The *second* aspect of the cosmic Consciousness is known as the 'Antaraatma'. This word has two parts—viz. 'Anatar' meaning inner or hidden or secret, and 'Atma' meaning of course the universal consciousness known as the soul. Therefore, the Antaraatma (or Antar-Atma) is that aspect of the cosmic and universal Consciousness that lives inside the body of an individual creature as his 'true self'. Generally speaking, when we use the term 'soul' vis-à-vis a living being, it is the Antaraatma that we refer to, because it is the consciousness residing inside the gross body of the individual that gives the individual his unique identity.

The above two terms used for the universal cosmic Consciousness, viz. the Atma and the Antaraatma, pertain to the grosser level of creation because they relate to the physical world limited to the creation that is of any relevance as far as the individual creature is concerned, and with which he is directly related. But it must be remembered that this Consciousness is 'universal, unbound, cosmic, ethereal, infinite, eternal, indivisible, immutable, immanent, omnipresent and all-pervading. Therefore surely there is definite *third* dimension to it—and this is the supreme transcendental Atma that is all-encompassing and almighty. This 'supreme transcendental and almighty Atma is known as the 'Param-Atma' or 'Parmatma' ('Param' = supreme, transcendental and one above or beyond which nothing exists). This Parmatma is Brahm, the Supreme Being.

This Upanishad expounds the tenet of non-duality or oneness between the Atma and the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm, as well as the great metaphysical truth that whatever that exists in this creation at all levels, whether visible or invisible, whether microcosmic or macrocosmic, whether living or inane, is a manifestation of one single Brahm. It outlines the astounding but paradoxical virtues and qualities of Brahm that makes it so unique and unparalleled in creation.

The Upanishad establishes beyond doubt the truth of the existence of Brahm. It cites several examples and similes to help elucidate the principles of metaphysics that it propounds. For instance, it takes the example of the sun which does not diminish in its brilliance inspite of appearing to be darkened during the solar eclipse to establish that Brahm and Atma always remain eternally untainted and uniform even though one attributes it with so many changeable virtues and colourful characteristics, some positive and others negative, because of their association with this delusion and ignorance ridden gross world.

Other examples cited to emphasize this fact are the mistaking of a piece of rope for a snake, and the dead left-over cuticle of a snake to be a live serpent. Then it cites the case of a child playing with toys, forgetting its hunger or pain, to help understand how wise people remain engrossed or submerged in the thoughts of Brahm and the Atma in spite of the incessant restlessness, the flux, the miseries, the troubles and tribulations along with the upheaval of the topsy-turvy world surrounding them.

Hence, the only way to realise the true nature of the Atma is to free one's self from delusions and ignorance. When this happens, the creature is deemed to have obtained Mukti, or spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. This implies that he has obtained complete self-realisation whereby his one Atma is dissolved or merged with the cosmic Atma known as Brahm even as two samples of milk, oil or water become indistinguishable from one another when they are mixed together.

Chapter 19—Pashupat Brahm Upanishad—This is a revealed Upanishad as it was first preached by the creator Brahma himself to sage Valakhilya. It is sub-divided into two parts—the first is known as Purva Kanda, and the second as Uttar Kanda. It primarily deals with the great metaphysical concepts of Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation, and uses the metaphor of Hans, the divine Swan that is used as a symbol of high purity and wisdom, to establish that Brahm and the pure conscious Atma residing as the 'true self' in the inner-being of all living creatures are the same divine entities. Just like the divine Mantra OM which is dedicated to Brahm and is synonymous with the latter as it is deemed to be an all-pervading cosmic sound manifestation of Brahm, the word Hans, when used as a Mantra, also implies both the Atma as well as the Brahm. 'Hans' is a broad term that is used as a metaphor for all that is wise, divine, holy, pure, immaculate, uncorrupt, auspicious and noble, qualities that apply to both the Brahm and the Atma.

The Upanishad derives its name from the fact that Brahm is known as 'Pashupati' (Kanda1, verse no. 32) because Brahm, manifested in the form of the eclectic virtues of wisdom, conscience, intelligence, virtuousness, righteousness, nobility, propriety and auspiciousness, as well as in right deed, conduct and thought, helps a man overcome, vanquish and control the natural animal-like savage instincts in a living being. It follows that anyone who has learnt to exercise exemplary control over his sense organs and their natural urges and instincts is a personification of Brahm. Since Brahm is represented by the Atma as well as by its symbol known as Pranav or OM, it follows that by taking the aid of the Atma or the word Mantra OM one can directly access Brahm.

Attainment of Brahm-hood is therefore directly related to the realisation of the Atma which is a microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic divinity known as Brahm that resides in the body of the individual creature and forms his true self. The word OM acts as a catalyst in the process of establishing a unity between this Atma and its principal form Brahm. Therefore, attainment of self-realisation and Brahm-hood are synonymous with each other and go hand in hand; they are marked by the grand virtues of wisdom, enlightenment and knowledge of the 'truth'. These virtues free the spiritual aspirant from the fetters of ignorance (Agyan) that had cast a thick veil of delusions (Maya) around him that acts as an abominable and foreboding obstacle in the path of his Mukti (which means his spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation).

The Upanishad emphasizes and establishes the fact that the best form of religious sacrifice as well as worship is that which is done internally as opposed to the external rituals and formalities. It goes on to elucidate that Brahm, the Supreme Being and the Lord of creation, is to be found in the inner-self of the worshipper and nowhere outside. It points out that all external paraphernalia of religion only have a symbolic value, and in this context it cites the instance of the sacred thread, the two great fire sacrifices known as the Vajpaye Yagya and the Ashwamedh Yagya, the observation of Sandhya which means the offering of prayers three times a day, the bird Hans, the Mantra OM employed during worship, and so on. True knowledge of Brahm that is rich in wisdom and a source of one's spiritual enlightenment and freedom is the Sutra (formula or thread) that links the Atma (i.e. the 'self') of the creature to the supreme Brahm (i.e. the Supreme Being and the supreme Self), and paves the way for his final Mukti. Then it also says that each unit of creation, including the great Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder, are only 'images' of Brahm in as much as they depict one or the other of the countless glories and virtues of Brahm, but they are *not* Brahm in the complete sense (verse no. 10). This Kanda outlines the method of meditating upon Brahm with the help of aids such as Hans and Pranav. These grand topics are covered in Kanda (Canto) 1.

The ideas expressed in the first Kanda are further elaborated in Kanda 2 which outlines how the supreme Brahm has a paradoxical nature in the sense that while the whole creation is its image, is regulated and empowered by it from within, Brahm still is absolutely different from any of its images and things that it controls and empowers. During the course of enumerating the glories and virtues of Brahm, this Kanda also outlines the eclectic characters and way of thinking a Brahm-realised and enlightened person.

Chapter 20—Par-Brahm Upanishad/Parbrahmo-panishad—This Upanishad is primarily classified as a Sanyas Upanishad as it emphasizes the role of Sanyas in Brahm-realisation, or spiritual enlightenment and awakening. It has twenty Mantras or verses.

It opens with sage Shaunak asking sage Pippalaad where the things of this creation were before the latter came into existence, and who is the Lord who created them. In his answer Pippalaad outlines the grand and magnificent virtues of the supreme transcendental Brahm. This Upanishad derives its name from this very fact.

The term 'Brahm' as envisioned in this Upanishad incorporates all the aspects of creation, and therefore Brahm is said to have various forms, known as the 'Paads' of Brahm. These are the following—the Tripaad Brahm, i.e. the three planes of existence in which Brahm exists, the Chatush Paad Brahm which corresponds to the four planes of existence, and the Panch Paad Brahm which pertains to the five divine aspects of Brahm. From the metaphysical angle they correspond to the various states of existence of consciousness, viz. the Jagrat state or the waking state, the Swapna state or the dreaming state, the Sushupta state or the deep sleep state, the Turiya state or the post-Sushupta state, and the Turiyateet state which is the super-conscious state of transcendental existence.

The ordinary living being known as the Jiva corresponds to the first three states of existence, and hence to the Tripaad Brahm. When the same Jiva becomes enlightened and self-realised he attains the Chatush Paad of Brahm, and finally when he becomes Brahm-realised he attains the Panch Paad of Brahm. To achieve these

eclectic states of existence, the Jiva is advised to take recourse to the 8-fold path of Yoga (verse no. 2).

Further, the terms Atma, Pran and consciousness are all treated as being synonyms of Brahm.

Next comes the discussion about the importance and significance of the sacred thread (called the Yagyopavit or the Brahm Sutra) as well as the tuft of hair worn on the top of the head (called the Shikha) as symbols of Brahm. These concepts have been extensively dealt with in this Upanishad. They are of no real consequence if their true meaning is not understood and practiced in one's thoughts and actions (verse nos. 3, 6-11, 15-20). True sacred thread and tuft of hair is internal awakening and enlightenment about Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the inner-self as the pure Atma, and this Gyan (knowledge) itself is like the Agni (the sacred fire) as it burns all spiritual impurities of the aspirant, and renders him holy, divine and pure (verse nos. 12-14).

Finally, the Upanishad concludes that a wise spiritual aspirant should discard external paraphernalia of Sanyas (life of renunciation) such as the sacred thread and the tuft of hair on the head, and instead concentrate on meditating upon Brahm by employing the Mantra 'OM', which he should treat as a representative of his sacred thread as well as the tuft of hair, for attaining Mukti (liberation and deliverance).

Chapter 21—Tripura Tapini Upanishad—This Upanishad belongs to the Tapini category of Upanishads which narrate the dynamic Shakti (the all-powerful dynamism representing the cosmic energy) aspect of the Supreme Being. This Shakti is visualized in a female form as a divine Goddess. It employs numerous symbols and esoteric formulas to invoke this Shakti. In the present case, this Shakti is represented by Goddess 'Tripura'.

The word 'Tripura' has many connotations—viz. it refers to the Goddess who lives uniformly throughout the known three worlds in a subtle form, providing them with their inherent energy and vitality; it means the Goddess who has three divine forms as the Bindu (drop of energy and knowledge), the Bija (the seed from which the entire creation emerged) and the Naad (the primeval sound vibrations in the cosmic ether which was the primary source of creation); it means also the Trinity Gods (Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva or Rudra the concluder) personified; it implies the three Gunas (the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna); she represents the three divine dynamic aspects of the Trinity Gods, i.e. Saraswati (the power of knowledge and speech), Laxmi (the power of wealth and fame), and Parvati (the cosmic Mother). The Goddess Tripura is therefore a personified form of the dynamism of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation, in entirety.

This Upanishad has five elaborate Cantos. While Cantos 1-4 are composed in the form of paragraphs, the last Canto 5 is in the form of verses. Canto 1 is primarily dedicated to espousing the divinity and supremacy of the Goddess, and explains how she is Brahm personified. Since the Tapini category of Upanishads describe esoteric forms of occult worship along with the secret formulas invoked for such worship, an instrument or a geometrical figure is needed for the purpose, and in the present case it is the Sri Chakra. This is elaborately described in Canto 2. The various Mudras (postures of the body during such worship) are described in Canto 3. The next Canto 4 is dedicated to the theme of Mukti or liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of the soul, the various Mantra that aid the process, and how the worshipper can have a divine glimpse of the Goddess. Finally, Canto 5 is totally dedicated to

elucidating upon the doctrines pertaining to Brahm-realisation and outlines the philosophy related to Brahm.

Chapter 22—Devi Upanishad—This Upanishad was revealed as a preaching of the divine Mother Goddess for the benefit of Gods. It describes the primary esoteric form of the Goddess as dynamism of the Supreme Being personified. It stresses that whatever that exists in this vast and multifarious creation is actually the same Goddess revealed in all these individual forms. It goes on to explain the Adi-Vidya, the primary knowledge, followed by the monosyllabic Mantra of the Goddess which is her Beej Mantra, and the nine-lettered Mantra which is called the Maha-Chandi Vidya, along with the rewards associated with them. Though this Upanishad is brief, but for those who follow the occult science of Tantra Vidya it is of utmost importance and significance.

Chapter 23—Bhavana Upanishad—This Upanishad emphasizes the point that the body of the spiritual aspirant itself is the holy altar where a wise man visualizes the presence of the Divinity, the Supreme Being and his dynamic Shakti. A lot of symbolism is employed in this Upanishad to emphasize the great metaphysical truth that it is the same universal Brahm who is the supreme transcendental Authority and Lord of this creation, the cosmic Consciousness and the dynamic powerhouse that drives this creation from the inside as well as from the outside that has revealed itself in the form of the various units of the individual creature's body which is like a microcosm, as well as the visible world on a large scale which is the macrocosm.

In this visualization, the Upanishad draws a parallel between the various units of the body of a living being at three level of its microcosmic existence, viz. the gross, the subtle and the causal, and the different units of this visible creation at the macrocosmic level. The supreme transcendental Brahm, i.e. the cosmic Consciousness, and its dynamism in the form of Shakti, i.e. the strength, the power, the energy, the vitality and the vigour that actually drives this whole creation on behalf of Brahm, is inherently present in all of these units, whether at the level of the body or the level of the creation. The dynamism of Brahm in the form of its Shakti is the underlying power that controls and operates this world from the inside as well as from the outside. This Shakti drives the world and empowers each unit of its various components to function smoothly according to the larger scheme of things.

Since a deity is worshipped on an altar, especially the Goddess whose place of worship is called a 'Shakti Peeth' which is literally a seat or center of energy, vitality, power and strength, the vital points of the body are also known as Peeths.

Another important point to note is that a wise spiritual aspirant is advised to understand the subtle philosophy and the metaphysical imports of the various steps involved in formal ritualistic forms of worship, and use these as symbolisms to offer his obeisance to the Supreme Being in the correct manner which would be a truthful form of worship and would actually be of any spiritual benefit to him. Mere formalities would be of no real good to him if he has not grasped their essence. It is like eating food to fill the stomach or satisfy one's taste buds but not being able to digest the food that is eaten, for the body actually benefits when the nutrients of the food are absorbed by it and not merely by filling up the intestines with tasty food. The gross food would be expelled and the body would remain weak and under-nourished inspite of the man eating to his full. So is the case when the worship is done as ritual involving formalities, without actually understanding what it means and what its intention is.

Chapter 24—Bhasma-jabal Upanishad—As the name suggests, this Upanishad is dedicated to the theme that truthful knowledge and enlightenment is one that literally ‘reduces to ashes’ (Bhasma) all the spiritual delusions and misconceptions of the Jiva, the living being, and establishes a seamless uniformity between the Jiva and Brahm, the Supreme Being.

It is in the form of a conversation between Lord Shiva, the most enlightened of the Gods and the patron Lord of all ascetics, and sage Bhusund, the disciple of the great sage Jabal. Since the disciple adopted the name of his Guru (moral preceptor) as his surname, Bhusund was known as ‘Jabal’.

In Canto 1, this sage ‘Jabal’, alias Bhusund, requested Lord Shiva to enlighten him about the great spiritual and metaphysical importance and significance of ‘Bhasma’, the ash of the sacred fire sacrifice. The Lord not only explained the physical characteristics of this mystically empowered ash but also how to correctly wear it on the aspirant’s body along with its stupendous divine qualities which bestow the wearer with Mukti or Moksha, i.e. spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. When properly worn on the body with full understanding of its significance and importance, this seemingly ordinary ash of the fire pit assumes astounding qualities and powers, enabling the wearer to become self-realised and Brahm-realised. The knowledge of Brahm and the truthful ‘self’ is like the great fire of the doomsday because it burns all sorts of delusions and ignorance that completely swamp the wisdom and intellect of the creature that has forced him to remain trapped in this world, and instead establishes oneness between his own individual ‘self’, which is a microcosm, with the cosmic ‘Self’ known as Brahm, which is the macrocosm of existence.

Canto 2 describes how the Rudraksha beads are worn on the body, as well as the detailed form of doing Dhyan, or meditation and contemplation, upon Lord Rudra or Shiva as he is the Supreme Being personified.

The Upanishad incorporates in its discussion two versions of the great ‘Rudra Suktas’ which are hymns dedicated to Lord Shiva. Besides these Suktas, a number of other eclectic Mantras of Shiva, such as the single word Mantra ‘Shivam’, the six letter Mantra ‘OM Namaha Shivaaye’, and the eight letter Mantra ‘OM Namaha Mahadevaaye’ are also enumerated along with their great powers and usage.

Chapter 25—Ganpati Upanishad—This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Ganpati (also known as Lord Ganesh), the God who is offered worship first in any religious ceremony as he ensures its successful completion and obtaining of desired fruits by the worshipper.

It is propounded herein that Lord Ganpati resides in the inner-self of all living beings as their Atma, the soul and the pure consciousness. It then goes on to explain the meaning of the word Ganapati, how to meditate upon the Lord, the Mala-Mantras dedicated to him which are used to turn the beads of the rosary while doing Japa (repetition of the holy Mantras), the spiritual rewards of such meditation and contemplation, some special Mantras of the Lord which help the worshipper to fulfill his desires and attain fruits of his efforts, the benefits of reading this eclectic Upanishad, and the rules to be followed while doing so as well as for preaching this Upanishad to others.

The visible form of Lord Ganpati has also been described in this Upanishad (verse no. 11-14).

Chapter 26—Mahavakya Upanishad—This Upanishad is a short one, having only twelve Mantras or verses. It was revealed to the Gods by Brahma, the creator. It primarily deals with the esoteric knowledge of the divine and the sublime entity known as the Atma, the pure consciousness which is the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality of creation. The Atma, which is inherently immaculate and enlightened, however appears to be veiled in a shroud of ignorance and its attendant delusions, thereby robbing it of its immaculacy, its majesty, its magnificence, its primacy, its pristine purity, its glorious virtues, and its divine character. When one becomes aware of the reality of the Atma, he discovers it to be as splendid and radiant as the sun which is self-illuminated; the Atma is brilliant like the sun. This Atma is the supreme Shiva principle—i.e. it is the ultimate truth, most eclectic, sublime and holy, and a fount of bliss and beatitude.

The Atma is a personification of the supreme cosmic Consciousness that is also known as Brahm, and therefore it is the Absolute Truth of existence. The Atma is the truthful ‘self’ of all living beings. This ‘truthful self’ as well as Brahm are also known as the Hans, the divine Swan which is employed in the scriptures for an entity that is truthful, pure, holy and immaculate. Therefore, when a man becomes self-realised, he becomes Brahm-realised as well as a personification of Brahm. He then honestly proclaims ‘I am Hans’—i.e. I am a personification of Hans which is a divine bird symbolizing the eclectic virtues that are associated with Brahm as well as the Atma.

This realisation overwhelms the spiritual aspirant as he submerges himself in a high tide of ecstasy and bliss. The Upanishad concludes by highlighting the glories of it, and the immense spiritual benefits derived by reading and understanding it meaningfully.

The Upanishad derives its name ‘Maha Vakya’ from the fact that it preaches the Great Truth of existence, the ‘truth’ of the Atma and Brahm. The word ‘Maha’ means great, and ‘Vakya’ means a saying, an edict, an axiom, or an axiomatic maxim. It teaches and espouses the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta which essentially says that the ‘Truth’ is always one and not more than one, that this ‘Truth’ vis-à-vis this existence is known as the Consciousness, that the Consciousness is an immutable, eternal, constant, universal and uniform divine entity, and that it is known as the Atma at the microcosmic level of creation and as Brahm at the macrocosmic level. Knowledge of this eclectic and quintessential truth is a liberating factor for the creature who is tied in the fetters of ignorance and its attendant delusions. The Atma, therefore, is the ‘Tattwa’ or the fundamental principle and essence of creation; it is principal aim of all spiritual aspirants; it is the real target that ought to be pursued by all seekers of Truth.

Chapter 27—Gopal Tapini Upanishad—This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Krishna whose other name is ‘Gopal’ (which literally means the Lord who takes care of cowherds, but implies in its ambit all the creatures of this creation). The Upanishad is in two parts—the Purva or previous section called the ‘Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad’, and the Uttar or subsequent section called the ‘Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad’. Therefore, we shall divide this Chapter into two sections—viz. section 1 dealing with the first Upanishad, and section 2 dealing with the second Upanishad.

The ‘Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad’ essentially deals with the divine form of Lord Krishna as it describes that the Lord is none but the Supreme Being himself personified in his form. It goes on to describe the divine form of Lord Krishna which should be meditated upon, along with the eighteen-letter Mantra of the Lord and its

spiritual importance. It then narrates the worship Yantra, the instrument that is used to offer worship to the Lord in formal forms of worship. This Upanishad was revealed by the creator Brahma when he answered the Gods who asked him as to who was the greatest God and Lord in creation.

The ‘Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad’ was however revealed by sage Durbasa for the benefit of the Gopis (milkmaids and cowherds’ wives) led by Radha when they enquired from the sage about the truthful nature and form of Lord Krishna. This is because they were confused about the reality of the Lord and his divine nature as his worldly activities seemed to be quite the contrary to the established principles regarding divinity, immaculacy and code of decent and ethical conduct. But the truth of the matter is that the Lord was absolutely immaculate and uncorrupt internally as well as externally. When the ladies had their doubts about this fact regarding Lord Krishna, sage Durbasa preached them the truth of Lord Krishna’s divine form and nature. Incorporated in his teachings are the various metaphysical, theological and spiritual concepts.

The sage cites the conversation between Lord Narayan, the Supreme Being, and Brahma, the creator, wherein the former preaches the latter about the various aspects of the greatest of the different incarnations of the Lord as Krishna. Great metaphysical and spiritual truths are revealed in this discourse. The concluding part of the Upanishad lists sixteen great Mantras of Lord Krishna that were revealed to Brahm by Lord Narayan. They are on the same pattern as the ones revealed for Lord Ram in the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

Chapter 28—Krishna Upanishad—This Upanishad reveals the divine aspects of Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu that appeared on earth in the Hindu era known as Dwapar, which was the third of the four-era cycle of creation and conclusion. He followed the incarnation of Vishnu as Lord Ram in the previous era known as Treta-Yug.

There is a legendary tale that the great Gods and sages who lived in the heaven once approached Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and caretaker of this creation and regarded as the Supreme Being himself, and told the Lord that they were so overwhelmed by the Lord’s divine form during his incarnation as Ram that they wished to be very near to him and enjoy the privilege of his close company with an unrestricted access to him, the benefit they were denied during the Lord’s incarnation as Ram. At this request, Vishnu granted them their wish and promised them that during his next incarnation as Lord Krishna they would have this good fortune. This fact is revealed in verse nos. 1-2 of the present Upanishad.

The rest of the Upanishad is dedicated to explain the divine form of Krishna. It explains how Lord Krishna, along with his different companions as well as opponents, symbolized the various aspects of the Supreme Being alongside the auspicious and righteous aspects of creation as well as those aspects that are opposed to auspiciousness and righteousness. It establishes that Lord Krishna is none but Lord Vishnu in a visible human form. It stresses that a person who knows this secret and worships the Lord as such is able to get the reward that is equivalent to going to all pilgrim sites as well as obtain liberation and deliverance from this gross body and this entrapping world.

This Upanishad compliments the ‘Gopal Tapini Upanishad’.

Chapter 29—Hayagriva Upanishad—This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Hayagriva, the horse-headed incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The word ‘Hayagriva’ has two parts—‘Haya’ means a horse, and ‘Griva’ means a neck or head.

This Upanishad was revealed to sage Narad by the creator Brahma when the sage requested him to preach Brahm Vidya, the knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The Upanishad lists the Mantras of Lord Hayagriva, and emphasizes in its concluding verses that the primary form of Mantras that were offered by the Gods to the Supreme Being were in the form of musical sounds instead of articulated words just like the neighing of a horse. This is the genesis of the Beej Mantras of any given hymn.

Chapter 30—Dattatreya Upanishad—This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Dattatreya who is believed to represent Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. The story regarding this form of Vishnu has been narrated in a note to stanza no. 4 of Section 1 of this Upanishad.

It has a total of three Sections or Khandas. The Mantras (hymns) of this Upanishad are in the form of a running prose, with only one in the style of a verse. For the purpose of narration, however, we shall be dividing the prose into convenient paragraphs or stanzas.

It is one of the revealed Upanishad as it was preached by Lord Narayan, the Supreme Being, when he was asked by Brahma, the creator, about the transcendental knowledge that is not only supremely enlightening but also a provider of liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death in this mortal world. The Lord advised him to meditate and contemplate upon the element of ‘Sattva’, the quality of eternal truthfulness and purity from which effuse equally eternal virtues of holiness, purity and divinity. Those who do so realise that the Lord to whom this Sattva refers to is a personified form of ‘Datta’, i.e. one who gives the boon of the knowledge of the transcendental and the divine. This knowledge pertains to Brahm, the Supreme Being that is the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation.

On successful meditation as advised by Lord Narayan, Brahma was able to become realised as he experienced this Sattva principle, the principle of the eternal Truth. He then preached it to others.

After this preliminary introduction, a series of Mantras dedicated to Lord Dattatreya are given. These Mantras are of different categories, such as one-lettered, six-lettered ones etc. All this is narrated in the first Section.

The second Section gives the Mala-Mantra, the long Mantra used to turn the rosary by those who worship Lord Dattatreya.

The third and the final Section outlines the reward that the worshipper gets by practicing the teachings of this Upanishad, and offering his oblations to Lord Dattatreya and meditating upon him. Such a person becomes Jivan Mukta, i.e. he obtains spiritual liberation and deliverance even while he is alive and active in this mortal world.

Chapter 31—Garud Upanishad—This Upanishad is dedicated to Garud, the legendary bird known as Heron or Eagle which is regarded as the celestial vehicle of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. Garud is no ordinary bird, but has divinity and greatness inherent in him, as otherwise he would not have been selected by Vishnu to be his mount. Being the only God in the closest proximity of Vishnu, Garud acquires special significance for the devotees of Lord Vishnu. He is

invoked to neutralize all sorts of negative and horrifying circumstances in this world which resemble the poison or toxin contained in the bite of a venomous serpent that torment the spiritual aspirant endlessly. This special virtue and power of Garud is derived from the fact that he is regarded as the greatest foe of the poisonous snake. Therefore, the knowledge of the Mantras dedicated to Lord Garud are directly related to the mystical occult powers that help one to overcome the poison of snake-bite. This knowledge is called ‘Garud Vidya’.

The Upanishad enumerates and describes in detail all the different Mantras pertaining to Lord Garud, how to do Japa with them, how to use them in practice (verse nos. 2-8), and what are the great benefits of invoking and mastering these Mantras (verse nos. 12-25) on the same pattern as done in the other Upanishads dedicated to different deities. The divine form of Lord Garud is also narrated (in verse nos. 5-7).

In the course of its narration, the Upanishad lists the names of different types of snakes (verse nos. 5 and 24) along with the exceptionally magnificent and miraculous power of Garud to neutralize all types of poisons (verse nos. 9-24). The worshipper of Lord Garud becomes immune from the bite of venomous insects and reptiles (verse no. 25). This Upanishad was first revealed to sage Narad by Brahma, the creator. It was then passed down the line of sages and seers for the benefit of the creatures of this creation (as listed in verse no. 1).

There are a number of ‘Yantras’ or worship instruments that are used in formal ritualistic forms of worship of deities described in some of the Upanishads of the Atharva Veda. They are added to the relevant Chapters—e.g. (i) Sudarshan Chakra at the end of Chapter 11 (Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad), (ii) Ram Yantra to Chapter 12 (Ram Rahasya Upanishad), (iii) another version of the Ram Yantra to Chapter 13 (Ram Tapini Upanishad), (iv) DeviYantra to Chapter 21 (Tripura Tapini Upanishad), and (v) Gopal Yantra to Chapter 27 (Gopal Tapini Upanishad).

A number of appendices have been added to this volume to supplement and compliment the main text. A brief summary is as follows—

Appendix 1 contains the **Shanti Paath** that is common to all the Upanishads of the Atharva Veda. This Shanti Paath is recited at the beginning and at the end of reading of a particular Upanishad. It is basically done to request the Supreme Being to give the reader peace and bliss.

Appendix 2—Pran Sukta—The ‘Pran Sukta’ is the fourth Sukta (hymn) of the eleventh Kanda (Canto or Section) of the Atharva Veda. It has a total of twenty-six verses. In relation to the Upanishads, it has special relevance to the Prashna Upanishad which is Chapter 1 of this present volume.

In this Sukta, Pran, the life-conscious factor in this creation revealed in the form of ‘vital winds’, is treated as being synonymous with the Supreme Being and shown equal reverence because without Pran no life is tenable in this world. The Rishi of this Sukta, i.e. the sage who had first conceptualized or formulated this hymn, was Bhargava Vaidarbhi.

Pran has been lauded as the most exalted and powerful of all the elements in creation, as being all-pervading and omnipresent in the living world, as being the entity that injects life and consciousness in this creation, and as being the essence life-

sustaining force present in all herbs and food that sustain life in this world. Therefore, it deserves the greatest of respect and honour.

Appendix 3—Neel Rudra Upanishad—This is a minor Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition, having three short Khandas or Cantos. It basically narrates the ‘Raudra’ (angry) form of Lord Shiva who is known as ‘Neel-Kantha Rudra’ because of the fact that his throat is permanently tinged purple or dark blue.

In the first Canto, prayer is made to Lord Rudra to shed aside his angry form, and instead adopt a form which is calm and auspicious.

In the second Canto, it is visualized that Lord Rudra is in the affectionate form of Gopal, one of the names of Lord Krishna, who is bewitching with the trademark peacock’s feather stuck in the lock of hairs on his head. Rudra is also said to be Indra, the king of Gods. This Canto also narrates the most potent weapons of Rudra in his form as Indra because the latter needed these weapons to rule over this world.

And finally, Canto three narrates the ‘Neel-Kanth’ form of Rudra, or the form of Lord Shiva with a dark-blue tinged throat. This colour of the throat shows that the Lord is so merciful that he did not care about his own welfare but gulped the ‘Halaal poison’, the most corroding and fierce poison that was produced at the time of the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal life and bliss.

Neel Kanth Rudra or Shiva with the blue/purple throat is also known by other names, such as Kedareshwar (the Lord of Kedar, the mountainous abode of Shiva), Virupaksha (the Lord with three eyes, hence looking most unconventional) etc.

Appendix 4—Surya Sukta—The ‘Surya Sukta’ is a hymn dedicated to the Sun God known as Surya. It lauds Surya as being the eye of the whole world, providing the latter with light and the consequent ability to see. Surya infuses life in this world by the way of providing it with energy, light, heat, vitality and dynamism without which no life is ever sustainable. Hence, it is equivalent to being the Atma or soul of the whole world; the world depends upon Surya for its survival and nourishment. Surya inspires the living being towards auspiciousness and righteousness as symbolized by the ‘light’ that it provides—i.e. it removes the darkness of ignorance and its attendant delusions and accompanying ghosts, and instead illuminates the correct path, symbolized by wisdom, erudition, knowledge and intelligence, for the creature to follow in order to reach his desired destination. The Sun blesses the creation with energy, vitality, health and nourishment; the Sun controls the seasons and rainfall; the Sun helps growth and development of plants and crops.

The Sun has special importance for the seekers of the Truth and the Supreme Being as it is the most splendid and vivid evidence of the truthful Lord. Nothing else in this creation matches the Sun in its astounding dynamism and eternal energy, its magical life-injecting and life-sustaining abilities, its stupendous brilliance, radiance, splendour, majestic glory and magnificence that can be equated with those of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being. In fact, for all practical purposes for this world, Sun is a visible manifestation of Brahm, the Supreme Being.

Hence, Surya is an object of great reverence and adoration for all living beings; Surya is the de-facto Lord of creation. It has special relevance to the Surya Upanishad which is Chapter 17 of the present volume.

Appendix 5 is the **Griha Sukta** which appears in the Paippalaad branch of the Atharva Veda. It is relevant to the Brihajjabal Upanishad (Brahman 3, verse no. 11

especially). This Sukta is essentially a prayer for the all-round welfare and well-being of the householder.

Appendix 6 There are many esoteric concepts, principles, topics or terms of metaphysics, theology and spiritualism forming an integral part of the Upanishad Texts, as their lexicon, that need a detailed explanation and more elaboration for their proper and correct understanding, to make their meaning clear so that they become useful for a wider and better understanding of the texts of the Upanishads, making them easy and comprehensible for even a lay person.

Since such concepts, principles, topics or terms are many, since the body of relevant information is broad-based and extensive, and since they need a detailed analysis and exhaustive explanation which can be applied to the reading of all Upanishads, this author (Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia) thought it prudent and practical to publish them as independent Books by collating and curating relevant information from a wide swathe of the Upanishadic texts.

This appendix no. 6 at the end of our current book on the 'Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads' provides to the reader a list of such Books, along with the websites and links from where they can be independently accessed / downloaded if the reader is interested to do so.

Appendix 7 is a brief introduction to the Author of this book, Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, and the many books written by him as a service to Lord Ram.

Appendix 8 has a number of Diagrams and Sketches that are related to different Upanishads of the Atharva Veda.

I feel shy to say a word to express my deep and overwhelming sense of gratitude and thanks for my Guru Lord Hanuman ji, because words cannot do justice to my feelings and the extent of benevolence, munificence and benediction that the Lord has been gracious enough to shower on me, and without whose wish, direct intervention and constant guidance, this volume, like the others in the series, would not have materialised at all.

At the same time, I ask forgiveness from my beloved Lord Ram, who is the very essence and soul of my life, for all my incompetence and childishness, and the audacity that I displayed to plunge headlong in the vast ocean representing the Upanishads just by relying upon his grace and mercy. And lo and behold, the Lord has held my hands and made the pen flow as if by magic, and this is the fact and the truth of my heart with no pretensions of modesty or simplicity whatsoever on my part. 'For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, Oh Lord, you know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid your hand upon me' (Bible, Psalms, 139/4-5). Oh Lord! I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know' (Bible, Job 42/2), but 'must I not take heed to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth?' (Bible, Numbers 23/12), for 'the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue (when I spoke what I said)' (Bible, 2 Samuel 23/2). Sure indeed, for 'You in your mercy have led forth the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them in your strength to your holy habitation' (Bible, Old Testament, Exodus, 15/13 (the song of Moses)).

'God shall be my hope, my stay, my guide and lanthanum to my feet' (Shakespeare's Henry, vi, part 2, 11:iii)

I humbly present this book to my esteemed readers with a sincere request to excuse me for the errors of omission and commission, and this request is out of the depths of my heart.

Date—May, 2022.

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Anthology of all the Principal Upanishads of the Atharva Veda

Chapter 1

Prashna Upanishad

This Upanishad is the Brahman of the Pippalaad branch of the Atharva Veda. It describes the six answers given by sage Pippalaad to queries raised by six other sages. First, Kabandhi enquired about Pran (the consciousness that infuses life and mobility in creation) and Rayi (the entity in which the Pran resides and which gives effect to the dynamism of Pran; the Prakriti or Nature). The second question was asked by Bhargava pertaining to the chief life supporting factor in creation, the factor which forms the foundation and basis of life in this world. The third question was asked by Kausalya, the son of Ashwal; it was in six parts and related to the origin of Pran. This question was an extension of the second question which revealed that Pran is the main factor that supports all forms of life in this world. The fourth query was raised by Gargya and it was in the form of five questions pertaining to the relationship between Parmatma (the Supreme Being) and the Jivatma (the living being). In the fifth question, Satyakam wished to know about the worship of OM, the divine symbol of Brahm. And finally, the sixth question was asked by Sukeshaa in which the latter wished to know about the 16 Kalaas or aspects of the Purush, the cosmic Male.

Sage Pippalaad answered them all satisfactorily, and they thanked him for enlightening them about these profound secrets of creation.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the meaning of this Shanti Paath.

Canto 1 (Question 1)

1. The son of sage Bharadwaj named Sukeshaa, the son of Shibi named Satyakam, the son of Garga named Saurayayani, the son of Ashwalya named Kausalya, Bhargava who resided in the country called Vidharva, and Kabandhi who belonged to the clan of sage Kaatyaayan—these six great sages worshipped Brahm, the Supreme Being, and observed all the relevant sacraments as ordained by the scriptures. They wished to learn and know more about Brahm, and with this auspicious desire in mind they took some Samidha (a gift as a token of respect and to indicate to the teacher that they have come to seek knowledge from him instead of testing the latter's competence) in their hands and went earnestly to the hermitage of sage Pippalaad¹ to seek this knowledge from him (1).

[Note--¹Sage *Pippalaad* perhaps got his name because he might have been used to eating a lot of Pipal, the fruit of the Pipal tree (the Indian Fig—*ficus religiosa*) or a

kind of long pepper called by this name. He was a great teacher of metaphysics, a master of the doctrine of the Upanishads, and one of the greatest exponents of their philosophy. He has taught many sages and seers of the period, such as Skaakalya, in Panch Brahm Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition wherein he describes the fundamental unity of creation and affirms that the five forms in which the Divinity exists are basically the revelation of the same Lord, and to the six sages in the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition wherein he answers their six questions to their satisfaction. He was taught about the spiritual wisdom pertaining to the spiritual aspect of life after death by Nachiketa who had himself got this knowledge from Yam, the God of death, as narrated in Katha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda. Pippalaada was present on the bed of arrows on which Bhishma, the legendary patriarch of the epic Mahabharat period, lay prior to his death when he taught wisdom to Yudhisthir. [Refer Mahabharat, Shanti Parva, 47/9.] This shows that Pippalaad was a contemporary sage of the Mahabharat period.

When the two facts—one, that the Panch Brahm Upanishad was preached by him to Shaakalya who had died in the court of king Janak during a debate with the great sage Yagyavalkya when the latter cursed him for being arrogant and haughty of his knowledge and showing irreverence and impertinence as narrated in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahmin 9, verse no. 26 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and Yagyavalkya's annoyance with him as is evident in the preceding verses—3/9/18, 25, and second, that Pippalaad was present in the Mahabharat war period that occurred in the later half of the third era called Dwapar, the era of Lord Krishna, it is easy to conclude that this sage had a very long life, easily straddling at least two eras, i.e. the Treta (Ram's era) and Dwapar (Krishna's era) if not three, i.e. Sat Yug which was the first era, till Dwapar Yug which was the third era.

It is believed that he was the son of Dadhichi and his wife Suvarka. The wife of Pippalaad was called Padmavati. His son was known after him as Pippalaadi, and he was taught by the great sage Jabal which forms the text of the Jabal Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition. It is a legend that he had ordained Shani, the malefic God who casts evil eye, to spare children below 12 years.

The Padma Puran describes another sage with this name who had become very arrogant because of special powers that he had acquired due to Tapa (severe austerity and penance), but later he was chastised by the creator Brahma. [Refer Padma Puran, Chapters 60-62.

It is narrated in the Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 7, verse no. 5, that he had accompanied the learned king Janak to the abode of Prajapati Brahma, the creator of this world inhabited by living beings, to learn about the importance of wearing the Tripundra, the three lines made from a paste of the sacred ash taken from the pit of the fire sacrifice and worn by all the devotees of Lord Shiva as his symbol. After that, Pippalaad went to Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Vishnu the sustainer of this creation to know more about this Tripundra and its esoteric secrets, metaphysical significance and mystical powers as narrated in Brahman 7, verse no. 6, and then to Lord Kalagnirudra, the form of Lord Shiva himself who had first revealed this Upanishad to one sage Bhusund (Brahmans 1-6), to learn more about it as narrated in Brahman 7, verse nos. 6-7.

The Par Brahm Upanishad, which is the twentieth Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, was revealed to sage Shaunak by sage Pippalaad. Verse no. 1 of this Upanishad, in its opening stanza, says that Pippalaad was born in the lineage of sage Angiras.

The name of the sage appears in a number of Upanishads—viz. Atharva Shikha, Kandika 1, verse no. 1, and the Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 7, verse nos. 5-7, besides the present Prashna Upanishad.]

2. Seeing their eagerness and sincerity, Pippalaad asked these six sages to spend one year in his hermitage, faithfully doing Tapa (observing the strict codes of austerity and penance) and diligently observing the principles of Brahmcharya (i.e. maintaining strict self control over the senses). He assured them that at the end of this period he would answer their questions or impart the knowledge which they seek if he knew the answer and was acquainted with that knowledge (2).

[Note—In earlier times this was a standard practice to make the disciple wait for some time before the teacher accepted him as his disciple. This was to test the person's sincerity and trustworthiness because during this time the teacher could closely observe the daily routine of the disciple, his behaviour and the level of his intellectual development, judge his character and general eligibility for acquiring metaphysical knowledge to decide whether or not he is competent enough to be able to understand correctly what would be taught to him. Some instances of this appear in the Upanishads themselves—for instance, sage Shukdeo was made to wait for twenty one days by Janak in Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 21-28; the wise and enlightened king of Panchal, named Pravahan, made sage Aaruni wait for some time before the king answered his queries as described in Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 5, section 3, verse no. 6-7; and the creator Brahma made Indra, the king of Gods, and Virochan, the king of Demons, wait for thirty two long years before answering their question about the Atma (the pure consciousness). Indra was not satisfied, so he went back again and again to Brahma three times. Indra was made to wait for a total of a hundred years, all the while observing austerity, self-control and doing penance—refer Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 8, section 7, verse no. 3; Canto 8, section 9, verse no. 3; Canto 8, section 10, verse no. 4; Canto 8, section 11, verse no. 3.]

3. At the end of this period, the son of Katyan named Kabandhi went to Pippalaad and asked, 'Oh Lord! From whom is this Praja (the living creation or the living beings) born or produced or created?' (3).

4. Explaining the process of creation or the Genesis of creation, sage Pippalaad replied, 'Prajapati Brahma (the creator of this visible world inhabited by the living creature) did Tapa (to observe austerity, do penance and suffer hardship for some noble cause) with a desire to initiate the process of creation and propagate his subjects or off springs (i.e. to initiate the process of creation).

He created or produced a couple consisting of Rayi and Pran¹. He thought that these two off springs of his would fulfill his desire of creation or producing countless creatures of numerous species, of myriad qualities and character traits (4).

[Note—¹The word *Pran* refers to the life factors in creation, such as consciousness and the vital winds that infuse life and consciousness in the otherwise lifeless, inane and gross body of the creature. The word *Rayi* refers to the entity that harboured the Pran and helped it to manifest its stupendous quality of injecting life into this creation. Rayi was the dynamism of Pran on display. Thus, Rayi was synonymous with Prakriti or Nature. In the language of modern science, the Pran is likened to the latent energy in creation, while Rayi can be likened to the matter. It is the union or conjunction of the two, Pran and Rayi, or energy and matter that the entire visible world has come into existence.

The point to note here is that the concept of the 'couple' and the 'need for their union' or the need for intercourse was seeded by none other but the creator Brahma himself at the beginning of creation. In other words, the creatures that would come into being as a result of this initial seeding would also follow the same path—i.e. they would need a partner to multiply and propagate themselves.

According to the revered sage Adi Shankaracharya, the Pran was the latent fire element in creation, and Rayi was the food that harboured this Pran in its bosom and helped to manifest its stupendous life-creating and life-sustaining qualities when it was eaten by the creature. This was at the micro level of creation. At the macro level, the fire was represented by the Sun, the food was represented by the Moon because the latter is said to be a celestial pitcher of Som, the elixir that gives life and happiness. This is asserted in the next verse.]

5. [Verse nos. 5-8 are devoted to praising the Sun God who is regarded as a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Brahm with all the divine glories, stupendous powers and magnificence that the Lord is renowned for, and which helps him inspire, sustain, develop and protect life on this earth. There are a number of Upanishads in honour of the Sun God, also known as Aditya—(a) Rig Veda = Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, Canto 2, verse no. 4. (b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Savitri Upanishad. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15. (d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Akchu Upanishad, Cantos 1 and 2; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1; Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2; Naryan Upanishad, verse no. 1. (e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1; Surya Upanishad; Gayatri Upanishad.]

The Sun is a personification of Pran, while the Moon represents the Rayi. In this vast world, everything that is Murta (gross) and Amurta (subtle) are Rayi. Hence, a Murti (image) is Rayi personified (5).

[Note—The *Sun* is the source of light, heat and energy for this earth. The Sun regulates seasons and rains, it controls the cycle of day and night, thereby regulating all aspects of life on earth. It is a symbolic personified and visible form of Brahm, the sublime form of the Supreme Being also known as the Viraat Purush, the vast and infinite macrocosmic form of Brahm. No life is imaginable without the Sun. Therefore, it is Pran personified. The *Moon* is lighted because of the Sun; the Moon has no light of its own but shines due the light of the Sun falling upon it. Therefore, the Moon showcases the magical power of the Sun to light up even distant bodies which have no light of their own. In other words, this Pran element represented by the Sun is capable of injecting life in an entity which has no life of its own, here the instance of the Moon. Since the Moon is lighted due to the inspiration provided by the Sun, it is like the Rayi. The Sun is the inspirer, and the Moon is the inspired one.

The Sun is an excellent example of the gross and the subtle aspects of Brahm. The eternal fire that is burning inside the disc of the Sun is the subtle aspect of Brahm; it provides the power and energy to the Sun to shine and burn. This fire is the ‘inspirer’ of the gross aspect of Brahm. The disc of the Sun is the ‘inspired’—the heat, light and energy that the physical body of the Sun gives is due to the fire burning inside it, but no one can see this fire. The viewer sees the disc of the luminous Sun only which is the inspired aspect of the Sun. The hidden fire in the Sun is the Pran of the Sun because it lends the latter its worth and power to shine. This ‘Pran’ of the Sun, i.e. the fire burning inside the Sun is Brahm manifested in its subtle form. The visible disc of the Sun, with its dazzling brilliance and splendour, giving out heat, light and energy is the manifested aspect of Pran or Brahm; it is the gross body of Pran or Brahm. Hence, it is the Rayi of the Sun.

But the fire burning inside the Sun is not the complete picture of Brahm which is a transcendental entity that surpasses all definitions. At the most, the fire represents only one of the numerous virtues of Brahm. Therefore, to say that the hidden fire

inside the Sun is Brahm personified in a subtle form is only a 'part or fraction' of the entire truth. In fact, the fire is a 'subtle image' of Brahm just like the external luminous disc of the Sun is the 'gross image' of Brahm. The fire embodies some of the grand virtues and characteristics of Brahm. The fire is the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm, and hence it is the 'Rayi' of Brahm because it is inspired by Brahm to burn and give out light and heat. In the context of the Sun, this fire becomes the 'inspirer' and the Sun becomes the 'inspired'. The Sun being a visible manifestation of the stupendous glories of Brahm is therefore the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm. The 'inspirer' Brahm is invisible. So when one worships the Sun as a manifestation of Brahm, he does so both in its subtle ('Amurta') and gross ('Murta') forms as mentioned in this verse. When the gross is worshipped, the subtle is automatically deemed to be worshipped. They both represent the 'inspired' aspect of the sublime Brahm that transcends both the gross and the subtle. Brahm is the universal 'inspirer' of both.

The Sun is at the core of life on earth; it helps in producing food crops of all varieties such as cereals, pulses, vegetables etc. that are eaten by the living being to survive and gain energy and strength. Without the light, energy and heat of the Sun there would be no vegetation on earth. Hence, the Sun is the 'inspirer' and the 'food' that is produced by the grace of the Sun is the inspired. When the food is eaten it gives the creature energy, strength and vitality. Therefore, that secret and invisible aspect of food that is used by the creature to derive energy, strength and vitality is the Pran of the food, while its external form, its external body is the gross aspect of this Pran. When this food is eaten and digested by the eater, the Pran is transferred to the eater in the form of the latter's own Pran, and the strength, energetic activity and vitality that the body of the eater shows is the inspired aspect of this Pran. The food therefore is the Pran, and the eater is the Rayi.

All the units of Nature that depend upon some Principal, such as the Moon depending for its light on the Sun, are called Rayi. These units may be visible (having a gross form) or invisible (having a subtle form).

The Sanskrit word for the Sun God or Aditya is *Surya*. This word has three connotations—viz. (i) Sarteha—one who moves. This refers to the Sun because it moves constantly across the sky. It also refers to the supreme cosmic Consciousness that makes all movement possible. (ii) Sviryate—this means one who receives and accepts. This virtue refers to the fact that all offerings offered to the fire sacrifice are done in the presence of the Sun, and since the latter is the celestial cauldron of fire all the offerings are deemed to be offered to it. In another plane, it refers to the Jiva, the living being, who receives stimuli from the world and then accepts them and deduces that the world from where they originate is real and true. (iii) Suvateha—meaning one who shines. This is very obvious in the case of the Sun. This virtue refers to the supreme Self or supreme Consciousness that is self-illuminated and self-effulgent.

Sun God or Surya appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the 'eye' of the Viraat Purush, and at the time of creation when this Viraat Purush revealed himself as the individual creature such as for example a cow, a horse and a man, the Sun God took up residence in the eye (refer Aitereyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4). He is also regarded as visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9). The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). The Sun is like the Atma of all the creatures (Akchu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

The Sun is the brightest, the most splendourous, the brilliantly radiant, the most majestic and grandest entity in the entire firmament. The whole length and breadth of the sky is lit with its light; all the objects present in the sky, visible or invisible, are illuminated by its light. It is the eternal and infinite celestial source of light, heat and

energy; it inspires, fosters, sustains and protects life in this world; it is synonymous with and a metaphor for life in all its dimensions. Its splendour and radiance makes it an apt metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment. As an embodiment of this virtue of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity he has been held in high esteem and as the great teacher and preacher of eclectic knowledge pertaining to the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. He had assumed the form of a horse and revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda to the great sage Yagyavalkya. He was also the teacher of Hanuman, said to be incarnate Wind God and Lord Shiva, and who was the great, most ardent and the wisest devotee of Lord Ram.

From the physical perspective also, the Sun is regarded as a fount of light, energy and heat which supports life in all forms in this physical world. No life is imaginable without the presence of the Sun.]

6. When the Sun rises in the east at the end of the night, it accepts the Pran (forces of conscious life) present in this direction and lets this Pran dwell in the rays radiating out from its body. [The rays of the Sun carry the life giving energy, heat and light emanating from the Sun, metaphorically called the 'Pran' of the Sun, to all the directions where the rays of the Sun fall. The Sun brings life and cheer to this world with its rising; the rising Sun is a harbinger of new life and activity.]

The same Sun accepts and distributes the Pran (forces of conscious life) in all the directions of the celestial globe—the directions of the south, west, north, nadir and zenith as well as the center. It shines and illuminates all the directions with its rays. [In other words, the Sun uniformly inspires life on this earth. Its rays are the body which transfers its Pran and injects it in this world. The life that is sustained with the help of the Sun's energy, light and heat is the 'inspired' aspect of the Sun, while the Sun itself is the 'inspirer'. So, the Sun is the 'Pran' and the visible life in this world is the 'Rayi'; without the Sun the visible life cannot survive; the latter is the dynamism of the Sun on display. In the context of the rays, the life-sustaining subtle energy of the Sun that these rays carry is the 'Pran', while the visible dazzling light and scorching heat that the rays of the Sun display vividly are the 'Rayi' aspect.] (6).

7. The Sun God is a visible revelation of the 'Vaishwanar Agni', the all-pervading universal fire element.

He is 'Vishwa Roop'—i.e. he is revelation of the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic all-inclusive gross body of the supreme Brahm; it is from this Viraat that the entire creation has emerged.

And he is personified 'Pran'—the all-important life and conscious factors in creation represented by the heat, light and energy of the Sun, factors without which life is not tenable in this world.

These facts have been endorsed by the sacred hymns of the Vedas too (7).

8. The Sun God is an embodiment of all forms of life in this creation. He is the support, base and foundation of all life in this world. He is blessed with majesty, grandeur, radiance, splendour and magnificence. He is omniscient and all-knowing. He is steadfast in Tapa—i.e. he steadily continues to burn and suffer himself for the benefit of the rest of the creation. And that is why he has no match and parallel for him.

The Sun God who is endowed with millions of dazzling rays to highlight his glory and magnificence as he rises or reveals himself as the subtle Pran (conscious life) in all the living beings in this world. Hence, all the countless forms or species of life that exist in this creation are like the numerous rays of the same Sun God

manifested in these individual forms. Since the rays of the Sun are all equal in brilliance and magnificence, it shows that each living unit of this creation is equally important, and no one unit is less or more valuable than the other. Each is an equal manifestation of the same Sun God. [Since the Sun God is a manifestation of the supreme Brahm or the Viraat Purush, the Pran or life consciousness as well as of the Vaishwanar Agni or the universal fire element as mentioned in verse no. 7 above, it follows that the creatures of this creation are also manifestations of these divine entities.] (8).

9. [The following verses, nos. 9-10, 13-16 describe the destiny of the person which depends upon the type of desires he has while doing deeds. Refer also to the destiny of the creature which has been succinctly described, inter alia, in the following Upanishads—Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 4/3/33, 35-38, 4/4/1-14, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2, 14-16, etc.; Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10; Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1; Taittiriyo-pahishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20; Canto 1, Valli 2, verse no. 1-6; Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 6-8; Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 4-17; Subalo-panishad, Canto 11; Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10.

From the perspective of this Canto where the Sun God is regarded as the personification of the Supreme Being who is the primary creator of this entire creation, is its inspirer, motivator, nourisher, sustainer, protector, caretaker and Lord, the Sun God is deemed to be the 'Prajapati' as described here in this verse. The word Prajapati means one who is the Lord and Master, the 'Pati', of his subjects, the 'Praj'.]

The Samvatsar (a year consisting of the one full cycle of the summer and the winter solstices of the sun) is indeed the Prajapati. The two halves of the year, i.e. the summer and the winter solstices of the Sun are the two roads or paths through which this Prajapati moves. [The equinox point is the central dwelling place of the Sun God who is called the Prajapati here because the Sun looks after all the aspects of life on earth where all forms of living beings live. For one half of the year the Sun moves to the north of the equator, and for the next half to the south. These two directions are symbolically the two 'Ayans' or paths in which this Lord moves to oversee his subjects.]

Those persons who take the path of doing Karma (performance of deeds) in order to fulfill their desires or aspirations move to the abode of the Chandra (Moon) God¹ and enter the cycle of birth and death.

Hence, those Rishis (sages and seers or learned ones) who think of their subjects (such as family, kith and kin, friends, dependants, compatriots, peers, members of the extended family which includes the entire society) move in the south direction on the path called the 'Pitri Yaan Marga'—i.e. they become 'spirits' which are concerned about the welfare of their descendents. This path of 'Pitri Yaan' is the symbolic Rayi² (9).

[Note—¹The word 'Chandra' is derived from the root 'Chadi' meaning happiness, joy, pleasure and comfort. Therefore, those who desire worldly happiness, joy, pleasure and comforts spend the energy and strength of their Pran to fulfill their desires and achieve this aim while they are alive. Such persons are responsible for propagation of this creation consisting of the material world with its uncountable sense objects, wealth, prosperity, pomp and pageantry, and other attractions. They remain engrossed in it while alive, and aspire to redo it even after death. So they symbolically go the abode of the Moon or Chandra God who presides over such

worldly charms. It is these kind of people who help to propagate this world of living beings, and they hope to continue their mission even after death. So they become 'spirits' or 'Pitrs' to oversee the assets they left behind in this world. Their soul continues to remain hitched to this world instead of finding liberation and deliverance.

²Once they become 'Pitrs' they are motivated by the desire to take care of the welfare of their subjects on earth. They are always worried about their descendents and the assets left behind by them. They are inspired to look after this world even after they have left it. So they are called 'Rayi'—the eternally 'inspired' ones.]

10. Those who are wiser and more enlightened search for the truth about the Atma, the pure consciousness. While alive, they spend their time in doing Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance of hardship for some noble cause), observing the strict codes of Brahmacharya (self control of the senses), develop Shraddha (faith, devotion, conviction) for the Supreme Being, and strive to acquire high quality Vidya or knowledge of this divine and eclectic Truth.

Such people go on the path leading to the north (symbolically meaning the path that is uplifting for the soul and helps them to elevate themselves from a lowly life of an ignorant mortal to an eternal life of enlightenment and wisdom). They go to the abode of the Sun God. [This means they come closer to the eternal fount of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment represented by the brilliant shine of the Sun. It also means they come closer to the Supreme Being because the Sun is a manifestation of the latter.]

The Sun God is the sustainer and protector of the Pran (vital life consciousness in creation). He is fearless and gives fearlessness. He is imperishable and eternal. He is the supreme destination of exalted souls. [It must be remembered here that Sun referred to in these verses is not the physical 'sun' that is seen in the sky. The Sun is a metaphor for Brahm, the supreme transcendental Brahm; it is the eternal cosmic force that lights up the creation as its Pran or life consciousness; it is the power around which the entire edifice of this world revolves. The latter fact is symbolically depicted in the revolution of the planets of the solar system around the physical sun which is the hub of this system. Even as the gravitational pull of the physical sun keeps all the planets in their position in the vast void of space and prevent their scattering about in a chaos, the Brahm in the form of its dynamic counterpart called the Pran helps to bind the creation in one huge garland called the 'creation'.]

Hence, once the exalted soul (a wise and enlightened person) reaches this high abode of the Sun God, it does not have to come back again to this world. [That is, once true knowledge is achieved by a wise person, once he is enlightened about the grand Absolute Truth behind the external façade of this world, he realises where real happiness, joy, peace, comfort and bliss is to be found. He no longer would search them in this world of material objects, but in the Atma or pure consciousness. Such people stand in sharp contrast to those described earlier in verse no. 9. So, such people find liberation from the cycle of death and birth. They have realised that the world is perishable and transient, that therefore it cannot give them permanent peace and happiness, and that it is futile to search eternity and everlasting peace in anything that itself is perishable and impermanent.]

This axiomatic maxim is confirmed by the next verse (10).

[Note—There is another way of interpreting this verse. The Sun is a cauldron of eternal fire. It is like the celestial fire pit. A person who observes the codes of religious conduct as narrated in the first stanza, i.e. does Tapa, observes Brahmacharya, has Shraddha and acquires Vidya, and constantly thinks of the Sun

God, is symbolically doing the sacred fire sacrifice. He is offering his Pran as the ultimate sacrifice to the holy fire. Anything sacrificed in the fire is burnt down. Here it metaphorically means that the grossness of the person's 'self', his gross body with all its organs and never-ending desires, is burnt down to ashes. In such a situation, the 'self' or the Atma is permanently liberated and finds its deliverance. Since there is no body to come back to, there is no fear of taking birth again.

Further, during such fire sacrifices, one is expected to give away all his worldly possessions as charity. With no material objects and wealth left behind to act as an attraction or drag on the soul, the latter flies off to freedom with nothing to look back to again. It's true renunciation.]

11. Some scholars assert that this Prajapati (i.e. the Sun God) is the father of all creation. [This is because the Sun is at the core of life on earth; no life is imaginable without the light, heat and energy that the Sun provides.]

He has five legs¹ and twelve shapes or forms².

He lives in the middle of the sky, and bears the water. [This water refers to the fact that the Sun is responsible for the rainy season. The heat of the Sun evaporates water from the ocean which, in due course of time, is transformed into rain. The Sun controls the seasons and the movement of wind. The control over wind can be easily verified if one observes how the wind picks up speed as the Sun moves up in the sky during the hot summer days in the desert or the plains of northern India. The sky is calm in the morning, the hot wind gathers speed during the noon hours, and it subsides at dawn. The movement of the rain-bearing clouds is regulated by this flow of wind, and therefore the rain is directly controlled by the Sun. This fact is represented here by saying that the Sun bears the water.]

Some other experts say that the Sun God has seven rings or circles³, and six spokes⁴ (11).

[Note--¹The *five legs* are the five vital winds called the Prans. They may also refer to the five primary elements called the Bhuts which constitute the building blocks of life.

The five Prans are the following—(1) Pran— this is the main vital wind and usually refers to the breath without which life is not possible; it is the vital wind located in the upper part of the body. It is the wind that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without this wind infusing life in the body no other wind would be of any significance to the creature. It is present in the mouth, nose, heart, navel, big toe of the leg. (2) Apaana—this is the wind that passes down the intestines, and is responsible for ingestion of food, its digestion in the intestines and the final excretion of the waste product from the body—its grosser content through the anus and its fluid contents through the urinary system of the kidneys. This is the wind that moves down in the body and is chiefly located in the lower part of the body—in the intestines and anus, lower abdomen, thighs, knees. (3) Samaana—it is uniformly present throughout the body and as the name itself suggests it is responsible for uniform pressure and balance in the body besides equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body by maintaining proper circulation of blood. Therefore its functions somewhat resembles that of Vyan wind. It is said to be especially present in the ears which are said to be the specialized playing field for the Samaana wind as it helps maintain balance in the body through the semi-circular canals in the ears. It also helps to coordinate the ears and the intellect because the latter would base its decisions on what it hears with the aid of the ears. (4) Udaana— this is the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough. It is predominantly present in the hands, legs and the various joints of the

body. (5) Vyan—this wind helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body as well as to ensure equal distribution of nutrients in the body by maintaining circulation. Hence, it works in close coordination with the Samaan wind. It also helps to control the functioning of the other winds. It is located in the ears, thighs, waist region, heals, shoulders and throat.

The five Bhuts are the following—sky or Akash, air/wind or Vayu, fire/energy or Agni/Tej, water or Aapo, and earth or Prithivi/Bhumi.

²The *twelve forms or shapes* refer to the twelve months of a year.

³The *seven rings or circles* are the days of the week.

⁴The *six spokes* are the six seasons—early winter (Nov.-Dec.), late winter or the season of snowfall (Jan.-Feb.), spring (March-April), summer (May-June), rainy (July-August) and autumn or fall (Sept.-Oct.). It must be noted here that verse no. 9 has already stressed that we are dealing with one full cycle in the life of a creature on earth as represented by the word ‘Samvatsar’ which is the very first word of this particular verse.]

12. Some say that Prajapati (the Sun God) is represented by the Months of the year. [This is extension of the concept of Samvatsar mentioned in the beginning of verse no. 9].

The Shukla Paksha (the bright lunar half of the month) represents the Pran aspect of this Prajapati, while the Krishna Paksha (the dark lunar half of the same month) is the Rayi aspect.

The wise Rishis (learned sages or seers as mentioned in verse no. 10) do their deeds with an intention of fulfilling their auspicious desires or wishes during the Shukla Paksha, while others (mentioned in verse no. 9) do their deeds during the Krishna Paksha with the intention that their wishes would be fulfilled¹ (12).

[Note—¹The light of the moon continuously increases during the bright lunar fortnight, the *Shukla Paksha*. This is symbolic of enhancement of spiritual energy and increase of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment for those who aspire for such noble aim in life as finding the reality and truth of existence, the fount of bliss, happiness and peace that is eternal and refreshing, and looking up to the source of light which would remove all darkness of ignorance and delusions, instead of down towards this world full of darkness of ignorance and delusions. The brightness and fullness of the disc of the moon goes on increasing by each passing day. This is a metaphor for the progress that such wise men make in their spiritual endeavours. They rise higher and higher till they reach their final goal of emancipation and salvation.

On the other hand, the light and the shape of the disc of the moon continue to decrease during the dark lunar fortnight, the *Krishna Paksha*. This is metaphoric way of saying that those who pursue this world, those who seek comfort and happiness in this world instead of the Atma and Brahm, are like the moon during the Krishna Paksha. Their glory and spiritual brightness gradually becomes mired in ignorance and delusions. It gets demoted and ultimately gets decimated. They enter the dark pit of this cycle of birth and death.]

13. Even the one single cycle of a day and a night symbolise this Prajapati. According to this view, the day is equivalent to the Pran, while the night is like the Rayi.

Those who have intercourse with a woman during the day time are harming their Pran (i.e. they are destroying their energy, strength and vital forces of life). On the contrary, those who approach the woman who is desirous of intercourse during the night time are deemed to be Brahmacharis, i.e. they are deemed to be the ones who have self control over their sensual instincts¹ (13).

[Note—¹The day time is meant for constructive activity as a selfless service to the Supreme Being, and not for indulging in pleasures of the senses. If one violates this

rule, he is demeaning his Atma and demoting it from its exalted stature. The Pran, which is synonymous with life consciousness, gets degraded and weakened.

On the other hand, if the same intercourse is done during the night and especially when the woman is willing and desirous, it becomes a duty to aid in the larger planning of the Supreme Being who had wished to keep the creation created by him going on perpetually (refer verse no. 15 below) as is established by the fact that he had created the couple consisting of the Pran and Rayi in the beginning of creation (refer verse no. 4), and therefore the Pran is not harmed. A person who fulfills his obligations in a dispassionate manner is deemed to be a Brahmchhari because he is not attached to the result of such deeds. In the present case, the sexual intercourse is done by the man to satisfy his partner and not to satisfy his lust. So it is as good as observing self control.

This verse indicates that there are certain times for certain things. One must obey the laws of Nature, for violation of them is full of hazards.]

14. The Anna or food is a manifestation of Prajapati, the creator. It is from the food that the sperms are created¹. It is from this sperm that all living beings are created (14).

[Note—¹The Pran or vital life forces present in the food eaten by the man are converted into his sperms. This sperm carries the Pran from the food to the next generation when this sperm is implanted in the woman. For this purpose intercourse is necessary, and that is why the intercourse described in verse no. 13 is not a sin but a carrying out of the divine mandate of the Lord. During the day time the Pran is busy in other activities, and it is only during the night that it finds time to rest. So, it is the best time when it can think of some creative activity out of the routine. Hence, it is during the night that this transplantation of the Pran from the male to the female by way of intercourse in which the Pran-carrying sperm is implanted into the female sex organs is prescribed in verse 13 above.]

15. Those who wish to fulfill the determination of Prajapati to create and propagate this creation of living beings (as mentioned in verse no. 4) involve themselves in the sexual activity (as described in verse no. 13-14). [Since such people wish to propagate this mortal world, they are like the ones described in verse no. 9. They remain indulgent in this world.]

Amongst them, those who seek the ‘truth’ and the auspicious path of spirituality do Tapa and observe Brahmacharya. They attain the Absolute Truth; they get established in this Truth. [These people are the ones described in verse no. 10.] (15).

16. Those who do not have such negative traits as wickedness, deceitfulness, conceit, falsehood, pretensions and lie—they find an abode in the untainted and uncontaminated world of Truth which is called the Brahm Loka, the abode of the supreme Brahm who is an embodiment of Absolute Truth.

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Canto 2 (Question 2)

1. The next question was asked by Bhargava, a resident of the country called Vidharva. He asked Pippalaad, ‘Oh Lord! How many Gods maintain or serve or are responsible for the subjects (creatures) of this creation? Who are the Gods in the

pantheon of Gods who illuminate the subjects (i.e. are able to reveal their glories and majestic virtues), and who is the senior most among them all?' (1).

2. Sage Pippalaad replied, 'The elements of Nature such as the Akash or sky, Vayu (wind or air), Agni (fire), Aapha (water) and Prithivi (earth) are all deemed to be Gods. [These are the five Bhuts or primary elements of creation from which the gross body of the creature and the rest of the physical world is made. They are called Gods because they were created by the Supreme Being known as Brahm himself in the beginning of creation and were empowered by him to carry on with certain designated duties on behalf of the Lord. Hence, these elements represented one or the other qualities or attributes of Brahm separated from one another with the intention that their efforts are not duplicated. They were Gods because they had certain superior qualities in them which the other units of creation lacked, and also because the rest of the creation depended upon their mercy and grace. These elements are universal; wherever there is life they must be present in some form or the other. It is out of them that the rest of the visible creation has been moulded. Even if one is removed, the edifice of the entire world as we know it to be would crumble. In effect, these elements represented the dynamic aspect of Brahm. This was the first instance of the concept of 'delegation of authority' or 'decentralization of power' for the express purpose of making the functioning of creation smooth and hassle free. It was done to avoid confrontation between various powerful forces of Nature so that calamity could be avoided.]

This is followed by the following Gods—Mana (mind), Vaani (speech), Chakchu (eyes) and Srota (ear). [These represent the five organs of perception and five organs of action.¹ These form the physical and visible aspect of the living body of the creature. Whereas the five primary Gods consisting of the Bhuts remain hidden, the entities mentioned in this stanza are the revealed forms of these primary Gods. The earth does not see or smell, but the fact that this element is astoundingly beautiful and produces myriad variety of fragrances is made vivid in the form of the faculty of sight located in the eye and the faculty of smell located in the nose. This logic can be extended to other Bhuts as well.]

All these Gods asserted that they were the ones who bear the body (representing the entire living world); that they were most important and responsible for creating and maintaining the body; that the body cannot survive without them; that the body itself is a revelation of their stupendous powers and potentials; that they are the primary cause for the entire creation coming into existence and depicting its glorious qualities (2).

[Note—¹The five organs of perception are eyes which see, the ears that hear, the nose that smells, the skin that feels, and the tongue that tastes. The five organs of action are the hands that accepts and do deeds, the legs that carry the body from one place to another, the mouth that eats and supports the other organs by providing them with food besides enabling the body to speak, the excretory organs that help eliminate waste, and the genitals that help to procreate.]

3. The chief amongst these Gods is Pran, and he admonished the other Gods, saying, 'All of you must stop bragging in vanity about your importance. The fact of the matter is that it is me who bears this body and give it protection with the help of my five manifestations¹ (3).

[Note—¹The five divisions or forms of Pran, the life consciousness that keeps the gross body of the creature alive are called Pran (breath), Apan, Samaan, Vyan and Udaan. These have been explained in note to verse no. 11 of Canto 1.

The superiority of Pran over all other patron Gods of the body have also been elucidated in the following Upanishads: Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Brahman 3, verse nos. 2-27, Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse nos. 7-14; Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 5, section 1, verse nos. 6-15.]

4. The numerous patron Gods did not believe this statement of fact made by Pran. To prove his point, Pran willingly decided to leave the body and began rising up (i.e. all the vital winds prepared to abandon the body and let the Gods defend the body's survival). As soon as this happened, the other life conscious factors in the different organs of the body, such as the faculty of speech located in the tongue and mouth, the faculty of sight in the eye, the faculty of intellect and thoughts located in the mind, and the faculty of hearing present in the ear too began to abandon the body along with the Pran. When the Pran stopped for a while, they too stopped.

This situation is like the queen bee and her retinue of worker bees. When the queen bee moves out, all the worker bees follow suit; when she sits down to rest, all the others too sit down to rest.

When the seniority of the Pran was irrefutably established, the rest of the patron Gods of the body offered their obeisance to it and worshipped it as their Lord. They accepted that Pran is the senior most amongst them all (4).

5. It is this Pran that burns or gives heat, light and energy in its manifestation as the fire. It is the Pran that is known as Surya (the Sun), Indra (the king of Gods and the chief of all the patron Gods of the organs listed in the previous verses), Parjanya (water), Megha (rain-bearing clouds), Vayu (wind or air), Prithivi (earth) and Rayi (the grosser aspects of creation; the inspired form of Brahm; the dynamic powers of Brahm).

If nothing exist that is not Pran, it naturally follows that Satya (truth), Asatya (falsehood) and Amrit (the elixir of eternity and bliss) is also nothing but Pran in these forms (5).

[Note—There is a special Sukta or hymn dedicated to the Pran in Atharva Veda. It is called *Pran Sukta*, and is the fourth Sukta of this Veda's 11th Chapter. This Pran Sukta is included in our present volume as appendix no. 2 at the end.]

6. Just like the spokes of a wheel are attached to the central hub, the hymns of the Rig/Rik Veda, the Mantras of the Yajur Veda and the Sam Veda, the two classes known as Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and the Yagya (fire sacrifices) are hooked or attached to or dependent upon the central axis called the Pran. [In other words, all these entities have any relevance only till the point there is life in the body. Pran is needed to recite the Vedas, Pran is needed to perform the fire sacrifices, and since the latter was financed and patronized by the Kshatriyas and actually performed by the Brahmins, they too depended upon the Pran.] (6).

7. [Verse nos. 7-13 are prayers offered to this supreme God known as Pran.]

‘Oh Pran! It is you who are Prajapati (the divine entity responsible for sustaining and giving protection to the world and its inhabitants). It is you who reside in the cosmic Mother's womb and take birth or reveal yourself in the mother and the father. [This stanza refers to the very beginning of creation. The ‘Pran’ here is the Atma or the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm who transformed into the Hiranyagarbha, the cosmic egg. From the latter emerged the Viraat Purush who was the cosmic Father. From the latter emerged the Prakriti, the cosmic Mother in whose womb the rest of creation was conceived and manifested. According to another

interpretation of creation, we can say that the Hiranyagarbha was lodged in the womb of the cosmic Mother known as Prakriti, and the Viraat Purush produced the Maya (delusion creating dynamic powers of the Lord) which harboured the rest of creation in her womb.]

Oh Pran! It is you to whom all the living beings of this world (called 'Prajā' or subjects of the kingdom of the Supreme Being) offer sacrifices, because you preside or rule over the world of sense organs. [The body of the creature is a microcosm of the entire world. The external world is known by the medium of the organs of the individual's body, and therefore the prime cause of the existence of this world is the life consciousness that is present in the organs of the body. This factor of 'life consciousness' is the Pran referred to here. Since life is central to all forms of sacrifices and other forms of worship, and since offerings to the sacred fire are meant for the supreme Lord, it follows that they are actually intended for the Pran which is a manifested form of the supreme transcendental Brahm or cosmic Consciousness.] (7).

8. (Oh Pran!) It is you who is like the sacred fire for the Gods. [The offerings made to the fire during the fire sacrifice is meant as food for the Gods. The Gods accept this food for their survival. Hence, the sacred fire is like the life-giving Pran for the Gods; it sustains them. The Gods respect the Fire God as the most senior amongst them. The Fire God gives them protection against evil by acting as an impenetrable shield of fire around them. The Fire God gives them their splendour, radiance, magnificence and glory; these Gods shine and bask in the glory of the Fire God just like the moon and other planets shine in the light of the Sun.]

It is you who is like the Swadha for the Pittars (the spirits of dead ancestors). [The word 'Swadha' is pronounced when food offerings are made to the spirit of dead ancestors. So, Swadha sustains them. Hence, it is like the life-giving Pran for the Pittars.]

This fact has been proved by the two great sages named Atharva¹ and Angira² (8).

[Note--¹Sage *Atharva* is the ancient sage who first revealed the fourth Veda called after his name, i.e. the Atharva Veda. He was the son of Brahma, the creator, according to Vedic mythology. He first brought down fire from the heaven to earth, and hence was the first sage to have propagated the worship of the sacred fire. The word 'athar' is the absolute word for the fire element, and hence this sage was named 'Atharvan' to commemorate this auspicious deed of his. He made the supreme Fire God, who is synonymous with the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being called Brahm, make this earth as his habitat, thereby paving the way for the forthcoming generations to utilise the stupendous powers and potentials of this fire element in practical terms here on earth itself. Since he brought the fire down on earth, he was also the first to initiate the process of worship of this element, both in its sublime form as the Fire God and its more tangible and gross form as the sacred fire worshipped during formal ritual of the fire sacrifice as well as in other informal forms as done by various sections of society in their daily lives.

When he brought the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire from the heaven, he offered Soma (the extract of a herb called Som and used as a holy and sanctified liquid-offering meant to be offered to the Gods for their eternal life and sustenance) to him to please him and to show respect to this God who was now the guest of honour for Atharvan. In order to please him further while offering Soma to him, the sage chanted the hymns that he had learned from his father, the creator Brahma. This started the practice of offering of Soma to the sacred fire during the ritual of the fire sacrifice along with the chanting of hymns of the Atharva Veda.

According to the Purans, his earthly wife was Shanti, the daughter of Kardama Prajapati. He is regarded as a personification of the Fire God, and is often invoked in conjunction with another great sage named Angiras (who was another son of Brahma). In this form he is called 'Atharvangiras' (Atharvan + Angiras) and is regarded as the father of the Fire God to commemorate the fact that these two sages are responsible for the honour and exalted position that the Fire God occupies in the pantheon of Gods, and also the fact that they were responsible for propagating the worship of the fire as the most holy and the most sacred form of worship of the Supreme Being.

According to Mundakopanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 1, Atharva is the eldest of the six mental-born sons of Brahma. Brahma had first taught him the best metaphysical knowledge called Brahm Vidya, and Atharva had later taught it to Angiras, his younger brother and first disciple (Mundakopanishad, 1/1/2). The descendents of Atharva came to be known as Atharvaan, and those of Angira as Aangiras.

Since sage Atharva had started the practice of worship of the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice and had used the initial Mantras taught to him by his father Brahma, the Mantra of this Veda came to be known after him as 'Atharvaa', and since his brother Angira had carried forward this practice started by his older brother by actually invoking these Mantras during formal sacrifices held from time to time after the first exercise, the Mantras came to be known after both the brothers as 'Atharvaangiras'.

The Mantras of the Atharva Veda which were initially pronounced by sage Atharva came to be known after him as 'Atharvaa', and those by the two brothers jointly as 'Atharvaangiras'.

According to Mahabharat, the great epic related to Lord Krishna penned by sage Veda Vyas, Atharva had searched out the fire concealed in the ocean (Mahabharat, Vanparva, 222).

Another Upanishad of the Atharva tradition that is attributed to sage Atharva is the Atharva Shikha Upanishad.

²Sage *Angira*—This sage was associated with the branch of ancient sages who adored and worshipped the sacred Fire as a manifestation of the Supreme Being. A number of Vedic hymns are attributed to him. He is the sage who first started the ancient tradition of 'fire worship', was the first sacrificer and the forefather of sacred rituals. He had achieved such great mastery of the fire element that he could replace the Fire God and take over his duties during rituals if the latter did not oblige the worshipper. The Purans describe him variously as being the mental-born son of Brahma, the creator, and as having sprung forth from the sacrificial fire of the Varun God (the Water God; also sometimes referred to as the Sun because the latter is responsible for rains).

He is believed to have four wives who were actually personified eclectic virtues that he possessed rather than any physical woman—Vasuddhaa (personified absolute purity), Shraddhaa (personified faith and conviction), Svadhaa (personified self realisation and self restraint) and Sati (personified chastity and immaculacy). Brishaspati, the moral preceptor of the Gods, was one of his sons. The Pittars (the Spirits of dead ancestors) are also believed to be his sons. His daughters are the following—Raka, Sinivaalli, Kuhu which are actually phases of the moon rather than any physical lass.

He is lauded as the great teacher of Brahm Vidya, the metaphysical knowledge of Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Absolute. This explains why he is associated with such prime and incorruptible elements of Nature as fire and light—the former is the great universal purifier and the infuser of life in this creation, while the latter is synonymous with truth, enlightenment, knowledge, erudition and wisdom. Being self-realised and a Titan amongst the great sages of his time who initiated the tradition of worship of fire and light, he is regarded as an embodiment of

illumination, and this is why he is visualised as being associated with illuminated objects in the dark sky, such as the planet Jupiter and a star in the constellation Ursa Major.

Being an exalted sage and seer, he is regarded as being one of the ‘Saptarishis’—the great seven Rishis of the first Manvantara (the age or era of Manu, the first Male of creation).

The disciples of Angira adopted his name as their surname or title, and hence came to be known as ‘Aangiras’—the descendants of Angira. They were Kshatriyas (the warrior class) by birth but Brahmins by vocation and practice. They were said to be experts in sacerdotal laws, performance of occult practices such as magic and holding traditional rites.

Angira is credited with authoring the book of Law, called Angiras Smriti, and a book on Astronomy. The Angiras Smriti is a short book having 151 verses and deals mainly with repentance of sins.

Sage Angira was the younger brother of sage Atharva who was the eldest son of Brahma. Brahma had taught the great metaphysical knowledge called Brahm Vidya, the knowledge that enlightens the creature about the supreme Brahman who is the ultimate Absolute Truth, the Reality and pure conscious cosmic Soul of creation, first to Atharva, and then Atharva had taught it to his brother Angira. These two brothers are credited with starting the practice of worship of the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice as well as other forms of the fire as worshipped by different sections of the society.]

9. Oh Pran! You are Indra personified. [Indra is the chief God and their king. Hence, by comparing to Indra, this stanza implies that Pran is the chief amongst all the vital factors in creation that are responsible for life in this world. Just like the subjects of a kingdom depend upon their king, all other units of the living world depend upon Pran for their survival. It is the responsibility of a king to look after the welfare of his subjects and the kingdom at large in a dispassionate and judicious manner while being caring, compassionate and merciful towards all. Likewise, the Pran too is expected to behave similarly.]

You are like Rudra (the angry and ferocious form of Lord Shiva) and give us protection from all sides (like a shield of fireball). [Amongst the eleven forms of Shiva, Rudra is the most ferocious one. Anger and ruthlessness are associated with the word Rudra. So, Pran is uncompromising as far as its duties are concerned. It never lets those who worship it to suffer. It would protect them like a magical shield of fireball protects the worshipper of the Fire God. Refer invoking of the two sages Angira and Atharva in this context as narrated in note to verse no. 8 above.] (9).

10. Oh Pran! When you appear in the form of the rain-bearing clouds and come down to us mercifully in the form of the life-giving rains, the subjects (i.e. all the living beings) of this world become exhilarated and ecstatic in the hope of fresh growth of food (10).

[Note—Since food sustains life in this world, and since the growth of food heavily depends upon good rainfall, the advent of the rains is the time of cheer and rejoicing for the population. That is why food is directly related to life. Refer Taittiriyo-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Valli 2, Anuvak 2; Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, section 9, verse no. 1 of the Sam Veda tradition; Subalo-panishad, Canto 14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The Taittiriyo-panishad, Valli 3, Anuvak 2, 7-9 affirms that food is the Pran of the creature, while Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Brahman 3, verse no. 17-18 says that food is Brahman.]

11. Oh Pran! You are ‘Vratya’—i.e. one who does not need purification, improvement, refinement, consecration or baptism. No formal investiture ceremony needed to be performed for your initiation because you are eternally holy and divine. [The reason is the Pran was the first-produced God. When the creator created this world and the body of the creature, it showed no sign of life. The creator felt frustrated because all his efforts had gone to vain. So he created ‘Pran’, and all the other deemed Gods immediately sprang into life and activity. Thus, Pran was the only entity that made the Gods what they are worth; in other words the Pran is the God of all the gods. Since he is the first-born he is deemed to be immaculate and already baptized. Since there was no life before Pran came into existence, there was no contamination, corruption and all sorts of faults and impurities that tainted this world—these formed gradually as time passed and the creatures got involved in the activities of this material world.]

You are praised as the Fire God known as the ‘Ekarshi Agni’—literally the sage who represents the Fire God himself. [In other words, you are the ‘only’ (Ek) sacred entity worshipped by sages (Rishi) when they offer oblations to the sacred Fire God during the fire sacrifices. Here the reference is to the sage ‘Atharvaanigra’ (sages Atharva and Angira who personified the Fire God) as narrated in verse no. 8 of this Canto 2 above.]

You are the divine Being who accepts the offerings of food that we make to the fire sacrifice. [Here the reference is to the food eaten by the creature. The food eaten is meant to sustain life or Pran in the body. Since Pran and Atma, the pure consciousness, are synonymous with each other, and since the Atma is Brahm personified, the food eaten is the offering to the Supreme Being residing in one’s own self as the Atma and the Pran. Pran is Brahm personified as much as the Atma—refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 1, verse no. 3. This is the best form of symbolic fire sacrifice as narrated in the Upanishads—refer Pran Agnihotra Upanishad and Shaarirak Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda.]

You are the Lord of this creation. You are our Father, and it is you who moves in the sky as the semi-God known as ‘Maatarishwa¹’ in the form of the wind or air (11).

[Note—¹The *Maatarishwa* is the cosmic father of the Wind God.]

12. (Oh Pran)! Please calm down your auspicious form that lives in the form of speech (in the mouth and tongue) as well as in ears (as the faculty of hearing), in the eyes (as the faculty of seeing) and in the Mana (the mind and the emotional aspects of the heart). [In other words, let the all the sense organs find peace and rest; let their agitations subside; let me find tranquility, rest and peace. The sense organs are naturally restless, and so this prayer is to calm them down. Let these organs think, see, hear and talk about auspicious things instead of worldly things.]

You should not attempt to move out of the body. [In other words, let the life forces remain energized, active, strong, vibrant, pulsating and revitalized in the body. Let my body remain active, strong, agile and energetic. Let me not suffer from want of energy, strength and vitality. Let me have a long life, because as long as the Pran lives inside the body it would continue to live.] (12).

13. Oh Pran! Whatever that exists in this mortal world as well as in the world where the Trinity Gods¹ live is dependent upon you; all are supported, sustained and protected by you; you form their foundation and basis.

Give us your protection just like a mother protects her child. Bless us with ‘Sri’ (fortunes, wealth, prosperity, fame, glory, splendour, renown and all sorts of worldly accomplishments) as well as ‘Pragya’ (truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment)’ (13).

[Note—¹The Trinity Gods are the creator Brahma, the protector Vishnu, and the concluder Shiva. They live in the heaven.]

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Canto 3 (Question 3)

1. The third question was asked by Kausalya, the son of Ashwal. He asked Pippalaad, ‘From where is Pran born or what is the source of its origin¹? How does it enter the body, and how does it come out of the body? How does it wear (sustain or inspire or keep alive) the external (gross) body as well as the internal (subtle) body of the creature?’ (1).

[Note—The origin of the Prans have also been explained in the Paingalo-panishad of Skukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 3.]

2. Sage Pippalaad replied, ‘You have asked a very difficult question. But since you are sincere about your query and are steady in your pursuit of Brahm (Truth), I would answer it (2).

3. [This verse answers the first two questions—‘from where is Pran created and how does it enter the body’.]

The Pran has its origin in the Atma (the pure consciousness). Just like a shadow has its origin in the presence of the gross body of the creature, or is dependent upon such a body, the Pran too has its origin from the Atma and is dependent upon the latter for its survival. [The shadow is created because of the presence of the gross body; if the body is not there, the shadow would also be not there. The presence of the shadow proves the presence of the body. Likewise, the Pran is a shadow created by the consciousness residing in the body of the creature. Since the creator Atma is sublime and subtle, since the Atma is invisible, the shadow, the Pran, is also sublime and subtle, it also is invisible. If the Atma or pure consciousness leaves the body, the Pran would also leave the body. In other words, the presence of the Pran or life in the body of a creature proves that the Atma is still inside the body. They both stay and leave the body together.]

This Pran enters the body by the determination of the Mana. [When the Atma, which is the true ‘self’ of the creature, decides that it must make the body alive and active, it enters it, and in order to activate the lifeless body it pulls in the Pran alongside it to do what is needed. In other words, the Pran is the dynamism of the Atma in action.] (3).

[Note—The relationship between the Pran (vital airs) and the Atma has been elucidated in the Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 10 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition; the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 35-38; Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 1-2. The Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 17 affirms that Pran and the Atma are synonymous with each other.]

4. Just like a wise king appoints his ministers and other staff in all the districts and villages of his kingdom to carry out the work of administration smoothly, the chief

Pran (breath) appoints the other Prans (junior or subsidiary Prans) to carry out specialised functions in the various parts of the body¹. [The body is like the kingdom whose sovereign is the Atma. The Atma has the chief Pran as its chief minister to whom it delegates the power of running the routine affairs of the kingdom known as the body of the creature. This chief Pran is the breath as would be confirmed in verse no. 5 below. It appoints other Prans and sub-Prans to different duties and assigns them certain jurisdictions for fixing responsibilities. But they all obey the chief Pran and the latter obeys the call of the Atma. The Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 4/3/35 describes how the various Prans present in the various parts of the body as the Atma or consciousness prevailing in these individual parts follow the call of the enlightened chief Pran or the Atma and moves along with it.] (4).

[Note—¹According to Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, there are fourteen Prans or vital winds present in the body. It lists their functions as follows—(1) Pran—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) Apaana—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing (verse 2); (3) Vyan—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4) Udaan—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Samaana—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5); (6) Vairambh—this controls speech (verse 6); (7) Mukhya—this controls the hands (verse 7); (8) Antarayam—this controls the legs (verse 8); (9) Prabhanjan—this controls the anus (verse 9); (10) Kurma—this controls the genitals (verse 10); (11) Shyen—this controls the Mana or the thoughts and emotions (verse 11); (12) Krishna—this controls the discrimination, intellect and wisdom (verse 12); (13) Shwet—this controls Ahankar or the notion of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity etc. (verse 13); (14) Naag—this controls the ‘Chitta’ or the faculty of concentration, memory, sub-conscious, reasoning (verse 14).]

5. [This verse answers the third question—‘how does it move out of the body’, and partly answers the fourth one—‘how does it sustain the body’.]

The chief Pran itself moves out of the mouth and the nostrils, and establishes itself in the eyes and the ears. [This chief Pran is the first and foremost component of the vital winds present in the body. It is the breath that is being referred to here. It helps the creature to breathe, to see and hear.]

It appoints the Apaana Vayu (the second component of the vital winds present in the body, the component called Apaana) in the lower end of the body, i.e. in the anus and the genitals. [It regulates the excretory organs and the entire process related to conception).

The Samaana Vayu (the third component) is assigned the middle area of the body, the region of the abdomen. It is assigned the duty of distributing the food eaten by the creature (i.e. the nourishment derived from the food eaten) equally to all parts of the body.

It is from this Pran manifested in the form of Agni or fire (i.e. the energy, heat, strength, vitality and life consciousness that is derived by the digestion of the food eaten by the creature) that the seven flames (of life) are ignited and kept burning. [The seven flames or signs of life referred to here are the following—the two eyes and their ability to see; the two ears and their ability to hear; the two nostrils and their ability to smell; the tongue and its ability to taste. The total comes to seven.] (5).

[Note—Verse nos. 5-6 describe the location and function of the various Prans in the body. Refer also to Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 79-82; Amrit Naad Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 35-36; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 97-98.]

6. This Atma (pure conscious soul) lives in the subtle heart of the creature. There are one hundred and one Naadis or tubular ducts (nerves, veins and capillaries) in the region of the heart. Each of them has one hundred branches, and each branch gives out seventy two thousand finer Naadis. As a result, a fine and complicated network of Naadis is created (much like a wire mesh or matrix of wires in an electrical gadget) that spreads out from the heart to the remotest corners of the body.

The Vyan Vayu (the fourth component of the vital winds) is located in this network and moves along in it (6).

7. Out of these Naadis, one, the chief amongst them, is called the Sushumna Naadi¹ and it moves in the upward direction. The Udaan Vayu (the fifth component of the vital winds) moves along this Naadi, and it is this wind that helps the creature to rise higher in his noble pursuits and spiritual stature in life if he is inclined towards auspiciousness, righteousness and nobility, or degrades and pulls him down to be demoted to a lower form of life if the creature is inclined to be sinful, evil, wicked, deceitful, pervert and indulgent in this world of delusions and grossness.

It is this Udaan Vayu that decides whether or not the creature remains turning in the cycle of birth and death in this mortal world² (7).

[Note—¹The Yoga Upanishads deal extensively with this *Sushumna Naadi*. It is the main nerve originating in the lower end of the spinal column and passes through it right up to the top of the head. During Yoga, the practitioner is taught to direct his Prans through this Naadi so that they can reach up into the head. As these Prans move up they meet the Atma in the heart, and the latter accompanies the Pran and heads upwards. When they reach the region of the head, the region of the forehead, the area of the cerebrum, the practitioner is said to have developed the enlightenment because the ‘third eye’ located in the middle of the eyebrows and the root of the nose is activated. At the same time some secretions effuse from this area of the brain which gives him the eclectic feeling of exhilaration and ecstasy that is unmatched and cannot be defined. He has no longer any awareness of either his body or the external world. As the Pran and the Atma move ahead, they reach the area of the cranium where the Brahm Randhra, the hair-like slit in the skull, is located. As the Pran begins to circulate here, the titillation reaches a crescendo and the experience of bliss and ecstasy is complete. Once this exalted spiritual stage of ‘high’ is reached, no man in his senses would wish to revert back to the world of problems. So, the wise ascetic finally allows his Pran to escape through this slit and go out of the body. The Atma escapes too along with the Pran—that is, the ascetic finds what is called Kaivalya Mukti, the liberation and deliverance which is one of its kind and from which there is no coming back into the body. The physical body left behind disintegrates on its own. This is because the life giving Pran has abandoned it.

²However, if the person is interested in this world, this achievement would be exploited by him for personal gain such as fame and money. This is because success in Yoga gives him certain mystical powers, called the eight Siddhis, that help him perform miracles, and this ability draws in the crowd of people to him, and along with the crowd comes fame, wealth, prosperity, pomp and pageantry. But all this hullabaloo demotes his soul and binds it to this world of materialism.]

8. [This verse answers the fourth question—‘what is the external and internal forms of the body of the Pran’.]

The Sun is the external form of the Pran. The Sun obliges the Pran or consciousness that resides in the eye when it rises in the morning. [Since the Sun is high up in the heaven called the Duloka, the Pran wind has a natural tendency to move upwards. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the natural inclination of the

Pran or the Atma is to reach nobler and higher goals in life. When one fixes one's eyes on a noble target, the Pran feels excited and motivated to put in its best. Presently, the eyes can see anything only in the light of the Sun during the daytime. The faculty of sight located in the eye is useful and can become effective only if there is light in the world. Otherwise, even though the eye is there in the body the latter would not be able to see anything, and as far as the creature is concerned the existence of the eye that cannot see is as good as the body which has no eye. So, it is the Sun that obliges the eye in as much as the latter's value is established only due to light of the Sun. The eye is always eager to look forward to the presence of the Sun to provide it with light to see. Since verse no. 5 of this Canto 3 has established that the chief Pran activates the consciousness or life (faculty of sight) in the eye, and earlier Canto 1, verse nos. 5-8, 10 has already established that the Sun God is the life of everything that exists, it obviously follows that the Sun is the external form of the chief Pran that resides in the eye and which enables the creature to live a meaningful and fruitful life on earth.]

The patron God of earth, i.e. the God named Prithivi, attracts the Apaana Vayu, the wind in the lower part of the creature. [That is why the Apaana wind has a tendency to move downwards. The earth pulls it towards itself. The location of the Apaana wind in the anus is symbolic of the earth because all residue matter of the food is accumulated here, and this is why stool is called night 'soil'—implying 'earth'.]

The vacant space between the two, i.e. between the Sun and the Prithivi, is called the sky or Akash. It is here that the Samaana wind resides. [This is indicative of the sac-like abdomen located between the eye and the anus. Even as the sky harbours everything in existence, all the gross bodies of the solar system find their habitat in this space, the abdomen too harbours all the major organs of the body. Since the air is uniformly distributed in this sky, it is called 'Samaana'—literally meaning equal and even.]

Since the wind or air present in the sky is all-pervading and all-encompassing, it is called Vyaan (8).

9. The energetic and dynamic cosmic power called the 'Tej' (literally meaning energy, heat, light, radiance, strength, vitality and stamina) that helps the Pran to fly or keep afloat is called Udaan (literally meaning to fly and take off), and it is personified as the vital wind of this name inside the body. [That is, the Udaan wind personifies the glorious ability of the divine forces of Nature to provide the impetus, the energy, heat, vitality and strength to the entities of creation to lift themselves up from the lower level of existence and reach for higher goals in life. In other words, the Udaan wind is that aspect of the Pran which helps the creature to get up, to wake up and rise, or to lift his self and 'fly'. All the other vital winds keep on moving and performing their functions because they are empowered and energized by this hidden dynamic force called the Udaan. Since the Sun is a personified form of all the glorious virtues that the word 'Tej' stands for, such as energy, dynamism, heat, light, strength, vitality, stamina, the Sun is treated as being synonymous with Tej. It is the Sun God that inspires the Pran to do what it does.]

Hence, those persons in whom this Udaan wind dies down, calms down, loses its strength and energy, or gets dissipated, their sense organs do not show life and cannot carry on with their functions. In such a situation, these sense organs retract themselves and collapse into the Mana (the mind). In other words, since the desires of the sense organs are yet unfulfilled because of the inability of these sense organs to act as they had wanted to act due to the dissipation of the Udaan wind, the unrequited

desires, aspirations and hopes are ensconced in the Mana or mind, waiting for an opportunity to leap forward and regain lost territory¹.

So, this paves the way for the creature taking a new birth to fulfill his unfulfilled desires, wants, aspirations, hopes and expectations² (9).

[Note--¹The creature has a great desire to do something or achieve some target, but he has lost the energy, the strength, the vitality, the stamina and the ability of the vital winds to inspire and keep the sense organs working so that the aim can be achieved. In such a situation, the desires and aspirations remain unrequited and unfulfilled. In other words, the Mana or the mind continues to harbour these desires, aspirations, wants and yearnings. In fact, the inability to obtain something only goes to stoke the fire of desires more ferociously. They become fierce and stubborn. This compels the creature to continuously think about them while he is still alive, and at the time of death his Atma would yearn to acquire another body so that the unfilled task of the previous life can be completed.

²The concept of what happens after death or the destiny of a person has been explained in many Upanishads. The basic concept is that the creature attains that place which it desires for at the time of death—refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 12 which is very explicit on this point. Further, it also depends upon the creature's mental awareness and conception of the what constitutes the 'Truth'—refer Brihad Aranyak Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse no. 1-6.

The destiny of the person depends upon the type of desires he has while doing deeds in this world. This is stated in Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; and in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 33, Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 4-14.

The concept of death and what happens after that has been succinctly described, inter alia, in the following Upanishads—Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 4/3/33, 35-38, 4/4/1-14, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2, 14-16, etc.; Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10; Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1; Taaittiriyo-pahishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20; Canto 1, Valli 2, verse no. 1-6; Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 6-8; Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 4-17; Subalo-panishad, Canto 11.

What happens to ignorant people after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1.

The three great Truths to be remembered at the time of death have enunciated in Chandogya Upanishad, 3/17/6. They are—(1) You are eternal and imperishable; (2) You cannot be demoted, degenerate, become fallen and digressed; and (3) You are basically most sublime, subtle, atomic and a microcosmic image of the vast and macrocosmic supreme Brahm.

The metaphor of the tree has been brilliantly employed to explain 'what happens after' death in Brihad Aranyak 3/9/28, and in Chandogya 6/11/1-3.

Why does a creature take a new birth is also explained in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 24.]

10. Whatever the Sankalps (determinations, volitions, resolutions, vows, promises) a creature makes or has at the time of death, he takes a new birth with the same sort of Sankalps. The new life is pre-conditioned and pre-programmed based on the Sankalps that the creature has at the time of his death. [In other words, the mental setup, the desires and expectations as well as the personality of the creature in his new life are initially based on the Sankalps of the pervious life. This is part of the concept of 'Praarabdha' or destiny of a creature. The other component of this destiny is the Karma or deed done by him in the previous life and their accumulated affects that are carried forward to the new life. These two components decide the initial conditioning of the Mana or mind of the new born infant. These would determine the child's initial

and spontaneous reactions to given set of circumstance or events in the new life. But since he is born as a human being, he has been given the special privilege to overcome the drag of these two components of his mind and personality by being able to decide for himself what to do and what not to. He can change or mould his destiny as he grows up because he has the power to read and understand, to think and decide, to analyse and discriminate—some of the grand opportunities the other creatures of creation lack.]

The Pran has the energy and the ability to take the creature (i.e. his Atma or soul) into that form which he desires at the time of death in order to fulfill his dreams that are yet unfulfilled¹ (10).

[Note—¹The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 1-4 very explicitly describes the detailed process by which the Pran leaves the old body and assumes the new body depending upon the desires of the creature.]

11. Those wise, erudite and enlightened ones who understand the importance and significance of Pran as narrated in this Canto are blessed with descendents or dependants who are never subjected to demotion or degradation. They obtain the elixir of eternity and imperishability. [That is, such people are knowledgeable about the truth and reality, and therefore like all learned people they do not waste their precious life in following falsehood and pretensions, in pursuing things that have no truth and substance. Instead, they spend their lives in fruitful activity. They gain steady fame and respect in society that lasts even after they leave this mortal world.]

This Shloka (verse) affirms this axiom; it reasserts this maxim (11).

12. A person who gets to understand comprehensibly the five aspects of Pran—viz. the origin, the arrival in this world, the abode or habitat, the distribution in an universal and uniform manner in this world, and the external as well as the internal forms of Pran—verily, such person is indeed able to obtain the exalted stature of eternity and imperishability. This is a certainty (12).

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Canto 4 (Question 4)

[This Canto describes the two primary states of existence of consciousness in a creature, called the Jagrat or waking state, and the Swapna or dreaming state.]

1. Next was the turn of the grandson of the Sun God, the sage named Gargya, to ask sage Pippalaad the following question—‘Oh Lord! In the body of the Purush (the man)¹ who (i.e. which organs) sleeps and who remains awake? Which God sees dreams and which God experiences happiness, pleasures and comfort? In whom are all these units of the body established (or who is the primary God who governs and controls them)?’ (1).

[Note—¹The reference to the ‘Purush’ to mean the body of all living beings is to symbolise the fact that the creature is a manifestation of the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading macrocosmic gross body of the supreme Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged. According to the Aiteriya Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4. When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human

body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. According to the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, it was this Viraat Purush himself that entered the body of all the creatures created.]

2. Sage Pippalaad replied—‘Oh Gargya! Just like the case of the rays of the sun collecting themselves and collapsing in the disc of the setting sun and re-emerging the next day when the sun rises, the various sense perceptions of the body relevant to different sense organs withdraw themselves and rest in the Mana or the mind of the Purush or the man (when he goes to sleep). Hence, in this situation he does not see, hear, taste, smell or feel (because the sense organs of perception related to these functions have become inactive), and neither does he speak (because the organ of action known as the mouth has become inactive), accept anything (because the organ of action known as the hand has become inactive), expels stool or other wastes from the body (because the organs of action concerned with these functions have become inactive), and enjoy anything (especially the enjoyment of sex and other sensual gratifications because the organs related to such enjoyments too have become inactive). In fact, he makes no effort of any kind.

This state of existence of the creature or his consciousness is called ‘sleep’ (2).

3. [Verse nos. 3 and 4 describe the symbolic fire sacrifice that the Atma, the pure ‘self’ of the wise and enlightened creature, continues to do even while he sleeps. This eclectic concept of doing a symbolic form of internal fire sacrifice which is continued uninterrupted and is therefore a superior form of worship of the sacred deity, the supreme Brahm revealed as the Atma or pure conscious ‘self’ of the creature, and as the Fire God who has manifested himself as the Pran of the creature, as compared to the formal forms of external fire sacrifice is endorsed in a number of other Upanishads, viz. Krishna Yajur Veda’s (i) Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 7; (ii) Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22; and (iii) Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 3-4.]

During this state of sleep, the only entity that is awake in the body called the ‘Pur¹’ (or the city where the Atma or the pure ‘self’ of the creature lives in the central citadel of the heart) is the subtle form of the Pran (the vital winds which are synonymous with life consciousness) called Agni which is the latent fire with its life giving and life sustaining energy that is inherently present in the Pran². [The Pran is regarded here as a manifestation of the Fire God and is responsible for life in this world. This is a metaphoric representation of the fact that the Pran provides the seminal energy, impetus and vitality to the creature to survive. In the state of existence when the external body consisting of the gross organs of perceptions and actions is asleep and inactive, the creature is kept alive because the Pran, in its manifestation as the fire element, keeps the body energized and activated, or ‘alive’. This is why the body is uniformly warm even when the body is not doing any physical activity. Had it not been for the Pran and its inherent fire element, the body would have cooled down and died.]

In this state, the holy fire known as the Garhyapatya Agni³ is represented by the Apaana wind, and the holy fire known as the Ahawaniya Agni⁴ is represented by the Vyan wind. It is the Garhyapatya Agni that gives rise or ignites the Ahawaniya Agni⁵ (3).

[Note—¹The concept of the body as a *Pur* has also been elucidated in the Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165; Canto 5, verse no. 2.

²This observation that the Pran is synonymous with fire is very interesting indeed. Let us examine how. Ordinarily, the wind representing Pran is inimical to fire or Agni—this is proved by the fact that wind can blow off any fire that burns; it is impossible for a candle to be kept lighted in a breeze. But when we examine the sleeping man, we observe that he breathes, or the wind/air element keeps blowing and aerating his body, while at the same time the body is kept warm, indicating the presence of fire element in it. So, both the Pran or wind and the Agni or fire co-exist. If we compare this sleeping man with a dead body, it is found that in both the cases the body is lifeless and no sense organs are functioning. The only difference is that the sleeping man breathes and is warm to touch, while the dead man stops breathing and his body is icy cold. Life and consciousness are equivalent to Pran, and therefore the subtle body of the sleeping man has Pran pulsating inside it along with the presence of the fire element. The Pran moves along the Naadis, the tubular ducts called the nerves and veins and capillaries present in the body while the man sleeps and his external organs are inactive—refer Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 12, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 20; Krishna Yajur Veda's Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 58-60; Rig Veda's Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 19.

³The Garhyapatya fire is the sacred fire of the household hearth. It is the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice. It is the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies.

⁴The Ahawaniya fire is lit to invoke the Gods, to invite them to participate and accept the offerings made to them during a ritualistic fire sacrifice.

⁵According to Vedic tradition, the invitational fire, the Ahawaniya fire that is lit to invite or invoke the Gods, is started from a spark brought from the Garhyapatya fire of the patron who does the fire sacrifice or on whose behalf it is being done. If such a fire is not available with him, then it is brought from some other person's house who worships the sacred fire on a daily basis.]

4. The breath that is exhaled and inhaled is like the offerings made to the holy fire during the formal fire sacrifice.

Since these two aspects of the same breath called Pran are equal in importance, the wind that has this epithet of 'Samaan' or being equal and uniform (i.e. the Samaan Vayu) is like the priest that divides the offerings of the fire sacrifice in equal parts before making the oblations to the deity. [The Samaan wind is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment to all parts of the body as stated earlier in Canto 3, verse no. 5. The priest who is responsible for making the offerings is called the Ritwik, and so it is expected of him that he divides the offerings to be made in equal proportions so that all the oblations are of equal ratio. No one offering should be more or less than the other.]

The Mana, or the thinking mind and emotional heart, is definitely the patron on whose behalf the fire sacrifice is done, or the one who does the sacrifice himself, and is therefore the beneficiary of the rewards. [The Mana is the chief patron because it is the mind and heart of the person which make him decide to do an auspicious deed and then actually carry out his decision. The success in this venture depends purely in the involvement of both the mind and the heart, for if one dithers the other is bound to follow suit. The involvement of the heart is of great significance because the Atma lives in its subtle space—Canto 3, verse no. 6, and the Pran has its origin in the Atma—refer Canto 3, verse no. 3. Since the whole concept of the fire sacrifice

revolves around the Pran, the inclusion of the heart is absolutely essential. Wisdom and erudition require a coordinated effort of these two components of the Mana, and a person is deemed to be enlightened if he has realised that the Atma residing in his heart is the Supreme Being who is at the center of the entire structure of the body and is the deity who is being honoured by this method of internal fire sacrifice. The thinking mind is the aspect of the Atma which makes it distinguished and different from other entities in this creation, including the Pran and the Fire. They simply carry out the orders of the Mana—the complex consisting of the heart and the mind as explained here. So the Mana naturally is the ‘patron’ who is to benefit from the fire sacrifice.]

The desired fruit of the fire sacrifice is equivalent to the Udaan Vayu. It is this Udaan (the exalting and spiritually uplifting rewards of the auspicious fire sacrifice) that helps the Mana (as the patron of this auspicious activity) to get firmly established in the truth and existence of Brahm (the Absolute Truth in life). [The Udaan wind is associated with lifting of the creature from his lowly worldly existence and making him exalted and honourable, wise and enlightened—Canto 3, verse no. 7. Such a soul is indeed Brahm realised.] (4).

5. The exalted deity (i.e. the Consciousness or the Atma) experiences its glories and majesty made evident during the Jagrat or waking state of existence. [During the waking state, all the organs are active, and the creature’s true ‘self’, i.e. his Atma, can witness the stupendous achievements that the body can attain with the help of its sense organs. Since the Atma is the truthful identity of the person who makes the various achievements and obtains success in different fields with the help of the organs of the body while he is awake, it is therefore the Atma that is supposed to be the actual beneficiary of these achievements and successes. So, the Atma watches them with pride and feels satisfied.]

Now when the same deity sleeps, it recollects or remembers those things that it had seen or experienced while it was awake. It sees, hears and experiences those things once again during the sleeping state, not at the physical plane but at the subtle plane of the sub-conscious.

Not only limited to this, it can even see, hear and experience things that it could not see, hear and experience during the waking state because then it had to face the barrier of the limitations of the gross body and the gross physical world. Since this barrier is removed during the sleeping state and the subtle aspect of the body consisting of the mind and the sub-conscious are given freedom to fly according to their inclinations, the deity can even see, hear and experience things unimaginable during the waking state of its existence. It gets so involved in this scenario that it becomes a part of it much like it was the part of the waking world (5).

6. When the deity or Lord of the body (i.e. the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’) withdraws itself into its own realm in the heart, it gets surrounded by ‘Teja’, the splendour and radiance that is natural to it and effuses out of it. In this condition it is deemed to have distanced itself from the Mana (which had made it see dreams as narrated in verse no. 5 above) and the Indris (the sense organs that had made it experience the world and interact with it). [This is because when the Atma, the deity of the body, comes to realise its own glorious nature, it finds true peace and tranquility, it feels exhilarated and happy so much so that now it forsakes the false notion of happiness and comforts that this physical material world and its counterpart seen in the dreams had presented to it to lure it in their snare. The Atma finds so much

spiritual solace and succour in the realisation of its own natural and inherent state of enlightenment, the state called Pragya which is glorious, radiant and splendorous, that it need not think or ever worry about the other two states through which it had passed, i.e. the two states of waking and dreaming, to reach this eclectic and exalted state when the Atma is surrounded by its own radiance and splendour. This divine and eclectic state of self realisation is called enlightenment and Pragya—the state of ‘truthful awareness’.]

Therefore in this state, the Atma, the deity, does not dream. It experiences true happiness, solace, comfort and bliss. It enjoys the peace and tranquility that this realisation gives it (6).

7. Oh Saumya (a pleasing and sober gentleman)! Just like all the birds come to take rest on a tree, all the elements¹ related to the perceptions and actions of the body, both at the gross level as well as at the subtle level, come to take rest in the Atma, the pure consciousness². They retire in the Atma at the end of their toil for rest and relaxation. [This refers to the Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness when the gross body and all its sense organs along with the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect complex come to rest, or become inactive. In this state of existence, the Pran—the life consciousness of the creature—comes to take rest in its true ‘self’ or with the parent from whom it had emerged in the beginning. This situation is also like the case of a tired child who plays the whole day but comes to his parent’s home to rest and relax at the end of the day’s activity.] (7).

[Note—¹The ‘elements’ referred to here have been enumerated in detail in the next verse no. 8 below.

²An exactly similar idea has been expressed in the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 19.]

8. [This verse enumerates the ‘elements’ referred to in verse no. 7. These are the different organs of perception and action in the body. In this context, refer to the Shaarirak Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda.]

All the different elements or individual units of consciousness that makes the creature aware of the world, interact with it, be charmed with it and remember it even while he sleeps (i.e. during the dreaming state) withdraw themselves (during the third state of consciousness called the deep sleep or Sushupta) and come to rest or retire in the Atma.

These elements that constitute the body of the creature are divided into the following categories—

[The five principal Bhuts or elements of creation.] (i) The earth and its perception in the form of smell (as all things that have the earth element as their ingredient have a natural tendency to emit a fragrance or smell, whether pleasant or otherwise); (ii) the water and its perception in the form of taste (because to taste anything the secretions of the taste buds need some fluid medium for its enzymes to interact with the chemicals in the thing tasted so as to create the sense of taste); (iii) the sky and its perception in the form of sound (because the sound waves need space to travel and the medium of the air to be generated and transmitted in the form of waves); (iv) the wind and its perception in the form of touch (as is evident when we can feel the soft touch of the breeze blowing against the face even though no one can see the wind); (v) the fire and light (collectively called Tej) and their perception in the form of shape and form (because only visible things can be seen, and the fire provides the light to make it visible along with the energy for enabling the creature to be alive

and see things—here the reference is to the sun in whose light the entire world assumes a definitive shape and form to enable it to be seen).

[The five principal organs of perception and their respective functions.] (vi) The eye and its function of perception in the form of sight or seeing things in this visible world (because it is only the eye amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to see anything); (vii) the ear and its function of perception in the form of hearing (because it is only the ear amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to hear sounds emanating from anything); (viii) the nose and its function of perception in the form of smell (because it is only the nose amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to smell anything); (ix) the tongue and its function of perception in the form of taste (because it is only the tongue amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to taste anything); (x) the skin and its function of perception in the form of touch or the sense of feeling (because it is only the skin amongst the various organs that is exclusively empowered to feel or touch anything).

[The five principal gross organs of action and their respective functions.] (xi) The hand and its function in the form of accepting or receiving anything worthy of accepting or receiving; (xii) the mouth and its ability to speak and express one's views about subjects worthy of speaking; (xiii) the genital and its function in the form of reproduction and sexual enjoyment; (xiv) the anus and its function in the form of expelling wastes from the body (which is stool); (xv) the leg and its function in the form of taking the creature or the other organs of the body to their desired destination.

[The subtle body consists of the following organs along with their respective functions.] (xvi) The Mana (mind) and its function in the form of thinking about things or subjects worth thinking about; (xvii) the Buddhi (intellect) and its function in the form of discriminating between the good and the bad, of thinking analytically and intelligently about things or subjects worth knowing about and worth pondering, contemplating, researching, analyzing, discussing and deciding about; (xviii) the Ahankar (the sense of pride and ego) and the object that breeds it along with its result (i.e. the thing about which the creature is proud, and the collateral consequences of being proud—to be arrogant and haughty); (xix) the Chitta (sub-conscious) and its object (i.e. the things that the sub-conscious mind remembers and which constantly keep on nagging the creature; the memory bank of the mind which plays a crucial role in his dreams and the way his subjective mind thinks naturally); (xx) the Tejas (the illumination in the form of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment which are the inherent qualities of the Atma) and the things or subjects that are illuminated (known, realised and understood) with the help of the light of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment; and (xxi) Pran (the vital winds in the form of life consciousness or the vital spark of life and its evident signs in the creature) along with all the elements or units that are dependent upon this Pran (i.e. the entire being of the creature except his pure 'self' known as the Atma).

Verily, all these units finally collapse and disappear into the Atma, the pure consciousness (8).

[Note—The relationship between the three basic units of creation—viz. the gross body that perceives or sees this world, the subtle body through which this perception takes place, and the actual perceiver, the Atma, can be understood with the help of a simple parable. Once a teacher asked his disciple—'Son, do you see anything?' The disciple answered—'Yes sir, I see'. The teacher—'By what light do you see?' The disciple—'Sir, by the light of the sun in the sky during the day time, and by the light of the lamp during the night'. The teacher—'By what light do you see these lights?' The disciple—'Sir, by the light present in my eyes'. The teacher—'By what light is

the eye enabled to see?’ The disciple—‘Sir, by the light provided by the mind’. The teacher—‘By what light do you know the mind, or what lights up your mind and enables it to see and interpret the sight?’ The disciple—‘Sir, by the light provided by my self, for no one else outside can empower my mind to think for me’. The teacher—‘Well, there you are. You are the light of lights’. The enlightened disciple exulted—‘Yes indeed sir, that is I; that indeed is me’.]

9. [This verse defines who this enlightened pure conscious ‘self’ is which carries out the various functions mentioned in verse no. 8, or on whose behalf they are being carried out.]

He is the one who sees, he is the one who touches, he is the one who hears, he is the one who smells, he is the one who tastes, he is the one who thinks and contemplates, he is the one who does various deeds, he is the one who becomes aware of anything or acquires knowledge, skills and expertise, and he is the one who is enlightened, erudite and wise. A person who becomes acquainted with who this esoteric, divine and eclectic entity addressed as ‘he’ is becomes established in the supreme transcendental Brahm in the form of Absolute Truth.

The ‘he’ is known as the Vigyan Atma—the wise, erudite, enlightened, omniscient and all-knowing ‘Purush’ who is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as the imperishable and eternal Brahm. This ‘Purush’ is the pure consciousness known as the Atma or the true ‘self’ of the creature. A person who firmly knows this fact is undoubtedly established in the Absolute Truth (9).

10. Oh Saumya! A person who gets acquainted fully with this Supreme Being who has no shadows, who has no body, who is invisible, who is imperishable, infinite and eternal, and who is most auspicious and holy—such a man becomes all-knowing and omniscient; he reflects the grand virtues of being an image of this all-pervading and all-encompassing Lord. He literally embodies this Supreme Being and exhibits similar auspicious virtues.

Verily, all differences between such a person and the Supreme Being are erased, and he becomes one like the Lord himself. This is the great truth that this verse propounds and affirms (10).

11. Oh Saumya! A wise, erudite, self-realised and enlightened person who clearly knows about the enlightened and wise Atma, the pure consciousness representing the supreme transcendental cosmic Absolute Truth known as Brahm, in which all the Gods (the various dynamic forces and auspicious virtues of creation), all the Prans (the various aspects of life consciousness) and all the Bhuts (the elements and their various functions as enumerated in verse no. 8 above) are established and founded becomes one like this Atma himself—i.e. he acquires all the grand virtues displayed by the Atma. He is established in the Atma; he becomes indistinguishable from the Atma. [This is because he has realised that his true self is the Atma; he identifies himself with this divine Atma.] (11).

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Canto 5 (Question 5)

[This Canto is devoted to the worship of OM, the divine sound representative of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Divinity.]

1. The next turn was of the son of Shibi, named Satyakam¹, to ask Pippalaad—‘Oh Lord! Please tell us which world is conquered or attained by a person who spends his lifetime repeating the divine Mantra OM which relates to the supreme transcendental Brahm. [In other words, what is the destiny of the spiritually exalted person who worships the Supreme Being by constantly remembering him and continuously repeating the divine Mantra dedicated to the Lord of his life?] Please be kind enough to elucidate it and expound upon the subject’ (1).

[Note—¹A sage by the name of *Satyakam* appears in Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, section 4 wherein it is said that he was the son of a woman called Jabaalaa. This sage is also mentioned in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 1, verse no. 6, and in Canto 6, Brahman 3, verse nos. 11-12. He was taught by the Fire God himself as described in Chandogya Upanishad, 4/4-4/9, and was regarded as an expert in the fire sacrifice—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 6/3/11-12. He had taught the enlightened king Janak as mentioned in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 4/1/6.

But it is not clear whether the sage mentioned in these two Upanishads is the same one as the Satyakam mentioned in our present Upanishad. Presently it is said that he was the son of Shibi and not Jabaalaa.]

2. Sage Pippalaad expounded as follows—‘Oh Satyakam! This OM is verily the transcendental Brahm and the Supreme Being manifested or personified in the form of the invisible and all-pervading cosmic sound. Therefore, a wise man who comes to understand the grand significance of OM is able to attain either one of these two divine destinations (as described below) (2).

[Note—The two aspects of sublime Divinity mentioned here have only subtle difference; they are the same entity but vary only in the degree of subtlety. While the first aspect refers to the primary Brahm which is the Absolute Truth and the ultimate Consciousness that is the cause and the end of the entire creation, its slightly less subtle form as the Viraat Purush from whom the entire creation has come into being is the second form of this Brahm. It is like differentiating between the Pran, i.e. the chief vital wind called the breath, and the rest of its manifestations such as Apaana, Samaana, Vyan or Udaan. Is it actually possible to demarcate different types of winds? The different names are assigned to the same entity for the purpose of comprehension and to delineate the special functions it performs under different situations. Likewise, Brahm and the Viraat Purush are the two sides of the same divinity like we have the two sides of a coin. None is separated from the other. If this world is regarded as the revealed form of the Viraat Purush, then it is deemed to be a revelation of Brahm, because the Viraat Purush himself is a revealed form of Brahm at the cosmic level, though this form is invisible and indefinable like Brahm itself.]

3. If the aspirant meditates and contemplates upon only one Matra or aspect of OM, or worships OM with only one Matra, then he attains this world soon. This one Matra of OM is like the one Richa or hymn (of the Rig Veda, the ‘first’ of the Vedas).

Since he is worshipping a symbol of the supreme transcendental Brahm in this world (instead of other myriad symbols that only act as distracting factors in his spiritual progress and act as a drag on his Spirit) with devotion and faith, he is able to obtain the rewards of observing Brahmacharya (self control over the senses) and doing Tapa (observing austerity, doing penance and undergoing hardships for some noble cause). This establishes him in this world, and he acquires fame and respect in it. [This is because he is deemed to be wise and enlightened, and not deluded and perplexed by confounding interpretations and confusions created by dichotomies arising out of the numerous versions of the same Truth. He seems to be focused and

determined; he gradually comes to terms with the reality, and is able to separate the grain from the chaff. It is much like the case of a student who becomes skilled in a subject by being steady under the guidance of one expert teacher rather than running from one teacher to another and not getting anywhere. Fickleness of mind and uncertainties of the heart are removed only when one is focused on his objective, and knows what that objective is. In other words, by worshipping only one symbol of the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, he finds it easier to reach his spiritual goal.] (3).

[Note—The symbolism of worshipping only one Matra of OM and acquiring greatness in the world is to indicate the stupendous mystical powers of OM as a Mantra or a symbolic representation of Brahm. Though this person is not very enlightened and learned in the intricacies of metaphysics as he is only knowledgeable or aware of only one aspect or only one of the many virtues and glories of OM as a symbol of Brahm, but this is enough to give him great respect and glories amongst his peers. What if he had been enlightened about the principal whom this OM represents? He would have had a divine experience of the greatest sublimity and the highest order had he been acquainted with more divine aspects of Brahm, and with the Brahm itself!]

4. If the aspirant worships two Mantra or aspects of OM, i.e. he is more advanced in his knowledge and wisdom, then he is symbolically empowered by the Mantras of the Yajur Veda (the 'second' Veda) to attain the Som Loka in the Antariksha or the sky known as the heaven where the Gods who drink Som live. [The Som Loka is the realm of the heaven where the Moon God presides and where the Gods live. The Moon is the custodian of the elixir of astounding bliss and joy known as Som. That is why the Moon God is known as Som himself. The celestial moon is the pitcher where the Gods have stored this Som. During the formal fire sacrifice rituals, this liquid is drunk and offered to the sacred fire as oblations intended for acceptance by Gods. It is their food and invigorator. So, in essence, this verse means that those who worship OM with a better understanding of its metaphysical and spiritual importance obtain greater benefits. They get spiritual bliss, happiness, joys and contentedness. They can literally taste the heavenly nectar of bliss here on earth. They get the same benefit as the one derived by remembering and chanting the holy Mantras of the Yajur Veda.]

Such people go to this Som Loka, enjoy its charms and benefits, and then come back to where they started from, i.e. they come back to the mortal life on earth (4).

[Note—This stage is a notch higher and better than the first stage narrated in verse no. 3 above. The aspirant has progressed in his spiritual pursuit and has tasted the nectar-like bliss that comes with self and Brahm realisation. He has moved a step closer to the Truth. The reference to the Yajur Veda is just for symbolic purposes and not to demean the importance of the Rig Veda mentioned in verse no. 3. It only marks the second milestone in a person's knowledge as now he is learned in two Vedas—the Rig/Rik and Yajur.]

5. When an aspirant worships and meditates upon three Matras or aspects of OM, he is able to access the abode of the Sun God which is splendorous and radiant. Just like a serpent comes out of its cuticle and finds freedom from its earlier grossness, such a wise aspirant is freed from all sins and their consequences. He attains the Brahm-Loka with the aid of the Sam Veda Mantras.

He enters the inner chamber where the supreme Brahm resides—i.e. he is able to witness the presence of Brahm in his own subtle heart as the pure consciousness or the Atma. [The reference to the Sam Veda is symbolic here because this Veda is very

sweet to hear as it is sung most melodiously in a heart-warming manner, and not merely chanted in a staccato manner like the other Mantras or hymns of the other Vedas. Singing melodiously and soulfully requires the direct involvement of the heart, a metaphoric way of saying that the aspirant is talking directly to the Lord residing there in the core of his heart. He is not merely repeating some Mantra, but he is in direct communion with the Lord. Since Brahm is a splendorous and radiant divine entity, the Sun is always used as a metaphor for Brahm. Again, since Brahm is enlightenment and wisdom personified, or since these auspicious virtues are characteristics of Brahm, wherever they are found it is deemed that Brahm is also present. Since these grand virtues are like the 'light' that removes the darkness of ignorance, they are compared to the Sun which is the light of the world.]

These two verses (i.e. the current one and the one following next) are concerned with this eclectic concept as narrated herein above (5).

[Note—This verse marks the third milestone in his spiritual pursuit. He has risen a step higher than that achieved in verse nos. 3 and 4. Now he has seen the Atma first hand, and witnessed its radiance and splendour which matches that of the sun. It is so dazzlingly bright that the aspirant is just not able to actually see it but only experiences its presence indirectly in the reflected shine that is manifested in the form of enlightenment. Since the Sam Veda is sung melodiously rather than being simply chanted in a staccato manner, it implies that when the aspirant has witnessed the presence of Brahm more closely in his heart, and the latter's divinity has drenched him like rain from all sides, he experiences a surge of ecstasy that inspires him to sing merrily and soulfully. He has found extreme happiness and bliss that is un-inhibited and unbound, and this bursts out in the open when he begins to sing and dance in joy.]

6. The three components of OM (A, U and M) are inseparable and one, though they appear as independent units. [This is a very significant observation. It implies that though this creation appears to consist of countless independent units, but since they all have one origin in Brahm and the same consciousness radiating and pulsating in their veins as the Atma, they are fundamentally and essentially the same, and are simply various manifestations of the immutable and indivisible One known as the non-dual Brahm. Incidentally, according to the metaphysical interpretation of OM, its three letters A, U and M symbolically represent the initiation, the development and growth, and the conclusion of creation respectively. It is like a circle having no definable end or beginning; it is simply a continuous process.]

Hypothetically, these three units of OM have independent existence and therefore subject to death or end or conclusion. [Theoretically, there is a point where the creation started and the initial process stopped. This is its hypothetical end. Then the second stage of development and growth occurred. This also has a certain point from where it began and a certain point where it reaches its outer limit. The end is this outer limit beyond which development and growth is not possible. Then comes the conclusion—it begins at the point where growth stops and decline begins. It ends when nothing remains. Thus, each unit of OM has a beginning and an end. But this is only for the purpose of analysis and understanding of something that is very esoteric and mysterious. But otherwise it is a seamless sound; it is a monosyllabic word like we have individual alphabets in a language.]

All these units are used in meditation and are such that they always complement and supplement each other. They cannot be counter-acting, they do not oppose each other, or one cannot subvert the rewards obtained by successful employment of the other.

A wise practitioner uses them in all forms of worship and meditation—whether it is done externally, internally or a combination of both. [The external form of worship takes many forms, such as formal fire sacrifices with OM as the Mantra; the internal form of worship is doing Japa with OM, and the performance of the fire sacrifice internally in a symbolic manner with the Pran as an offering, and a combination is the use of both the methods. In terms of Yoga, this would mean exercises using the body, such as various Aasans, Mudras and Bandhas (postures and control of the body) as being equivalent to external worship (because it involves the external organs of the body), contemplation and doing Pranayam (internal holding of breath) for prolonged periods with the OM Mantra as the internal form of worship (because it involves none of the external organs), and a combination of both as the middle path.]

Such an aspirant becomes steady and firm in his spiritual path. [Obviously, Yoga and other forms of spiritual practices teach discipline and self-restraint to the aspirant—so it is natural that he becomes steady and firm in his spiritual pursuit.] (6).

7. The aspirant obtains access to this mortal world with the Richas or hymns of the Rig/Rik Veda (because they are like one Matra of OM or one aspect of Brahm; refer verse no. 3), the Antarisksha or the world in the sky where the Gods live in the heaven with the help of the Richas of the Yajur Veda (because they are like two Matras of OM or two aspects of Brahm; refer verse no. 4), and the higher world called the Brahm-Loka with the aid of the Richas of the Sam Veda (as narrated in verse no. 5).

It is with the aid of the eclectic Mantra OM that the spiritual aspirant achieves success in obtaining the supreme destination where the supreme Brahm resides. With this success, he is able to enjoy peace and tranquility; he becomes eternal and imperishable; he becomes freed from the fear (of death and miseries). This exalted existence is most sublime and divine in nature.’ [In other words, if one wishes to reach the pinnacle of spiritual awakening and Brahm as well as self realisation, he is required to use OM in a comprehensive manner, and not in a fractured manner. To draw an analogy, a man who eats all kinds of food, such as seasonal fruits, cereals, vegetables and dairy products, is able to get proper and balanced nourishment as opposed to a man who depends upon a limited variety of food either because of unavailability or due to his being a serf to his taste buds. Another example is of a student who studies different text books or reference books from a library to gain a comprehensive knowledge of his subject. By and by, he becomes an expert on this subject as compared to a student who has limited his study to just pass an examination.] (7).

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Canto 6 (Question 6)

[This Canto describes the 16 Kalaas of Brahm.]

1. Finally, the son of sage Bharadwaj, named Sukesha, asked Pippalaad—‘Oh Lord! I will submit before you the question asked of me by the prince named Hiranyanaab of the kingdom of Kaushalya.

Once he had come to me and asked, ‘Oh Bharadwaj! Do you know about the Purush with sixteen Kalaas (i.e. do you know the symbolic sixteen divine qualities or attributes of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-inclusive form of the Supreme

Being)?'. I replied, 'No, I do not know of him. Had I known of him, why would I not tell you? A person who says a lie gets demoted and discredited, which is equivalent to getting withered and dying out. Hence, I do not speak a lie and so cannot pretend to know the Purush you are talking of. So I cannot give you a wrong answer'.

Thereafter the prince said nothing and went back on his chariot. So please enlighten me about that Purush and where he lives?' (1).

2. The learned sage Pippalaad replied—'Oh Saumya (a gentlemanly person)! The divine Purush who possesses sixteen Kalaas or virtues lives in this body itself (2).

[Note—Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse nos. 14-15, Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda, Canto 6, section 7, Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 18-19, and Kalisantarana Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 2.

The word *Purush* here refers to the Atma, the eternal Soul and the pure consciousness which is the true identity of the man. The word Purush itself means 'one who lives inside the body' (because 'Pur' means a city or dwelling place)—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse nos. 14-15.

The word *Kalaa* has a wide application and briefly it refers to the a particular aspect or position or condition or situation of any entity. It is indicative of this entity's deeds which has led it into the present position or situation. It also refers to the special qualities, attributes, virtues, strengths, powers and potential possessed by it. other connotations include—(a) shape, form, contours of a thing; (b) special qualities, art, craft, skills, expertise, attributes etc. that one possesses; (c) a division, portion, fraction, phase or degree; (d) any kind of discharge; (e) brilliance, magnificence and grandeur; (f) fraud, deceit, pretensions and trick; (g) maverick and supernatural powers.

Verse no. 4 narrates the 16 Kalaas referred to in the present verse. However, there are other connotations of this term. Now, let us look into these various connotations and contexts in which the word Kalaa is applied in practice before reading verse no. 4 so as to get a comprehensive idea of the term.

The *16 Kalaas of a man*—In the context of the man, the word Kalaa represents the special qualities, art, craft, skills, expertise, attributes etc. that one must possess if he were to successfully reach his target in life. These different qualities and virtues present in a man symbolically make him perfect; they represent his various strengths and potentials, and they are said to be sixteen in number corresponding to and symbolised by the sixteen phases of the moon. Since a man is an exact replica of the 'Viraat Purush', who in turn is a subtle manifestation of the sublime Brahm, these sixteen qualities or attributes of a man refer to the sixteen qualities of Brahm himself that made him the Lord of creation. The presence of all these divine attributes makes a man complete and very powerful. Hence, these sixteen Kalaas represent all the magnificent good qualities that are present in this creation which enable a man to overcome all adversities, hurdles and ill circumstances. Since Brahm is the creature's only sincere well wisher and succour in times of distress and dismay, and since Brahm possesses all the exemplary qualities grouped under the single word Kalaa, a man who is blessed with them is regarded as being equivalent to Brahm. Or in other words, he personifies Brahm with all his dignified virtues that are needed by a man to complete and get across the cycle of birth and death without hurdles.

These sixteen Kalaas of creation that are present in a man refer to the sixteen elements or primary components that form the basis of a man's very existence and his nature and temperament. These are the fundamental building blocks of his subtle and gross body, its characteristic qualities as well as the world surrounding him and how the man lives in and interacts with it.

The sixteen Kalaas or aspects or facets of creation are described in verse no. 4 below.

In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into sixteen parts.

The *Kalisantarna Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 2 says that these sixteen Kalaas are like sheaths or veils covering the Atma or 'self' of the man, and he can realise this glorious divinity residing in his bosom only when these Kalaas which are like impediments or hurdles in self and Brahm realisation are removed. When this Upanishad describes them as 'hurdles or impediments' in realising the glory of the 'self' it implies that although all these sixteen qualities are related to achieving glory and majesty in the world, they have nothing to do with 'self-realisation' and 'Brahm-realisation' which is possible only by abandoning everything related to this world as well as the body both in its gross part and its subtle part.]

3. That Purush who dwelt in the body wondered—'Which is that entity whose exit from the body would also mean that I have to make an exit too, and whose retention in the body would mean that I too can live in it?' (3).

4. [The following narration outlines the Genesis of creation with a new perspective.]

That supreme Purush (i.e. the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic and all-inclusive gross body of Brahm) created the Pran to begin with¹. From this Pran he then created successively the following elements of creation—Shraddha (the virtues of devotion, faith and belief), Akash (the sky or space element), Vayu (the wind or air element), Jyoti (the light and radiance personified in the form of the fire element), Aapah (the water element), Prithivi (the earth element), Indris (the different sense organs of the body), Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart), and Anna (the food that would sustain the other elements of creation which had combined to give shape to the creature).

From the Anna were created the following other units or elements of creation—the Virya (the sperm which is the carrier of life and the metaphor for valour, strength, stamina, vitality, vigour, energy, potentials etc.), Tapa (austerity, penance and sufferance for some noble and auspicious cause), Mantras (the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature).

These sixteen elements or units created by the Purush are the sixteen Kalaas or aspects or fractions of creation. In other words, this visible creation is made up of these sixteen units in different ratios just like a colourful picture in mosaic is prepared by an expert artisan from bits and pieces of glass or stone which are independent units in their own right but when incorporated in the mosaic that forms the colourful picture they become an inseparable and an integral part of the latter. Even if one piece is removed, the picture is disturbed (4).

[Note—¹Earlier in Canto 3, verse no. 3 it has been said that the Pran is created from the Atma, the pure consciousness. So, this Purush is the cosmic Atma or cosmic Consciousness that is the root from which the entire creation resembling a huge tree has emerged.]

5. Even as all the rivers having different currents, names, depths, widths, lengths and other characteristic features flow independently but ultimately fall into the ocean to become one with it and indistinguishable from it, thereby losing their independent existence and identity, in the same way the sixteen Kalaas of the supreme Purush spread out from him to expand and manifest themselves as the creation and its inhabitant creatures, but in the end they are withdrawn and collapse back into this Purush to become indistinguishable from him. They lose their independent characteristics and are then known only as Purush, the source and the single point of their origin¹ (5).

[Note--¹It is like the rays of the Sun spreading out from a single source, the brilliant disc of the Sun. When these rays are traced back to their origin, what remains is the Sun's disc. Also, when the Sun rises in the morning, these rays spread out from it to distant corners of the earth, but at the time of sunset they are withdrawn by the Sun, and these rays collapse into it to set with it. It is not possible for the rays to remain behind after the Sun has set; the rays have no independent existence without the Sun. Refer Canto 4, verse no. 2.

Likewise, the visible creation has no separate and independent existence from the Purush. This world, with its characteristic features and attributes, is a visible revelation of the sixteen Kalaas as listed in this verse. It is seen or perceived only in the presence of the Purush just like the case of this world being lighted by the light of the Sun and seen only in the latter's presence. Once the Purush decides to withdraw his Kalaas, the world would vanish just like the world becomes shrouded in darkness when the Sun sets and withdraws its rays.]

6. Just like the spokes of a wheel are attached to its central hub, all the different Kalaas that constitute this world are attached to and are dependent upon one single core called the supreme Purush (Brahm). [Earlier in verse no. 7, the Purush was treated as the Viraat Purush because the visible creation has come into existence from the latter. But since this Viraat Purush himself is created from Brahm who is the ultimate supreme transcendental cosmic Being, the cosmic Soul or 'Atma', the cosmic Consciousness, it follows that this Brahm is the actual 'hub' referred to in this verse as it is the central cause of everything in existence, including the Viraat Purush. It should be remembered here that Canto 3, verse no. 3 has already asserted that Pran was created from the Atma, and the Viraat Purush is not the Atma. This 'Atma' is the cosmic Consciousness known by the term 'Brahm'.]

Understand this fact and come to be acquainted with this Supreme Being so that the fear of death cannot haunt you. [This is because you would then realise that since your true 'self' is also the same Atma which is called the cosmic Consciousness, you too are immortal and free from the limiting notion of death or an end. This is because the Atma is eternal and imperishable. What would die is your gross body, but it is not your 'true self'. The death of the body is actually this Atma, or the Purush residing in this body, withdrawing its external Kalaas into its self before it decides to abandon the body. So it is the body that actually dies and perishes in a process that ignorant ones call 'death'.] (6).

7. Sage Pippalaad told the assembled sages that it is all he knew about the supreme Brahm. There is nothing else to be known (7).

8. All the assembled sages offered their obeisance to Pippalaad and submitted—‘You are our father because you have taken us across Avidya—i.e. you have removed our ignorance and shown us the light of true knowledge. You are indeed a great Rishi (a sage or seer). We repeatedly bow before you. Amen!’ (8).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 2

Mundak Upanishad/Mundako-panishad

This Upanishad belongs to the Shaunak branch of Atharva Veda. It has three Cantos called ‘Mundak’, and each Mundak has two sections. The word Mundak refers to shaving of the head, implying shedding of all ignorance and its attendant delusions from the Mana (thinking mind and emotional heart), and instead filling it with truthful knowledge of the Reality. It has been taught by sage Angira to sage Shaunak.

The first Mundak or Canto is related to the Paraa and Aparaa Vidya—the former being the knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm which is the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation, and the latter refers to that body of knowledge that is known and which can enlighten the aspirant about the Paraa Vidya which is the knowledge of the transcendental Brahm. In this second category come the four Vedas—the Rik, the Sam, the Yajur and the Atharva, and the fire sacrifices.

The second Mundak compares the creation of the multi-dimensional world from Brahm with sparklers springing out from a burning fire. It also describes the world’s end just like these sparklers dying off. It cites the analogy of the bow and arrow to describe how an aspirant can use the medium of OM, the bow, and his Atma, the arrow, to attain the knowledge of Brahm. The glorious virtues of Brahm and the importance of attaining the latter are also discussed.

The third Mundak compares the body as the tree on which two birds representing the Parmatma (the Supreme Being) and the Jivatma (the living being) are sitting. A similar analogy is cited in the Krishna Yajur Veda’s Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 41, and Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 6-7. It goes on to stress that Brahm or the knowledge of the Absolute Truth is possible only when the inner-self of the aspirant is pure and cleansed of all evil thoughts and other worldly contaminants that act as millstones around the Atma. It concludes by enumerating the immense spiritual rewards obtained by diligently and honestly pursuing Brahm Vidya, the eternal and blissful knowledge of the truthful Brahm.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the meaning of the Shanti Paath.

Mundak (Canto) 1

Section 1

1. Lord Brahma, the creator of this visible world, was the first God born. He is the creator of this world and the protector of all the fourteen Bhuvans¹ (or the fourteen divisions into which the entire creation has been divided for the purpose of administration).

He taught his eldest son named Atharva² the knowledge known as ‘Brahm Vidya³’ which is the grand, the best and the supreme knowledge pertaining to the Absolute Truth of creation known as Brahm. This Brahm Vidya is the foundation of all knowledge (that Brahma had revealed for the benefit of the creation created by him) (1).

[Note—¹The fourteen Bhuvans created by Brahma are the following— (A) The upper worlds called Urdhava Lokas (उर्ध्व लोक) are seven in number—(i) Bhu (भूः), (ii) Bhuvha (भुवः), (iii) Swaha (स्वः), (iv) Maha (महः), (v) Janaha (जनः), (vi) Tapaha (तपः), and (vii) Satyam (सत्यम्). (B) The seven nether worlds called Adhaha Loka (अधः लोक)— (i) Atal (अतल), (ii) Vital (वितल), (iii) Satal (सुतल), (iv) Rasaatal (रसातल), (v) Talaatal (तलातल), (vi) Mahaatal (महातल), and (vii) Paataal (पाताल). The total number of Lokas is, therefore, fourteen.

²A brief life sketch of sage *Atharva* has been given as note to verse no. 8 of Canto (Question/Prashna) 2 of Prashna Upanishad which is Chapter 1 of this volume.

³The *Brahm Vidya* has been elaborately explained in other Upanishads as well, notably the following which are exclusively dedicated to this theme—Krishna Yajur Veda’s Kaivalya Upanishad, Brahm Upanishad, Panch Brahm Upanishad, Akchyu Upanishad, Tejobindu Upanishad, Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1-5, and Brahm Vidya Upanishad.]

2. The divine eclectic knowledge that Brahma had taught sage Atharva was subsequently taught by the latter to sage Angira¹ (who happened to be his younger brother).

Angira passed on this knowledge to the son of Bhardwaj, named sage Satyawaaha. The latter taught this knowledge to another sage called Angiras. [This sage is not to be confused by sage Angira who was the younger brother of sage Atharva and the son of Brahma. This second Angiras was one of the numerous disciples of the original teacher named Angira, and they all came to be known as ‘Angiras’ after they all assumed the name of their Guru Atharva as their surname like we have the family name in modern times.] (2).

[Note—¹A brief life sketch of sage *Angira* has been given in note to verse no. 8 of Canto (Question/Prashna) 2 of Prashna Upanishad which is Chapter 1 of this volume.]

3. The famous householder sage Shaunak¹ once went to sage Angiras (one of the senior disciples of sage Angira) with the intention of acquiring knowledge and approached him in the proper way².

Sage Shaunak requested—‘Oh Lord! Who (or ‘what’) is that by knowing whom (or ‘which’) everything worth knowing is known?’ (3).

[Note—¹Sage *Shaunak*—He was a wise and learned sage and derived his name after his father sage Shunak. He is regarded as an incarnation of Indra, the king of Gods. He was an expert on the Vedas, especially the Rik/Rig Veda and the majority of his works revolve around this particular Veda. They are known as ‘Anukramanika’ (indices). His magnum opus is the ‘Brihad-devta’ which deals with the deities of the

Vedas. He had a large following of disciples, the chief being Ashwalyaana. He appears in many ancient scriptures such as Shatpath Brahmin, 13/5/3/5; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 2/5/20; Chandogya Upanishad, 1/9/3; Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, 4/7.

²The proper way to approach the learned Guru with the intention of accepting his discipleship is to first take a purifying bath and hold some Samidha, a token gift consisting offerings for the teacher's fire sacrifice, in hand as a sign that the teacher is being approached for knowledge. In this situation, the teacher is morally bound to teach the aspirant whatever he knows.]

4. Sage Angiras explained to sage Shaunak—‘Those who are experts in the supreme knowledge of the transcendental have asserted that it is called Brahm Vidya—the knowledge pertaining to Brahm. In this field, there are two main branches—viz. one is called ‘Paraa’ Vidya, and the other is called ‘Aparaa Vidya’ (4).

[Note—The word *Paraa Vidya* refers to that knowledge which is transcendental and beyond the normal field of knowledge that can be acquired in this mundane world by study; the knowledge which relates to the supreme ‘self’ or the pure conscious Atma; the knowledge of things that is beyond the range of bodily perception and comprehension. It is the knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm which is the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation. The *Paraa Vidya* relates to the invisible and unknown Divinity that is eternal, infinite and imperishable, and whose Mantra is OM.

On the other hand, *Aparaa Vidya* means that body of knowledge that is known and which can enlighten the aspirant about the *Paraa Vidya* which is the knowledge of the transcendental Brahm. In this category come the four Vedas—the Rik, the Sam, the Yajur and the Atharva.

These two forms of Vidyas have been described elsewhere also in the Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 28-30.]

5. The ‘Aparaa Vidya’ is the knowledge enshrined in the four Vedas and includes the language necessary to read and understand them. The four Vedas are the Rig/Rik, Yajur, Sam and Atharva. The components of the language which must be mastered in order to be able to acquire this knowledge enshrined in the Vedas are called Shiksha (primary knowledge of the alphabets and basics of grammar), Kalpa (study of Vedic rituals), Vyaakaran (thorough knowledge of Sanskrit grammar), Nirukta (the exposition of the Vedas; commentaries on the scriptures), Chanda (poetry and its style of composition used in the scriptures), and Jyotish (astronomy and astrology based on mathematical calculations).

On the other hand, the knowledge which enlightens the aspirant about the imperishable and eternal Divinity and Truth known as supreme and transcendental Brahm is known as the ‘Paraa Vidya’ (5).

6. He who (or that which) cannot be seen, cannot be caught hold of or grasped, who (or which) has no Gotra (inheritance or lineage or family origin) or Varna (one of the four sections in which the society has been divided; complexion or colour; a specified or designated place in the hierarchy of creation), who (or which) does not require either the eyes and ears (to see and hear) or the legs and hands (to move and receive), who (or which) is always immutable and steady, all-pervading and omnipresent, all-encompassing and all-inclusive, and most subtle and sublime, who (or which) is imperishable and not subject to decay, ruin, decimation, termination, demotion or degradation, and who (or which) is the cause and the root from which all the Bhuts (primary elements) of creation have emerged—verily, those who are truly wise,

erudite and enlightened see that supreme transcendental Brahm everywhere without exception (6).

7. Just like the spider creates or produces the thread from its own stomach (body) to weave the cobweb and finally withdraws it (or eats it up) into its own stomach (body), just like the earth produces numerous herbs, and just like countless hairs are produced from the skin of the man—in the same manner this (perishable) world is created from Brahm who (or which) is primarily imperishable and eternal (7).

[Note—All the things cited here are perishable—the cobweb, the herbs and the hairs. They are produced and finally come to an end. But the ‘source’ from where they are created—i.e. the spider, the earth and the skin—can produce fresh supply of thread for the cobweb, the herb and the hair respectively. The producer (the spider, the earth and the skin) continues to produce or create (the cobweb, the herbs and the hair) endlessly. As compared to the limited life span of the produce, the producer is without such limits, is literally ‘eternal’. In the present verse, Brahm is the source like the spider, the earth and the skin cited who creates this mortal world, and numerous such worlds would be created by Brahm in the future also.

Refer Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 1 also.]

8. When this supreme transcendental Brahm does Tapa (i.e. when he does some form of penance and austerity in order to fulfill some desire), he becomes a bit grosser (like the seed when it desires to generate a tree begins to show internal subtle activity by generating heat that aids in the division of cells and their multiplication which add to the seed’s weight and size, or it’s ‘grossness’).

As a result of this Tapa was produced the Anna or food (which is the ‘reward’ of the Tapa much like the seed sprouting into a sapling which would grow into a huge fruit-bearing tree).

From the Anna or food was created or produced the Pran—the vital life infusing and sustaining factors of creation which are necessary for the conception and support of life on earth.

From the Pran was created or produced the Mana—the thinking mind and the emotional heart. [The energy provided by the food eaten by the creature enables his mind to think and his heart to be active enough to exhibit emotions and sentiments, to have a liking or disliking for anything. A hungry and famished man would have no stamina and energy left to think about anything or be emotionally attached to anything. His whole being would be concentrated on acquiring food before he can think of anything else. This is the picture at the micro level of creation. The same thing applies at the macro level of creation. When the supreme Brahm who/which has been described as having none of the grossness associated with this world in verse no. 6 above begins to have desires, the chain reaction is set in motion, and one after the other all the units of creation come into existence.]

From the Mana is created or produced the Satya or the five primary Bhuts. [They are called ‘Satya’, literally meaning ‘truth’, because their presence in the forthcoming world would be undeniable. The ‘Bhuts’ are sky, air, fire, water and earth—obviously all of them are undeniably evident in this world. The world which would ultimately form out of their combination would be deemed to be true because it is visibly seen and verified. From the perspective of the genesis of creation, once Brahm produced the Mana, the latter spread out its tentacles and wished to create the world. For this purpose it needed the ‘bricks’, and these Bhuts were the so-called bricks of creation.]

From these Bhuts came into being the humans, along with the rest of the world.

From them arose the concept of Karma—doing of deeds and taking of actions, and this resulted in the production of fruits or results according to their nature. This fruit or result or consequence was like the succulent fruit that tastes sweet like nectar. [In other words, this world is driven by the theory of Karma—i.e. if one wants any rewards or wishes to achieve success in anything or wants to fulfill his desires, then he is obliged to do something, or initiate ‘Karma’. If he does not do any Karma, there would be no fruit, sweet or otherwise.] (8).

9. Someone who is extremely wise and enlightened does Tapa (some auspicious activity) with scruples, wisdom, correct knowledge, due seriousness and diligence. His Tapa has auspicious intentions and bears fruits commensurate with it. [In other words, the Tapa done by Brahm was not to fulfill some selfish desires or to satisfy some sensual urges. It was done with an auspicious intention of creating this world, and then taking due care of it.]

It is from such Tapa done by the supreme transcendental Brahm that this universe with entities having distinct names and forms were created, along with the food that would help to sustain it and make it self-sustaining and self-perpetrating (9).

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Mundak (Canto) 1

Section 2

1. During the earlier stages of creation, i.e. the during the Sata Yug (the first of the 4-era Hindu cycle of one round of creation and conclusion) when the Vedas were first revealed, the great, wise and learned sages and seers had the depth of knowledge and the insight to understand the ‘truth’ encrypted or implied in the hymns of the Vedas; they were able to decipher it. During the Treta Yug (the second era of the 4-era Hindu cycle), it was this ‘truth’ that expanded in countless ways and forms. [In other words, during the Treta Yug, the dominant feature was the prevalence of ‘truth’. Every phase of life and each deed were marked by truthfulness and honesty. It was during these two eras that the fire sacrifices were given preference over other forms of worship because the hymns of the Vedas were to be primarily used to offer worship to the supreme transcendental Brahm by the medium of the fire as the latter was considered as the purest, the most holy and the most potent and powerful of the elements created by Brahm. The ‘fire’ was a metaphor for purity, immaculacy, cleanliness, truthfulness and holiness, and therefore of Brahm. Anything offered to the fire was deemed to be offered to Brahm. The statement that the ‘truth’ expanded in numerous ways and forms refers to the fact that there were many ways of performing the fire sacrifice, many different hymns used during such rituals, many deities were apparently worshipped in these sacrifices, but all of them represented the ‘truth’ called Brahm. All worship and all rituals were basically meant for the ultimate Absolute Truth known as Brahm. The people were wise enough to realise this fact.]

You must follow them (i.e. the tenets and teachings of the Vedas which teach about the ‘truth’) with the intention of accessing the Truth. [Remember that Truth can be reached by following the correct path that leads to it, and not by following the misleading path of falsehood or the various paths of ‘pseudo truths’. In other words, if

you wish to learn about the spiritual truths then you must thoroughly study the scriptures and analyse them intelligently.]

In this world, this is the only auspicious and correct thing to do for your own spiritual welfare and true well being (1).

2. [The following verses describe how the offerings are to be properly made to the sacred fire of the sacrifice.]

When the sacred fire of the sacrifice (which accepts the offerings made to it on behalf of the Gods) is burning properly and the flames are leaping upwards, the oblations meant for the Gods are offered with immense faith and devotion in the middle of the ‘Aadhaar Bhaag’ and the ‘Aajya Bhaag’¹ of the sacred fire (2).

[Note—¹When fire sacrifices are done, the sacred fire that is lit to invite the patron God to the ceremony is called the Ahawaniya fire, or the invocational fire. The first offering is made to the north of it while pronouncing the Mantra ‘Agneya Swaha’. The second offering is made to the south of it with the Mantra ‘Somaaya Swaha’. These offerings consist of clarified butter. These are called ‘Aadhaar’ and ‘Aajya Bhaag’—the share of the Fire God and the Moon God respectively. Since Brahman 2, verse nos. 1-2 of the Brihajjabal Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition asserts that Agni and Soma are virtually the two aspects of the same cosmic Divinity that creates and sustains life in this creation, the offering made to this Divinity or Brahm through the two Mantras mentioned above in this paragraph are the shares or ‘Bhaag’ that are offered to the fire located to the north and south of the main fire pit.

The central part of the fire between these two ends is called the ‘Awapasthan’. It is in this that the main oblations intended for the patron deity who is being invoked are made.]

3. Those who have not followed the sacrosanct scriptural rules regarding ‘Agnihotra’¹ (i.e. how and when the fire sacrifices should be done and how the offerings are to be made to the sacred fire) not only do this in vain but also destroy whatever auspicious rewards that they had accumulated as a result of the good deeds done by them in the past. [In other words, doing the fire sacrifice in the wrong way has a negative effect and is more dangerous than not doing them at all.]

In order to ensure that the Yagya or the fire sacrifice gives full rewards and proves to be auspicious, it should be done strictly according to the principles and guidelines set out for such sacrifices in the scriptures. There should be no violation of this rule. Hence, the Yagya should conform to the principles laid out for doing the following four types of fire sacrifices called the ‘Darsha Yagya’², the ‘Purnamaas Yagya’³, the ‘Chaturmaas Yagya’⁴, and the ‘Aagrayan Yagya’⁵ respectively.

Besides the above, there are certain general guidelines to be observed while doing the fire sacrifices. These are the following—all the guests should be welcome and given due respect, the sacrifice is to be done in the proper time and by the correct method, and there should be proper sacrifice. [Usually this word ‘sacrifice’ is interpreted as meaning an animal sacrifice, but its intention is not that though the sacrificing of animals had been part of the tradition of doing fire sacrifices. The word ‘sacrifice’ has a very broad and far reaching import than just killing an innocent animal. It implies that one offers to the raging fire all the Vasanas and Vrittis (latent passions, lusts and yearnings, as well as natural temperaments, habits and inclinations respectively) that are present in his inner self, that one burns all the numerous mental and emotional taints such as worldly passions and inherent evil tendencies that act as impurities that had been covering his inner self like a dark veil, that one burns his

Ahankar or the sense of ego, pride and vanity in the fire, that one offers to the fire all his worldly attachments and delusions to emerge non-possessed of any delusions pertaining to this material and artificial world etc. If this is not done then the entire exercise is just a formality to gain fame and name; it becomes perfunctory. On the other hand, if the fire sacrifices are done properly, they have the power and the potentials to give immense rewards to the aspirant. This is because the sacred fire is the most powerful representative of the supreme Brahm, the Lord of creation.] (3).

[Note—¹The fire sacrifices and the offerings made to the holy fire are collectively called *Agnihotra*. Usually, the fire sacrifice is done daily by a diligent householder who wishes to strictly follow the rules as sanctified by the scriptures for an auspicious and religious way of living. This *Agnihotra* therefore is done by him twice a day—the time when the day meets the night, i.e. during the evening at dusk, and the time when the night meets the day, i.e. at dawn.

²The *Darsha* is the fire sacrifice that is done on the Amavasya day, the last day of the dark fortnight of the month.

³The *Purnamaas* is the fire sacrifice that is done on the full moon day.

⁴The *Chaturmaas* is a fire sacrifice consisting of three independent sacrifices done at four-monthly intervals called the ‘Chatur-maas’ or a period of four months. Each sacrifice has an independent name, viz. Vaishwadeva, Varun-praghaasa and Shakamedh. Sometimes one more named Shunaashirya is also added if the Hindu lunar calendar shows an extra month. Each of these is performed on the full-moon day and mark the advent of a season—such as the Phalgun or Chaitra Purnamaasi (February-March or March-April), Aasaadh Purnamaasi (July), and Kaartika Purnamaasi (November). Sweet pudding or porridge and rice cakes are the main offerings.

According to the Shatpath Brahman, 1/6/3/36, the Chaturmaas Yagya is the fire sacrifice that is done on the full moon day, called the Purnamaasi day, at the culmination of each four-month period of the year consisting of a cycle of 3 four-month auspicious seasons. According to the Shatpath Brahman, 2/6/3/1, the auspiciousness and well being of those who perform the Chaturmaas Yagya become permanent. Similarly, the Shatpath Brahman, 2/6/4/9, asserts that those who do the Chaturmaas Yagya are able to obtain the best of spiritual destinations and an exalted stature in life.

⁵The *Agrayan* is the fire sacrifice done on the full moon day in the month of Basant or the spring season, and on the full moon day of Sharad or autumn/fall.]

4. The seven tongues of the blazing fire are called Kaali (i.e. as ferocious and merciless as a goddess of war by the same name), Karaali (i.e. most fierce and sharp), Manojavaa (i.e. one which is as restless and powerful as the mind), Sulohit (i.e. red complexioned), Sudhurma Varnaa (i.e. one who is of an auspiciously bright or brilliant hue), Sfulingini (i.e. one who gives out sparklers), and Vishwa Ruchi (i.e. the one who is dear to the world, indicating the fact that inspite of the ferocious nature of the fire it is adored by the world because no life is tenable without the existence and the assistance of the fire element) (4).

5. A wise aspirant who offers oblations to such a fire (burning brilliantly with seven tongues) in the proper way and time is deemed to be doing the fire sacrifice in the proper way. The satisfied sacred fire (representing the Fire God) takes such an aspirant astride the rays of the Sun (symbolically represented by the leaping flames and the sparklers emerging from the fire) to the abode (in the heavens) where the only Lord of Gods (known as Brahm, the Supreme Being) lives. [In other words, doing the fire sacrifice properly and in the sanctioned method is a medium by which the aspirant

can reach the 'heaven'—which is a metaphoric way of saying that all auspiciousness and all goodness is available to him. The fire sacrifice is a means of attaining the desired fruits in this world of mortal beings as well as the other world where the exalted immortal Gods live. The fire sacrifice gives him all the material things that he desires in this material world as well as provides him with the golden opportunity of having an easy access to the spiritual world of emancipation and salvation should he desire it.] (5).

6. The offerings made by an aspirant to the holy fire during the sacrifice act as escorts that accompany him as he rides the rays of the Sun on his way to the heaven. They are also like heralds or ushers who stand by to welcome him in the heaven. They say—'Come, come! You are welcome. This is the Brahm Loka (the abode of Brahm) which you have attained as a result of your auspicious deeds' (6).

7. The ritual of the fire sacrifice that is done with eighteen chief participants (one chief patron + his wife + 16 priests = 18) with some worldly desires and hope of their fulfillment as a reward of the fire sacrifice, the fire sacrifice that is done with hope or expectation of some worldly gain and fame, is verily unfruitful and demeaning for the august institution of doing a fire sacrifice. Such fire sacrifices give perishable rewards that are transient and temporary. Such fire sacrifices are simply mechanical exercises done merely as a formality to satisfy one's ego that accompanies the successful acquisition of material wellbeing and worldly fame and majesty, without understanding what the fire sacrifice actually signifies and stands for, what the immense spiritual benefits are that can be derived by the august institution known as the 'Yagya', or the sacrament of the fire sacrifice.

Those ignorant people who are foolish enough to describe such external forms of formal ritualistic fire sacrifices (as described above) as the best thing to do by an aspirant, fall in the trap of taking repeated births and then dying each time. [That is, such people never find the 'truth' referred to in verse no. 1 as enshrined in the Vedas which had devised these fire sacrifices as an easy medium of accessing it. Such people never find 'true heaven' which is the abode of Brahm and is tantamount to spiritual emancipation and salvation. On the contrary, they treat the word 'heaven' to mean the highest position in the hierarchy of visible creation where enjoyment of material comforts and pleasures is a permanent feature and a sign of success. This position is represented by heaven where Indra, the king of Gods, lives. It is this 'heaven' that such people aim for. Indra is depicted in the Purans as being very passionate and lustful, rolling in material comforts and pleasures of heaven which are simply extensions of what a rich and famous man is accustomed to in this mortal world. The only difference is that these comforts and pleasures of the 'heaven' where Indra lives are long-lasting as compared to their counterparts in the mortal world. So, when the fire sacrifice is done with this purpose it would indeed provide the fruit desired, but this is like bargaining solid gold for some trash. The real benefit should be the aim of finding liberation and deliverance from the vicious and never-ending cycle of birth and death, because this cycle keeps the soul trapped in the snare of miseries and pains. If this aim is not achieved, then the main purpose for which the sacrifices were designed by the Vedas is defeated. It should be noted here that in verse no. 1 above it is clearly stated the wise sages and seers who had started the system of fire sacrifices during the Treta Yug had seen or understood the 'truth' enshrined in the hymns of the Vedas, and had devised this system as a practical method of accessing this 'truth' and to derive a practical benefit from it. That this divine vision

degenerated with the passage of time into meaningless rituals and useless waste of time and resources is most unfortunate as is clearly affirmed and endorsed by the present verse. Such exercises give only superficial and pecuniary benefits, and nothing else of real substance.] (7).

8. Such people (as referred to in verse no. 7) live in utter ignorance. They are like those blind persons who attempt to take other blinds to their destination; none reach the desired destination. They roam about aimlessly like blind persons, and suffer many sorts of problems (8).

9. Those who are ignorant of the 'truth and reality' think, in their utter ignorance, that they are fulfilled and accomplished after having done the ritual forms of fire sacrifices. They think that by completing such formalities they have actually done something great and have performed a noble deed, and therefore are entitled to some great spiritual reward. They become proud of their achievement.

Since such people have not understood the truthful meaning of the fire sacrifice and its real intention, nor have they understood the esoteric meaning of the various hymns recited during such exercises, they are falsely proud of themselves and their achievement; they are living in a fool's paradise! They do the fire sacrifice with some worldly desires in mind, or with any desire at all for that matter. Therefore, they get the reward hoped for, they get the 'heaven' they aim for, but once the good effect begins to wear off they have to leave the heaven and come back to this world of miseries once again (i.e. they have to take birth again). Since the benefits derived from doing fire sacrifices with some worldly desires are short-lived, such people never find permanent peace and tranquility that their soul longs for. [People who do fire sacrifice with some desires in mind do get their desires fulfilled. But once the good effect wears off, they are back to square one. Then they would do more fire sacrifices in order to compensate for their shortfall of good deeds and their good effects that had forced them to abandon the comforts of heaven and come back to earth. They attempt to retrieve lost glory and the heaven they had been forced to abandon. This vicious cycle of doing fire sacrifices, attaining glory and heaven, falling back to the mortal world once the good effects wear off, and doing more sacrifices to regain the lost glory and paradise, results in their being trapped in the never-ending cycle of birth and death. On the contrary, those who have understood the real intention of the fire sacrifice as a means of honouring the Supreme Being do not expect any reward from it because it is a duty to pay respect to the Lord who have given them a life and has provided everything for their survival. It is to thank the Lord that such fire sacrifices are done. Then it is obligatory on the part of the Lord to take care of his devotee, and thus even without asking the Lord brings him nearer to himself. This is the bonus in the form of emancipation and salvation. Since the aspirant is not expecting any reward from the fire sacrifice, it is obvious that no results accrue for him, and therefore he does not get worldly comforts or reaches the lower heaven where the inferior Gods, such as Indra, live, but he is directly called in by the Supreme Lord. He gets that satisfaction and peace which is got by doing anything selflessly and with a charitable disposition. It is spiritually uplifting and exhilarating.] (9).

10. There are people who do fire sacrifice expressly with the intention of fulfilling certain worldly desires and aspirations. They are immensely stupid and fools of the highest order who think that there is nothing better or higher in this life than doing

the two types of Karmas (deeds)—viz. the ‘Ishta Karma’ which refers to the performance of rituals during the formal fire sacrifice with the specific purpose of fulfillment of certain desires, and the ‘Purta Karma’ which refers to such deeds as constructing wells, ponds and other such memorial landmarks to mark the successful completion of the fire sacrifice and to commemorate its performance.

These people are so ignorant that they regard the worldly rewards obtained by doing the fire sacrifice successfully as better than and superior to the eclectic reward that should be obtained by doing a fire sacrifice, which is to obtain an access to the higher heaven (or to the exalted state of spiritual liberation and deliverance from this cycle of worldly birth and death). Such people take birth repeatedly in this world or even are demoted to a lower form of life than the one they presently occupy (10).

11. [This verse describes those who are wise and enlightened, and their destiny.]

Those who lead a contented life living in the forest (i.e. living away from the glamour, pageantry, charms and deluding artificiality of the material world which would vex their spirits and snatch the peace of their mind and heart), those who do Tapa and observe other auspicious vows (i.e. do penances, observe austerity and the tenets of self control, suffer hardship for their spiritual welfare with stoic forbearance, and generally lead a religious way of life in the true sense), those who have faith and devotion in the spiritual truths as enshrined in the scriptures, and those who meet their daily needs for food and other necessities by begging (instead of hoarding and then worrying about the security of their hoard)—verily, such wise and enlightened men free themselves from all sorts of contaminants that taint the spirit of ordinary persons in this world and act as a stumbling block for their spiritual liberation and deliverance. Being freed from their cumbersome burden, they proceed on the lighted path of spiritual realisation and upliftment that is as brilliant and splendid as the light of the radiant sun.

They follow this path called ‘Surya Dwar’—the spiritually enlightened and liberating path that leads to the abode of the glorious Brahm who is eternal and imperishable, who is the Supreme Being represented by the splendid Sun in the heavens. [The word ‘Surya’ means the Sun, and the word ‘Dwar’ means a door. Hence, they enter the heaven through a path illuminated by the sun. That is, they find light instead of darkness; they are welcomed into the higher realms of the spiritual world instead of being forced to tread the path of darkness and ignorance that keeps them moribund to this deluding world. They indeed find liberation from this dark mortal world of delusions and ignorance which traps ordinary less-enlightened creatures in a vicious grip of birth and death; they are delivered from its torments and delusions by finding final emancipation and salvation for themselves which gives them spiritual eternity and imperishability, eternal peace and tranquility. This gain is tantamount to going to the abode of the supreme Brahm which is as splendid and brilliant as the realm of the celestial Sun, an abode from where there is no return—because no wise man worth his intelligence would like to abandon light in exchange for darkness!] (11).

12. Realising that the world and its attendant rewards (such as material comforts, pleasures, happiness and joys, as well as fame, name, lordship, power and authority) that are obtained by doing Karma (literally meaning doing deeds, but here referring to the doing of fire sacrifices with the aim of obtaining worldly rewards or gains) is transient and perishable, a wise, self realised and enlightened Brahmin, i.e. such a learned man who has this wisdom and foresight, inculcates or develops a natural sense

of deep renunciation and detachment from them. He realises the futility of such exercises that do not give permanent happiness or rewards.

Since it is not possible to attain eternity and imperishability by simply doing Karma (which is the performance of rituals and fire sacrifices), such wise men (who have understood this reality and are eager for finding the truthful way that would give permanent spiritual rewards) approach some learned and enlightened Guru (a moral preceptor, teacher and guide) who is not only well-versed in the ‘truth’ of Brahm as enshrined in the Vedas but is also a firm believer in this ‘truth’ known as Brahm and is a practitioner of this ‘truth’. It is only he who can show the spiritual aspirant the correct path leading to Brahm and teach him about the supreme knowledge of Brahm (12).

13. This enlightened and Brahm-realised Guru is obliged to welcome the aspirant, who is calm in his demeanours and has obtained full control over his sense organs, as his disciple. The teacher should teach him the divine and eclectic knowledge of Brahm, a knowledge called ‘Brahm Vidya’, so that the eager disciple can have a comprehensive knowledge of the truthful and eternal Brahm (13).

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Mundak (Canto) 2

Section 1

[This section follows seamlessly the last verse of Mundak 1, section 2 which says that the teacher should teach an eager disciple the knowledge of Brahm. Now therefore this section tells us who or what this Brahm is.]

1. Both the Brahm and this world are true just like the raging fire that produces countless sparklers and embers. [The fire is compared to Brahm, and the sparklers and embers to this colourful world showing astounding variety. The fire is the truth because it is burning right in front, and the sparklers and embers are true also because they are springing from the fire on the one hand, and on the other hand they have the same potentials as the parent fire as they can start another fire if they fall on an inflammable object. Similarly, Brahm is the powerful source from which this world of diversity and variety emerged. This world is self-sustaining—i.e. like the sparks and embers that can produce another fire independently after their origin, this world can replicate its self once it was created by Brahm. There can be no sparklers or embers without the fire, and similarly there cannot be a world without Brahm.]

Oh Saumya (a pleasant and dear person; a term of endearment)! It is from this Akshar Brahm, or the imperishable and eternal Divinity, that countless ‘Bhaavas’—i.e. the world with numerous forms and names and myriad characters—is produced. They originate in this Akshar Brahm and ultimately collapse and become one with it in the end¹ (1).

[Note—¹This is like the Sun spreading out its radiant and bright rays at dawn, and withdrawing then into its self at sunset. Refer also to Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 7.]

2. This Brahm is self-illuminated, and without any forms and attributes.

Brahm pervades inside and outside of everything in existence as it is omnipresent and all-pervading—there is no spot where Brahm is not present.

Brahm has no birth or precedent.

Brahm has no Pran or vital life sustaining factors because Pran lives in a gross body in order to keep the body alive, and since Brahm has no physical gross body there is no need of Pran for Brahm.

Brahm has no Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart) because these are the subtle aspects of the gross body of a mortal creature, but Brahm is none of them.

Brahm is splendidous and radiant as it is self-illuminated.

The eternal and infinite Brahm indeed is far superior to the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the gross body of the mortal creature as his self (because the Atma is subjected to the limitations of the gross body in which it lives, and naturally influenced by the latter) (2).

3. It is from this imperishable and eternal Brahm that the Pran (the vital life sustaining forces of creation such as the vital winds), the Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart) and the various Indris (the sense organs—five of perception and five of action) are created.

It is from Brahm that the five primary elements Kham or Akash (sky), Vayu (air or wind), Jyoti (light, implying the fire element), Aapaha (water) and Prithivi (earth) which bears this world are created (3).

4. That whose head or crown is the fire element, the sun and the moon the two eyes, the directions the ears, the famous Vedas the speech, the air or wind the Pran (the vital life sustaining winds that keep the living being alive), the entire world the heart, and from whose legs the earth has been created—verily, that supreme cosmic transcendental Brahm is established as the Atma that resides in the inner self of all living beings in creation (4).

5. It is from this Purush (here referring to the Viraat Purush, the invisible, macrocosmic, all-inclusive gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm) that the cosmic fire is created.

The Sun is like the Samidha (the firewood used during the fire sacrifice) of this Brahm. [This is because the Sun lights up the entire heavens with its light much like the fire sacrifice ‘lights up’ or opens the gate of heaven for the chief patron of the sacrifice.]

It is from this fire kept burning with the help of the firewood that the nectar-like Soma (the elixir of life) was created. And from this Soma was created the Parjanya or water from the heavens which comes down upon earth as rains. [This refers to the creation of rains due to the heat of the Sun. The rains are produced because the water is evaporated from the oceans due to this heat, and then in due course of time is converted into clouds that shower this evaporated water as rains back upon the earth. It is called Soma or the elixir of life because rains are very essential for crops and for taking water to distant areas of the earth where rivers and their like cannot reach. Rains bring cheer and joy to the creatures on earth who would have died for want of water, and it acts as a lubricant as well as a coolant to protect them against the unrelenting heat of the Sun. Had there been no rain, the earth would have scorched and turned into a parched dry terrain of lifeless rocks and withered shrubs. Hence, the rain is like the Soma that cheers the drinker.]

From the Parjanya (rains) was created the medicinal herbs—plants, trees, shrubs, creepers, and all other forms of vegetation that exist on earth.

These herbs create sperms in a man. When the man irrigates with the help of this sperm, the rest of the subjects (off springs) are produced. [That is, the plants when eaten as food in various forms support life in the man, providing the necessary nourishment, energy, stamina, strength and vitality to him. Even the animals depend upon plants for survival. It is the latent Pran or vital life supporting forces present in the food eaten that are extracted by the man and converted into his own life generating energy that is converted into sperms, the spark of life from which the next generation is born. In effect, the sperm is like the liquid Soma that produces life on earth when it irrigates the latter as rain. Likewise, the sperm irrigates the earth in the form of the female when the man transplants the sperm into the female, and this creates fresh life in the form of the off spring much like the rain creating fresh crops and new generation of plants on earth.] (5).

[Note—In the context of verse nos. 5-10 of the present section, refer also to the Prashna Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4. This Upanishad is Chapter 1 of this volume.]

6. It is from this Viraat Purush that all the Richas (hymns of the Rig Veda), the Sam Veda and the Yajur Veda were created.

It is from him that the investiture and other religious ceremonies were created.

It is from him that the fire and other forms of religious sacrifices, all their accompanying formalities, and the obligatory charities that must accompany such exercises were created.

It is from him that the concept of Samvatsar (one full year consisting of all the seasons) originated. [That is, the entire concept of one cycle of life has its origin in the supreme Brahm. The Samvatsar is a metaphor of one cycle of origin and conclusion of the visible creation.]

It is from him that the Yajmaan (the chief patron on whose behalf the fire sacrifice is done; here also referring to the ancestors called the Prajaptis from whom this human race evolved) and the subjects of the vast kingdom, stretching as far as the rays of the moon go and the energy of the sun heats, were created. [The vast kingdom refers to the world that exists on earth because the rays of the moon are limited to lighting the earth and not the far reaches of the solar system. At the same time, it also includes all the planets of the solar system because all these planets are lighted by the energy of the sun which is transmitted in the form of sunlight. In the context of the fire sacrifice cited herein above, the vast kingdom is a metaphoric way of alluding to the numerous benefits that accrue as a result of successful completion of a fire sacrifice. When this kingdom is seen in the context of the Prajapati as the Yajmaan or the chief patron who presided over this great exercise of creation of this habitable world, it would obviously mean the off springs of Prajapati. These off springs are the living beings that inhabit every corner of this earth. In other words, whatever that exists in this visible world is a manifestation of Brahm in his macrocosmic all-pervading form known as the Viraat Purush.] (6).

7. It is from this Viraat Purush that the numerous Gods as well as the special Gods who are invoked during the fire sacrifices, along with the humans, the animals, the birds, the various life supporting vital winds such as Pran and Apaana etc., and the staple cereals such as rice and oat are created.

It is from him that the glorious virtues of Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance for some noble cause), Shraddha (having faith, conviction and belief), Satya (truthfulness, sincerity and honesty), Brahmacharya (self control over the sense organs; continence and abstinence), along with the various laws and regulations that govern all phases of civil life, its ethics and morality were created (7).

8. It is from him (the Viraat Purush) that the seven grosser aspects of Pran were created. [These seven units of Pran are the two ears + two eyes + two nostrils + one tongue = seven. They are called 'Pran' because it is through them that the man is able to perceive the existence of the world. The ears help him to hear, the eyes to see, the nose to smell, and the tongue to taste.]

It is from these sense organs of perceptions that were produced the seven tongues of fire¹, the seven types of Samidhas or firewood², and the seven types of Homa or the offerings made to the fire sacrifice which are also classified into seven types³.

It is from the Viraat Purush that the seven Lokas or places inhabited by the creatures were created⁴. Besides these, the seven places where the Pran (life consciousness) finds its playing field, or the places which are kept alive by the Pran and where the Pran roams⁵ are also created from this Viraat Purush.

These seven units of creation are all established in the body of all living beings, and are created by the Purush who lives in its cave-like heart⁶ (8).

[Note—¹The *tongues of fire* refer to the sense of perceptions that are generated by each of the sense organs listed in this verse. The word 'tongue' has a metaphoric implication because one tastes anything with the tongue. Here it means that the man is able to 'taste' the irresistible charm and fascinating attractions of the material world only through the sense organs of perception. These perceptions light up the world for him and make him aware of its allurements. The seven tongues of the fire have been named in Canto 1, section 2, verse no. 4.

²The *Samidha* is the firewood that helps the fire of the sacrificial pit burning. This in the present context is a metaphor for the objects of the world that are relevant to each sense perception. For instance, the smells of the world are the firewood that keeps the fire of perception called smell burning; the sights of the world are the firewood that keeps the fire of perception called sight burning, and so on and so forth.

The seven types of Samidhas are firewood from seven types of trees are that used for this purpose as follows—Ashvattha (*Ficus religiosa*), Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*), Chandan (sandal wood), Devdaaru (pine), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Nayagrodha (Indian fig tree), and Palaas (*Butea frondosa*).

The wood from the following trees are not to be used for the purpose of Samidha—Bibhitak (*Terminalia bellerica*), Kapittha (wood apple), and Neem tree.

Each stick of the firewood should not be thicker than the thickness of the thumb, must have the bark on them, and should not be eaten by wood-worms or insects, or infected by any kind of germs—i.e. should be fresh.

³The *Homa* and *Yagya*—During fire sacrifices, Havi is offered to the consecrated sacred fire. This Havi is the material that is put into the consecrated sacred fire as an oblation during fire sacrifices. The process of offering is called Homa. Since Homa and Havi are an integral part of Yagya or the fire sacrifice, the latter is classified into seven types depending upon the type of Havi offered.

The Havis are generally the following things—(a) barley, rice and oat. (b) milk and clarified butter. (c) Juice of the Soma plant. (d) Besides these, animals were also offered as a sacrifice in earlier times.

Classification of Fire Sacrifice or Yagya depending upon the Homa used—

(i) Since doing Homa by the offering of a Havi is an integral part of Yagya or the fire sacrifice, the latter is classified into seven types depending upon the type of Havi

offered. If the Havi consists of rice, barley, oat, milk and clarified butter, then the seven types of fire sacrifices are called the following—Agnyaadheya, Agnihotra, Darshapuranmaas (also called the Prakriti or original fire sacrifice), Chaturmaas, Aagrayan, Niruddhapashubandha, and Sautraamani.

All these fire sacrifices are performed in the three main fires—viz. the Garhyapatya, the Dakshinagni and Aahavaniya.

(ii) If the Havi is the juice of the Soma plant, then the fire sacrifice is called the Soma Yagyas—so called because the extract or juice of the Soma plant is offered as an offering. These seven Soma Yagyas are the following—Agnisthoma, Atyagnisthoma, Ukthya, Shodashi, Vaajpeya, Atratra, and Aptoryaama.

(iii) Then there are seven special types of fire sacrifices called the seven Paak Yagyas. They are the fire sacrifices done for the purpose of worldly gains and material prosperity. They are also called Kaamyeshthi Yaga, or literally that which is done with the aim of fulfilling some specific desires or aspirations. They are performed in the Garhyapatya Agni or the fire of the household with cooked offerings such as boiled grains mixed with Ghee (clarified butter).

These seven Paak Yagyas are the following—Huta, Prahuta, Aahuta, Shulagava, Baliharana, Pratyavarohana, and Ashtakaahoma.

The Homa in the present context is the knowledge of this world and the belief that it is the reality and one that is worth acquiring. This is likened to the offering made to the fire sacrifice because when one makes such offerings to the sacred fire, he is aware of the results that would accrue to him if the sacrifice is completed successfully. He keeps in mind the objective of making such offerings while going through the elaborate rituals. He is sure that the desires would be fulfilled. Likewise, the knowledge of this world motivates the man to divert his sense organs and their efforts towards his objective—which is getting access to the charms and material benefits that have their presence in the world. He does everything with only one aim in mind, and that is the fulfillment of his desires pertaining to the specific object that he finds charming, attractive and meaningful. This diversion, concentration and putting to use of all available resources towards achieving success in the fulfillment of one's desires pertaining to this material world is like offering Homa or oblations to the fire sacrifice with great devotion and diligence. No efforts are left undone to achieve success in the fire sacrifice.

Since such fire sacrifices are done with the desire of attaining worldly successes, the reward is also commensurate with it. In other words, the reward is worldly prosperity, wealth, fame, name, glory and majesty. In the context of the genesis of creation in which the Viraat Purush was involved, the reward was the creation of the Lokas as mentioned in this verse.

⁴The *seven Lokas* that were created as the result of the fire sacrifice, according to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP), are the following lokas-- 'Bhu' (भूः) or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha' (भुवः) or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha' (स्वः) or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha' (महः) or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yogans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha' (जन्मः), so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha' (तपः) or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam' (सत्यम्) or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the view of this Upanishad as narrated above are the following—the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head—viz. the two eyes + two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. These are called the ‘Lokas’ because it is through them that the man becomes aware of the existence of the world.

⁵The seven *places where the Pran or life consciousness moves* are the following—the five organs of action such as the legs, hands, mouth, excretory and genitals, the thinking mind and the emotional heart = seven units. In other words, these organs of action along with the mind and the heart help the man to carry out his desires effectively. Once the organs of perceptions find out about the world and its charms, success in obtaining access to it would depend upon these organs of action aided and abetted by the mind and the heart.

These organs are included in the overall picture of the manifestation of Brahm as the world and its inhabitant creatures because the body of the creature is an image of the Viraat Purush, and as such to limit the existence of the vital life giving consciousness called Pran only to the organs of perception, and excluding the other organs such as the organs of action, the mind and the heart which nevertheless are equally important, would only distort the comprehensive picture of Brahm that the Upanishads attempt to depict.

⁶This ‘Purush’ is a clear reference to the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the subtle space of the creature’s heart. Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/1 affirms that the Purush is the Atma which is absolutely immaculate and sinless, and in 2/5/18 says that someone who resides in a ‘Pur’ or city (the ‘body’) is called a Purush. This resident is the Atma. See also verse nos. 9-10 below which are very clear in this. Since the Atma is the Sovereign of the body, all the organs of the body and all its activities are like the functioning of the different state organs for the purpose of administration of the kingdom whose king is the Atma. In other words, those who are wise and self-realised do not think that ‘they’ are the doer of any fire sacrifice or any other form of deed in this world. They firmly believe that it is their Atma that is doing these deeds in order to keep the wheel of creation turning on behalf of Brahm. Here the word ‘they’ is the plural for the individual person who usually is identified by the physical body in this world which recognises forms, names and attributes as the identity of the creature instead of the Atma. Refer verse no. 1 of this Canto in this context.]

9. It is from the Viraat Purush that all the oceans, the mountains and the rivers of different names are created.

It is from him that all the medicinal plants (herbs) and their essence or juices are produced.

It is this Viraat Purush that lives in all the living beings as their Atma that resides in their inner self¹ (9).

[Note—¹Refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, Brahman 4, verse no. 1, and Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 which also endorse exactly the same idea.]

10. Oh Saumya! The entire Vishwa (universe), all the Karmas (literally meaning the deeds, but here referring to the fire sacrifices), and the Tapa (austerity, penance and suffering of hardship for some noble cause)—verily, all of them are manifestations of the supreme Brahm.

That Brahm is the ‘absolute reality’ of creation, and is the ‘truthful essence’ which is like nectar of creation.

A wise and enlightened aspirant who knows that this Brahm is established in the subtle heart of all living beings (as their Atma, their pure conscious self) is able to

dismantle all the knots of ignorance in this world. [That is, he attains supreme knowledge of the Truth that is absolute and like nectar.] (10).

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Mundak (Canto) 2

Section 2

1. That (supreme transcendental Brahm) is self-illuminated, is all-pervading and omnipresent, is a resident of the subtle space of the heart of the creature, and is most holy, divine, honourable and exalted.

All forms of living beings that move, breathe and blink eyelids are incorporated in this Brahm, are an integral part of Brahm, and are an extended manifestation of the same Brahm that is a universal entity present in each minutest unit of creation. In fact, there is nothing that is not Brahm.

Know that supremely divine and holy Lord (Brahm) who is beyond the doubts and confusions created by the dual concept of truth and non-truth, who is worth honouring, accepting, admiring and worshipping, who is supreme and most exalted, and who is beyond the reach of the mind and intellect of all living beings (1).

2. That Brahm is splendorous and brilliant, is finer or smaller than the finest or the smallest atom, and is the one who harbours all the worlds and their inhabitants, and therefore is larger than the largest of anything that has ever come into existence.

Indeed, it is this Brahm that is eternal and imperishable. It is the same Brahm that is called the Pran or the vital life consciousness of creation, the Vani or the faculty of speech that enables the creatures to speak and express themselves (or the Pran to express itself, because it is the vital winds present in the body of the creature which enables the latter to speak and show other signs of life), and the Mana or the thinking mind as well as the emotional heart (because only a living and conscious creature can have a mind and heart that helps it to think and exhibit emotions respectively).

It is this Brahm that is a personification of Truth and Amrit (the essence, the nectar or the elixir of life).

Oh Saumya (gentleman aspirant—sage Shaunak)! This Brahm can be known and accessed only with the help of concentration of the mind, with diligent contemplation and deep insight (i.e. with the concentration of the various faculty of the intelligent and analytical mind). Hence, concentrate your mind and its faculties on Brahm (2).

3. [Verse nos. 3-4 describe how the teachings of the Upanishads and the divine Mantra OM can be used by a wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant to obtain success in realising Brahm.]

Use the teachings of the Upanishad as an infallible weapon called the bow, and mount it with the arrow sharpened and made effective with constant contemplation and thoughts of the target (of Brahm). Pull the strings of the bow with full devotion, conviction and faith, and you would definitely pierce the bull's eye or the target, which in this case is the attainment or realisation of the Brahm that is imperishable and eternal by nature. [That is, if you follow the instructions of the

Upanishads faithfully and practice them in your life, it is certain that you would become enlightened and Brahm-realised.] (3).

4. Pranav (the Mantra OM representing Brahm) is the bow, the Atma is the arrow, and Brahm is regarded as the target. [The main aim of all spiritual endeavours is to obtain the knowledge of the Absolute Truth known as Brahm. Since the Atma is the pure conscious ‘self’ of the aspirant, it is the one that aims to become Brahm realised—or realise Brahm, attain Brahm, or reach Brahm. In other words, the Atma is able to understand the Absolute Truth that is taught by the Upanishads. The vehicle for this is the Mantra OM because this Mantra relates directly to Brahm, and therefore is clearly the best medium by which Brahm can be accessed. Just like a man responds when he is called by his personal name, Brahm would respond more quickly and easily when called by this Mantra of OM. This Mantra is used as a medium during meditation and contemplation by the spiritual aspirant; it is used in Japa or constant repetition in order to enable the mind to remain focused on its target of Brahm realisation. Hence, the bow is both the teachings of the Upanishads as mentioned in verse no. 3 as well as the OM as said in this verse no. 4.]

A man who has conquered lethargy and indolence, a man who is alert, vigilant and agile, and a man who is attentive and focused—only such a man can ever hope to pierce the target with the arrow. [That is, these virtues are necessary if one wishes to reach one’s aim in this world, and in the present context, to have Brahm-realisation.]

One should concentrate upon the arrow (the Atma) and be focused on the target (Brahm) in order to pierce (reach) it (i.e. become Brahm-realised). [Inculcating the grand virtues enumerated above is simply like the bow that is properly strung as these virtues can aid an aspirant to reach his sought-after spiritual target. But it is the aspirant himself who must reach the target and enjoy its rewards. Since the Atma or the pure conscious ‘self’ is the true identity of all living beings, it is said here that the Atma is the ‘arrow’ because it is the Atma that attains Brahm and becomes one with Brahm; it is the Atma that becomes ‘Brahm-realised’ when it is said that the creature has become ‘Brahm-realised’. After all, the gross body of the creature is not his ‘true self’, so when it is said that the creature has realised his goal of attaining Brahm, it is actually his Atma that does so.] (4).

[Note—The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 38-39 uses the metaphor of the bow and the arrow to describe how the Atma of the creature can reach Brahm.]

5. That eclectic and enigmatic divine entity in which the Duloka (representing the heavens where the immortal higher Gods live), the Prithivi (the earth representing the terrestrial world of mortal beings), and the Antariksha (the sky and its upper reaches where the Spirits and junior Gods live, representing a realm in between the mortal world and the immortal world) along with the Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart) are established (or the eclectic and enigmatic entity from which all these units of creation have emerged or created)—verily, it is the Atma. This Atma is unique and non-dual.

Free yourself from all dichotomies and confusions in this matter that would only vex you and leave you perplexed. Instead, be firmly convinced that it is the only Truth worth pursuing if you wish to obtain the Amrit (elixir) known as Brahm (the Absolute Truth) (5).

[Note—In this verse, the Atma and Brahm are treated as being synonyms. The only probable difference between them is the plane in which they are usually understood to exist. For instance, when one says the ‘Atma’, it is usually at the

microcosmic level of existence that one refers to, while the term 'Brahm' applies to the same entity at the macrocosmic level. In reality, both are the two aspects of the same universal 'consciousness' that exists in this creation; they are like any 'truth' which is fundamentally unchangeable and immutable.]

6. Just like the spokes of the wheel of a chariot are fixed to its central hub¹, and the various Naadis (veins, arteries, capillaries and nerves) are centered around the heart², in the same way the supreme Brahm (i.e. the cosmic Consciousness) that has manifested in numerous ways finds its abode in the heart of the creature (as his Atma, the pure conscious soul which is the truthful 'self' of all the living beings) in this world³.

That supreme transcendental Brahm should be remembered, worshipped, honoured, meditated and contemplated upon through the medium of the divine and eclectic Mantra exclusively dedicated to it, and this Mantra is OM⁴.

It is absolutely imperative to do so if one wishes to go across the darkness of ignorance (regarding the spiritual truth) in this world (6).

[Note—¹Refer also (a) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shwetshwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no.4, 6; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.

²Refer also Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 6.

³Refer also Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 6; Krishna Yajur Veda's Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 40; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 4. Refer also to Mundak 2, section 1, verse no. 10, and verse nos. 7-9 of the present section 2 of this Mundak Upanishad.

⁴OM—It is the nearest analogue to Brahm, and is the universal Mantra dedicated exclusively to Brahm. OM is regarded as being synonymous with Brahm.]

7. Brahm that is supreme and transcendental, that is all-knowing and omniscient, that is all-pervading and omnipresent, and whose glories, majesties and magnificence is well known and revealed everywhere in the form of this creation itself—verily, that Brahm is established in the divine 'Brahm Pur' located in the sky represented by the subtle space of the heart of the creature. In other words, the supreme Brahm who is none else but the cosmic Consciousness pervades throughout the length and breadth of this creation in his macrocosmic form, and at the same time he lives as the Atma or the pure conscious 'self' of all living beings in their heart. [The word 'Pur' means an abode.]

This Brahm in the form of the Atma lives in the subtle sky of the lotus-like heart of the body which has two major components—viz. the subtle body called the Mano Maye Kosh or the mental sheath, and an outer gross body called the Anna Maye Kosh or the food sheath¹. It is through the Mana that the Brahm residing in this lotus-like heart of the body of the creature controls all its functions along with the movement of Pran (the vital winds that not only keep the body alive and active but also control each activity of the gross body)².

This Brahm, the Supreme Being, who resides in the lotus-like heart as the Atma is an embodiment of Anand—i.e. it is personified bliss and ecstasy; it is an embodiment of Amrit—i.e. it is personified elixir that gives not only bliss and ecstasy but is the essence that is at the core of this creation.

This Brahm shines or is revealed everywhere with full glory, splendour and magnificence. Those who are truthfully Brahm realised, enlightened and wise, see,

experience and witness this Brahm everywhere, in each unit and direction of creation (7).

[Note—¹The gross body of the creature is like a wheel consisting of five rings or Koshas which are like cells or sheaths or layers that surround the central hub represented by the heart where the Atma lives. Just like a wheel that depends upon the hub to remain intact and maintain its form, shape and existence, the body too depends upon the Atma for its survival. Again, just like the hub is the central point around which the wheel rotates in order to take the chariot forward, the Atma is the central core around which the entire edifice of creation revolves.]

²Since the Atma itself does not do anything like the Emperor who does not carry out the daily routine affairs of the empire himself but depends upon his trusted prime minister, the Atma too depends upon the Mana or the intelligent mind and the emotional aspect of the heart to help it carry out the various deeds of the body. It is the mind through which the Atma regulates everything in this world. If the mind is disturbed or sick, all the activities are adversely affected.]

8. When a man comes to be acquainted with the truth and reality of this Brahm, all the Granthis or knots (tantamount to various spiritual impediments, hurdles, corruptions and taints) of his heart are ruptured, vanquished, untied or unknotted (or are dispelled and overcome)¹.

All his doubts and confusions are dispelled. All the accumulated consequences of his past deeds as well as the chances of accumulating fresh consequences are done away with. [This is because once he has realised the Truth about his own self as well as the body, he understands that they are two different entities, and that it is the body that does the various deeds and not the Atma which is only a dweller in this body for a certain time, and would have to ultimately abandon it when the body becomes old and dies. This Atma is divine, eternal, imperishable, immaculate and free from all worldly taints; the body possesses none of these grand virtues. Becoming self and Brahm realised is the pinnacle of spiritual knowledge that bestows natural wisdom and enlightenment to the aspirant.] (8).

[Note—¹Refer also to Mundak 3, section 2, verse no. 9. Such a person is able to overcome all the numerous spiritual hurdles that ignorance of the truth of Brahm puts in his way of finding liberation and deliverance as well as finding permanent peace and tranquility. The numerous emotional, sentimental and spiritual hurdles that an aspirant faces are referred to as the *Granthi* because they are like the hard shell of the nut which is difficult to crack. Only when this shell is cracked can one find the nut. Similarly, only when one overcomes the numerous obstacles and hurdles faced by him in his spiritual pursuit that it is possible for him to have access to the fount of eternal bliss and peace that comes with realisation of Brahm, which in essence is being aware of the Absolute Truth of existence. These Granthis are called Hridaya Granthis because they shackle the Atma and prevent its liberation and deliverance; they stand in the way of a man obtaining freedom from his fetters, and keep him tied to this world. Once he is able to rupture them or overcome them, he finds liberation even while he is still alive in this world. This is known as 'Jivan Mukti'. This fact has been clearly emphasized in Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

9. The supreme Brahm lives in the subtlest Kosha or the inner-most cell of the creature's body. This Kosha is illuminated, and therefore called 'Hiranymaya'. It is illuminated because of the presence of this self-illuminated Brahm in its core. This Kosha becomes inseparable from Brahm and acquires the shine of Brahm residing inside it. It is therefore called the 'Hiranyamaye Kosha'. It is the body's hub and the core of its life. This Kosha is the subtle heart where this Brahm—who is immaculate

and pristine pure, who is without any attributes and forms—lives. [This inner most cell of the body is called the ‘causal body’ because the very ‘cause of existence’ known as the pure conscious Atma lives in it. This Atma is the microcosm of Brahm.]

This Brahm is at the heart or core of all that is illuminated, glorious, splendorous, radiant and magnificent. [That is, if anything has these virtues it is because of the presence of Brahm—or the Absolute Truth—in it. In other words, Brahm—or Truth—is a personification of these eclectic and divine virtues.]

Those aspirants who are self realised, wise and enlightened know about this Brahm (9).

10. In this Brahm Loka the sun does not shine, nor does the moon or the stars. The electric or lightening too does not shine or dazzle there, say how then can the fire be lighted there? The fact of the matter is that all these entities are illuminated because of the illumination and light provided by Brahm as they do not have their own light.

It is this single Brahm’s light that is reflected in all of them; it is when Brahm shines that all these entities begin to show light¹ (10).

[Note—¹This observation can be understood by a simple example. When the Sun is shining brightly at its best, the flame of a lighted lamp or candle become virtually ‘lightless’, loses its brightness and glow, and becomes redundant or irrelevant as far as illuminating the surrounding area is concerned. Seen from a distance one would not be even able to make out whether the candle is lighted or not, so luster-less does its flame becomes. Similarly, when Brahm is present, all other lighted entities such as the sun, the moon and the stars become inconsequential and redundant. Even the ‘fire’ makes no impact because the glare and dazzle of the illumination of Brahm is extremely bright so as to dwarf the glow and brightness of fire into nothingness. The illumination emanating from Brahm is of such an astounding dimension and intensity that it nullifies the light of all entities that have a shine.

In other words, when a man becomes enlightened about Brahm, he attains such glory and wisdom that he becomes a living embodiment of the Sun on this earth. He acquires such stupendous mystical powers and spiritual majesty that he outshines all other human beings in this world.]

11. [What is that Brahm?] That Brahm is Gyan or truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment personified. This Gyan is like Amrit, or the quintessential knowledge of Brahm is the essence of all knowledge, and is the elixir of Truth. [That is, nothing is superior to the knowledge about the ‘Absolute Truth’.]

It is Brahm everywhere—on the left and right, above and below.

Indeed, this world is nothing but this eclectic and magnificent Brahm revealed in its form (11).

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Mundak (Canto) 3

Section 1

1. Two friendly birds live on the same tree¹. Out of these two, one enjoys the fruits of the tree while the other fasts and watches everything in a dispassionate and neutral way² (1).

[Note—¹This analogy of the tree and the bird has been cited in Krishna Yajur Veda's Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 6-7; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 41.

²The tree is compared to the world, while one of the birds represents the creature who remains engrossed in enjoying the world and its pleasures and comforts symbolised by the fruits of the tree, whereas the other bird is like the enlightened creature who has become detached from it and is not attracted by the fruits of the tree representing this colourful and attractive world with its innumerable comforts and pleasures of the sense organs.]

2. When the Purush or the living being (represented by one of the birds who remains engrossed in eating the fruits) who lives on the tree (i.e. in the world of sense objects) surrounded by ignorance and overcome by delusions (about his exalted heritage and lineage traced back to Brahm, the Supreme Being), he becomes helpless and is at the mercy of the world. He remains engrossed in endlessly pursuing it and is submerged in all sorts of pains and miseries pertaining to this world¹.

On the other hand, those wise ones who have become aware of the fact that there is a divine and holy entity that is distinct from their body as well as the world, an entity that is served, worshipped, honoured and sought to be accessed by learned and wise sages, seers and ascetics—such people become freed from all miseries² (2).

[Note—¹The foolish bird thinks that this 'tree' has produced 'fruits' for it, that this tree is its eternal home, that this tree belongs to it, that the other inhabitants of this tree are its competitors, and so on and so forth. When this is applied to the stupid man who is ignorant of the fact about his 'true' self, who thinks that the body is his 'self' instead of the Atma, who treats this world as his permanent home, who selfishly guards his worldly assets and material gains, who spends his entire life-time in remaining engrossed in pleasing this or that sense organs or this or that friend and family member, who is never satisfied with whatever he has and has a constant desire for more, who thinks that this world is meant to be enjoyed, that there is no such thing as the soul or the Atma, that there is no such thing as spiritual liberation and deliverance or emancipation and salvation—such ignorant people remain perpetually hooked or attached to this world and continue to enjoy as well as suffer in it. They suffer because they are never satisfied and contented with what they have; they see their peers having this and that material successes and start hankering after it. They land in the grip of the vicious cycle of wants and more wants. This situation can never be conducive to peace and happiness. They are like the bird that spends its time in the pursuit of enjoying the fruits of the tree. This bird hops from one branch to another, nibbling endlessly at the fruits, eating a bit of this and a bit of that, jumping from fruit to fruit in the false belief that the other one is sweeter than the first. But as it turns out, this stupid bird not only ruins all the fruits of the tree, create a lot of noise by its incessant chirping, litters the whole place with half-eaten and half-chewed pieces of fruits and its excreta, but also gets tired and worn out itself by the end of the day due to its restless and fickle nature, besides never being able to satisfy its hunger and ruining its appetite and general health in the long run. This bird not only causes havoc to the tree and its fruits, but also to its own peace of mind.

On the other hand is the bird that remains silently perched on any one branch, eats its fill on one fruit, and spends the day quietly observing the nuisance created by its friend and pondering at the latter's lack of wisdom. At the end of the day, this second bird is rested and relaxed; it does not ruin the tree and its fruits, it does not litter the surrounding area, and does not create nuisance by constant chirping and hopping around.

In this scenario, obviously the first bird would be regarded as stupid and the second as wise. The first bird is a metaphor for the stupid, deluded and ignorant man who remains engrossed in the pursuance of the material world of sense objects and

spends his time in seeking gratification for his sense organs. On the other hand, the second bird is like a wise and erudite man who is eternally contented with whatever he has, is never attracted by the temptations of this deluding world, and is ever calm and rested.

²Wise, intelligent and self-realised people understand that the ‘truth’ is neither the body nor the visible world and its numerous charms. This world is not their destination, and neither is the body their permanent habitat. Both are perishable and transient. All the pains and enjoyments are likewise transient and impermanent. Then there must be something that is true, permanent and the real destination. Like a man who does not know about anything looks upon his seniors for guidance and help, such a man would look up and observe how the learned sages, seers and ascetics behave. He discovers that they remain totally dispassionate towards and detached from this material world, its sense objects and charms. Obviously he begins to wonder about the reason for such calm and neutral demeanours of these people because they are learned, wise and experienced. Like a faithful student who follows his learned teacher, they emulate them and inculcate the same virtues of dispassion, detachment and renunciation that is characteristic of such exalted people. Such people are like the second bird who sits dispassionately on the tree, watching everything in a neutral and disinterested way.]

3. When a wise and Brahm realised man is able to see or become acquainted with the supreme Brahm who is the neutral and dispassionate witness to all and everything in this creation, who is self-illuminated, who is the Supreme Being, and who is the supreme creator and the ultimate progenitor of the entire universe, including Brahma the creator (who created this visible world where the mortal creature lives)—it is then that such a wise and enlightened man abandons all sorts of involvements in any kind of thing, whether it is auspicious or inauspicious. [That is, he does not get sucked in the vortex of getting mentally and emotionally involved in doing worldly deeds at all. He does them but with total detachment from them, and with a sense of non-involvement in their fruits or rewards.]

Such a man attains the eclectic stature of being calm and equitable in his approach to life. He becomes pure and untainted as his inner self is not polluted by any of the contaminants or impurities that are by-products of getting engrossed in this world. (3).

4. [This verse clearly asserts that a truly wise and Brahm realised person is one who continues to do his duties in this world without getting involved in them. This gives him honour and an exalted place amongst those who are called Brahm realised.]

The supreme Brahm is the one who is revealed in the form of Pran or life consciousness in all the living beings¹. A person who knows this universal truth has no sense of Ahankar, or ego and self pride in him. [This is because he realises that whatever the body does is not as a result of his own effort but due to the fact that the Pran that lives in this body is making the body do what the latter does, and this Pran is Brahm personified. So, there is no scope of ‘his’ being proud of anything because ‘he’ is not the doer. ‘He’ is not the one who is empowering the body to do anything, but it is some different mystical power that is known as Brahm that empowers the body.]

Such a wise and erudite person who knows the eclectic truth about the Atma, i.e. about the supreme Brahm residing in his own bosom as the pure consciousness and his true ‘self’, knows that it is this Brahm in the form of the Atma that drives the body and all its activities². It is the Brahm that is the Pran or life consciousness in the body of all living beings.

Such a person is called 'Brahm realised'. He continues to do his duties in this world and acquires an exalted and honourably position in the society of learned and enlightened men who are categorized as Brahm realised³. (4).

[Note—¹Some of the other Upanishads that affirm that the Pran is a manifestation of Brahm—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse no. 17; Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Valli 3, Anuvak 3.

²It is the reason why the Kosha or cell where the Atma lives in the body, i.e. the subtle heart, is called the 'causal body' because it is the 'cause' of everything in this world. Refer verse no. 9 of Canto 2, section 2 of this Upanishad above.

³That is, a wise person does not run away from the world or from doing his duties, but his attitude changes. Instead of getting neck-deep involved in the deeds and their results, he does them in a dispassionate and detached manner. He does not get hooked to the deeds and their results; he does not bother what the world says or whether or not success is attained. He does the deeds absolutely dispassionately and in a neutral fashion. This is the eclectic theory of selfless and dispassionate Karma.

This concept of *Karma* or deeds has been explained in a number of Upanishads. For instance, the Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 67 describes succinctly how Karma or deeds and their consequences can be overcome. The Varaaha Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48, and Canto 4, verse no. 35 describe the relationship between the deed, the doer and the cause. The Adhyatma Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes the concept of doing deeds and its effect on the spiritual liberation or bondage of the creature in fine detail in its verse nos. 49-60.

The Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 13 asserts that the supreme transcendental Brahm or the quintessential spiritual Truth of creation as well as Mukti or liberation and deliverance is not possible by merely doing various deeds in this mortal world. This same idea is endorsed in Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 35, which asserts that deeds or Karma do not provide the Atma of the creature with liberation and deliverance from this world, but it is Gyan (truthful knowledge of the spiritual truths) that does so.

The 'Karma Chakra' or the giant wheel of deeds and their consequences has been described in the Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 6, verse no. 3. The three Paths followed by a creature according to the deeds done by him are referred to in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 4/7. The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48 describes how one can become free from the fetters created by 'deeds'. The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 11-12 describes the concept of Karma. The Sarwasaar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 6 describes the concept of how and why the creature becomes the doer of deeds

What happens to ignorant people after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1. The Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 23-26 defines what constitutes of true 'Karma Yoga'. The Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 2/4/2-3 describes the philosophy of Deeds. The Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 67 describes succinctly how Karma or deeds and their consequences can be overcome.]

5. That Brahm who is manifested as the pure conscious Atma (which lives in the body of the creature as his 'true self') can be known by regularly and consistently following the path of speaking the truth and nothing but the truth, doing Tapa (observing austerities, doing penances and suffering hardship for some noble cause), acquiring correct and comprehensive knowledge about the Truth, and observing the principles of Brahmacharya (full control over the sense organs and their wayward tendencies).

Indeed, this glorious, splendid and magnificent Brahm lives inside the body of the creature in the form of his Atma, the pure consciousness¹. [In other words, if one wishes to search for Brahm, he need not go out into the forest or numerous pilgrim sites because the Supreme Being is to be found in one's inner self only.]

This indwelling Brahm can be seen or known or realised by only those ascetics who have cleansed themselves of all impurities and contaminations. [This is like the case of one viewing one's face in the mirror. If the mirror is tarnished or not properly made, the picture would be hazy and distorted. Likewise, only those who inculcate the virtues enumerated herein above are qualified to experience Brahm in their inner self.] (5).

[Note--¹Refer Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse nos. 6-9.]

6. It is the 'truth' that alone wins, and not 'falsehood'. The path in which the exalted Gods move is marked by 'truth'. [That is, it is the 'truth' that is the characteristic feature of all the auspicious and noble virtues that give glory to the creature. The Gods personify these virtues and the path of truth is what they follow. Therefore, if someone follows the path of complete 'truth' he is no less exalted than any of the Gods.]

By following this path of 'truth', wise and selfless sages and seers reach that exalted abode or attain that auspicious stature which is equivalent to having reached the holy abode of the Supreme Being who is the best example of 'truth'. Indeed, the Supreme Being (Brahm) is the Absolute Truth personified (6).

7. That Brahm (Supreme Being) is most grand, splendid, majestic, divine, sublime and supreme. He is beyond the reach of normal thoughts and perceptions. He is most subtle, enigmatic and esoteric. He is most miniscule and fine. He is further than the farthest point of creation on the one hand, and on the other hand he is nearer than the nearest as he resides inside the body itself, in its very center in the heart as the pure conscious Atma of the creature.

For those who are truthfully wise, erudite and Brahm realised, Brahm is experienced by them in the cave-like heart as the Atma as well as in the form of the grand faculty known as the 'Buddhi', or the faculty of intelligence, analytical thinking, research, discrimination and rationality etc., that are present in the mind (7).

8. That enigmatic, esoteric and mystical Brahm (and its manifestation as the Atma) is not seen by the eyes (as it does not have any physical form, colour and contour), is not understood or grasped by the speech (i.e. it is not possible to describe or learn about Brahm with words), is not perceived by any of the other sense organs of perception (such as the ear, nose, tongue and skin—i.e. it is not possible to learn about Brahm's existence by hearing Brahm, by smelling Brahm, by tasting Brahm or by feeling or touching Brahm).

That Brahm is not accessible either by doing Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance) or doing Karma (literally deeds, but here referring to the performance of fire sacrifices—refer Canto 1, section 2, or doing numerous other auspicious deeds such as making charities, going on pilgrims etc.).

[Then, how is it possible to access Brahm? It is being narrated now--] That Brahm who has no attributes and aspects that can be ordinarily discerned is accessible to only those wise ones who have cleansed their inner self of all evils, contaminations and impurities, and then meditate and contemplate diligently and sincerely upon Brahm, the 'Truth', with great conviction, devotion and firmness of faith (8).

9. The subtle form of Brahm called the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the body of the creature consisting of the five forms of Prans or vital winds¹, is known, experienced, witnessed or realised by the medium of the Mana (mind).

It is only when this instrument of the mind is thoroughly cleansed and scrubbed of all taints that the creature is able to witness the presence of the glorious Atma representing Brahm in his inner-self because then this self-illuminated entity begins to shine through. [It is like the case of the mirror being cleaned in order to see one's face. The 'mirror' here would be the mind, and the 'face' would be the reality of one's self as the Atma. The 'shining' would then be equivalent to being aware of or being acquainted with the truth of the Atma and its divine nature which is pure and self-illuminated. It is also like the case of the glass chimney of a wick lantern being cleaned thoroughly, because it is then that the light of the flame can be clearly seen and would properly illuminate its surrounding.] (9).

[Note—Refer Mundak 3, section 2, verse no. 3 below. The five vital winds referred to here are Pran, Apaana, Vyaana, Samaana and Udaana. Please refer to the Prashna Upanishad, verse nos. 4-5 of its Cantos (questions) 1, 2 and 3, and verse no. 4 of Canto 4.]

10. A person who sincerely wishes to have access to anything or any world, if his desire is honest and true, then it is certain that he would have access to the desired thing or world. Therefore, since a wise and enlightened aspirant would always aspire for higher objectives in life and aim for the exalted stature of obtaining the Truth, he is easily able to do so. In other words, a person who has a cleansed 'inner self' becomes so spiritually powerful that he is able to have access to any of the worlds he wishes to have access to, or attains anything that he wishes to have. [It must be noted that a wise and enlightened man would surely not wish to have worldly material objects or fame and material prosperity. What is intended here is to emphasize the fact that real peace, happiness and bliss comes with true contentedness that comes when one has acquainted himself with the 'truth' of this world and renounces its false charms. It is obvious that such a man would never hanker for worldly things. Obviously, he would be at peace with himself much like the second bird cited in verse nos. 1-3 above.]

Hence, those who wish to have truthful fame and glory should follow such enlightened and wise men. [That is, those who wish to free themselves from a false sense of achievement by not striving for acquisition of worldly things and fame, but endeavour to find spiritual liberation and deliverance, spiritual emancipation and salvation, and spiritual contentedness and peace, should follow the example set by wise, enlightened and Brahm-realised souls.] (10).

[Note—Refer Mundak 3, section 2, verse no. 2 below.]

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Mundak (Canto) 3

Section 2

[This section outlines the method by which the Atma and Brahm can be realised by a spiritual aspirant.]

1. [Verse nos. 1-2 outlines why a man takes a birth, and how he can obtain freedom from the cycle of birth and death.]

A wise, enlightened and self realised aspirant is able to know about that majestic and splendorous Brahm who is supreme and transcendental, who is the only foundation and the universal basis of the entire creation, and who pervades throughout it uniformly.

The spiritual aspirant who worships and serves this Brahm selflessly, without expecting anything in return, is indeed able to break free from this seemingly endless cycle of birth and death (1).

[Note—Refer also to Mundak 1, section 2, verse no. 12, and Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 6.]

2. A person who has any kind of desire, aspiration, hope and expectation in his heart and mind, and wishes them to be fulfilled, such a person finds a destination (or takes a new birth) accordingly. [In other words, if a man worships the Lord with some rewards in mind, the Lord would definitely oblige him by giving him his desired reward. But this would entail being born again in order to enjoy this reward, and this prevents the aspirant from finding liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. It also means that if a man is not able to fulfill his desires in this life and dies, he has to take another birth to that his unrequited desires can be addressed and realised. But as it happens in practice, this is like pursuing a mirage in a desert in search of water which eludes the thirsty man. In the new birth, the man gets entangled in a new set of wants that are a natural consequence of living in a material world, especially when the man has no control over his natural instincts, resulting in the setting in motion of a new chain of desires that remain unfulfilled by the time the body gets worn out and collapses due to old age, and dies. As is obvious now, the only way to clear this burden is to disengage from the world and its entrapping attractions by not having any desires whatsoever.]

Therefore on the other hand, a person who is completely contented and has no desires, hopes, expectations, yearnings or aspirations left in him that require fulfillment, he would naturally not worship the Lord with the hope and expectation of getting them fulfilled. He would not worship the Lord to seek favour from him with the view of fulfillment of his desires, but his worship now would be for the purpose of simple selfless thanksgiving-worship to express gratitude and thank the Lord for all that he has showered as blessings upon the aspirant. For such a person there is no new birth, and when he sheds the body it is his final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. He will not have to take a birth again (2).

[Note—Verse nos. 1 and 2 effectively say that if a person worships the Supreme Being selflessly, i.e. with no rewards for such worship in mind, he is able to break free from the cycle of birth and death. Similarly, if a man has no desires or wishes unfilled, i.e. a man who is fully contented, would not have to take a birth again, while a person who has unfulfilled desires would take a new birth according to the type of desires he has left un-realised at the time of death. Refer also to Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 10.]

Other references:—The concept of *death* and *what happens after that*, the *destiny* of the creature, has been succinctly described, inter alia, in the following Upanishads—

(a) Rig Veda = Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1.

(b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 4/3/33, 35-38, 4/4/1-14, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2, 14-16, etc.; Subalopanishad, Canto 11.

(d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Taittiriyo-panishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Kathopanishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20; Canto 1, Valli 2, verse no. 1-6; Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 6-8; Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 4-17; Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 24.

(e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10.

The basic concept is that the creature attains that place which it desires for at the time of death—refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 12 which is very explicit on this point. Further, it also depends upon the creature's mental awareness and conception of what constitutes the 'Truth'—refer Brihad Aranyak Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse no. 1-6.

The *destiny* of the person depends upon the *type of desires he has* while doing deeds in this world. This is stated in Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 33, Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 4-14.

What happens to *ignorant people* after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1.]

3. [Verse nos. 3-4 describe how the spiritual aspirant can obtain knowledge of the Atma.]

The pure conscious Atma (which is the supreme Brahm personified; it is the cosmic Consciousness residing in one's own inner self in the subtle space of his heart) is not accessible or known by giving or hearing discourses and lectures, or by relying solely on the ability of the mind to think intelligently and analytically, or by hearing about it repeatedly over a long period of time from different sources. [This statement is not intended to undermine the valuable contribution of these instruments in realising the Atma, but their role is very limited as is made clear below.]

The Atma is accessed (witnessed, experienced, known and realised) only by a sincere desire and a firm determination for it. For such a sincere aspirant, the Atma reveals its glory spontaneously for him. [That is, if one sincerely wants to know about the Atma it is only then he would pursue his objective relentlessly, would overcome all hurdles that come in his way, and would take the help of all the instruments enumerated herein above to reach his goal. He would not rely only on, say, discourses or reading of scriptures and trying to decipher their teachings by applying the rational and intelligent mind to know the Atma, because then he would fail to reach his objective. He must have faith in the 'truth' of the Atma, for otherwise he would begin to have doubts and confusions as the path of finding the Atma is not easy as it seems. It is an extremely arduous journey in un-chartered territory, but it is nevertheless very rewarding and spiritually enlightening as well as exhilarating. The realisation of the Atma is a sudden event just like the sun breaking from behind the curtain of dark clouds to show its bright light, its brilliance and dazzling radiance. The glory of the Atma, the pure consciousness, likewise reveals its self and illuminates the inner-self as well as the mind of the aspirant with what is known as 'enlightenment'. Just like it is impossible to describe in words what the 'light of the sun' is like except to say that it removes the darkness of the night and shows the world to the creature by illuminating things around, it is also impossible to find words to describe exactly what the Atma is like, and what does it feel when one accesses or realises this glorious and divine entity known as the Atma.] (3).

[Note—Refer Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 9 above.]

4. The Atma is not attainable by a weak person, or by him who is careless, lazy and indolent, or by simply doing Tapa (austerity and penance) that is bereft of knowledge of the Truth. [That is, a person who is mentally unsteady, is not certain of what he is doing, what he should do, or the real aim of what he is doing, is unable to reach his target. He would be confused and an easy prey for misconceptions, diversions and delusions. Similarly, laziness and lethargy are not conducive to one realising his dreams in life in any field, let alone the spiritual field which specially requires great effort and diligence. Simply torturing the body in the name of doing Tapa is a stupid thing to do just like the case of a student who would do better in a short time if he studies his subject with proper understanding and concentrates his attention and energy on the book he reads instead of spending hours reading many books without understanding them, or just learning by rote.]

A wise and enlightened man who aims at attaining this Atma with due diligence and sincerity, who does Tapa correctly (i.e. who understands what he is doing and what the aim is), this Atma is not only accessed by him but it also enables him to enter the exalted state of Brahm realisation. [In other words, when one realises the pure consciousness residing in his inner self as the Atma, he becomes truly 'self-realised' and 'Brahm realised'. He would have accessed the spiritual Truth that immediately lifts him to an exalted state of enlightenment and spiritual liberation. He would have accessed the fount of nectar that gives steady peace and bliss. All the darkness caused by spiritual ignorance and delusions would be dispelled, and just like the brilliant light of the sun breaking through from behind the dark bank of clouds to illuminate the entire world, such an enlightened man would at once become 'enlightened' spontaneously. Darkness and light can't co-exist. Once the Atma or the pure consciousness is realised, everything else that is 'non-Atma' perish automatically.] (4).

5. [Verse nos. 5-9 describe how Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death can be obtained by a spiritual aspirant.]

Upon having realised the truth of the Atma which is the pure consciousness, Rishis (exalted sages and seers) who are wise and discriminating become enlightened and self-realised. With the eclectic knowledge of the divine Atma, they become fully contented and fulfilled; no desires, yearnings and passions are left in them. They become dispassionate towards and detached from everything in this world. As a result, they become fully rested, calm and peaceful; all their restlessness, confusions and agitations are eliminated. [Just like a man who has tasted nectar not wanting to drink ordinary water, a self-realised and enlightened man who has accessed the Atma would no longer have any interest in any of the grosser things or aspects of life.]

Such wise and self-realised persons who have experienced the glorious Atma are able to see the supreme Brahm representing the Absolute Truth and the cosmic Consciousness everywhere in this creation, because Brahm is omnipresent, all-pervading and a universal divinity that has revealed itself uniformly in all forms that this creation has taken. That is, such persons truly and honestly become wise, knowing, erudite and enlightened.

With this holistic all-inclusive view of Brahm, such wise men (as described herein above) become indistinguishable from Brahm and ultimately merge in Brahm to become one with this cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth that is known as 'Brahm'. They would have realised that since their 'true self' is the pure

consciousness known as the Atma, and the latter is no other entity but the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm itself personified, it is natural that they would see no distinction between their individual 'self' and Brahm, the supreme 'Self'. Therefore, they become one like Brahm, the Supreme Being, himself. [Refer verse no. 6 below.] (5).

6. Those who have fully understood the teachings of the Upanishads and have determined the aim of their spiritual pursuit based on these teachings, those who have cleansed their inner self (of all kinds of desires and worldly attachments) by inculcating the grand principles of Vairagya (renunciation), and have empowered themselves by practicing Yoga (meditation and contemplation) in a holistic manner—such wise and enlightened spiritual aspirants obtain the exalted Brahm Loka at the time of discarding their mortal body. [That is, such wise men find Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death when they die. They find entrance in the divine abode of the Supreme Being which is a metaphoric way of saying that they get emancipation and salvation, and reach an exalted stage from where they would not have to re-enter the mortal world characterized by incessant birth and death. They would have found permanent peace, tranquility and bliss for their souls. Refer verse no. 5 in this context.] (6).

7. For a self and Brahm realised person, all the fifteen Kalaas¹ (or various aspects of life) merge into one, and the different Indris (the sense organs) withdraw themselves and merge with their primary Gods² (representing the primary forces and energy of Nature that have revealed themselves in these divine forms in order to carry out different functions of life in this creation). At the same time, he has no Karma (deeds) left to be done (because he is fully contented and has no need for doing any worldly deed in order to fulfill his desires), and no more Gyan (knowledge) left to be acquired (because he has already known the 'truth' pertaining to the pure conscious Atma that is his 'truthful self' as well as the cosmic Truth known as Brahm that is the same 'consciousness' prevailing in the entire universe and whose reflection the individual Atma is). This knowledge is the ultimate knowledge that one can ever hope to acquire, and the best part is that is the 'truthful' form of knowledge of the Reality that is Absolute.

Hence, such an enlightened person merges himself inseparably and irrevocably into the supreme Brahm (at the time of death—thereby obtaining Videha Mukti, and even while he is alive—thereby obtaining Jivan Mukti) (7).

[Note—¹The *fifteen Kalaas* have been enumerated in Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4. These are the various units of creation—viz. the 5 elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth + Anna (food) + Virya (sperm) + the 5 Indris or sense organs + Mana (the thinking mind and emotional heart) + Sraddha (the virtue of faith and devotion) + Tapa (austerity, penance and sufferance of hardship for some noble cause) + Mantra (divine formulas or key to any body of knowledge) + Karma (deeds) + Loka (the different worlds) + Naam (name, and this implies a form because only things with a form can be assigned a name) = 15.

Refer also the Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 33, 37-40 which describe the concept of 'Kalaa' vis-à-vis the living creature.

²The *Indris* are the five sense organs of perception with which the creature knows or becomes aware of the world—the eyes which see, the ears that hear, the nose that smells, the tongue which tastes, and the skin which feels.

³The Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse nos. 1-4 describes how the Supreme Being (Brahm) created the universe from his own self and then decided to create the principal *Gods* of creation from his own cosmic body to oversee the functioning of the various aspects of creation, and in its Canto 2, verse nos. 1-4 it describes how the various creatures were created and then how these cosmic Gods took up their residence in the different organs of the creature. Thus, the eye became the abode of the Sun God, the mouth of the Fire God, the nose of the Vayu or Pran God, the ear of the custodian Gods of all the directions represented by the sound element, the Mana or heart of the Moon God, the skin the Earth element which generated hair representing the trees and plants, and fluid part of the body such as sperm, blood, mucous etc. of the Varun or the Water God. When the body disintegrates into its primary elements such as the earth, water, fire, air and sky, these Gods find themselves released and they go back to their parent, the Supreme Being. The entire process can be simplified and said that when the wise man who knows this entire process dies, he goes back to assume his primary form—and it is Brahm, the Supreme Being from whom the independent units that formed the composite identity of the individual creature had emerged at the very beginning.]

8. Just like the many rivers with different names and following different paths fall into the ocean to lose their independent existence and instead become one with the ocean, the wise and enlightened man is freed from the limiting effects of name and form to become one with and indistinguishable from the supreme Purush, the universal, all-pervading divine, sublime and transcendental Brahm. They lose their independent identity and surrender to this Supreme Being (8).

[Note—An exactly the same idea has been proclaimed in the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 6, verse no. 5. This Upanishad is Chapter 1 of this volume.]

9. A wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant who becomes knowledgeable about Brahm becomes one like Brahm. No one in his family remains bereft of Gyan or knowledge of Brahm. [It is like the case of the sun lighting up all the planets that revolve around it. All the family members who come in contact with such an enlightened man are bound to be affected with the illumination of spiritual knowledge that effuses from him like the light from the sun. They cannot remain immune to it. They would watch him and his life at close quarters, and would obviously see the level of contentedness and peace that he has obtained. This would also motivate them to acquire the same knowledge so that they can also get the same sort and level of peace and happiness.]

Such a wise and enlightened man who has become self and Brahm realised is not only freed from the evil effects of sins but also gets rid of or overcome all sorts of torments and miseries which are so much part of this mundane world and mortal life in it.

He is able to crush all his Hridaya Granthis¹ (i.e. he is able to overcome all the emotional hurdles that act like knots and create an obstacle in his spiritual progress). As a result, he finds eternity and bliss (9).

[Note—¹The concept of Hridaya Granthis have been explained in Mundak 2, section 2, verse no. 8 and its accompanying note.]

10. The wisdom enunciated above has been reaffirmed in the following verse also.

This eclectic and sublime knowledge pertaining to the divine Brahm, called the 'Brahm Vidya', should be given or taught to only those persons who have the following virtues in them—(i) they do deeds selflessly (refer verse 1/2/12 and 3/2/1),

(ii) are well-versed in the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Upanishads (refer 1/1/4-5, 2/2/3 and 3/2/6), (iii) are devoted to and sincere worshippers of Brahm (refer 1/2/11, 2/2/4, 3/1/3-6, and 3/2/1, 5-9), (iv) offer oblations to the sacred fire (refer 1/2/1) called the Ekarshi Agni (so-called because this procedure of worshipping of the Fire was initiated by sage Angira as stated in verse no. 11 below) themselves (instead of hiring priests), and (v) have observed all the tenets and vows of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety themselves (instead of simply lecturing others about it but not following what they preach—refer 1/2/11-12, 3/1/6, and 3/2/1, 5-9) (10).

11. It was the sage Angira¹ who had first revealed the truth of Brahm. Those who have not observed the principles of Brahmacharya (total self-control over the sense organs) cannot hope to know about Brahm.

We pay our deepest respects and obeisance to such Brahm realised persons. Amen! (11).

[Note—¹Refer Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 2.]

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 3

Mandukya Upanishad/Mandukyo-panishad

In this Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition, the greatness and divinity of the ethereal word OM has been described. It is proclaimed here that OM is the best and the most honoured address for the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Upanishad describes the various subtle and sublime aspects of OM, and how it relates to the various aspects of creation. It goes on to describe the world as the visible manifestation of the invisible Brahm who has no attributes. The entire creation is the habitat of the cosmic Brahm, and the seven Lokas (divisions of the world) are its seven aspects or branches or manifestations. In this revealed form, Brahm's mouth are the various Indris (sense organs of the body of the creature), the Pran (the vital winds representing the life consciousness in this body), the Antahakaran (the inner self and the subtle body) etc.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the meaning of this Shanti Paath.

1. The esoteric, enigmatic, ethereal and sublime 'Akshar' OM (literally meaning the 'word OM', but also implying an entity that is imperishable and eternal, which is the supreme transcendental Brahm to which OM actually refers) is all there that exists in this creation. All that existed in the past, exists in the present, and would come into existence in the future—they are all manifestations of OM, they are all elaborations of

OM because they define and reveal OM in various forms. [This word OM is a sort of name of Brahm; it is a representative of Brahm. Since everything in existence has emerged from Brahm, it follows that everything is a revelation of OM as a representative of Brahm. Therefore, this world reveals and makes the astounding glories and magnificence of OM representing Brahm clear for every creature to see and understand.]

Not only this world but whatever that exists that is beyond its limit and is beyond the imagination of the mind is also OM personified or revealed in that form. [And since OM is a name assigned to the Supreme Being known as the Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation, it follows that this entire creation is Brahm manifested in its form.] (1).

[Note—The concept of OM is described in a number of Upanishads in all the Vedas. An indicative list is as follows—

(a) Rig Veda—Naad Bindu Upanishad.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli (Canto) 1, Anuvak (sub-canto) 8; Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 2, 4, 24-25, 31-32; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 2, 9-18 (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation), 37, 102; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 6; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 136-139; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 2-12, 69-71 ½ which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11—1.34, and Canto 5, verse no. 70; Shuk Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 20 describes how OM is used for the purpose of ritualistic worship according to the Tantra philosophy involving Anga Nyas, Shandanga Nyas etc.; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 42-43 ½ describe how the three states of existence (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) and the three types of bodies (gross, subtle and causal) came into existence as manifestations of the three letters A, U and M of the word OM; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 38.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Taarsar Upanishad, Canto 2, and Canto 3, verse nos. 1-7; Hans Upanishad, verse nos. 6-17.

(c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad verse no. 74-81, 85-88; Pranava Upanishad which has only 13 verses dedicated to OM.

(d) Atharva Veda—Ram Tapiniopanishad, canto 3, verse no.5-9; Prashna Upanishad, full Canto 5; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 4, 6.]

2. Indeed, this entire world is nothing but Brahm manifested in this form. Similarly, the Atma, the pure consciousness or the ‘self’ of the living being, is also nothing but Brahm.

That Brahm (at the cosmic level) and this Atma (at the individual level) both have four aspects called the ‘Paads’ (literally meaning step or foot) (2).

3. [Verse nos. 3-7 describes the four states in which Brahm exists. These are the four ‘Paads’ or literally the legs, aspects or revelations of Brahm. These four states of existence of creation representing the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as ‘Brahm’ have been explained with a different perspective in Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3; and in Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1.]

The first ‘Paad’ or aspect of Brahm and Atma is called Vaishwanar¹. This aspect of Brahm known as the Vaishwanar is the revealer and regulator of the visible world as it corresponds to the waking state of consciousness. It is this gross aspect of Brahm that makes the creature’s Atma (i.e. his true conscious self) become aware of the

visible world. It therefore corresponds to the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness² which makes the creature aware of the external world.

This gross aspect (i.e. gross body) of Brahm (in the form of this vast world) has seven 'Angas' or body parts or units or divisions³, and nineteen 'Mukhas' or mouths⁴.

This form of Brahm is the enjoyer and consumer of all the material things in this world (because it is able to perceive this world with its material sense objects and get enticed by their charms).

This form of Brahm is called the 'Vishwa' or the physical gross and visible world in which the creature lives and with which he interacts. [It is from this word 'Vishwa' that the term Vaishwanar is derived.] (3).

[Note—¹The concept of Vaishwanar Brahm and Atma have also been explained in the Nrisingh Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4 which is Chapter 7 of this volume, as well as in the Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 21, and Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse no. 15.

The term *Vaishwanar* in simple words means the form of Brahm that is as large and as vast as the universe, enclosing it from all sides like a moat of a fort, and even existing beyond it. This all-inclusive, all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm is the *Vishwa* or the vast physical world of infinite dimensions, because this world is a manifestation of Brahm, it is Brahm revealed in its myriad and diverse forms, and it is the glory of Brahm on display. In fact, if one wishes to witness Brahm, he must observe Brahm at play in this world itself. The physical aspect of Brahm in the form of the visible world is equivalent to the Jagrat state of consciousness because it is in this state that the creature sees or perceives the physical presence of the world. Here the word 'creature' refers to his Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and his true self. This Atma is called Vaishwanar because, like Brahm, it is manifested as all forms of life in this world.

²The 1st stage is called waking or *Jagrat*. During this state, a creature's sense organs that constitute its gross body are active and they receive inputs from the physical material world outside which they in turn transfer to the mind which forms the creature's subtle body. This mind then filters through the clutter of information, then either orders the organs of action to respond accordingly, or it consults its supervisor, the intellect, for advice. Meanwhile, the mind stores all the information in its data bank for future reference much like the record room of an office. The true self of the creature, the pure conscious Atma, is like the King in whose secretariat the mind and intellect work, and therefore the Atma is the final Authority which takes the final decision and is responsible for all the things done by each of these individual entities. Even as the King cannot absolve himself for the sins committed by his subjects during his rule or plead ignorance of whatever is happening in his kingdom though he is not directly involved in them or in the day to day routine work of the kingdom as he stays in his palace and cannot be practically expected to control each movement in his kingdom, but he is morally responsible for them and cannot deny this responsibility. Similarly, the Atma of the creature is responsible for each and every thing that the creature does though the Atma is limited to its palace-like residence in the heart of the creature. So, the otherwise immaculate Atma is accused of things that body or mind of the creature does because the Atma is at the helm of affairs.

During this Jagrat state, the Atma interacts with the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of the gross body (i.e. the physical body). The sense organs of perception of the body collect information from the external world and pass them over to the mind, which in turn processes them and passes necessary instructions to the organs of action on the one hand, and files data for future reference in its memory bank on the other hand. The mind would also refer to the intellect those things which are not routine in nature. It is the transcendental state of supreme enlightenment and self-realisation.

The Jagrat state is when the consciousness is aware of the external world of material objects, and this is made possible through the medium of the sense organs of perceptions such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which enables the creature to respectively see, hear, smell, taste and feel this world. The creature's responses are carried out with the help of the organs of action such as the hands which receive, the legs that take him to the desired place, the mouth that helps him to speak and eat, the excretory organs that helps it to eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which helps him to recreate and enjoy the sensual pleasures of the world. These organs are located in the gross body, and since the world is experienced through them, the latter is also deemed to be gross. The coordination of all the perceptions and actions is done by the mind-intellect which is the subtle part of the body.

This Jagrat state has been explained in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 20; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-19, 31, 34-35.

³The *seven parts* of the Vaishwanar Brahm's body have two interpretations. One way of considering them is related to the seven Lokas or subtle worlds that exist. These seven worlds are the following—The *seven Bhuvans* or Lokas according to the Purans are the following:--According to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP) there are the following Lokas-- 'Bhu' (भूः) or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha' (भुवः) or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha' (स्वः) or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha' (महः) or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha' (जनः), so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha' (तपः) or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 million miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam' (सत्यम्) or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 million miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the Vedantic view are the following:--the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head—viz. the two eyes + two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. Refer *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8.

Another way of interpreting the seven parts of the Vaishwanar's cosmic body are the following units of creation—the Duloka or the heavens is its head, the Sun (representing the fire element) and the Moon (representing light) are its two eyes, the Vayu or the air element is its Pran or vital life giving winds with which it breathes and which infused life in the units of its cosmic body, the Akash or the sky is its abdomen in which all the organs of the Vaishwanar's body are located just like the man's abdomen encloses all his organs, the Aapha or water is its fluid part such as its blood, mucous and semen, the Anna or food produced in the world is its intestines and rectum (as it is the food that is digested in the intestines to sustain the body and its residue is collected in the rectum before being expelled from the anus), and the Prithivi or earth is its two legs.

⁴The *nineteen mouths* of the Vaishwanar Brahm are the following—10 sense organs consisting of five organs of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin) and five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory, genitals) + 5 Prans (or the vital winds such as Pran or breath, Apaana, Samaana, Vyana and Udaana) + 1 Mana (mind) + 1 Buddhi (intellect) + Ahankar (ego, self pride) + Chitta (sub-conscious) = 19. These are the components through which the creature interacts with the world—or 'sees' the visible world during his Jagrat or waking state of consciousness.]

4. The second 'Paad' or aspect of Brahm and the Atma is equivalent to the Swapna or the dreaming state of consciousness¹. It is a subtle form of existence of Brahm and it refers to the world that is not visibly manifested and tangible, that has no physical existence but is nevertheless perceived to be there at the mental level just like the world of dreams (which the creature thinks to be real as long as the dream lasts).

Thus, that aspect of Brahm or cosmic Consciousness by which subtle things which are not physically visible or perceptible can become known, or that aspect of existence in which the creature can see and visualise things that have no gross forms, is called the dreaming state of existence. It is also called the 'Taijas'² form of Brahm.

(Like the gross form of Brahm as described in verse no. 3—) This form of Brahm also has a body, albeit a subtle one, having seven parts or components as well as nineteen mouths. [These have been enumerated in note of verse no. 3 above.]

Brahm (or the cosmic Consciousness existing at the vast macrocosmic level of creation) and the Atma (or the Consciousness existing at the individual microcosmic level of the individual creature) in this second Taijas form enjoys the material things of the world, but at a subtle level of existence. [This refers to the state in which the creature dreams. For all practical purposes, the world of dreams and its material objects appear to be real for the creature as long as he dreams, and he enjoys them just like he would have enjoyed them in the world when he was awake. There is no difference between how a creature would respond to a given situation, how he would desire to obtain a particular thing, or how he would enjoy the material things of the world that he encounters while he is awake or while he dreams. The only difference is the level in which the consciousness exists—for in the waking or Jagrat state of consciousness the gross body is active and it helps the Atma of the creature to actually perceive and interact with a gross world having a physical existence, while in the Swapna state the same situation is converted into a subtle level.] (4).

[Note—¹*Swapna* or dreaming state is the 2nd state of consciousness when the latter has withdrawn its self from being actively involved in the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of perception and action. But the mind does not sleep and remains active as before, though this activity is at the subtle level of the sub-conscious. Here, the consciousness remains active through the medium of the vital winds, called the various Prans present inside the body, and moves in the different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body, such as the nerves and veins etc.) which keep the mind working. Refer Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 12, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 18; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 20; Krishna Yajur Veda's Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 58-60; Rig Veda's Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 19.

This Pran is deemed to be synonymous with the life factors and consciousness in the body as well as with the latent fire element present inside the body which gives the energy, strength and vitality to the body to live and remain active. If it were not for the fire element (Tej) and the wind element (Pran), the consciousness (Atma, the 'self') would have found it difficult to live in the body. In fact, the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 3 clearly states that the Pran in its manifestation as Agni or fire.

Since no external stimuli is being received from the outside world, the mind begins to replay what is stored in its memory bank and uses its stupendous abilities to imagine and recreate situations and circumstances in an imaginary world of dreams. Since the Atma living in the causal body depends upon the mind living in the subtle body to feel or sense anything pertaining to this world, for all practical purposes therefore the Atma begins to live in this new world of dreams conjured up by the mind and gets as involved in it as it was during the waking state. Since the mind is

active here, the man remembers some of his dreams even when he wakes up. So as far as the Atma is concerned, the two states of waking and dreaming means the same—the world exists for it in both these two states.

²The word *Taijas* refers to the inherent light of conscious that is present in an entity that makes it aware of anything because of this 'light'. *Taijas* means energy, light, radiance, vigour and vitality. A dead entity would not see and feel anything, and hence a dead body has no *Taijas* in it. The dreaming state is compared to the *Taijas* because for all practical purposes the creature's gross physical body appears to be lifeless and dead from the outside as it shows no sign of life. But this apparent lifelessness is only skin deep as the consciousness is very much alive and active inside the body because the creature is dreaming and actively participating in the world of his dreams. This world is subtle because it has no physical gross existence.]

5. The third 'Paad' or aspect of Brahm and the Atma is equivalent to the Shusupta or the deep sleep state of consciousness¹. It is a subtler form of existence of Brahm or consciousness and it refers to the state when the creature does not even dream. Since in this state of existence the world has ceased to exist and the mind which actually makes the Atma aware of the world and its material objects too ceases to exist, the creature has no desires or wants left in him. This gives the Atma of the creature complete rest, peace and tranquility; it marks the state of existence where there is bliss and contentedness because of the simple reason that there is nothing to disturb the natural state of blissfulness and tranquility that the Atma possesses.

In this third state of existence the creature's Atma, his pure conscious 'self', has nothing to distract it. It exists in its primary form of being enlightened. This is being aware of the highest form of spiritual knowledge of the 'self' in the form of the pure consciousness that wants nothing, that remains ever contented, that is blissful and is at peace with itself.

This eclectic and divine form of the Atma that exists in this third state of Sushupta is therefore ever blissful, contented, tranquil and peaceful. The Atma that is consciousness personified enjoys its natural state of inherent blissfulness and peace.

Since the eclectic Atma becomes aware of its conscious and blissful state of sublime and exalted existence, it is called 'Pragya'—meaning knowing, enlightened and wise. Indeed, this is the third aspect or step of Brahm in which the latter's primary form of being all-knowing and all-wise comes to the fore. [Brahm and the Atma are synonymous with each other—the only apparent difference being in the level in which the cosmic Consciousness exists. If we think of this Consciousness at the level of the individual creature, it is called the Atma, and if we think of it at the vast level of the creation, it is called Brahm.]

The creature comes in close contact with his 'true' form as the enlightened Consciousness when he transcends the first two states of Jagrat and Swapna, and reaches the third state of Sushupta (5).

[Note--¹Beyond the second state of existence of consciousness is the third eclectic state called the *Sushupta* or deep sleep state. This has been elaborately dealt with in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 19; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 14-15, 19, 21-30. During this stage the creature does not dream.

The Sushupta or the deep sleep state of consciousness is the 3rd state in which the mind has also become defunct, and the Atma has withdrawn itself into the exclusive domain of the causal body and lives in seclusion, disconnected with the external world because of the non-involvement of either the gross body or the subtle body. Here it is surrounded by the space of the subtle sky around the heart, called the Hridya Akash. During this state of existence, the vital winds, called the Pran or 'life'

of the creature, keep on moving in the different Naadis (various ducts such as nerves and veins etc.) as during the dreaming state so as to keep the body alive as is evident from the fact that all the subtle and imperceptible functions of the inner organs of the body such as the liver, kidneys, heart, pancreas, digestive organs, lungs etc. continue uninterrupted as before, because if they cease to function the body would die. It is the mind now that has gone in a defunct state. But this phase is temporary and shows the true nature and fundamental characteristic of the Atma, which is blissful and peaceful, contented and fulfilled, not feeling restless and perplexed in any manner whatsoever because it is now not being disturbed by the mind's constant nagging. That is why a sound asleep man does not want anything, he does not feel anything, he is not worried about anything, he is not concerned about anything, and he does not remember anything. That is also why one feels very relaxed and refreshed after even a short deep sleep when the mind and the body both find their rest.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 6, and Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in Canto 2, verse no. 62 describe in clear terms why a creature stops dreaming.]

6. Brahm is the supreme Lord of all, is all-knowing and omniscient, is a resident in the inner self of all living beings as their Atma or their true self, and is not only the primary cause for this creation coming into being but is also the cause for its remaining in existence and for its conclusion. [In other words, being the supreme Lord of the world who knows everything inside out, it is Brahm who decides when to create this world, how to maintain it, and when to conclude it.] (6).

7. That enigmatic, most esoteric and mystical entity which has paradoxical qualities such as it being neither enlightened or aware of anything nor being ignorant or not enlightened about it, an entity that is both enlightened and not enlightened, and hence deemed to be absolutely neutral so much so that it has no concern for or awareness of what is inside or what is outside, an entity that is neither understood or discerned by the organs of perceptions nor approachable or accessible by the organs of action, an entity that does nothing (as it does not need to do anything), an entity that has no parallel and comparisons or symbols, an entity that is beyond the reach of thoughts and speech (i.e. that cannot be thought of, cannot be even imagined, and cannot be spoken about or explained), an entity that is only accessible or witnessed by personal experience, an entity that is the point where everything in existence would ultimately collapse and conclude, an entity that is an embodiment of such divine virtues as being peaceful and tranquil, being auspicious and holy, and being non-dual and unmatched—verily, this entity is known as Brahm, the supreme transcendental Divine Being. And the state of its existence as described herein above, the state in which it exhibits these grand qualities is called the fourth aspect or Paad of Brahm.

This fourth state of existence of the cosmic Consciousness is called 'Turiya'¹—literally meaning the state that transcends the usual three levels in which an ordinary creature lives in this world. Indeed, this is the truthful form of the Atma that is worth knowing (as it represents the real and truthful nature of the soul of the creature). [In other words, the Atma exhibits these characteristics if it is left alone. Since the Atma is the microcosmic form of Brahm, it follows that these eclectic qualities are also the qualities of Brahm.]

Verily, this is the fourth 'Paad' or aspect of Brahm (7).

[Note--¹Then comes the 4th state of existence of the Atma, and it is known as *Turiya* state. This state is reached when the third state becomes a perpetual phenomenon instead of being only a temporary phase. Once this state of Turiya is reached, then even though the man might wake up from sleep and appears to be going

about his normal duties in a routine manner in this world, his pure consciousness remains aloof and distanced from the sense organs of perception and actions as well as from the mind. This is the 'transcendental state' of existence of consciousness, and it goes beyond the third state of Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness. Here the spiritual aspirant lives in a state of perpetual Samadhi. That is, he remains in a constant state of blissfulness and meditation though he lives in this physical world and goes about his normal affairs like an ordinary man.

During this 4th state called 'Turiya', the Atma acquires all the characters of the earlier three stages, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleeping states in their individual form as well as in a combined and composite way. In this state of spiritual existence, the consciousness exhibits all the traits of the earlier three states at the same time along with the unique traits which would obviously be a net result of the combined affect of all the individual traits that are so unique to each of the three earlier states of existence consciousness—viz. the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep state.

The 4th state of existence of the consciousness or Atma is also called the 'Turiya Chaitanya state'. In this state, the creature exists in its purest form as the pure consciousness which is undiluted, uninterrupted and unpolluted by any impulses or inputs from the external world. This results in its pristine and immaculate form as 'consciousness' to shine through (much like the flame of the candle which shines with all its brightness and splendour once the tainted glass covering around it is removed). This consciousness is the true 'self' of the creature and its real identity.

Thus, it is the Atma or the pure consciousness as the true 'self' of the creature that is the witness of the existence of the other three states in which the creature lives. This 'self' or Atma is imperishable and without a birth or beginning. This is because the other three states continue to appear and disappear in a rhythmic cycle as the creature wakes up to face the world after his phase of sleep is over, only to go back to sleep again when it is exhausted, and wake up again refreshed and rejuvenated from sleep. But the fourth state is like the Sun in the sky which is steady and shines constantly upon the world and lights it up. This Sun is unaffected by anything happening in this world and to this world, and remains completely dispassionate and detached from anything mundane and terrestrial. Nights and days appear and disappear in a cyclic manner, but the Sun remains the same. During the night it is erroneously assumed that the Sun is no more, but as science has proved the Sun is there in the sky though it might not be visible to the creature during that period of time called the 'night' as it is shining on the outer side of the globe. The day is comparable to the waking state of consciousness, the moon-light night to the dreaming state of consciousness when a man is able to see this world but with a different light, while the dark night when nothing is visible is comparable to the deep sleep state of consciousness when nothing of the external world is visible.

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 64, and Subalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 9, verses 1-7 describe what the practical implication of this Turiya state of consciousness is.

According to Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, these four states of existence represent Brahm in his different divine manifestations. The same Brahmo-panishad, in verse no. 21 describes the presence of the Atma in the four states of consciousness.]

8. [Verse nos. 8-12 describe the four aspects of creation in relation to the three letters of OM, viz. A, U and M, and the complete word OM.]

That transcendental cosmic all-inclusive and all-pervading Brahm, and its counterpart in the form of this individual creature's Atma are both in the form of the Akshar OM. [The word 'Akshar' literally means something that does not decay and is imperishable. It also means a letter of the alphabet. Since OM is an ethereal word

representing both the supreme Brahm and the pure conscious Atma, both of which are eternal and imperishable entities, it is called 'Akshar'. Since it is a monosyllabic word pronounced in one single breath as OM (as in *roam*), it is equivalent to one letter in spite of the fact that it actually consists of three independent letters A, U and M.]

(Like in the case of Brahm and the Atma having different steps as narrated in verse nos. 3-7 above—) This OM has three steps or letters that constitute its body. They are not separable from OM and from each other. In other words, they merge seamlessly in one another. It is not possible to have OM devoid of any one of its units (just like it is not possible to separate the Atma from Brahm, or the world from either of them).

These three aspects or constituent parts of OM are the letters or Akshars 'A', 'U' and 'M'. [The combined word that is formed is A + U + M = Aum or OM as in *roam*.] (8).

9. [Verse nos. 9-11 describe the three aspects of OM corresponding to the three 'Paads' or aspects of creation—viz. initiation, development and conclusion which are called the Vishwa, Taijas and Pragya respectively, and are equivalent to the Jagrat (waking), Swapna (dreaming) and Sushupta (deep sleep state) of existence. Finally, verse no. 12 describes that state of existence that transcends these three states and is called Turiya. It is likened to the closing of the mouth after the word OM is pronounced. This last is the fourth Paad or aspect of OM.]

The first 'Paad' or aspect or leg of OM corresponding to the first letter 'A' of the ethereal word OM is the Vaishwanar form of Brahm and the Atma that is the primary cause of creation of this visible world, and is therefore equivalent to the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness (as described in verse no. 3). [It is this waking state when the creature is aware of the world around him. He can physically interact with this world. Since this state of consciousness is the initiator and progenitor of this 'Vishwa' or this visible world, it is like the first letter 'A' of the series of alphabets because it is the basic vowel sound upon which all other sounds are based and which precedes all the other alphabets. When one starts counting the alphabets, he starts with the first letter 'A'. Hence, for all practical purposes, 'A' is the foundation upon which the entire edifice of alphabets, and as a natural corollary, the whole language rests because the language is based on words made up of alphabets. Similarly, the whole edifice of this creation rests upon the first letter or syllable 'A' of the word OM standing for Brahm.]

A man who is acquainted with this fact is regarded as wise and learned, and consequentially he gets respect and honour in this world and is able to fulfill all his desires and wishes. [Since all desires and wishes are fulfilled in this visible, physical world by taking relevant actions and doing necessary deeds, which in turn require diligent efforts and involvement of the various faculties of the physical body, along with faith, devotion and sincerity of purpose for the job at hand, as well as the acquisition of corresponding skills and having relevant knowledge of the world, this waking state enables the man to achieve success in fulfilling his desires and wishes. A man who has attained success would naturally find respect in society.] (9).

[Note—It must be noted here that the entire gamut of creation, right from its initiation through its development and till its conclusion, is visualised as being represented in the three letters of OM. This visualization is based on the premise that the word OM is a complete symbolic representation of Brahm in its entirety. Since the creation is a revelation of Brahm, it follows that it is also a revelation of OM. Therefore, the three constituent letters of OM, viz. A, U and M, represent the three phases of existence—

viz. the Jagrat, the Swapna and the Sushupta as explained in verse no. 9, 10 and 11 respectively.]

10. The second 'Paad' or aspect or leg of OM corresponding to the second letter 'U' of the ethereal word OM is the Taijas form of Brahm and the Atma that is equivalent to the Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness. This dreaming state is in between the Jagrat or waking state and the Sushupta or deep sleep state. Hence it forms the middle part of OM. Just like a man can dream things much beyond what is actually possible in the practical life of the waking state, or it is in this dreaming state that his imaginations can stretch to infinity, it is the second state of creation in which the already initiated world (of the first state as narrated in verse no. 9) develops, grows and blossoms in infinite varieties of shapes, colours and forms. It represents growth, development and expansion.

A man who is acquainted with this fact is regarded as wise and learned, and he always remains calm and unruffled. He has equanimity of demeanour and treats everything and everyone equally without any discrimination. [Since he is wise and enlightened about Brahm and the reality of this world, his behaviour, outlook and temperament would reflect his exalted mental state. Since he would have realised that whatever that is seen is actually an expansion of Brahm or a revelation of Brahm, he would see no distinction between any two units of creation. He would treat every creature alike, and would be neutral towards everything in this world. For him, pain and suffering as well as joys and happiness are the same; duration of none of them either bothers him or makes him elated or depressed in the least.]

No one in his family remains devoid of the knowledge of Brahm. [Obviously, with such a wise man amidst them, it is natural that those who live with him are bound to be affected by his life, teachings and thoughts. As it is not possible for darkness to exist in the sunlight, it is not possible for ignorance to survive in the vicinity of light of knowledge that such a Brahm-realised man symbolises.] (10).

11. The third 'Paad' or aspect or leg of OM corresponding to the third letter 'M' of the ethereal word OM is the Pragya form of Brahm and the Atma that is equivalent to the Sushupta or deep sleep state of existence of consciousness. This third state of existence of consciousness is equivalent to the conclusion of creation because the mouth has to be closed when one pronounces the letter M (as in *come*; *mum*). The 'closing' of the mouth is a metaphoric way of saying that the man has concluded or ended what he wished to express. [To think what to speak is equivalent to the first state of initiation of creation, the expression of this thought is like the unfolding, spreading and extension of this creation, and ending the speech by closing the mouth is like the conclusion of creation. Since the mind is the entity that creates this world and expands it, it is the mind that can conclude it too. So, the third letter M of the word OM marks this third phase of conclusion of creation. It is 'Pragya' because when a man completes what he wishes to say, it becomes fully known to others what his thought was. It is not possible to know completely what he wants to say either before he starts to speak or during the middle of his speech. Therefore, the conclusion of the word OM symbolically represents not only the conclusion of creation but also the extent and depth of the knowledge that the speaker has.]

A man who knows this secret of OM, who has the depth of wisdom and scale of learning to understand and grasp the great metaphysical import of this knowledge develops the ability of withdrawing everything into himself, or accepting everything as they are, but remaining calm, poised and unruffled. He has virtually dissolved

himself into nothingness. [In other words, he stops to be perturbed or disturbed by anything in this world. He becomes calm and rested. He develops an exemplary sense of equanimity and indifference to everything. He stops to talk unnecessarily and indulge in unnecessary activities. He goes about his duties in this world silently, rarely if ever speaking. He remains perpetually engrossed in contemplation and meditation even while appearing to be doing so many things in this world. Whatever comes his way is accepted by him because he sees Brahm in everything. Thus for all practical purposes, he has become non-existent as a separate individual that is distinct from Brahm. Or in other words, he has dissolved himself into nothingness! In practical terms also, the less a man speaks the more relaxed and energized his mind and body feel. Speaking draws energy from the body and it is an unnecessary distraction for the spirit, creating more vexations than removing them. Going about one's job silently helps one to concentrate all his energy and faculties on it, and the result is all the more better than that obtained when one is incessantly talking nonsense. The faculty of speech is helpful to him to enquire about the correct path to be followed, but once his destination is determined he is well advised to tread it quietly and in solitude of the mind. Such a spiritual aspirant is able to easily and more quickly able to obtain Mukti or liberation and deliverance for himself.] (11).

12. The fourth 'Paad' or aspect or leg of OM corresponds to the Turiya state of existence. It is that stage when the word OM is completely pronounced and the speaker falls silent. It symbolises that calmed and tranquil aspect of Brahm or Atma that has eliminated all the delusions, doubts and confusions that arise in this material world of sense objects. It is an auspicious state of existence that is non-dual or Advaitya. [Since there is no delusion, doubt or confusion, there is no possibility of the man being torn between two options. He has for instance not to decide what to say or what not to say, what to see and what not to, what to hear and what not to, what to taste and what not to, what to touch and what not to, where to go and where not to, what to accept and what not to etc. In other words, both the gross body of sense organs and the subtle body of the mind become redundant and irrelevant. This is like the man actually reaching his chosen destination when he finally sits down to relax and revitalize himself. It is upon reaching his final destination that he feels accomplished and fulfilled, and is overcome with extreme happiness and joy. It rids him of all the worries about the uncertainties that lay before him, which in turn created consternation and perplexities in his mind till the time he has actually reached his destination and found his final peace. He is finally liberated from all the worries that had been dogging him since time immemorial, and delivered from all the consternations and uncertainties that had been the cause of all his torments. In the spiritual field, he has sort of 'arrived' at his destination. He has attained Mukti or Moksha—liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation.]

An aspirant who is wise and enlightened enough to have learnt the secret of this esoteric knowledge (as described in this Upanishad) is able to merge his own Atma with the supreme Brahm. In other words, he reaches the exalted state when non-duality becomes an all-pervading reality for him. [This is because he would have realised that the Atma and Brahm are essentially the same non-dual entity known as Consciousness. Everything in the world which shows life in it is basically the same Atma in all these forms, and therefore Brahm in these forms as Brahm and the Atma are one and not two separate things. He is completely 'enlightened'.] (12).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 4

Atharvashir Upanishad/Atharvashiro-panishad

This Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition has seven Kandikas or short Cantos. It is a sort of dictionary or ready reckoner which succinctly defines the various epithets or adjectives that are used to describe the glorious and magnificent virtues of the Supreme Being also known as Brahm. Here, the Supreme Being is named Rudra which also happens to be one of the names of Lord Shiva, but as Kandika 4 explains, the word Rudra refers to a divine entity whose most sublime and eclectic form is known easily to enlightened, wise and realised souls, but which is very inaccessible for all others.

In Kandikas 1 and 2 as well as in Kandika 3, stanzas 1-2, Lord Rudra himself declares that he is the supreme Lord of creation, and as such each unit and phase of creation such as the Sun, the Moon, the Gods (representing the various forces of Nature), the Bhuts (the primary elements), the animate and the inanimate things, the visible and the invisible, all the worlds such as the terrestrial, the nether and the heavenly, the minutest and the most colossus, the most humble and the most powerful, as well as the past, the present and the future and beyond are all manifestations of Rudra. In fact, the entire creation is a vivid depiction of the magnificent glories and stupendity of Rudra. It is Rudra who gives each unit of creation its glory, magnificence, virtues and worth.

Kandikas 2 and 3 are in the form of liturgical hymns sung by the Gods in honour of Rudra who is a personification of the dynamic aspects of the supreme transcendental Lord known as Brahm wherein the greatness and divine virtues of Brahm are outlined.

Kandika 4 defines all the epithets used to describe the Supreme Being, such as the terms OM, Pranav, Sarwavyaapi (all-pervading), Anant (endless), Tarak (one which gives emancipation and salvation), Shukshma (minute; subtle), Shukla (lighted; white), Krishna (dark; hidden), Vidyut (electric; light; energy), Param Brahm (the Supreme Being), Ek (the only one), Rudra, Ishan (the Lord), Indra (the king of the patron Gods of creation), Maheshwar (the great Ishwar or Lord) etc.

Kandika 5 essentially outlines the all-inclusive nature of Rudra who is Brahm, the Supreme Being, personified.

Kandika 6 outlines the genesis of creation and establishes that this creation has emerged from one supreme transcendental Brahm known as Rudra.

Finally, Kandika 7 extols the importance of grasping the teaching of this Upanishad because it briefly and precisely enlightens an aspirant about the divine virtues of the Supreme Being.

Some of the other Upanishad which have an uncanny resemblance to our present Atharvashir Upanishad are the Shukla Yajur Veda's Niralambo-panishad, Subalo-panishad and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad (specifically, its Canto 1, Brahman 2 and 5), as well as Krishna Yajur Veda's Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, Rudra Upanishad, Dakshin Murti Upanishad, Sarwasaar Upanishad and Skanda Upanishad.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please refer to appendix no. 1 for the meaning of this Shanti Paath.

Kandika 1

[Some of the Upanishads having great relevance to this present Atharvashir Upanishad are the Krishna Yajur Veda's Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, Rudra Upanishad, Dakshin Murti Upanishad, Skanda Upanishad and Sarswasaar Upanishad, as well as Shukla Yajur Veda's Niralambo-panishad, Subalo-panishad and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad (specially its Canto 1, Brahmans 2 and 5.

Close examination of the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra, one of the many forms of Lord Shiva, himself clearly shows that he is actually describing the Supreme Being when he says that he possesses these qualities. In other words, this Upanishad establishes that Rudra and Brahm are the two names of the same Divinity.

In Kandikas 1 and 2 as well as in Kandika 3, stanzas 1-2, Lord Rudra himself declares that he is the supreme Lord of creation, and as such each unit and phase of creation such as the Sun, the Moon, the Gods (representing the various forces of Nature), the Bhuts (the primary elements), the animate and the inanimate things, the visible and the invisible, all the worlds such as the terrestrial, the nether and the heavenly, the minutest and the most colossus, the most humble and the most powerful, as well as the past, the present and the future and beyond are all manifestations of Rudra. In fact, the entire creation is a vivid depiction of the magnificent glories and stupendity of Rudra much like it is that of the supreme Brahm. It is Rudra who gives each unit of creation its glory, magnificence, virtues and worth.]

1. Once, all the Gods approached Lord Rudra¹ and asked—‘Who are you?’

Rudra replied—‘I am one and non-dual. I am the past, the present and the future. There is nothing in this creation besides me.

It is me who is established in the inner most chamber and in the minutest core of everything in existence, and am also present uniformly in all the directions of the universe.

I have stunning paradoxical qualities (making me a unique and indefinable entity) such as being Nitya (steady, constant, always, routine and eternal) as well as A-nitya (the opposite of Nitya), as being Vyakta (manifested, revealed, vivid and articulate) as well as A-vyakta (the opposite of Vyakta), as being Brahm (supreme and transcendental) as well as A-brahm (the opposite of Brahm). [Refer verse no. 1 of Kandika 3.]

It is me who is (or who has revealed myself or has established my self as) the Prachi (east) and Pratichi (west), the Uttar (north) and Dakshin (south), and the Urdhva (zenith, up) and Adha (nadir, bottom).

It is me who is the Puman (man), the A-puman (the neutral sex), and the opposite of Puman or the woman.

It is me who is Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati. [These three are Goddesses who are personified forms of the three divine and dynamic virtues of Brahm by which the Lord of creation established knowledge in this creation. Thus, Gayatri represents the poetical style in which knowledge was revealed in the form of the hymns of the

Vedas, the Savitri is the ray of the Sun symbolising the light of wisdom and enlightenment that the knowledge of the Vedas spread, and Saraswati is an embodiment of knowledge as a Goddess who presides over the faculty of speech as well as knowledge, erudition and wisdom.]

Similarly, it is me who is (or who has revealed knowledge in the form of the Vedas composed in other poetical styles such as) the Trishtup, the Jagati and Anushtup Chandas².

It is me who is the three forms of the divine Fire such as the Garhyapatya, the Dakshinagni and Ahavahaniya³.

It is me who is indeed the Satya (the Absolute Truth), the Gau (the holy cow), Gauri (Goddess Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva and the Mother of creation), the Jeyshta (the eldest and the senior most in creation), the Sreshtha (the best, the most exalted and the excellent one), and Varishtha (the highest, the chief, the senior most, the most established, honoured and revered).

The Apaha (the water element) and Teja (the fire element) are also none but me. [These are the two most essential entities for life to become a reality in creation. Water is the quintessential elixir of life, and fire is the eternal source of heat, light and energy. Hence, whatever that has life is Rudra or Brahm revealed in its form.]

It is me who is revealed in the form of the four Vedas, viz. the Rig/Rik, the Yajur, the Sam, and the Atharva.

It is me who is both the Akshar (imperishable, infinite and eternal) as well as Kshar (that which perishes and comes to an end). [This is because while I am eternal as the supreme Truth in creation and its Lord, my revealed form as the mortal world and its creatures continue to die every day. Nothing that has come into being would last for eternity even though it is my revealed form which is eternal and imperishable.]

Likewise, I am both Gopya (something that is concealed) and Guhaya (secret, mysterious and esoteric). [In other words, I am an entity that is difficult to understand and explain.]

It is me who is the Aranya (the forest where ascetics go in search of the Supreme Being by doing Tapa or penances and austerities), the Pushkar (name of a pilgrim city, but here meaning all places where one goes to do auspicious deeds), and the virtue of Pavitra (the most holy, pure, uncorrupt and clean). [In other words, various pilgrim cites and the serene places such as forests are important for the creature because they find a pure and holy environment representing the purity and holiness associated with Divinity there. If this is not there, then there are just like other towns and picnic spots.]

The life energy and its manifestation in the form of light that is present in the ten directions of this world, such as in the front (north), the middle (the atmosphere of the earth and the sky of the solar system), the outer (the periphery or the sky beyond the solar system), the Purastad (east) etc. are all my forms. All the directions should be regarded as being established in my cosmic all-pervading and all-inclusive form.

A wise person who is enlightened and erudite enough to know my all-inclusive and all-pervading macrocosmic form as narrated here is indeed the one who knows about all the Gods and all the branches of the Vedas. [This is because all of them are revelations of my form, and when one knows the essence, when one holds the 'key', he can know everything that is worth knowing. It is like having a master key that can unlock all the locks. It is also like some master formula of science or mathematics—if one knows the secret of it he can solve any problem that comes to him. Such a possibility is not mere conjecture but there are instances of people who

have become ‘master solvers’ of long and complicated mathematical problems, or can do many mental tasks like recalling long list of names or digits instantaneously, so fast that they can even compete with the fastest of computers.]

It is me who gives the cows their holiness, the Brahmins their greatness, the Havi (the offering made to the fire sacrifice) its sanctity and power, the creature his age (i.e. it is me as the vital life force that decides the age of all living beings), the virtue of Truth its great value, significance, importance, respect and honour, and Dharma (righteousness and auspiciousness) its traditional importance and value.’

When Rudra had emphasised his divine virtues as the supreme Lord, all the assembled Gods closed their eyes and began meditating upon this divine form of Rudra. They raised their hands and paid obeisance to the Lord in the following words (as narrated in Kandika 2).

[Note—¹Though Lord *Rudra* refers to one of the names of Lord Shiva, but it is deemed here that he is none other but the supreme transcendental Brahm who is the Supreme Being in this creation. The divinity and the supremacy of Rudra as the senior most Lord has been narrated in the Krishna Yajur Veda’s Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, Dakshin Murti Upanishad and Rudra Upanishad.

²The *Chanda* is the poetical style in which the hymns of the Vedas are composed. The ones listed here in this Kandika are Gayatri, Trishtup, Jagati and Anushtup. (i) The *Gayatri Chanda* has 24 letters and syllables in all which are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$. (ii) The *Trishtup Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines in which each line has 11 letters; $11 \times 4 = 44$ letters in all. (iii) The *Jagati Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines with 12 letters in each line, bringing the total number of letters to 48. And (iv) The *Anushtup Chanda* is a verse with 4 lines, each line having 8 letters = total 32 letters. It was first conceived by an ancient sage named Anustuv, hence it bears his name.

³The *Garhyapatya* fire—This is the householder’s fire. A householder has land and farm representing ‘earth’ in which he grows food. This food is grown with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire place in the house. Hence, the Garhyapatya fire, or the householder’s fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these four entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the ‘fire element’ because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

The fire was the central piece of all religious life in early times of the Vedic period when a fire sacrifice was deemed to be the best religious activity that a righteous man can expect to do. In this context, the Garhyapatya fire is the main fire lit during such formal fire sacrifices. The fire pit was either square-shaped or rounded. In the context of the fire sacrifice, it was used for the purpose of daily rituals, cooking or warming the offerings, heating of the vessels, to perform circumambulation, to act as a main cauldron or reservoir of the sacred fire which was to be kept perpetually burning throughout the life of the householder once it was lit.

The *Dakshinagni* fire—This fire is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

Like in the case of the Garhyapatya fire, the fire that was lit in the main sacrificial shed or site just near the main fire pit but to the south of it and where donations and

charities were made was called Dakshinagni fire. The fire pit for this fire was semi-circular or bow-shaped.

The *Ahawaniya* fire—This fire is lit to invoke the Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The ‘electric’ is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possesses most stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahm in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahm present in it which gives it its punch and strength.]

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Kandika 2

[This Kandika marks the glories of Rudra, the Supreme Being, as defined by the Gods to pay their respects to the Lord. It has 32 short verses in the form of liturgical hymns sung in honour of the Lord.]

1. ‘OM Salutations! Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Brahma, the creator. We bow before you most reverentially (1).
2. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. We bow before you most reverentially (2).
3. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Skand (an epithet of Lord Shiva). We bow before you most reverentially (3).
4. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Indra (the king of Gods). We bow before you most reverentially (4).
5. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Agni (the Fire God). We bow before you most reverentially (5).
6. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Vayu (the Wind God). We bow before you most reverentially (6).
7. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Surya (the Sun God). We bow before you most reverentially (7).
8. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Soma (the Moon God). We bow before you most reverentially (8).
9. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of the Astha Graha (the eight planets that find importance in astrology). We bow before you most reverentially. [The eight Grahas according to Hindu mythology are the following—Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu. The last two stand for the ascending

and descending phases of the moon, and therefore counted as one and not two independent planets.] (9).

10. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of the eight Pratigrahas. We bow before you most reverentially. [The word Pratigraha means to give Daan, or to give charity or donation or alms in the form of a selfless gift. It has the following eight types—(i) Vidya Daan meaning gift of education, (ii) Anna Daan meaning gifting of food to others in need or those who are hungry, (iii) Vastra Daan meaning gifting of clothes, (iv) Abhay Daan meaning gifting of fearlessness, (v) Swarna Daan meaning gifting of gold and other valuables (especially to Brahmins), (vi) Gau Daan meaning gifting of cows, (vii) Bhu Daan meaning gifting of land (for charitable purpose), and (viii) Kannya Daan meaning giving a girl in marriage to the groom.] (10).

11. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Bhu (the first mystical word pronounced by the creator Brahma from which the mortal world came into being, such as the terrestrial world). We bow before you most reverentially (11).

12. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Bhuvaha (the second mystical word pronounced by the creator Brahma from which the world above the Bhu came into being, such as the world of flying creatures in the sky where Spirits live). We bow before you most reverentially (12).

13. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Swaha (the third mystical word pronounced by the creator Brahma from which the heavenly world came into being where the Gods live). We bow before you most reverentially (13).

14. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Maha (the fourth mystical word pronounced by Brahma representing the universe beyond the solar system; the 'greater world' which is the habitat of the Supreme Being; the world incorporating even the outer most part of creation). We bow before you most reverentially (14).

15. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Prithivi (the earth element). We bow before you most reverentially (15).

16. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Antariksha (the sky where the planets are located). We bow before you most reverentially (16).

17. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Duloka (the heaven; the deep space of the sky beyond the solar system). We bow before you most reverentially (17).

18. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Aapha (the water element). We bow before you most reverentially (18).

19. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Teja (the fire element). We bow before you most reverentially (19).

20. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Akash (the sky element). We bow before you most reverentially (20).

21. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Kaal (the factor of time and era; the myriad number of circumstances and uncountable variations of situations; the Death God). We bow before you most reverentially (21).

22. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Yam (the God of death and destiny; also meaning the eclectic virtues of self control in all forms). We bow before you most reverentially (22).

23. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Mritu (the end or conclusion of anything; death and termination of existing life; another name for the Death God or 'death' personified). We bow before you most reverentially (23).

24. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Amrit (the elixir of eternal life and bliss). We bow before you most reverentially (24).

25. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Vishwa (the entire universe; also meaning the waking state of consciousness). We bow before you most reverentially (25).

26. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Sthul (the gross aspect of creation). We bow before you most reverentially (26).

27. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Sukshma (the subtle aspect of creation). We bow before you most reverentially (27).

28. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Shukla (the white or lighted aspect of creation; that which shines and gives light such as the sun as well as the bright half of the moon; the bright lunar fortnight). We bow before you most reverentially. [There are certain fire sacrifices that are done on the full moon day. They are called the Purnamaas Yagya. Hence, Lord Rudra personifies the Lord who presides over this fire sacrifice. The word Shukla also means knowledge that is 'lighted', i.e. that is out in the open and can be easily accessed, knowledge that is empowering and enlightening.] (28).

29. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Krishna (the dark aspect of creation). We bow before you most reverentially. [The word Krishna refers to the dark half of the lunar fortnight. The fire sacrifice that is done on the Amavasya day, i.e. the day of the dark moon. It also means that body of knowledge that is esoteric and hidden and requires great effort to learn.] (29).

30. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Kritsnam (i.e. you are all and everything mentioned in this hymn at the same time; you are all-encompassing and all-inclusive). We bow before you most reverentially (30).

31. Oh Lord Rudra! You are personified form of Satya (the Absolute Truth). We bow before you most reverentially (31).

32. Oh Lord Rudra! You are indeed everything that exists in this creation. Nothing is beyond you. That is why you are honoured by the epithet of 'Sarwam' (meaning all, everything without exception). We bow before you most reverentially (32).'

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Kandika 3

[Kandika 3 is in effect a continuation of Kandika 2 as the Gods are continuing with their prayer in honour of Lord Rudra. It has three stanzas.]

1. 'Oh Lord! The three worlds represented by the primal words Bhu (terrestrial), Bhuvaha (sky) and Swaha (heaven) are in effect your lower, middle and upper parts.

You are a personification of this universe and the supreme transcendental Brahm who is one and non-dual. But it is out of ignorance and delusions that you appear to be bound in the erroneous concept of being two (dual nature of creation—such as gross and subtle), three (triad of creation—such as God, Jiva and world) and countless (an extension of the earlier two forms in multiples)¹.

You are an embodiment of such glorious virtues as calmness, peace and tranquility (Shaanta). You are robust, strong, bold, stout, sturdy, ever youthful, invigorated and invigorating, ever fresh and restorative (Pushta).

You are an enigmatic and mysterious One who exhibits paradoxical qualities and apparently opposite characteristics—such as being Huta and A-huta² at the same time, as being Datta and A-datta³, as being Sarwa and A-sarwa⁴, as being Vishwa and A-vishwa⁵, as being Krit and A-krit⁶. [Refer verse no. 1 of Kankika 1 also.]

You are not only supreme but transcendental as well. You are the unknown as well as the known (Paramaparam). [In other words, you are the supreme transcendental Brahm who is invisible and unknown on the one hand, and on the other hand you can be known by studying the scriptures which are your manifestation as knowledge, and by analyzing the truth of the visible physical world which is your living manifestation.]

You are involved in everything in this creation and are a part of it (Paraayan).

You have made us, the Gods, immortal by making us drink Soma, the ambrosia of eternity. It is by your grace that we, the Gods, have acquired illumination (or magnificence and glory, supernatural powers and potentials, exalted stature and honour) in the form of knowledge of the truth, wisdom and erudition. As a result, such enemies as Kaam (passions, lust and desires) cannot harm us. [That is, no negative traits can ever pull us down from our high moral state of existence as Gods.]

Indeed, you are like Amrit—the nectar that provides liberation and deliverance from all torments, miseries and sorrows—for all mortal (human) beings (1).

[Note—¹This refers to the astoundingly diverse forms in which the creation exists. No 'two' or 'three' units of this world are alike. Even twin children are not exactly alike, and neither are two flowers or leaves or fruits on the same branch of a tree. It is said that everything in creation is a revelation of Brahm who is one and not two, then why is there so much diversity? This statement answers precisely this question—it is out of delusions and ignorance of the truth. We see the exterior and decide the identity of anything, but the concealed factor of 'life' in all of them is the same. The apparent diversity is only external and superficial; it is not internal and real. When one begins to judge Brahm based on the external façade, he would see hundreds of Gods, while if he understands that all of them are essentially the same Divinity having assumed different forms in order to carry on the diverse functions of creation—a clear case of delegation of authority—he would realise that they are fundamentally the same Brahm in all their forms.]

²The term 'Huta' refers to the sanctified offerings made to the sacred fire during fire sacrifices. Hence, here 'Huta' means everything that is holy and sanctified and can be offered to the Gods, as well as everything that is not so, i.e. is 'A-huta'.

³The term 'Datta' refers to donation and gifts. Hence, here 'Datta' means everything that is worth giving as well as other things that are not worthy to be donated or gifted, i.e. are 'A-datta'.

⁴The term 'Sarwa' means all and everything. In other words, Lord Rudra on the one hand personifies everything in existence as he is 'Sarwa', and on the other hand none of these things is a true form of Rudra or 'A-sarwa'. Rudra is far beyond the purview of definition that applies to anything in existence.

⁵The term 'Vishwa' means the universe. Hence, Rudra is 'Vishwa' personified, i.e. he is the embodiment of the whole universe; the universe is Rudra's body. On the other hand, to say that even the evil and gross world is Rudra is a false statement because Rudra is holy and pure. Hence Rudra is 'A-vishwa'.

⁶The term 'Krit' means the result of a deed or action. Hence, everything is the result of whatever Rudra does as Brahm, i.e. as the Atma of creation. But at the same time the Upanishads assert that the Atma does not do any deed as all deeds are done by the body and not the soul. So Rudra is 'A-krit'—he does nothing.]

2. Oh Lord! You are the most esoteric and mysterious One who preceded the Sun and the Moon. [That is, you predate the world.]

You provide auspiciousness, well being and welfare to the whole world. [That is, you are a most benevolent, munificent, merciful, kind, graceful, loving and an obliging caretaker of this creation.]

You are 'Akshar'—in other word you are the imperishable and infinite divinity on the one hand, and are represented by the monosyllabic ethereal word OM on the other hand. [Refer Kandika 4.]

You are the Prajapati, the Lord of your subjects in the form of this creation, who is greatly honoured and given the highest respect by them. [This is because you take good care of them.]

You are subtle and sublime. You are the gentlest Purush. [Like the word 'gentleman', the epithet 'Saumya' refers to the most polite and graceful nature of the Lord. The word 'Purush' literally means a man, but here it refers to the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic first invisible and all-inclusive form of Brahm that came into being in the very initial phases of creation when Brahm decided to start the process of creation. It is from this Viraat Purush that the rest of creation came into existence.]

You are the cosmic consumer who consumes everything in existence, employing the same quality and virtue as the thing consumed because you have it in greater and more intense strength. [This is like the case of a strong magnet attracting the weaker magnet towards itself. Brahm or Rudra has all the qualities that are imaginable in creation, but have it in abundance and in a more intense degree and form. So the Lord attracts everything towards himself, thereby metaphorically becoming the cosmic consumer. It is also like the black hole in space which pulls in even light and prevents its escape.]

Such as for example:—You can attract and grasp anything that is not accessible very easily because you are more inaccessible than anything in this world. You can consume (grasp or control) all sorts of thoughts, sentiments and emotions by the same virtues present more intensely in you. You can similarly attract towards yourself all those who are gentle and humble by these virtues that are in a more robust form in your self. [That is why the world gives you so much respect and bows reverentially before you.] You can consume the subtle by more strong subtle and sublime virtues in you. You can hold the movement of Vayu or wind, or consume its

energy and strength so that it stops its movement, by the more powerful force that you possess. [Thus, you are the great universal consumer.]

We, the Gods, offer our respectful obeisance to you, the greatest universal consumer of everything.

It is you who lives in the heart of all the Gods (as their Atma or soul which is the pure consciousness and the true identity of these Gods), and it is you who are their Pran (or life) (2).

3. Oh Lord! While living in the subtle space of the heart, you transcend all the three Matras or phases or aspects of creation. [The three phases are the origin, existence and conclusion of creation; or the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state of existence. Brahm transcends them—i.e. Brahm was present even before the creation was initiated, and would be present when the creation comes to a conclusion. Even during its existential phase, no one can judge Brahm and it is the latter that controls every instant of life.]

This form of Brahm or Rudra that lives in the heart (as the pure conscious Atma) has his head in the upper side and the leg in the lower side. [This obviously refers to the gross body of the creature who has the heart in the central part of the body with the head towards the upper side and the leg towards the lower side. In fact, the body of a creature is a manifestation of the Viraat Purush—refer Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 2; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/1 and 2/5/18 of Shukla Yajur Veda.]

That which resides in the upper region or that which occupies an exalted position in the body is known as Omkar represented by the monosyllabic word OM. OM is called Pranav, and Pranav is the divine entity that is universal, omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing. [In other words, Pranav is Brahm. Refer Kandika 4 which defines these terms.]

This universal Pranav (or the supreme transcendental Brahm known by the name of Pranav, the cosmic sound represented by OM and Naad) is Anant (endless, infinite, measureless and fathomless).

That which is Anant is also the Tarak (the provider of liberation and deliverance; the one who gives emancipation and salvation to the creature's soul).

That which is Tarak is most Sukshma (most sublime and subtle).

That which is Sukshma is Shukla (white, illuminated, bright, vivid, clear, wise and knowledgeable). [That is, the sublime and subtle Brahm, or the knowledge of this Brahm that is very sublime and subtle besides being extremely esoteric, mystical and incomprehensible is most illuminating and enlightening for the creature's soul. This Brahm is self-illuminated and brilliant like the white light—'Shukla'—of the sun.]

That which is Shukla is Vidyut (or 'electric', representing the grand virtues of being energetic, powerful, effective, potent and vigorous). [In other words, Brahm and knowledge that is enlightening and spiritually elevating are both as potent and powerful as the electric.]

That which is Vidyut is the supreme Brahm. It is this Brahm that is one and non-dual. [An entity that is endowed with the glorious virtues symbolized by 'electric' is none else but the supreme cosmic Consciousness as well the universal Absolute Truth and Reality of creation known as Brahm.]

That which is one and non-dual is also known as Rudra. [In other words, Lord Rudra is none but Brahm, who is one and non-dual, personified.]

He who is Rudra is also known as Ishan (Lord of all).

He who is known as Ishan is also known as Maheshwar (the great Ishwar or the great God or the great Lord of all). [Obviously, Brahm is Maheshwar besides being Rudra and Ishan as he is the supreme Lord of creation, as he is the Supreme Being.] (3).

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Kandika 4

[This Kandika explains the terms used to define Brahm, the Supreme Being. It is in continuation of Kandika 3 has used these terms when the Gods prayed to Lord Rudra.]

Why is the word OM so famous as a synonym of Brahm, and is spiritually uplifting? It is because when one pronounces this word in the proper way, he has to pull the Pran or the vital winds upwards. This upwardly mobile Pran representing the vital life forces in the creature's body is a metaphoric way of indicating his spiritual progress from the lower rung of life to an exalted state of enlightenment which leads to Brahm realisation or attainment of the citadel of divinity. [Yoga Upanishads describe in detail how this word OM is used during breath control exercises known as Pranayam in which all the vital winds of the body called Pran are made to enter the Sushumna Naadi in the spinal cord and reach the top of the head in the region of the cerebrum where the practitioner can witness a fount of scintillating and sparkling light used as a metaphor for 'enlightenment'. Further ahead, the Pran enters the cranium and ultimately escapes through the Brahm Randhra, the hair-like slit on the top of the head where the two halves of the skull are joined, to find final and ultimate liberation from the fetters of the gross body. This is tantamount to 'Brahm realisation' because this term refers to a creature's final emancipation and salvation. OM is the Mantra that is used as an aid in this process of Brahm-realisation obtained by controlling and harnessing the vital winds by the method of Pranayam. So if one employs OM for his spiritual progress, one would get direct access to Brahm in the form of Brahm-realisation. This is the climax of spiritual enlightenment.]

Why is OM called Pranav (a word used as a synonym for Brahm, the Supreme Being)? It is called Pranav because it is used as a salutation for the Supreme Being, as the Lord's divine name and an honourable form of address for the Supreme Being known as Brahm while reciting the Rig/Rik Veda, the Sam Veda and the Yajur Veda, as well as while giving respects to the priests known as Atharvangiras (who perform the fire sacrifices using the hymns of the Atharva Veda) and other Brahmins, the learned ones, who are deemed to be experts in the Vedas.

Why is it (i.e. Pranav or Brahm, the Supreme Being) called 'Sarwavyaapi' (literally meaning 'one who is all-pervading and omnipresent')? It is because it (Pranav/Brahm) is an integral and inseparable part of this creation, being all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, though it is not apparently visible just like oil that is inherently present in a hidden form in the sesame seed (or the mustard seed) but cannot be visibly seen or felt or known by any ordinary means from the outside.

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called 'Anant' (literally meaning 'endless and infinite')? It is called Anant because when the word OM representing it (Pranav or Brahm) is pronounced there seems no end to it in any of the directions—the top, the bottom or in any of the angular directions. [The word OM is a monosyllabic word and is hummed continuously and seamlessly without break. OM represents the cosmic

background that continuously reverberates in the cosmos. In the higher stages of Yoga or meditation, this sound reverberates in the entire being of the practitioner of Yoga. In the context of the creation and the cosmos, this sound of OM completely fills the entire space of the sky. Since each individual unit of creation is envisioned as having its origin in this sky, developing and growing in the sky, and finally collapsing and disappearing in the same sky, it follows that they have their origin, development and end in OM. In other words, the sound and reverberation of OM both precedes and follows this creation. Everything has its origin in OM—refer Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 8-12 which is Chapter no. 3 of this volume. Being the filler of the space of the sky element, OM is infinite, endless and measureless as the fathomless bowls of the sky. It is like a circle which has no end. That is to say, Brahm, the principal entity represented by OM, is also without an end. There is no direction of creation where there is no Brahm. Hence it is endless and seamless or ‘Anant’. Brahm is Anant because it is characterized, inter alia, with the virtues of being endless, infinite, measureless, fathomless, imperishable etc.]

Why is it (OM) called ‘Tarak’ (literally meaning ‘one that delivers or takes across’)? It (OM representing Pranav/Brahm) is called Tarak because it has the mystical and overriding authority, ability and potentials, like the principal Brahm it represents, to deliver or give fearlessness to a creature from the numerous horrors, torments, pains and fears that makes him suffer in a mother’s womb, or during and after birth, or while suffering from various diseases and other bodily problems that are a part of his worldly life, or during his old age when the body declines, becomes infirm and the strength wanes, or at the time of his death. [In other words, this divine word Mantra OM can give him final liberation from the cycle of birth and death so that he would not have to take a new birth and enter a mother’s womb in the process, followed by a new cycle of torments that he was fed up with in his previous life. This is because by meditating and doing contemplation with the help of OM as a tool to attain self and Brahm realisation, the spiritual aspirant would be able to find permanent liberation from the fetters of this gross body and achieve deliverance of his ‘self’ from the bondage of this world. Constant practice would help him find enlightenment and realisation of his spiritual goal, and this would naturally free him from such fears because, for one, he would have realised that the Atma or soul which is his ‘true self’ never suffers, and that it is distinct from the gross body which is the entity that actually suffers. With this wisdom ‘he’ (the true self, the Atma, the soul) would not be involved in doing any deeds as they are done by the body and not the soul. This would have a natural liberating effect, because now ‘he’ would be freed from having to bear the consequences of doing deeds as ‘he’ has not done them at all, and therefore he would not have to either suffer from the consequences of the deeds or have to take a new birth again. Further, a wise man would not have any desires left unfulfilled in him, and so would have no cause for taking a new birth again to fulfill them. According to the adage ‘one becomes what one thinks or the company one keeps’, such an enlightened aspirant would have found Brahm, the Supreme Being, because constant remembrance of OM would draw him closer and closer to Brahm till the time he merges in and becomes one with Brahm. At the height of meditation, the sound of OM and its accompanying vibrations reverberate through each pore and nerve of the practitioner’s body so much so that he virtually drowns in the waves of this cosmic sound overflowing his inner being. It titillates his nerves to such an extreme end that he feels ecstasy and exhilaration of the highest and purest form. The practitioner experiences a surge of emotions that are described as bliss and ecstasy that have an indescribable dimension to them. This eclectic state of existence of the

consciousness is tantamount to Brahm-realisation. From the broader perspective, this is also tantamount to 'self-realisation' and enlightenment as well as to Mukti or liberation and deliverance.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called 'Shukla' (literally meaning 'white, bright, illuminated, lighted, radiant, splendorous')? It is called Shukla because it is self-illuminated and self-radiant. Not only this, it lights others with its own splendorous light. [The word 'light' is not restricted to the physical aspect of light but implies such glorious virtues as wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment. Anything that removes the darkness of spiritual ignorance and delusions, anything that gives the light of knowledge and makes the aspirant aware of the 'truth' is Shukla.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called 'Sukshma' (literally meaning 'subtle, microcosmic, microscopic, minutest, atomic and fine', and therefore invisible and indiscernible)? It is so-called because it resides in a microscopic or atomic form in the body of all living beings in creation (as their Atma, the pure consciousness that keeps the gross body alive, and which gives the creature his identity).

This divine entity that lives in the body is called a 'Purush'—literally a man but actually meaning the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of Brahm that has taken up its habitat in the gross body of the individual creature. [The word 'Purush' means one who lives in a city or citadel. The Viraat Purush had revealed this creation from his body and created man in his own image, and then had taken up his residence in this man's body. Being a resident of the body, the otherwise unbound Brahm became a resident bound and butted by the body. From the macrocosmic perspective, the word Purush would refer to that aspect of Brahm who lives inside the gross body of a living being, and from the cosmic perspective at the macrocosmic level of existence, this word would refer to Brahm who pervades uniformly throughout the length and breadth of the entire creation. This word has been explicitly defined in the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, and the Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) known as 'Vidyut' (literally meaning 'electric' and implying the stupendous dynamic powers and potentials that electric possesses)? It is because even when the aspirant is surrounded by grave darkness of ignorance when there is no hope of his salvation, the word OM, when constantly and persistently repeated by him as a symbol for the supreme Brahm, enlightens him about the latter. When the aspirant has accessed this eternal fount of brilliance and light, darkness obviously cannot survive. When the spiritual aspirant uses the method of constant repetition of OM as a means to attain Brahm who is self-illuminated and an eternal fount of light that lights up its surroundings much like the Sun in the heaven illuminating everything in this world, it is natural that this light would also light up the inner self of the aspirant by the virtue of the light of enlightenment about Brahm that is kindled by being constantly and persistently associated with OM. When this happens, when the aspirant attains self and Brahm realisation, i.e. when he becomes 'enlightened', his body begins to radiate a divine halo of light much like the glass covering of the lantern which begins to glow when the wick inside it is lighted. [Brahm has the power, shine and dynamism that are the inherent virtues of 'electric'. There is no other single entity in this creation that has the blinding dazzle and splendour of raw electric, so Brahm is likened to electric as the former possesses all these virtues besides countless others. This is also why Brahm is honoured by the other aspect of electric, i.e. 'Tej', which means energy, dynamism and heat as well as radiance, splendour, glow and brilliance. Brahm in brief displays all the virtues so

characteristic of electric, but Brahm is not electric. Since Brahm displays the radiance so synonymous with electric, it explains why a divine halo surrounds a self and Brahm realised man who is 'enlightened', or 'empowered with the light of Brahm', even though he might not have been formally educated in the scriptures and be otherwise like other ordinary men having a gross body and an ordinary life. This is because a 'Brahm-realised' person understands that his 'truthful self' is not the external or internal gross aspect of the body, but the pure consciousness known as the Atma which is none other than Brahm personified. It means that Brahm lives inside his inner-self, and therefore the light of the self-illuminated and radiant Brahm effuses out of a Brahm-realised person much like the light shining from a wick of a lighted lamp or a lantern here on earth, or from the disc of the self-illuminated Sun in the sky. In other words, even though an aspirant might not have been fortunate to have studied the Vedas and other scriptures to remove the darkness of spiritual ignorance that submerges him and his other brethren in this humdrum world, but if he has taken refuge of OM as a tool for Brahm-realisation, then in due course of time the light of spiritual enlightenment that is synonymous with Brahm, and which has the potential to dispel darkness of spiritual ignorance, would automatically dawn upon his mental horizon much like the celestial Sun rising at dawn over the earth's horizon. This ability of OM to give enlightenment and help the aspirant in self and Brahm realisation is like the stupendous power inherent in the 'electric' to light the environment around it. In fact OM is compared to 'electric' because of its stupendous powers and potentials which are as powerful, dynamic, effective and strong as the electric. A Brahm realised person becomes very powerful and authoritative even though he might look thin and physically famished. It is his inner soul that shines with the glory of Brahm and becomes as powerful as the Lord of creation himself.]

Why is it (Pranav/Brahm) called 'Param Brahm' (literally meaning the 'supreme Brahm')? This is because there is nothing superior to Brahm, nothing that transcends Brahm, nothing that goes beyond the parameters of Brahm. In fact, Brahm is the divine entity that is not only enigmatic and mystical but is also all-encompassing and all-pervading in this creation. Nothing exists in this creation which is devoid of Brahm, nor is there anything that is outside the ambit of Brahm.

It is a paradoxical entity because on the one hand it is known as the 'Paraa', and on the other hand it is also known as the 'A-paraa'. The term 'Paraa' refers to an enigmatic and esoteric entity which is beyond knowledge, beyond perception and beyond comprehension, that which is invisible and cannot be grasped, and that which is not revealed and clear. The term 'A-paraa' however applies to an entity which can be known, that which is revealed, that which can be understood by applying the mind and intellect, and that which is within reach, that which can be accessed, known, researched and analyzed, such as the knowledge contained in the Vedas and other scriptures, or as perceived in physical terms in this visible world and therefore can be witnessed, researched, analyzed and understood. These two aspects of Brahm, i.e. Paraa and A-paraa, are complimentary to each other—for the latter helps one to know the former, and the former is the supreme Authority that is attempted to be known by the latter. It is the supreme Brahm that is transcendental and beyond ordinary comprehension which is the object of teaching of all the scriptures, and it is these scriptures that establish the greatness and divinity of Brahm who would have remain obscured and unknown had it not been for them¹.

Since Brahm is very much involved in this creation right from its conception through its birth, development, growth and right up to its conclusion, Brahm is also called 'Paraayan'—that which is fully involved in something and devoted to it². It is

because Brahm is the 'Prajapati', the supreme caretaker of this world. Brahm is responsible for everything and every aspect of creation, being the Supreme Being and the supreme Regulator of this creation. In other words, Brahm is the 'supreme commander and Lord' of this creation; he is the supreme Authority and Emperor of this creation; there is nothing that goes beyond Brahm or nothing that can supersede him. Hence, Brahm is honoured by the epithet of being 'Param'.

Why is it (Brahm) known as 'Ek' (literally meaning 'one and non-dual')? This Brahm is called 'Ek' because while it remains one, immutable, constant, unchanging and steady itself, it constantly and continuously devours all things in creation and creates them anew. [That is, unlike everything else in creation that has a beginning and an end, things that constantly go through different phases of change, this Brahm remains unchanging, immutable and constant under all circumstances and phases of time such as the past, the present and the future. Not even a minute trace of change ever occurs in Brahm.]

This 'Ek' principle known as the divine Brahm is present in all the pilgrim sites. People go to different pilgrim sites located in the north, the south, the east and the west, but in all these places it is this same Divinity which is known by the title of 'Ek' that gives them the power to bestow spiritual solace and succour to the pilgrim³. [In other words, a wise man is one who would not require going to many pilgrim sites for finding emancipation and salvation because he would have realised that the divine entity which he hopes to experience there is present in his own inner self. Merely by roaming in different pilgrim sites one cannot ever hope to find emancipation and salvation. The underlying idea is that the Supreme Being is present everywhere in equal measure. There is not a single place that he is not present in. It is not that, say, a site 'A' has more powerful presence of Brahm as compared to the site 'B'. Therefore, according to the philosophy of the Upanishads, there is no actual need to go on pilgrimage if one does not understand who or what Brahm is; such visits devoid of this knowledge are no more than picnics. A wise man should be able to see his Lord everywhere, and not only limited to a holy pilgrim site. Visiting religious sites in the hope of finding emancipation and salvation is an exercise in futility—refer Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 75, Canto 5, verse no. 20, Canto 6, verse nos. 7, 37-38, 42, and Canto 7, verse no. 1. This Upanishad is Chapter 8 of the present volume.]

Why is he (Brahm) called 'Rudra'? [Kandika 5 of this Upanishad elaborately explains this particular question.] It is because the esoteric and secret form and nature of Brahm which is most enigmatic and difficult to understand is easily known by enlightened and self-realised Rishis who are exalted and wise sages, seers and ascetics; the knowledge of Brahm as Rudra is within their easy reach and grasp. On the other hand, this knowledge is very difficult for others to access. [It must be noted here that the difference between the two terms 'Brahm' and 'Rudra' lies in the degree of subtlety. While Brahm is the neutral divinity, its active and dynamic manifestation, or its dynamic and active principle is known as Rudra. Brahm in itself does not do anything, and being a neutral entity is best addressed by the pronoun 'it' just as we would address light, electric, sky, air, water, fire, earth etc. with the pronoun 'it'. On the other hand, when this Brahm lost its neutrality and got engaged in activity of creating this world and regulating it, Brahm's manifestation as 'Rudra' came into being. This Rudra is the dynamic form of Brahm. Rudra is less subtle as compared to Brahm, but otherwise they refer to the same divine Being who is supreme and transcendental in creation. Since Rudra is deemed to be 'male' aspect of creation—not because of any gender superiority or gender bias but because the initial 'spark' of

life in the form of a 'sperm' can only be provided by a male—he is addressed as 'he' and not as 'it'. Rudra is one of the names of Shiva, and this Lord is the patron God of Rishis who do meditation. Shiva is the greatest moral preacher, teacher and preceptor of spiritual knowledge⁴. Shiva is an exemplary renunciate and he himself remains eternally engrossed in meditation and contemplation. He teaches the Rishis who spend their time in meditation and contemplation about the Truth of Brahm. These Rishis repeat the Mantras of Brahm known as OM while meditating, and this brings them closer to the principal entity that this OM represents. They are totally immune to and free from all sorts of spiritual contaminations and hurdles that an ordinary man faces while remaining engrossed in the affairs of the material world and the temptations proffered by its sense objects which are hard, if not impossible, to resist. That is why the term 'difficult' is used for ordinary creatures when it comes to their realising the truth of Brahm—i.e. though it is not impossible it is nevertheless hard and difficult.]

Why is he (Brahm in the form of Rudra) known as 'Ishan' (literally meaning the 'Lord' and his 'insignia or authority')? It is because he (Rudra) has full control over all the Gods, and over their powers and authority. Ishan signifies the Lord's overriding authority and complete control over all the aspects of creation that are individually controlled by these Gods who actually act on behalf of Rudra representing the dynamic form of Brahm. These Gods are nothing but the different forces of Nature personified. But the supreme Authority is Brahm in its dynamic form known as Rudra to whom all the Gods are subservient, whom all the Gods obey, and who is the most senior God in creation.

Therefore, oh Lord Rudra, we pay our obeisance to you and attempt to please you just like one attempts to please the cow before milking it. [In other words, we plead with you to bless us and show grace upon us. We are all dependent upon you and your benevolence.]

It is you who controls this entire creation as Indra, the king of Gods; it is you who controls the organs of the creature's body over which these Gods rule. That is also why you are called 'Ishan'. [Refer Kandika 5, stanza no. 2.]

Why are you (i.e. Rudra, who is a manifestation of Brahm) called 'Maheshwar' (literally meaning 'the great Lord')? It is because you show your benevolence and grace upon those devotees who worship you selflessly in order to attain Gyan or true knowledge. [As the greatest teacher and preacher in creation, it is you who alone can give the knowledge of the Truth. This knowledge is known only to you. Hence, you are great amongst even the Gods who are supposed to be wiser and more knowledgeable than ordinary mortals. When the other Gods need clarification on some thing, they approach you, thereby proving that your knowledge and wisdom is superior to theirs, and that you are senior to them as well because one would go to his senior when in doubt. This is precisely the reason why you are honoured by the epithet 'Maheshwar'—the great God, or 'Ishwar'—the supreme God himself.] It is you who empowers the faculty of speech to speak and express this Truth. It is you who inspires the mind and the intellect towards acquisition and use of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and skills. It is you who provides enlightenment to all the Gods as well as the rest of the fortunate creatures who have known who you actually are. Indeed, you are the patron deity for the grand virtues that are compositely known as 'Gyan'. You have forsaken all sorts of delusions and overcome all ignorance, and instead remain steady and unwavering in the knowledge of Truth that you have acquired. You are self realised and most wise and enlightened. This gives you immense fame and honour; it establishes you as the greatest enlightened One in creation. This is why you are called Maheshwar.

This is how the divine characters and virtues of Rudra have been outlined here in this Upanishad.

[Note—¹References: for the two terms ‘Para’ and ‘Aparaa’—Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 28-30; Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, sections 1-2.

²For the term ‘Parayaan’—Kandika 3, verse no. 1 of the present Atharvashir Upanishad.

³The concept that the body is the best site to find Brahm, and it is futile and waste of time searching for Brahm in external places, including in temples and idols, has been endorsed in a number of other Upanishads as well—viz. Maitreyu-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 21, 26; Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 50-59; and Sanyaso-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74-75, 97.

External forms of worship have been literally prohibited in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s following Upanishads—Pran Agnihotra Upanishad; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 69, 74; Canto 3, verse no. 26, 29-30; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 21-24. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse nos. 5, 10, 13.

The Body as a Holy City or Pilgrim Site or Temple has been proclaimed in numerous Upanishads as follows—

As an *abode of Lord Shiva*—(i) The Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165-168, Canto 2, verse nos. 6-10, 20, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-15, and Canto 5, verse nos. 2-5, 13-16; Canto 6, verse nos. 32-33, 47; and Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11. (ii) Sam Veda’s Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 48-59.

Body as an abode of Shakti (Goddess) and *4 Peeths*—Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 6-12.

Body as an abode of Shiva and Shakti—Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 75; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4.

Body as a city—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165; Canto 5, verse no. 2. (b) Atharva Veda’s Prashna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 3.

Importance of the *body as a medium of obtaining Siddhis* (mystical powers)—Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4.

Importance of the *body as a Linga* (symbol of Brahm and the Atma)—Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 10.

Body as a pilgrim site called ‘Triveni Sangam’—Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 30.

The body has *four Peeths* symbolising the abode of divine Shaktis or Goddesses—Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 170-175, and Canto 5, verse nos. 3, 8-12.

⁴The fact that Lord Shiva is the greatest teacher of spiritual knowledge is affirmed in Dakshin Murti/Mukhi Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

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Kandika 5

[Kandika 5 essentially outlines the all-inclusive nature of Rudra who is Brahm, the Supreme Being, personified. Refer also to Kandika 2-4 in this context.]

There is only one such Deva or Lord God (referring to the Supreme Being known as Brahm in his passive role, and as Rudra in his active role) who is universal, and who pervades or resides in all the directions of this creation uniformly. It is he who

preceded this creation; it is he who is in the middle of this creation and in its end. It is he who is actually born in the form of this creation, and would continue to do so in all time in the future. [That is, this creation is a revelation of this Deva, or Brahm.]

Nobody else but it is Rudra who is controlling this creation. It is in him that all the living beings find their sustenance and abode, and it is in him that they all collapse at the time of their conclusion. [This refers to the all-encompassing form of Brahm. Since everything has come into being from Brahm, since Brahm is the all-enclosing envelop that acts as the cosmic bowl represented by the sky element in which everything that exists has its base and foundation, and since Brahm encloses this sky from the outside like a moat around a fort, nothing in existence can live outside of Brahm. Therefore, everything is born in the cosmic bowl of Brahm, and dies in it.]

It is he (Rudra) who is the great creator of this world, and is its sustainer and protector (in his role as Prajapati Brahma and Vishnu respectively).

It is he (Rudra) who lives in all the creatures to give them life (as their Pran or life consciousness), and it is in him that all the living beings live (because he is their Pran or life support system, and they cannot survive without Pran).

A man can find the source of eternal peace and tranquility by meditating and contemplating upon this Ishan, the Lord of all the Gods. By dispelling all sorts of ignorance and their accompanying delusions which are at the root of all spiritual troubles of the creature and compels him to remain shackled in the myriad web-like problems associated with this artificial world of material sense objects, and by offering all the deeds along with their rewards selflessly to Lord Rudra, it is possible to obtain oneness with the Supreme Being. This is achieved by proper application of the various faculties of the mind and the intellect. [That is, it is by inculcating correct and proper wisdom, by analyzing facts and using the power to discriminate between the truth and the false, between the good and the bad, that a wise, learned, erudite, intelligent and skilled aspirant is able to overcome all sorts of falsehoods and ignorance based upon delusions, and instead find the spiritual 'truth' which only can give him peace of mind and bliss. A wise and learned man would have understood that there is no Lord except Rudra who is none else but a dynamic form of Brahm. He would also have understood that as a human being it is not possible for him not to do anything if he has to live and survive in this world which revolves around the philosophy of doing deeds. So the best way is to do the deeds as and when they come along and in accordance to the call of duty, but not to get hooked to either the deeds or their rewards. In other words, the deeds are to be done and actions to be taken in a complete dispassionate and neutral manner, having no trace of mental or emotional involvement or attachment. One should ideally not have any expectations from the deed and actions, either favourable and good, or unfavourable and bad. This is achieved by thinking that all the deeds are done as duty towards the Lord and as an offering in the holy fire sacrifice to honour this Lord. When there is no attachment to the deeds or expectations of any rewards from them, it is natural that the man is freed from the vicious trap that these deeds lay for an ignorant and unaware man. Since all activities are governed by the mind, the latter's help and role can never be overstated to achieve the enlightened state of existence.]

It is this most ancient Lord, praised even by the Purans (ancient mythological histories of Hindus), who has created Anna, or food, to sustain, nourish and protect all the subjects of his creation from the fear of death. In other words, the Lord has created food to ensure that the creature is freed from the clutches of death. [This is because without food all the living beings would die; life is directly dependent upon food. In fact, the gross body of the living being is known as the 'Anna Maye Kosh'—or the

food sheath that encloses the Atma, the pure consciousness that is the true identity of the creature.]

It is this supreme, transcendental and mystical Divinity that represents the fourth Matra or aspect of OM¹ which gives the knowledge of the ‘self’ to the aspirant besides bestowing him with spiritual peace, tranquility and bliss along with liberation and deliverance. [The fourth Matra of OM refers to the fourth state of existence of consciousness called the Turiya state. It is that state which exists beyond the first three states of existence, viz. the Jagrat or waking, Swapna or dreaming, and Sushupta or deep sleep. In the Turiya state, the consciousness is freed from all interferences from the mind-intellect which is the subtle body of the creature, as well as from the various perceptions originating from the gross external world and perceived by the various organs of the body which too are gross in nature. Being thus freed from all naggings and distractions, the Atma or the true ‘self’ of the creature is able to concentrate more fruitfully and effectively on its natural state of existence which is its reality and true form. This state is marked by complete tranquility, peace, bliss, felicity and beatitude. An aspirant who is able to make this state a permanent feature of his existence has indeed broken free from the fetters of this gross body and the surrounding world which is equally gross, and which never lets him rest in peace. This concept is explained in numerous Upanishads in the context of Mukti—meaning liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.]

The first Matra or divine aspect of Rudra (who is manifested Brahm; the Supreme Being) is equivalent to or manifested in the form of Brahma, the creator of this visible world. Its colour is red, and by meditating upon this aspect of divinity, the aspirant is able to attain the stature similar to the one occupied by Brahma.

The second Matra or divine aspect of Rudra is equivalent to or manifested in the form of Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of this visible world. Its colour is dark or Krishna, and by meditating upon this aspect of divinity, the aspirant is able to attain the stature similar to the one occupied by Vishnu.

The third Matra or divine aspect of Rudra is equivalent to or manifested in the form of Ishan, the controller of this visible world. Its colour is yellow, and by meditating upon this aspect of divinity, the aspirant is able to attain the stature similar to the one occupied by Ishan. [Ishan is Indra, the king of Gods and the living world—refer Kandika 4.]

The one half of the fourth Matra or divine aspect of Rudra is equivalent to or manifested in the form of all the Gods who roam in the sky in invisible form. [These Gods are junior to Indra and have specific duties and area of control.] The colour of this aspect is like crystal (clear and transparent), and by meditating upon this aspect of divinity, the aspirant is able to attain Mukti—i.e. liberation and deliverance from this world. [That is, he develops the same mystical powers as possessed by the Gods which gives him the ability to live even without the need of having a gross body. Being freed from this cumbersome necessity of having a gross body, his soul can live a freed life and roam at will like the Gods. Since the soul is an invisible ethereal spirit, there is no difference between such an exalted aspirant and the Gods who are also in a disembodied Spirit form.]

Those who are wise, erudite, experienced and enlightened advise that it is always preferable to worship and meditate upon this one half of the fourth Matra of Rudra as it helps to break all the fetters and give the aspirant access to Mukti, or provides him with liberation and deliverance from the grossness associated with the body and the world.

The auspicious and noble path to adopt and follow is the one which is followed by the Gods, the Pittars (the spirit of dead ancestors) and Rishis (enlightened sages, seers, ascetics, hermits etc who have become self and Brahm realised). It is called the 'Uttaraayan Marg' or the path of the Gods that symbolically goes 'northwards' or upwards—i.e. it is always spiritually uplifting and elevating for the Atma (the soul, the 'self', the Spirit) of the creature. [It liberates the creature from the grossness of the world, and he can metaphorically become so light and subtle that he can literally float in thin air in an invisible form as the Spirit.]

This is the path that is also called the 'Paraa', 'Aparaa' and 'Paraayan' because it gives the knowledge of all these three aspects of Brahm and creation at once. [Refer Kandika 4. In other words, a man who follows the auspicious path followed by the Gods and Rishis becomes enlightened about the supernatural along with the natural. Nothing remains secret or unknown for him. Or it can be said that the truth of the 'Atma' becomes known to him, and this is the reason he finds Mukti or freedom from the fetters that tie an ordinary creature, who is not aware of what the Atma is, to the body and the world.]

The supreme Deva (Lord God known as Brahm) is as fine as the tip of the hair follicle. He resides in a most subtle form in the equally subtle aspect of the heart of the creature, and he is manifested as the entire world or creation that includes all the invisible immortal Gods as well as all the other visible mortal living beings. Those who are wise, erudite, learned and enlightened enough to see, observe, experience and witness this supreme Divinity in their own inner self (and not in the external gross world) are the ones who find real peace, tranquility, serenity and bliss. This opportunity is not available to others. [This statement stresses the importance and significance of 'self realisation' as a means of obtaining enlightenment.]

It is by eliminating all the negative traits such as Krodha (anger) and Trishna (worldly yearnings, passions and lust) etc. that taints one's inner self along with offering selflessly to Lord Rudra (Brahm) all the accumulated effects of deeds done in the past can one hope to establish himself in the divinity known as Rudra. [It must be noted here that this divine entity known as Rudra is none other than the supreme Brahm, and in the previous statement it has been said that this Brahm lives in the inner self of the aspirant himself, and not outside of him. So, true calmness and peace is obtained only when one abandons all sorts of negativity that are associated with life in a world full of delusions and materialism, a world in which people think that this life is the only life that exists and therefore it must be enjoyed to the hilt by indulging in material sense objects like a fish taking to water. They lunge head over heels over limited resources, and then become jealous of each other and get at each others throat to protect their possessions in the hope that they would never die. Such a situation breeds Krodha or anger and Trishna or yearnings etc. as noted in this stanza. Then again, in order to attain success in this world, the man remains engrossed in doing deeds. These two aspects of this world are like two chains attached to the two feet which keeps the man bonded forever, and hence tormented. Obviously such a situation can never give peace to the soul.]

Verily, it is Rudra (the dynamic form of Brahm, the active form which controls everything in this creation) that is true and eternal; it is ancient and the one praised by the Purans. [The Purans are full of mythological stories of various Gods and Goddesses. Actually, all these entities are none but the supreme Brahm operating in these forms in order to keep the wheel of creation moving ahead. To think them to be independent Gods and Goddesses having independent existence, powers, domains and authority is a stupid thing to do. All these divine entities are actually the same

non-dual Brahm in these forms. All of them are the same universal supreme Brahm playing different roles. It is a clear case of delegation of authority by the Supreme Being in order to keep the administration of his realm known as the creation running smoothly. This is what is meant here.]

He (Rudra/Brahm) rules over and controls everything and everyone in this creation by the virtue of his supreme authority and overriding powers as well as the Tapa (austerity, penance and hardships endured for some noble and auspicious task) that he does.

All the primary elements of creation, viz. sky, air, fire, water and earth, all of them are essentially 'Bhasma'²—literally meaning 'ash' and signifying the fact that all of them have no independent importance, worth and life in them, but it is this Rudra or the dynamism of Brahm that has injected each of them with the magical ability to become powerful forces in creation so much so that without them this creation cannot be imagined. [This word 'Bhasma' also literally refers to the sacred ash of the holy fire sacrifice that Lord Rudra smears on his body, and this is replicated by ascetics to indicate that they are enlightened enough to realise that there is no difference between them and Lord Rudra. Since Bhasma means ash, the implication here is that a wise and enlightened man understands that all the signs of life in this gross and artificial world consisting of the five elements are essentially like a mirage seen in a hot desert; they have no reality and substance in them. The prime entity that actually has any worthwhile meaning is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. Such people treat the material world moulded out of the five elements called the Bhuts to be as worthless and lifeless as the ash known as Bhasma. They therefore have no compunctions in renouncing the falsehoods of the world, and instead concentrate themselves in realizing the Truth that lies beyond these elements.]

Indeed, the body of a creature which has not touched or is not smeared by the Bhasma worn by Lord Pashupati (literally meaning the Lord of animals but implying Lord Rudra who is the Lord of all the living beings belonging to the animal or the zoological kingdom) is like ash; it is worthless, lifeless and useless. [There is symbolism here. The smearing of the sacred ash is to purify the body just like one uses soap and water. The presence of the ash on the body symbolically establishes the sacredness of the sacrificial fire on the individual's body and acts as a shield that protects the body and the individual from all taints and evil effects that are generated in the course of daily life of constant interaction with this material world of sense objects and their accompanying temptations. It's a sort of 'sun-screen' that people use to protect themselves from the harshness of the sun's rays!]

In this symbolic way, the ash representing enlightenment about the 'truth' of Pashupati Rudra as personified supreme transcendental Brahm who is the undisputed Lord of all living beings is able to break all the fetters that shackle these 'animals' or creatures of the animal kingdom and prevent them from finding Moksha or spiritual freedom.

[Note—¹The four *Matras of OM* have also been dealt with in detail in Mandukya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, and it is Chapter 4 of this volume.

²The Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition explains the concept of *Bhasma* in detail. It is Chapter 24 of this volume. It will be noted in the present case that the Bhasma has been employed to denote two aspects of creation—viz. the first aspect is the fact that everything except Brahm is worthless like the ash formed after all things worthwhile have been burnt by a raging fire, and the second aspect is that the ash of the sacred fire sacrifice is a holy entity having all the goodness associated with the fire sans its scorching effects. In other words, a wise man is one who first realises that this world is worthless and false, and then continues to live and

enjoy it with total detachment as one has for the original material things that were put into the fire before they were reduced into ash. He must be wise enough to penetrate deeply and realise the symbolic and metaphoric meaning of wearing the Bhasma if he has to actually benefit from its usage. Otherwise it is reduced to a mere meaningless ritual and formality. He must inculcate profound mental renunciation, treating the world as no better than ash. The smear of the ash on his body is like his wearing a protective cream on it, as this ash constantly reminds him of the futility of this world, thereby inspiring the virtues of strong renunciation, detachment and dispassion, along with the fact that this body is the holy abode of the Atma representing the supreme Brahm that resides in it.]

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Kandika 6

[This Kandika first outlines other grand virtues of the supreme transcendental Brahm, and then goes on to briefly sketch the Genesis of creation.]

The Rudra principle (i.e. the dynamic and energizing life forces of creation that inject the fundamentals of life, vigour, vitality, strength, stamina and such other active principles of life that are variously called Atma and Pran of everything living in this creation) that inherently resides in Agni (fire) and Aapaha (water) to give them their astounding life-supporting abilities is also present in medicinal herbs and all forms of vegetation. [That is, the vital life giving dynamic forces that are secretly present in the elements ‘fire’ and ‘water’, giving them their unique ability to sustain life in all its forms in this world, is the same force that is also present in the medicinal herbs so that they have curative properties, as well as in numerous plants and trees that produce a wide variety of fruits, cereals, pulses and vegetables that are eaten by all living beings to survive in this world. This is called the Pran or the Atma of these entities because they form their core values and give them their importance and significance vis-à-vis this creation. If the fire did not have heat, energy and light so necessary for life in this world, it would have been useless because otherwise its only characteristic would be to burn which is obviously a negative character. Similarly, if the water could not harbour life, if it could not act as a universal elixir and a lubricant that takes the role of a buffer or a balm to soothe the scorching effects of the heat of the fire, it would have been only disastrous for this creation as is evident during the deluge that happens at the time of dooms-day, or when the river is in spate, drowning and washing off large inhabited areas on earth. The fire and water are very dangerous elements because both can produce catastrophic effects—the fire can burn everything to ashes, and the water can submerge the whole earth and annihilate life. But inspite of these negative traits, it is the ‘Rudra principle or element’ present in them which makes them so vital for life and so dear to the creatures. That is, it is the subtle presence of Brahm in both the fire and the water elements that prevents them from showing their negative and ugly side of causing havoc and terror, and instead inspires them to show their benevolent side and play a positive role to help sustain creation in the best way they can. Likewise, all members of the plant kingdom would have been a worthless growth of impregnable and intractable dense forests that would have choked this earth and stifled life had it not been for this Rudra principle living subtly inside these members of the plant kingdom as their inherent life sustaining properties—this is obvious from the fact that all the members of the animal kingdom survive directly or

indirectly on the members of the plant kingdom. Plants and the verdant forests are regarded as the ‘lungs’ of earth as they replenish the oxygen consumed by members of the animal kingdom; they help the earth to breathe.]

We (the Gods who are offering this prayer to Rudra) bow most respectfully to Rudra who has manifested himself as the Agni (the fire element) from which this creation has come into being. [This is because life without fire is unimaginable and untenable. Heat, light and energy that are so characteristic of the fire element are the basic requirement for life to come into being and its subsequent survival. This importance of the fire element as being the most vital factor in life, and that its absence would not have created life in the first place, is amply proved by the fact that if there is no warmth and heat, if there is no light and energy in this world, life would cease to exist. The Sun’s absence would freeze the earth to death even though the vast reservoir of water in the form of ocean would be very much here. Even growth of crop, cooking of food, its digestion, absorption and elimination of waste from the body, and its ultimate disintegration into the basic elements depend upon heat and warmth. The energy that sustains life inside the creature, the energy that drives every aspect of life is nothing but a revelation of the life-sustaining property of the fire element. It is well known and established that life is annihilated in frigid conditions where temperatures drop to minus degrees.]

We bow most respectfully to Lord Rudra who lives in the fire, the medicinal herbs and the vegetation or plants as their natural life-sustaining virtue, and who has created and sustained the entire universe and all forms of life in this world.

We bow most respectfully to Lord Rudra who lives in the water, the medicinal herbs and the vegetation or plants as their natural life-sustaining virtue, and who bears this entire universe and all forms of life in this world.

We bow most respectfully to Lord Rudra who exercises control over this earth and life on it in his two subtle forms known as ‘Dwidhaa’ (i.e. as the cosmic male known as Shiva, and the cosmic female known as Shakti) and ‘Tridhaa’ (i.e. the three Gunas or inherent qualities in creation such as the Sata Guna which is the noblest and the most auspicious quality, the Raja Guna which is medium quality and creates the tendency to be interested in the world and its affairs, and the Tama Guna which is the meanest quality and produces negative and evil traits in the creature).

We bow most respectfully to Lord Rudra who has enabled the ‘Naags’ (literally meaning legendary serpents but here referring to the Spirits) to live in the Antariksha or heavens.

Those aspirants who worship Rudra in the form of the exalted Pranav or the supreme Brahm are able to access the acclaimed stature of excellent existence that was attained by sage Atharva¹, while those who do not do so (or those who do not understand that there is no difference between Rudra and the supreme transcendental Brahm who is the Supreme Being of creation) are condemned to a lower form of existence (i.e. they continue to take birth and die like other mortal creatures). [This is a very important observation. It is very important to properly understand what one does and with what purpose it is being done to actually reap any desired reward from any activity. For instance here, the same Rudra is being worshipped but with different understandings of who he actually is. A wise and enlightened man who worships Rudra as Brahm is rewarded with the glorious stature that comes with worshipping the supreme Lord of creation himself—i.e. he finds his reward in the form of liberation and deliverance upon death, and even while alive he occupies an exalted stature as was obtained by sage Atharva cited here. In fact, sage Atharva was considered as the Fire manifested, so pure and holy he was. On the other hand if he

worships Rudra as a God who is revealed as Dwishaa and Trividhaa as narrated in the previous stanza would remain circling in the cycle of birth and death. This is because Dwidhaa and Trividhaa refer to the powerful forces of Nature responsible for creation of this physical mortal creation, and as such the aspirant gets the desired reward in the form of being a part of this mortal world.]

Lord Rudra is a symbolic form of ‘head’ of all the Gods. [Since the ‘head’ is the highest point in the body, this term means that Lord Rudra symbolizes all the grand and noble virtues that the Gods stand for. Rudra represents all that is auspicious, noble, holy, divine and sublime in creation. Rudra is most wise, enlightened and erudite amongst all the Gods as the head is the part of the body where the mind and the intellect are located. Since the word ‘head’ also means a ‘chief’, Lord Rudra is therefore the ‘chief God’ or the chief amongst the pantheon of Gods. It is to be noted here that each organ of the body has a patron God symbolizing that organ’s functions vis-à-vis the rest of the body. For instance, the eye is the abode of the Sun God as it is the eye that lights up the world for the creature to enable the latter to see it by the virtue of the faculty of sight present in the eye that enables one to see just like the sun in the sky lighting up the world to make it visible to the creature. All these organs function under the command and control of the mind and intellect, and the latter have their location in the head. Therefore, since Brahm represented by Rudra is the supreme commander, regulator and controller of creation, it is metaphorically depicted here as Rudra being the head of Gods.]

It is Rudra who protects the Pran (life), Mana (mind) and Mastak or Buddhi (intellect) of all the Gods. These Gods, left on their own abilities, are not competent and able to give protection to the earth, the sky or the heavens. [That is, it is Brahm, in the form of his dynamic counterpart known as Rudra, who is actually the supreme protector of these Gods who mistakenly think that they are responsible for protection of this world. These Gods cannot protect the mortal creatures who are bound to earth, or those who can fly in the sky, or even the Spirits who live in the heaven. They don’t have any original powers of their own, but derive them from Brahm. In other words, Pran wrongly thinks that it sustains and protects life inside the body of the creature, as it is Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, residing in this body that actually keeps the body alive and active. This Brahm is so magnanimous and benevolent that inspite of doing everything himself he allows Pran to hog the limelight as being the caretaker of life. This also applies to the mind and the intellect. These two units of the creature’s body think that they are vital for survival and the creature becoming aware of the world and the reality of his surroundings. But the fact is that the same mind living inside a body from which ‘consciousness’ has left remains useless for the creature proves that there is some entity superior to the mind and the intellect. Therefore we conclude that the entity known as the Rudra principle that stands for the cosmic Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is indeed a far superior entity than Pran, Mana and Buddhi vis-à-vis life in this creation is concerned. It is this Rudra that empowers these three units of creation, viz. Pran, Mana and Buddhi to display their stupendous and matchless abilities to sustain life everywhere. Indeed, their powers and authority comes from Brahm. Actually, these Gods represent the various faculties of the creature’s body. The gross body, left to its own accord, would not be able to do anything if it were not for the Pran as well as the mind-intellect complex residing inside it as its subtle components, inspiring the gross body to do what it does. But the ability of Pran, Mana and Buddhi to carry out their respective functions is due to the presence of some hidden dynamic force or power within them, or within the body of the creature—as is evident from the fact that a dead body from which consciousness

has gone is good for nothing inspite of having the grosser aspect of the vital winds present in it as well as the physical structure known as the brain which is the site of the thinking mind and discriminating intellect. Evidently therefore, these units of creation, i.e. Pran, Mana and Buddhi, should not boast that they are independently able to do anything, because it is the subtle Brahm, known as the Rudra principle in this Upanishad, residing inside them that actually enable them to carry out their respective functions.]

Indeed, everything is incorporated in Lord Rudra; there is nothing beyond Rudra; there was nothing before Rudra. There was nothing in the past before Rudra, and there would be nothing in the future also after Rudra.

It is this Rudra having thousands of legs and one head who lives or pervades uniformly in all the Bhuts or living beings in this world. [Thousands of legs is a metaphoric way of saying that the same Brahm lives in the form of countless mobile creatures of this creation, and his having one head implies that all these creatures have only 'one head' or 'one chief' or 'one Lord'. It also means that self-realisation and Brahm-realisation that comes with enlightenment is always of one kind, and it never varies from man to man though other characteristics differ between any given two individuals.]

It is from the 'Akshar' that Kaal came into existence. [The word 'Akshar' means something that is imperishable, that does not decay and die, that is infinite, timeless and eternal, while the term 'Kaal' means the factor of 'time', a factor which implies imposition of limits because it also means an era or phase which must come to an end to pave the way for the next era or the next phase, and it also means 'death' because anything that is limited by time must come to an end or die, a situation which is the opposite of being imperishable and eternal. In other words, it is from the infinite, eternal and imperishable Brahm that this finite, mortal and perishable world came into being. This is because the world 'has a beginning' while Brahm has 'no beginning'. It is like the case of a huge wave arising from the surface of the vast ocean, running its course and finally collapsing back on the surface of the ocean. Numerous waves appear from and disappear into the fathomless ocean, but do any of them affect the ocean? The wave has a limited life span, but is the ocean also subjected to this limitation of time? The answer is an unequivocal 'no'. This applies also to Brahm which is like the cosmic ocean from which the numerous worlds have arisen, and in which they would vanish at the end of their life spans. 'Akshar' also means a letter, here indicating the ethereal word OM which stands for cosmic sound indicating the presence of vibrations in the cosmic ether symbolising primal life in the universe. Anything that is born must come to an end. It is something which is not born that is not subjected to death. Sound had its origin in the cosmic ether because of some 'vibrations' produced in it, and therefore there must be some dynamic energy that must have produced these vibrations in the first place. The unknown and mystical source of this energy that generated the primary vibrations in the cosmic ether, vibrations that lay the foundation and the plinth of the grand structure known as the 'creation', is Brahm. It is from this Brahm that Akshar (the eternal ethereal sound) was produced, and it is eternal and infinite because it would survive the end of this world as the background vibration in ether. It is from this Akshar that the new generation of world would evolve. Hence, the perishable creation that is subjected to 'Kaal' is created from the imperishable 'Akshar'.]

It is because of this fact that Akshar (i.e. Brahm) is said to be eternal, infinite, all-pervading, omnipresent and all-inclusive. [The wave arising on the surface of the ocean is essentially water of the ocean and nothing else. Ocean from which the wave

is created is itself water and nothing else. If there was no water, there would be no ocean, and hence no wave. So it can be safely said that the wave is a representative of the ocean. Or, that the ocean, in its basic form as 'water', is present in all the waves that arise in all the parts of the ocean. Therefore, all the waves are basically and essentially the same thing having different existences and different locations in different periods of time. Similarly, it is the Akshar or letter that is present in all languages and tongues by which the world acquires knowledge, by which the scriptures were revealed, by which the individual creatures interact with each other, by which one expresses one's thoughts, and which is a vivid sign of life in this world. Existence of life somewhere can easily be deduced on the basis of sound even though neither the former nor the latter can be physically seen, smelt, touched and tasted. This is proved by the fact that scientists train their radio telescopes to distant corners of the universe to catch any bleep of sound, say in the form of radio waves emanating from remote corners of the universe, to determine the existence of life there. In modern medicine, sound is used to determine the state of internal organs and diagnose diseases inside the body of a patient, in a process known as the Ultrasound technique. Sound is used in oceanography to research what lies in the deep bowls of the vast ocean, thousands of feet below its surface where it is impossible for man to go physically. Similarly, we can determine that there is someone behind the wall if we hear him speak or some noise is heard even though we cannot see, touch, smell or taste the source. In the present case, it is Brahm that is the timeless 'Akshar' which is essentially present in all the entities called 'Kaal' that are limited by the factor of time.]

When this magnificent and glorious Rudra, who is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, sleeps, it is then that all the creatures come to an end (i.e. the entire creation is concluded). [From the metaphysical perspective, this 'sleep' refers to the Sushupta or deep sleep state of existence of consciousness. During this stage, both the external gross world of material objects as well as the subtle world seen in one's dream ceases to exist. This is like both of them coming to an end. But when the consciousness reverts from the Sushupta state back to the Swapna state of dreams it begins to dream once again, or when the man wakes up from sleep into the Jagrat state of wakefulness he begins to see and interact with the gross world once again. This would be akin to a new phase of creation after its annihilation during the Sushupta state. Since Rudra is personified Brahm in his macrocosmic form as the Viraat Purush, as well as the individual creature in his microcosmic form, this stanza can be applied to both the levels of existences.]

When Rudra breathes, Tama (the lowest category of Guna or quality representing grossness) is created. From the Tama is created the Aapaha (water) element. When this Aapaha is rubbed (by Rudra) with the finger, it becomes thicker and is called 'Sishir'. [Literally, the word 'Shishir' means the winter season, so it refers to viscous form of water that took the shape of cosmic 'semen'.] When this Shishir is churned, it produces froth. This transforms into the (cosmic) egg. And it is from this egg that Brahma the creator of the visible world was created.

From Brahma (the creator of the visible world) is created Vayu (the air or wind element). From Vayu is created the Omkar or the cosmic vibrations that translates into sound represented by the word OM. It is from this OM that Savitri (the 'brilliant rays' of knowledge) is born. From Savitri was born Gayatri (the first style of composition of verses in which the first hymns of the Vedas were revealed). And it is from this that the different Lokas or worlds were born. [Brahma wished to create he world and make it visible. He not only created but wished to ensure that it endures.

That is, after the initial phases when he started the ball rolling, he wanted this creation to be self-sustaining and self-perpetrating. For this purpose, he needed to disseminate information and the secrets of creation. That is, he needed a medium to spread his knowledge by speaking about it. So he first created the air. Then he shook the air to create waves of wind. Friction between these waves created the sound which traveled with the help of the wind moving in waves. This helped Brahma to spread the knowledge he had to the remotest corners of his creation in the form of ‘rays of knowledge’ personified as the goddess called Savitri. But knowledge needed a language and its grammar to be comprehensible. So he created the Gayatri—the compositions that came to be known as hymns. And this knowledge empowered Brahma to spread his knowledge of ‘creation’ far and wide, creating many worlds. This term ‘many worlds’ implies that the same knowledge was interpreted differently by different people who would create a world or theory of their own. Some of it would be destructive indicating the dominance of the factor of ‘Kaal and Tama’, while others would be constructive indicating the predominance of ‘Akshar’ or the grand virtues that provided eternity and imperishability.]

When Rudra does Tapa (i.e. when he involves himself in doing penance and austerity), honey in the form of Satya, or truthfulness that is eternal, immutable, steady, non-changing and imperishable, drips from him. [It is like the case of ripe honeycomb from which honey begins to drip if the temperature is warm. Tapa means severe penances and austerities, and therefore when Rudra did Tapa, the virtue of Satya stored in his inner being began to effuse out like sap from a tree or honey from the honeycomb.] When this happens, it is said to be the best form of Tapa. [That is, when the creature takes the vow of truthfulness in all spheres of his life, he is doing the highest form of sacrifice which is like doing Tapa in practice. This is because being truthful is not always easy. He would have to suffer harsh circumstances or consequences due to this vow of truthfulness, but that is his litmus test.]

Verily, we pay our obeisance to and bow reverentially before the supreme transcendental Brahm who is revealed in the form of Aapaha (water element), Jyoti (fire element that gives light, energy and heat), Rasa (juices of life; nectar and essence of fruits, vegetables etc.), Amrit (elixir of life; the ambrosia that gives eternity and imperishability), Brahma (the creator), Bhu (the primary world of mortal creatures bound to this earth), Bhuvaha (the sky and the primary world where junior Gods and lower forms of spirits as well as the creatures that can fly, such as the birds, live), and Swaha (the heaven where the senior Gods live).

[Note—¹Sage *Atharva* was the first son of the creator Brahma, and when he came down on earth he started the practice of worshipping the Fire God. He was directly taught by his father Brahma, and so was the most wise, learned and enlightened sage who had knowledge of Brahm in right earnest. The Mantra of the Atharva Veda are attributed to him, and this Veda is known after him. Some of the Upanishads taught by sage Atharva are the following—Atharva Veda’s Prashna Upanishad, Mundak Upanishad and Atharva Shikha Upanishad. A brief life-sketch of sage Atharva is given as a note of Canto 2, verse no. 2 of the Prashna Upanishad which is Chapter 1 of this volume.]

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Kandika 7

[This Kandika extols the glorious benefits that come with reading and understanding this Upanishad.]

A Brahmin (a learned person) who studies this Upanishad is called a 'Srotriya', or a person who is deemed to have studied all the Vedas even if he has actually not done so.

A person who studies this Upanishad gets the reward of wearing the sacred thread or is deemed to have worn it inspite of his actually not having done so.

A person who studies this Upanishad becomes as pure as the Fire element, the Wind or Air element, the Sun, the Moon (also called Soma), and Satya which the universal element of Truth personified. [That is, he acquires such stupendous powers and potentials, such divinity and holiness, such glories and magnificence that he becomes a personified form of the entities listed here. All of them are powerful forces of creation and symbolise Brahm in their individual forms. In other words, such a person becomes Brahm-realised.]

A person who studies this Upanishad becomes an expert in the knowledge pertaining to all the Gods, is deemed to have studied and be an expert of all the Vedas and their tenets, is deemed to have been to all the pilgrim places and knows fully about them, is deemed to have acquired the auspicious rewards of having done all the Yagyas or fire sacrifices, and is deemed to have done Japa (constant repetition of holy Mantras) of sixty thousand Gayatri Mantras. [This Gayatri Mantra is dedicated to the Sun God and is regarded as the best Mantra.]

A person who studies this Upanishad gets the benefit of having read the Itihasas and Purans (mythological histories of the Hindus which tell the stories related to various manifestations of Brahm in the form of various Gods and Goddesses), of having done Japa with one hundred Mantras of Rudra, as well as with the Mantra of Pranav, which is OM. People become holy and purified by his mere sight. He is able to provide deliverance to seven generations of his forefathers.

The Lord has declared that by reading (attentively though) this Atharvashir Upanishad even once, an aspirant becomes purified and cleansed so much so that he becomes eligible to do religious ceremonies and attend to other auspicious activities that require ritualistic cleansing before one commences to perform them.

If he reads it twice, then he attains the exalted stature of being honoured as the chief amongst other creatures.

And if he reads it thrice, then he attains the exalted and most honourable state of being one with OM. That is, he realises the supreme Brahm because this word OM represents Brahm, and having done so he merges in the latter to become indistinguishable from Brahm.

Indeed, this OM or Pranav or Brahm is the Absolute Truth. One should be enlightened about this eclectic fact. Amen!

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 5

Atharva-shikha Upanishad/Atharvashikho-panishad

This Upanishad is entirely dedicated to the theme of OM. OM is a synonym of the supreme transcendental Brahm as well as is the greatest of Mantras that is used as a standard medium for meditation and contemplation that aid in one's spiritual progress. This Upanishad builds upon the Atharvashir Upanishad in as much as it describes more finely the various components of OM, the ethereal word representing Pranav or the supreme Brahm. It elaborately deals with the concept of OM in a comprehensive manner. Kandika 1 elaborates upon the concept of OM by describing all its components along with the relevant Vedas, the patron Gods, the Chandas or style of composition (metres), the sacred fires, and the symbolism of colours. In effect, it outlines the genesis of creation in the context of the primordial sound of OM. Kandikas 2 and 3 elaborate upon other divine and glorious virtues of OM, such as it being the illuminator of the spiritual path of a seeker, as representing all the four states of existence of consciousness, as a bestower of mystical powers, as an infallible instrument for the realisation of Brahm and the true 'self', as the progenitor of the entire creation, including all the Gods, and such other concepts with special emphasis on their metaphysical connotations.

In effect, this present Atharva-shikha Upanishad marks the culmination of meditation and contemplation or Yoga involving the use of the divine Mantra OM when the spiritual aspirant has attained perfect and exemplary quietude and blissfulness. He is then deemed to have attained Shambhu or Brahm-hood. It is a natural progression from the earlier stages of enlightenment when he had realised Brahm in his form as Rudra and Ishan that has been narrated in Atharvashir Upanishad.

So we can safely conclude that this present Atharva-shikha Upanishad is the 'tip or head' ('Shikha') of that body of knowledge which was initiated by its cousin Atharvashir Upanishad. In a sense, this Atharva-shika Upanishad rounds off the teaching of the previous Atharvashir Upanishad.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Kandika 1

1. Once, sages Pippalaad¹, Angiras¹ and Sanatkumar² approached the great sage Atharvan¹ and asked—'Oh Lord! Which is the highest form of meditation and contemplation that you have preached? What does it consist of, and what are its four steps? Who is the meditator? What is the object of this meditation or the reward of such meditation?'

Sage Atharvan replied—'Well, the ethereal word OM representing Pranav or the transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, is always present. It was present before even the Vedas symbolising knowledge came into being. It is this OM that should be meditated upon. [Since OM represents Brahm, the supreme Creator and the progenitor of all knowledge represented by the Vedas, it is their de-facto parent. It is this reason why OM is always said before recitation of the hymns of the Vedas is commenced. It

is a prefix of the hymns and reminds the aspirant of the supreme Brahm who these Vedas refer to, and who was existent even before these Vedas came into being. In other words, if the Vedas are revered and honoured, then their source, the spring-board from where they originated, i.e. Brahm represented by OM, the sound symbol of Brahm, should be given more respect. This is because OM representing Brahm is like the 'parent' of the Vedas. Brahm is more exalted than and superior to all the hymns of the Vedas put together just like the father who is shown more respect than the off spring. Further, since the hymns of the Vedas are 'chanted or said' using letters and words which are spoken by the medium of speech, an aphorism for sound, it follows that OM, the ethereal sound, is a pre-requisite for the revelation of the Vedas. Without sound there can be no spoken word. In fact, the spoken word is a manifestation of sound having 'life' in it in the sense that the word has a meaning which lends it its importance and value. If the spoken word has no meaning, it is a lifeless jumble of sounds which are nothing but a nuisance. Without words the Vedas can't be either revealed or transmitted from one generation to another. Since the Vedas are the first and the primary body of knowledge, their origin in the primordial and primary form of sound known as OM is easy to conceptualize and understand.]

All the four Vedas are the four Paads or legs or aspects of OM (representing the supreme divinity known as Brahm). The first Matra or letter that is equivalent to its first Paad is 'A'. It represents the Prithivi or the earth. It is from this 'A' that the first of the Vedas, i.e. the Rig/Rik Veda and its Richas (hymns) were created. The creator of the visible world, i.e. Lord Brahma (the first of the Trinity Gods), the different Vasus³ (assets or wealth that was created in the beginning to sustain life on earth), the Gayatri Chanda⁴ (the first poetical metre in which the hymns of the Vedas were pronounced), and the sacred fire called the Garhyapatya Agni⁵ (the householder's fire) were also created.

The second letter 'U' of the ethereal word OM represents the second Paad or leg of Brahm and the second Matra or aspect of OM. It gives rise to the Antariksha (the vast space of the sky above the earth), the Yajur Veda containing the Mantras called Yajus needed to perform the sacrifices during fire sacrifices, Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation (the second of the Trinity Gods), Lord Rudra who is none but the supreme Brahm personified (as affirmed in the Atharvashir Upanishad, and therefore refers to the Viraat Purush whose manifestation is Lord Vishnu)⁶, the Trishtup Chanda⁷, and the second type of holy fire called the Dakshinagni⁸.

The third letter 'M' of the ethereal word OM represents the third Paad or leg of Brahm and the third Matra or aspect of OM. It is from this that the following units of creation were created—the Duloka (the heavens), the melodious hymns of the Sam Veda, the brilliant Aditya or the Sun God, the Rudra (that aspect of Brahm which helps to conclude the creation; the third of the Trinity Gods), the Jagati Chanda⁹, and the third holy fire called Ahawaniya¹⁰.

The fourth Matra of OM is called the 'Ardha Matra' because it is half a syllable, and is placed at the end of the letter 'M' (sound of M) and is a fragmented form of 'M'¹¹. It is this aspect of OM from which the Moon God (the Soma Loka), the Atharvan Mantras of the Atharva Veda, the Samvartak Agni¹² (which is the universal fire of destruction), the Maruts¹³ (the winds; the howling wind that blows during the doomsday), the Viraaj/Viraad¹⁴, and the most brilliant and self-illuminated element which has the dazzle of 'electric'—which implies the eternal and universal fire element.

[Now the colours of the four syllables are being described. The Sam Veda's Yogchudamani Upanishad, in its verse nos. 75-78 also describes the colours of the

syllables.] The first Matra of OM, i.e. the letter 'A', represents the colour red and yellow. Its patron deity is Brahma, the creator of this visible world.

The second Matra of OM, i.e. the letter 'U', represents the dark colour. Its patron deity is the self-illuminated and splendorous Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation.

The third Matra of OM, i.e. the letter 'M', represents the colour white. Its patron deity is Rudra who is both the auspicious form of Brahm and the annihilator of creation. [Rudra as being a dynamic form and a synonym of Brahm has been proclaimed by the Atharvashir Upanishad—this is his auspicious and benevolent form. Rudra is also known as the angry form of Shiva who is responsible for conclusion of creation—this is the annihilating role of Rudra in creation. There is no confusion in this apparent opposite and discordant role because 'Brahm' plays *all* the roles in creation, not only as concluder but even as the creator and sustainer of creation. This is because Brahm is the Supreme Being, and as such is responsible for all that is happening in this creation. Nothing happens without his knowledge, consent and order.

The fourth Ardha Matra of OM, i.e. the sound that follows the pronunciation of the third letter 'M', represents an admixture of all the colours. Its patron deity is the glorious and majestic Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing invisible form of Brahm that is the macrocosmic gross body of the Supreme Being.

[This is a symbolic way of saying that whatever that exists in creation, or whatever that happens in creation is due to the Viraat Purush. In fact, this creation is a gross manifestation of the Viraat Purush who lives in his own creation and governs it from the inside like a great king who first founds a dynasty and then rules it as its supreme ruler. The primary form of the Viraat Purush would incorporate all the known forces of creation, all the myriad variations in which this creation exists. A simple example would illustrate this phenomenon. The light of the sun is known to have seven colours of the rainbow inherent to it—i.e. the colours of violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red, but the sunlight itself appears to be white; it does not indicate on the surface that all these colours are hidden inside it. Similarly, the Viraat Purush hides the entire creation in his bosom; he incorporates the entire gamut of creation in his being, but when the creation is actually revealed it begins to show no semblance of similarity to its parent, the Viraat. But when analyzed intelligently one comes to the conclusion that the creation actually depicts the countless virtues of the same divine entity revealed in myriad of forms.]

In this way, the ethereal word OM representing the supreme Divinity has four Paads or aspects symbolised by its four letters or syllables. This form is a gross form of Brahm and has three types of existence symbolized by the three types of pronunciations of OM—viz. the short, the medium and the long.

By saying OM three times, each for a longer duration than its previous utterance, and rounding it off with the longest humming of the letter 'M', the aspirant finally becomes silent and calmed down. By pronouncing OM with the longest sound (i.e. with a prolonged humming following the uttering of OM), the spiritual aspirant is able to experience the light of pure consciousness called the Atma residing in his inner self—that is, he becomes enlightened.

[In the beginning, the first utterance is of a comparatively short duration to indicate the preparatory stage. The second utterance is of a longer duration than the first, followed by the third utterance which is the longest. The first two utterances correspond to the letters A and U respectively, whilst the last and the third utterance culminating in complete silence represents the third letter M, which is then followed

by the Ardha Matra that indicates the conclusion of utterances symbolizing the calming down of the senses and nerves. In other words, there are three ways to say OM. The first way is to say the word OM once, and then talk about something else. The second way is to repeat OM for some time, but not in a sustained manner. And the third is to repeat OM continuously so much so that one is completely drowned in the vibrations produced by it in the inner-self of the aspirant. The last way is the best way for honest and faithful spiritual aspirants, and the resultant calmness and bliss that is experienced by him is tantamount to the conclusion of this creation because it helps him to shut off the deluding and distracting external world from his mental screen. An aspirant constantly repeating OM has no awareness of the outside world, and so for all practical purposes the latter is as good as not being there.]

That mystical word which has the magnificent and magical power to lift the aspirant spiritually upwards or make his vital winds or Pran upwardly mobile (as done during Yoga or meditation exercises) even by pronouncing it once is called OM. [That is, OM has an inherent power built in it which lifts all those who associate themselves with it spiritually upwards just like Helium gas which has a natural tendency to lift all things filled with it upwards as opposed to other gases and ordinary air which keeps them moribund and earth-bound.]

Since OM has the astoundingly magical power to bring about a merger of all the five chief Prans or vital winds present inside the body (such as the Pran or breath, Apaana or the wind that moves in the intestine, the Vyan which helps maintain equilibrium, the Samaana which helps in distribution of nourishment equally in the body, and the Udaan which helps in lifting the body), it is called OM.

[This refers to the fourth stage corresponding to the Ardha Matra which symbolises the conclusion or dissolution of existence. This corresponds to the fourth state of existence of the consciousness, known as the Turiya state. During Yoga, which relies upon OM as the Mantra or formula to achieve success in concentration of mind (Dhyan) and control of breath (Pranayam), it is this merger of all the Prans and making them upwardly mobile through the Sushumna Naadi (the central nervous system), and their final reaching the top of the head where enlightenment and Brahm-realisation is experienced by the practitioner that is being referred to here when the 'merger of Prans' is cited as the reason of honouring the word OM with its divine powers.]

OM is called 'Pranav' because it enables all the vital life forces of the body called the Prans to bow down and surrender themselves to the 'self' or the Atma which is Brahm personified. Hence, it is called Pranav—literally meaning to respectfully bow down.

[It is called Pranav for other reasons as well. Such as for example, OM helps to attain the supreme state of realisation where the spiritual aspirant becomes self and Brahm realised. OM helps in reaching Brahm, also known as Pranav, and merger of the individual's Atma with the cosmic Atma by the process of deep meditation and contemplation, a process commonly known as Yoga, and hence it is called Pranav. OM helps one to overcome his ego and false sense of pride by helping him concentrate his energy to attain a higher state of existence, rather than remaining a slave of the body and its sense organs, by exercising rigorous control over them through various meditation techniques, hence it is called Pranav—to become humble and surrender one's self to the Supreme Being instead of thinking oneself as being the Master and Lord of this world and its material sense objects.]

The complete word OM represents the fourth state of consciousness called the Turiya state (which is marked by peace, tranquility, serenity and bliss), and since the Gods exist in this state it is a comprehensive metaphor for all the Gods taken together.

Since everything in existence is incorporated in the three letters A, U and M of the word OM, it is a representative of Pranav or Brahm.

[This is because, as explained earlier in this Kandika, these three letters represent all the three phases of creation—viz. A stands for creation coming into being because Brahma is its patron deity, U represents the expansion and perpetration of creation because Vishnu is its patron deity, and M represents the conclusion of creation because Rudra is its patron deity. Since everything in creation is a manifestation of Brahm who is also known as Pranav, or better still, since Brahm or Pranav has revealed itself in the form of this creation, each unit is Brahm or Pranav in some way or the other. Therefore, the entire creation is OM personified because it is a representative of Brahm or Pranav which are the two names of the Supreme Being.]

Since OM exists in four subtle aspects which cannot be separated from one another, it represents the four Vedas (Rig/Rik, Sam, Yajur and Atharva) which though appearing to be separate are basically inalienable and one single unit. [The four subtle aspects of OM have been fully described in the earlier part of this Kandika.]

It is a representative of all things that have a name and can be known. [For example, the knowledge is given name as the four Vedas. This knowledge can be grasped and understood. Hence, it represents OM. On the other end of the spectrum we have the incomprehensible and most enigmatic divine entity known as ‘consciousness’ or Atma which cannot be taught and understood like the knowledge of the Vedas, but can be experienced only. It cannot be taught like the Vedas but has to be witnessed personally in the form of ‘self-realisation’, or understanding what is the true meaning of the term ‘self’. This is known as ‘enlightenment’. Hence, both the aspects of existence—the gross as well as the subtle—represent OM.]

[Note—¹A brief introduction of these sages are given in the Prashna Upanishad of this volume—(a) *Pippalaad*—Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, note of verse no. 1. (b) Sages *Atharva* and *Angira*—Prashna Upanishad, Canto 2, note of verse no. 8.

²Sage *Sanatkumar*—This Sage is considered as one of the four Manas Putras or the mental-born sons of the creator Brahma. The other three are Sanak, Sanatsujat and Sanandan. They are regarded in a perpetual state of boyhood. Together they are called ‘Sanakaadi Rishis’. According to Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Sanatkumar was taught how to wear the Tripund, the three lines marked on the forehead of all Hindus, by Lord Kalagni Rudra, a form of Shiva, himself. Sanatkumar had taught the greatness of Vishnu to demon Vrittaasur, the enemy of Indra, the king of Gods. He also taught spiritual wisdom to sage Narad, the celestial sage.

Sanatsujat taught spiritual wisdom to Dhritrashtra who was the blind father of the Kauravas of the epic Mahabharat fame. Sanak is said to an eternal companion of Lord Vishnu. Sanandan is regarded as the ancient preacher of the Sankhya Shastra, even more ancient than Kapil.

Sanatkumar, along with sages Pippalaad and Angira, had approached sage Atharva to ask him about the highest form of meditation, the different aspects of OM and the culmination of spiritual journey by realising Brahm in the form of Shambhu, one of the names of Lord Shiva, in Atharva Veda’s Atharva-shikha Upanishad.

It is narrated in the Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 7, verse no. 8, that he had gone to Lord Kalagnirudra, one of the forms of Lord Shiva and who had first revealed this Upanishad to one sage Bhusund (Brahmans 1-6) to learn about the metaphysical importance and spiritual value of the Rudraksha beads. [Rudraksha beads are the seeds of the tree *Eleocarpus ganitrus*.]

According to Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Sanatkumar was taught how to wear the Tripundra, the three lines marked on the forehead of all Hindus, by Lord Kalagnirudra himself.

The Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 22 stresses the greatness of Lord Shiva known as Maheshwar by saying that even such great sages as Sankaadi and Sanatsujat (i.e. sages Sanatkumar and others collectively called the Sankaadi Rishis) had praised and prayed to the Lord, implying that if these great sages had worshipped Shiva then the latter must surely be a great Lord.

³The *Vasus*—There are eight *Vasus* who are the various patron Gods who preside over the essentials of life—Vishnu who is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and ‘Ray’ representing glory and fame. The element ‘Fire’ is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The ‘fire’ element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following-- Dhruv, Dhar, Som/Soma (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods), Aapha (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhaas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The Ekakchar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

⁴The Gayatri Chanda— The *Chandas* are a poetic style in which the verses of the Vedas were composed. These compositions rendered the sacred hymns or psalms of the Vedas with the melody of poetry which, in turn, symbolise the skill one has with

words as well as the literary genius, erudition, scholarship, learning and wisdom of the ancient sages who first inhabited this earth. Since knowledge had to be preserved and transmitted orally, it was thought prudent that lines that rhymed like a poem and which could be sung were easy to remember than paragraphs after paragraphs of dry prose. That's why, in ancient times, poetry was the usual and most accepted medium of disseminating knowledge and information. Hymns that could be chanted with a particular beat and rhythm were more acceptable than a monotonous dry prose. The Vedas stand for wisdom and enlightenment, knowledge and information. The knowledge or the science of creation and Nature needed words to be understood and explained to others, giving rise to the need for a system or style of narration called 'Chandas' which were poetic narrative styles. The word 'Chanda' means—a poetic composition, rhyme, a metre or stanza in poetry, a measure in music, or hymns or psalms of the Vedas.

The Chandas are a special type of poetic composition used by Brahma to create the texture of the fabric of knowledge in the form of the Vedas. The material used to make this fabric was the profound wisdom and the essential truths of creation as enshrined in the Vedas. This system of composing the religious text of the scriptures is in vogue since earlier times and such verses are called hymns as they are dedicated to the offering of prayers and honouring the chosen deity for which the particular hymns is meant. These hymns are also called Mantras because they are like mystical formula specific to that deity; they help the worshipper to activate the dynamic forces of Nature and creation as represented by this deity who is actually a personified form of these forces. Each deity had a particular hymns dedicated to it much like we have specific formulas in science or mathematics to solve specific problems. No one formula applies to all the problems in a universal manner, though there are some universal ones also which can be applied to all the cases, such as the Mantra OM which is used equally for all the deities. The reason is that OM represents the supreme transcendental Brahman whose manifestations all these individual deities or Godheads are. This is like the case of one listening to a particular radio station of his choice when he must tune-in to the particular frequency in which that radio station broadcasts.

The *Gayatri Chanda* has 24 letters and syllables in all which are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$.

Amongst the Chandas, the Gayatri Chanda is considered the best and the most ancient because it was in this style that the creator Brahma had first revealed the primary hymns of the Rig and other Vedas. This fact is corroborated by the Gayatri Upanishad which is actually the Atharva Veda's eight Kandikas (sub-sections), from 31 to 38, of the Gopath Brahman which are collectively known as the Gayatri Upanishad. A famous Mantra dedicated to the Sun God is also called Gayatri Mantra because of the fact that it was the first such Mantra revealed by the creator Brahma in the composition style called Gayatri and became synonymous with it.

⁵The *Garhyapatya Fire*—Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/3-6, 4/11/1-2, 4/17/4. It is the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies. A householder has land and farm representing 'earth' in which he grows food. This food is grown with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire place in the house. Hence, the Garhyapatya fire, or the householder's fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these four entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the 'fire element' because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

⁶Lord *Vishnu* and *Rudra* symbolise two dynamic aspects of Brahman. The former is the sustainer and protector of the visible world that Brahman the creator created, while the latter is the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic gross body of the Supreme Being and a sublime form of Vishnu. In fact, Vishnu and the Viraat Purush are usually treated as one deity called by these two names according to the context. The synonymous nature of Rudra and Brahman has been the subject of the entire Atharvashir Upanishad which is Chapter 4 of this volume.

⁷The *Trishtup Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines in which each line has 11 letters; 11 x 4 = 44 letters in all.

⁸The *Dakshinagni Agni*—Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/7-10, 4/13/1-2, 4/17/5. This holy fire is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

Like in the case of the Garhyapatya fire, the fire that was lit in the main sacrificial shed or site just near the main fire pit but to the south of it and where donations and charities were made was called Dakshinagni fire. The fire pit for this fire was semi-circular or bow-shaped.

⁹The *Jagati Chanda*—is a verse of 4 lines with 12 letters in each line, bringing the total number of letters to 48.

¹⁰The *Ahawaniya fire*—Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/11-16, 4/14/1-2, 4/17/6. The Ahawaniya fire is lit during the fire sacrifices to respectfully invoke Gods, and invite them to come and participate in the sacrifice and accept offerings made to them. The word 'Aavaahan' in Sanskrit means to invite, invoke, to pray respectfully with the intention of welcoming. Since one uses one's mouth for these purposes, the fire in the form of the strength, energy and vigour of the spoken word and the power of speech residing in the mouth is called Ahawaniya fire. This fire was lit to invoke the Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The 'electric' is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possess most stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahman in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahman present in it which gives it its punch and strength.

In ancient times it was an established belief and tradition that the way to attain heaven was through the path of the fire sacrifice. The fire sacrifice was in effect a method to harness the spiritual energy inherent in the all pervading fire element which would sufficiently empower the person performing the fire sacrifice to achieve his goal. The sacrificial pit and the heat generated from it reminds one of the modern day nuclear reactors. Even as the strength and energy and powers of the atom can be harnessed for beneficial or ruinous effects through the nuclear reactor, depending upon the temperament and mental setup of the person who masters the science of atomic energy, the fire sacrifice could be similarly used either for auspicious purposes such as attaining eternal peace and tranquility for the tormented soul, or for attaining worldly glory and conquest. Harnessing of nuclear energy requires expertise, knowledge and skills not easy to master and not accessible to all. Building and operating a nuclear facility also is a daunting and elaborate job. Similarly, the ancient fire sacrifices required special skills and expertise, and it was not simply lighting any

odd evening village community bonfire to the merriment of all those who sit around it to gossip about the day's events.

¹¹The *Ardha Matra* refers to a half-syllable. Normally, the letter 'M' of the word OM is to be hummed in a prolonged sound stretching into infinity. But since it is not done and the worshipper becomes silent, it is called 'half Matra' or half syllable. It is tantamount to conclusion of the word OM, and since OM is envisioned as representing the whole gamut of creation, this *Ardha Matra* is symbolic of conclusion of creation. That is why it is accompanied by the universal fire of destruction called the *Samvartak Agni*.

¹²The phrase *Samvartak Agni* refers to the fire that engulfs the earth at the time of dooms-day, because the word 'Samvartak' means the end of an era or a period of time, and *Agni* means fire. It also has two other connotations—viz. (1) The dooms-day cloud, because at the time of conclusion of one cycle of creation and destruction there is torrential rain which causes a deluge that drown the entire habitation on the surface of the earth. In this scenario, only certain forms of aquatic life survive, and from it the seed of the next cycle of creation is sown. (2) The fire burning under the bed of the ocean and in the bowls of the earth which keeps the water of the ocean as well as the underground springs warm. This fire is called 'Barwaanal' or 'Badvaanal'. In the present verse, this fire has been personified as the sage who first conceptualised this Upanishad.

¹³The *Maruts* are the various names given to the Wind God. There are said to be 49 in number, and are the Wind-Gods mentioned in Rig Veda, 1/37-39 and 1/165/3, 5, 7, 9. They are regarded variously as—(i) sons of Indra and Vrishni (Rig Veda, 2/34/2), (ii) Sons of Rudra (Rig Veda, 2/33/1), (iii) similar to the Fire-God (Rig Veda, 6/66/2), and (vi) Indra God (Rig Veda, 1/165, 171). The Purans call them sons of sage Kashyap and Diti.

¹⁴The word *Viraaj* or *Viraad* has two connotations. One, it refers to the *Viraat Chanda* which is a verse that has four lines each having ten letters, bringing the number of letters to 40, and two, it means the eldest son of Brahma the creator. If the second connotation is to be considered then the *Maruts*, the various Wind Gods would deem to be the *Viraad*.]

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Kandika 2

1. OM is honoured by the epithet 'Tarak' (one that takes across or gives liberation and deliverance to the soul) because it gives freedom to all the humans and the Gods from their innumerable torments such as various forms of sorrows, miseries, grief and fears. [OM provides the soothing balm to their tormented souls and provides them with spiritual solace and succour.]

Since all the Gods are included in OM, it is called Vishnu. [It must be remembered here that OM is used as a synonym for Brahm or Pranav. Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is the 'cause' of everything. Hence, Brahm is the cosmic 'causal body'. Its next form is known as *Hiranyagarbha* which would be the 'cosmic subtle body' of creation. And its third form is the 'cosmic gross body' known as the *Viraat Purush*. These terms have only a relative nature and symbolic value, because Brahm is essentially one and immutable, having no physical delineations, limitations and dimensions. Since everything in this creation has its origin in the *Viraat Purush*, even the Gods owe their existence to the latter as clearly affirmed in the *Aiteriyo-panishad* of Rik Veda. Since Vishnu is another name of this *Viraat Purush* in his capacity of being the sustainer, nourisher and protector of creation, and since

everything in existence is within the body of this Viraat Purush, it is natural to say that all the Gods are included in OM because OM is the word synonym for Brahm whose cosmic manifestation is known as the Viraat Purush.]

Since OM gives importance to all and enhances their stature, since it gives enlightenment, and is a revelation of the glory of Brahm, it is equivalent to Brahma the creator. [Brahma had revealed this visible creation which would have otherwise remained concealed in the deep and fathomless recesses of the cosmic bowl of Brahm. Likewise, OM has revealed Brahm in the form of the sound, and has consequentially brought Brahm, the invisible, incomprehensible and intractable cosmic Divinity that is extremely enigmatic, esoteric and unknown, within reach of the spiritual aspirant through meditation and contemplation done by the medium of the word OM.]

Since OM illuminates the inner self of all the creatures as their pure consciousness known as the Atma (when they attain self realisation), and since it illuminates (shows and paves) the path of salvation and emancipation for all the creatures, it is called 'Pradip' or the illumination of a lighted lamp. It is therefor the 'illuminator' (of the spiritual path).

Since OM is self-illuminated, and when meditated upon fills the inner self of the creature with its inherent natural light which is sparkling, dazzling and splendorous, it is likened to the Vidyut or electric which has its own light and does not need any external source to light it up.

Since OM as the all-pervading cosmic ethereal sound element that fills all the directions and corners of creation (world), it is called 'Sarwavyapi'—meaning an entity that is all-prevailing and omnipresent. Hence, it is also called 'Mahadeva' or the Great God because only the supreme Lord can be present everywhere at the same time.

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Kandika 3

1. The first Matra or letter or aspect of OM, i.e. 'A', corresponds to the Jagrat or waking state of existence. The second Matra or letter or aspect of OM, i.e. 'U', corresponds to the Swapna or dreaming state of existence. The third Matra or letter or aspect of OM, i.e. 'M', corresponds to the Sushupta or deep sleep state of existence. The fourth Matra or letter or aspect of OM, i.e. the Ardha Matra, corresponds to the Turiya state of existence which is also called the state of Samadhi, the trance-like state of peace, tranquility, serenity and bliss.

All these aspects or Matras of OM are seamlessly merged or united with one another, and they are inseparable or inalienable from each other. [That is, it is not possible to consider OM in a fractured form.] That is why OM is also called 'self-illuminated' or 'self-sustained and self-sufficient' like the supreme Brahm. [This is because Brahm is an immutable, indivisible, eternal, infinite and non-dual divine entity. It is like a round ball which has no front or rear side; all the sides are equal and indistinguishable from one another. Brahm does not need some support to prop it up. There is no such thing as a beginning, middle or an end of Brahm. Therefore, there is also no such concept applicable to OM as well, and this is why OM is regarded as being a monosyllabic sound. All the individual sounds that constitute OM are an indivisible part of OM just like all the manifestation of Brahm, viz. the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body of creation, are an inseparable part of Brahm. The

four parts of OM, viz. the letters A, U, M and the Ardha Matra, have been visualized just for the sake of understanding and analyzing the profound importance of OM from the metaphysical perspective just like one understands the chemistry of water by analyzing its molecules which consists of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen, but that does not mean that Hydrogen and Oxygen exist separately, that none of them would equal water in its grand life-sustaining virtues, and that understanding the value of water vis-à-vis the creation has anything to do with these two gases the atoms of which constitute the molecule of water. Thousands and thousands of bits and units of sound are created every moment, but they all merge seamlessly in the cosmic sound of OM. When one goes higher up in the earth's atmosphere, all that he hears is complete silence inspite of the cacophony and ear-splitting noises prevailing on the surface of earth. In other words, as one rises higher in his spiritual pursuit, he experiences complete tranquility when everything dissolves into nothing. This is the state of Turiya representing the Ardha Matra of OM.]

OM is a provider of all Siddhis or mystical powers. Hence it is the prime object of meditation and contemplation, and is worth pursuing diligently.

OM helps to control all the sense organs and their restlessness by helping the mind to be focused in meditation and contemplation as well as by controlling the Pran (the vital airs or winds) and their movement in the body.

OM is worthy of pursuing as an object of meditation and contemplation because it represents Brahm. At the same time, it is a means or an instrument or a medium of attaining Brahm because it is used as a Mantra to focus one's mind and energy, to control one's sense organs, and to do meditation and contemplation so that self and Brahm realisation can be achieved. And it is the culmination of spiritual practices because when successfully mastered it gives complete tranquility, peace, serenity and bliss that is equivalent to the Turiya state of existence which is also called the state of Samadhi, the trance-like state of complete peace and tranquility when the creature is blissfully unaware of the body and the external world.

The spiritual aspirant should control all the sense organs and the various Prans (vital winds) and gradually establish them in the Mana (mind) through the well-established practice of meditation and concentration (i.e. Yoga) that is done by employing the Mantra OM. When he successfully does so, he becomes one like Lord Vishnu because all the Gods are said to be established in Vishnu. [See Kandika 2.]

When all the vital winds (Prans) and the sense organs (Indris) as well as the mind (Mana) are merged into one another by the process of meditation and contemplation using the Mantra OM, the reverberations of this ethereal sound overwhelms the aspirant as it begins to resonate throughout his being. This is his state of having realised the Supreme Being in the form of bliss, ecstasy, peace and tranquility. It is the eclectic state of self and Brahm realisation; it is the state of enlightenment.

This OM is the cause of coming into being of all the senior Gods of the Trinity such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, as well as all the other junior Gods presiding over the various sense organs of the body along with all the Bhuts such as earth etc. (the others being water, fire, air and sky). [This is true because OM is a name for Brahm, and the entire creation has emerged from Brahm which is cosmic Consciousness. Refer Kandika 2.]

Hence, OM is the supreme entity (because it is the divine Brahm personified); it is the 'Sarveshwar' of the Lord of all (for the same reason); it is endowed with all the glorious virtues and magnificent sublime qualities possessed by the highest

Authority in creation (as Brahm personified). And that is why it is honoured by the title of 'Shambhu'.

By concentrating and meditating upon OM, the spiritual aspirant gets immense benefit in the way of attaining the highest stature of existence marked by steadiness, calmness, infinity, eternity and imperishability symbolised by his attaining access to the high heaven beyond the Polar Star (the North Star) called the Dhruv Star. [The symbolism lies in the fact that this Star does not change its position in the sky like all the other stars and planets, including the Sun and the Moon which are the two most luminous bodies in the sky symbolising a high stature amongst their peers. So, the aspirant who takes the shelter of OM, or relies upon it for his spiritual progress, becomes as steady, eternal and imperishable as the Polar Star that remains steady and constant in its position. He is looked upon for guidance and support by navigators who refer to the Polar Star to decide their location when traveling without the compass.]

Besides the above, such a spiritual aspirant gets the benefit of doing a hundred fire sacrifices which reward the person who does them by enabling him to go and reside in the heavens for a long period of seventy-four Yugs. [1 Yug is equivalent to one-fourth of the 4-Yug celestial cycle of birth and death according to Hindu belief.]

According to the Vedas, the best path to be followed to achieve all spiritual success and be rewarded for doing Dhyān (contemplation), Yoga (meditation) and Gyan (acquisition of knowledge or attaining enlightenment and spiritual wisdom) is the path of worshipping OM and having faith and devotion for it. [Of course, worshipping etc. of OM implies doing Dhyān and Yoga using OM so that Gyan of Brahm can be successfully attained. It ought to be noted here that when one worships OM, he is actually paying his respects directly to Pranav, the cosmic Consciousness that is also known as Brahm, and which is represented by the word OM that is specific to it.]

This is the only auspicious and beneficial path for all spiritual aspirants seeking enlightenment as well as self and Brahm realisation. A wise man should discard all other Mantras (paths for spiritual enlightenment) and follow this single Mantra of OM as the best Mantra amongst all the Mantras of the Atharva Veda. One should study about this OM as described in this Atharvashikha Upanishad exclusively. This entitles the wise and learned aspirant to be freed from having to enter another womb again—i.e. he would not have to be born again as he will find liberation and deliverance for himself as a reward for submitting himself to OM representing the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Lord of creation. He would have become Brahm realised, and hence would find Mukti or emancipation and salvation. He indeed finds Mukti or emancipation and salvation. This is the declaration of this Upanishad. Amen!

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 6

Brihajjabal Upanishad/Brihajjabalo-panishad

This Upanishad describes the Tej or the radiant splendour and divine glory of the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm, the Absolute Truth, besides which there is nothing in this world. The very thought that there can be something else besides this Absolute Truth (Brahm) is itself a delusion arising out of extreme ignorance of its reality. This Brihajjabal Upanishad is equivalent to the tip or head or the citadel of all Vedic teachings because it removes all shades of ignorance and delusions. It has eight Brahmanas or Cantos.

Brahman 1 describes how the creator Brahma desired to create, and how this basic notion of having a 'desire' was at the root of Brahma getting embroiled in the cumbersome and entangling process of the affairs of creation. This is followed by a conversation between sage Bhusund and Lord Kalagnirudra, one of the divine forms of Lord Shiva, in which the Lord outlines how the creation came into being from the five symbolic dynamic but subtle forms of the Supreme Being. He describes how the five primary elements, the five types of cows and the five forms of 'Bhasmas' or sacred ashes that are metaphors for five qualities in creation have come into existence.

Brahman 2 elaborates upon two primary concepts of metaphysics and how they form a couple that compliment and supplement each other. One is the concept of Agni or the fire element and the Soma or the elixir of life known as the water element without both of which life would not have come into existence, and the other is the concept of Shiva and Shakti, the cosmic Consciousness and its dynamic aspect respectively. It describes the various connotations of these four units and the finer nuances of meaning attached to them. Besides this, the significance of the term Bhasma (ash) is very succinctly described in this Canto.

Brahman 3 is an exposition, first, on the proper way to produce the sacred Bhasma (ash) and in this it bears close resemblance to two other Upanishad of this genre—i.e. the Kalagnirudra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, and Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda traditions, second, on the religious importance and significance of the cow and answers the confounding question why the Hindus regard the cow as holy, and third, it describes in detail the process of doing the fire sacrifice using the holy cow's dung as an offering to the consecrated fire of the sacrifice as an oblation.

Brahman 4 and 5 are an extension of Brahman 3 and they describes in minute detail how, when and by whom the Bhasma, the sacred ash, is to be worn on the body in the form of the Tripundra—the three lines marked on various parts of the body, especially the forehead. This Tripundra is a symbol worn by the worshipper as a token of his having accepted the supreme transcendental Brahm, in his manifestation as Shiva, as his primary deity and Lord, as well as a sign of his own purification, his vanquishing of sins and protection from their evil consequences, and his initiation into the fold of seekers of Mukti (liberation and deliverance) by symbolically establishing the mark of the Lord on his own body. The immense spiritual rewards of wearing the Tripundra on the body by the worshipper are outlined in Brahman 5.

Brahman 6 describes five astounding mystical powers of the sacred Bhasma (the holy ash of the fire sacrifice) by illustrating them citing a story from the Purans. Each power is like an honoured title or an epithet assigned to the Bhasma. Hence, this Brahman describes the 'Naam Panchak' or the five names by which the Bhasma is

known. For instance, the first power is its ability to give life to a cursed man who is condemned to death. This is described in verse nos. 1-4. The second is its power to eliminate the curse of horrific sins. This is narrated in verse nos. 5-6. The third is its power that established a unique similarity between Lords Vishnu and Shiva and to provide all round welfare and auspiciousness to a devotee. How this came to happen is narrated in verse nos. 7-11. This power is endorsed by Lord Vishnu himself. The sacred Bhasma is so powerful that various Gods stand around to attend to the devotee who wears it, and it is also a bestower of wisdom, erudition and knowledge to its wearer—these two additional facts, bringing the total number of glorious virtues of Bhasma to five, have been outlined in verse no. 12.

Brahman 7 describes two things—one, the importance of the Bhasma and the Tripundra as revealed to king Janak by Brahma, and to sage Pippalaad by Vishnu and Kalaghirudra (from verse nos. 1 to 7), and two, the importance of the Rudraksha beads as revealed to sage Sanatkumar by Lord Kalagnirudra (in verse no. 8).

Finally, Kalagnirudra enumerates the profound metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of Brihajjabal Upanishad in Brahman 8.

This is one Upanishad which highlights why the cow is held in high esteem and treated as sacred by the Hindus. In this context, Brahman 1 and 3 are very explicit.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Brahman 1

1. The entire world, the visible and the invisible, is not true; it is a falsehood and artificial. In the beginning everything was water and dissolved in it. The first to come into existence was Prajapati Brahma who was born atop a divine Lotus flower. He desired in his Mana (mind) to create something (i.e. to build or fashion an enigmatic entity that would eventually come to be known as the 'world'). A creature says or expresses what his mind desires or wishes, then he goes about doing relevant deeds that are in accordance to his wishes so that they can be fulfilled or realised.

'Prajapti Brahma had a desire', so this element called 'desire' assumed a personified form and presented himself before Brahma. Thus, the first appearance of 'Ichha' or having a first desire, a first wish, a first aspiration or a first yearning is the mind's first dynamic form (i.e. it is like the seed of the mind that would sprout to produce a huge tree known as the world around the otherwise neutral creature who was completely at peace with himself prior to having a desire, because it is from here the rest of the chain of deeds and actions, successes and failures, desires and more desires, worries and miseries, pains and joys etc. would be set in motion).

Brahma wished to have a companion or helper to aid him in this endeavour. The concealed desires, wishes or aspirations that are hidden in the people's heart are reflected in their intellect called the Buddhi. It is the secret desire or wish or aspiration of a person that inspires him and influences his mind and the intellect to make certain decisions and act accordingly so that what he desires can be fulfilled, attained and realised. [That is, though the intellect is supposed to be neutral, analytical and clinical

in its approach to things, arriving at deductions and helping the man take wise and intelligent decisions, yet it becomes conditioned by the man's hidden desires. These desires would prevail on the intellect and influence its advice given to the grosser aspect of the mind which would then impel the man to act in a certain way.]

With this desire in mind (that he would 'create'), Brahma did Tapa (i.e. he made hard effort to fulfill his desire, and it was in the form of severe penance and austerity and its accompanying sufferance).

*It was at this time that sage Bhusund¹ (a disciple of sage Jabal) went to Lord Kalagnirudra (one of the names of Lord Shiva indicating his form that concludes this creation; the annihilator Shiva; the word itself means that ferocious form of Shiva which resembles the fire of the doomsday) and asked him about the importance and significance of 'Bhasma' (the ash of the calmed-down fire sacrifice in which the dried cakes of cow-dung are used as fuel as well as an oblation to the sacred fire, and which is smeared by ascetics on their bodies as a sacred symbol of Lord Shiva)².

Lord Kalagnirudra replied—'What should I say in this matter. Sage Pippalaad has already expounded upon the importance of Vibhuti (the ash of the sacred fire; the Bhasma) as well as Rudraksha³ (beads used to make a prayer rosary from the seeds of the Rudraksha tree called *eleocarpus ganitrus*). What more is to be said on this subject'?

Then sage Bhusund requested him to preach about the Brihajjabal Upanishad that teaches how to obtain Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance).

Upon this, Lord Rudra preached the eclectic knowledge of the Divine, the knowledge that is most sublime and holy, as enshrined in the Brihajjabal Upanishad in the following manner.

It was first expounded and elucidated by sage Jabal (and hence bears his name). [The word 'Brihat' means large and wide in scope. So the knowledge preached by sage Jabal that is contained in this Upanishad, being of vast spiritual importance and having a great import on the spiritual well being of all seekers of knowledge of the Absolute Truth, is called Brihajjabal Upanishad in honour of the sage, and to indicate its importance.]

When there was only water everywhere, it was from the Shakti or dynamic powers of Brahm in his cosmic first subtle form as Saddyojaat Shiva⁴ that earth came into existence. The earth emerged from this all-encompassing fluid water as a solid ground.

Upon this earth was then created the benevolent and merciful cow known as 'Kapilaa'. This is because her skin was reddish-brown with white spots, and also because she was most docile, simple, humble and harmless. It is from its dung that the 'Vibhuti' was created. [The word *Vibhuti* has two meanings—one refers to the ash of the fire sacrifice, and the second refers to the virtues of excellence, dignity, majesty, glory, prosperity, wealth, riches, and supernatural powers such as the many Siddhis etc. that made their appearance on earth at the beginning of creation. According to the first meaning, the cow produced dung which upon drying up was reduced to coarse powder because of the natural disintegration process. This was like the ash of the sacrificial fire-pit. According to the second interpretation, the word *Vibhuti* would mean the virtues mentioned above. The sacred cow represented all the excellent things that the creator was so considerate to create before he created other living beings so that when they were eventually born they would have no shortage of anything. As an example he gave milk to this cow so that before the creature learnt to hunt for food he would have a ready-made, wholesome and abundant supply of nourishment for his survival. This is the reason why the cow is so revered amongst the

Hindus because of the fact that not only was it first born or preceded human beings, thereby becoming their ancestor, but also because it embodied or personified all the glorious virtues that were ever created on earth. The cow symbolized the virtues of the creator whereby he provided for the comprehensive nourishment of his subjects because the milk of the cow is a complete and wholesome food all by itself. Besides this, the dried-up and naturally disintegrated dung of the cow was the first ash created prior to the advent of the system of doing fire sacrifices using firewood. In fact, the cakes made from the dried-up dung of the cow were the first fuel used for such fire-sacrifices.]

The second subtle form of Shiva is called Vamdeo who produced a sweet fluid which was like sweet water, and the earth was floated on it. [In other words, the first 'primordial water' from which the earth emerged refers to the vast cosmic ether that is symbolised by the salty ocean, and this second 'sweet water' refers to the underground water that is found under the solid surface of the earth, and it is sweet by nature. It is this sweet water that is found in wells and springs. Since it surrounds the earth as a ring underneath the surface, the solid outer surface of the earth where terrestrial creatures and trees grow is virtually floating on this inner ring or layer of sweet water. The salty water of the ocean floats on the surface of the earth. The earth's surface where creatures live, and where this visible salty ocean is located, actually floats on the inner ring of underground sweet water that exists below the thick layer of rock beneath the surface of the earth.]

The next to come into existence was the cow with a dark skin, and it was called 'Bhadraa'. [The word Bhadraa refers to the female gender and implies a creature that is most gentle, courteous, noble, calm, poised, sober, modest and humble.]

It was from the dung of this cow that 'Bhaasit' (dried form of the dung which has naturally disintegrated into a coarse powder symbolizing the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice) was created. [This is the second type of ash. The word 'Bhaasit' means 'to evolve, to become visible, to be brilliant'. Hence, Bhaasit refers to the fact that the brilliant ash evolved automatically when the dung was dry.]

From the third subtle form of Shiva known as 'Aghor' ('the fierce One') was created the Agni or the fire. He produced 'Vidya' or knowledge and the cow with a red (copper-coloured; dark brown) skin. The Bhasma (ash) was produced by its dung when its dried cakes were used as fuel as well as an oblation to the consecrated fire to do a sacrifice. [This is the third type of sacred ash. Prior to the practice of doing fire sacrifices which produced ash when the fire calmed down in the pit, the dried and disintegrated dung of the cow was used as ash for religious purposes.]

From the fourth subtle form of Shiva called the 'Tat-Purush' ('that Lord'; the cosmic form of Shiva as the Viraat Purush) was created the 'Vayu' or the air or wind. From the air/wind was created the virtue of 'Shanti' (meaning peace, calmness, restfulness and tranquility), as well as the next form of cow with a white complexioned skin. This cow was called 'Sushila'. [The word Sushila is the female gender of the virtues of being sober, courteous and pleasant in one's demeanours; to be gentle, amiable, affable, modest, polite, suave, obliging, cordial, and being naturally good.]

It is from her dung that saltiness and alkaline things (chemical) called 'Kshar' were created.

From the fifth form of Shiva called the 'Ishan' ('the Lord high up in the heaven') was created the sky. He also produced 'Shakti', or the dynamism that could overcome 'Shanti'. [In other words, peace and tranquility can be disturbed by use of

force. From the metaphysical perspective it implies that the inherent 'Shanti', or peace and calmness of the soul or the Atma is disturbed when the 'Shakti', or the dynamic forces of the 'Mana', the mind and the heart combine, is allowed to interfere with the natural state of tranquility of the Atma. In other words, Shanti and Shakti can not co-exist; one would disturb the other. When the supreme Brahm decided to initiate the process of creation, he had employed his Shakti, or the dynamic power of creation that he possessed. But though he was successful in rolling forward the wheel of creation, he lost his Shanti or peace of mind, because the creation that he produced was more of a headache for him as it robbed him of all his peace and bliss. Now the Lord had not only to take care of his own produce, worry about its nourishment, development, wellbeing and general upkeep, but also to tackle the waywardness of his off-springs who more often than not pulling each other by their hairs in the opposite directions, and were at each other's throat most of the time!] The next cow having multi-coloured skin was then created. Her dung produced 'Rakshaa'—literally meaning the capacity to give protection. [The significance of the 'ability to protect' having its origin in the cow of 'multi-coloured skin' is that only a society with versatile qualities and abilities would be able to protect itself and survive in the face of harsh existential conditions. It also means a society that is multi-racial, multi-coloured, multi-cultured and multi-ethnic, and tolerant and accepting to such virtues, would prosper in this world. Otherwise, the world would be torn asunder in ethnic strife, jealousy, hatred and animosity. Diehard fanatics and dogmatic individuals cannot act as protectors of the Lord's creation. The cow does not distinguish between two individuals who serve her, feed her or drink her milk. She is equally benevolent to both of them. Therefore she personifies the virtue of 'Rakshaa'.]

Thus, this answers your (Bhusund's) question about the sacred ash called Bhasma or Vibhuti. The five names of the sacred ash are the following—Vibhuti, Bhaasit, Bhasma, Kshar and Rakshaa.

Since all these forms of the sacred ash have glorious virtues and immense spiritual value, they are all honoured by the title of 'Vibhuti'—something that is endowed with supernatural powers, and something that is majestic, exalted, honourable and excellent.

Since they can devour or annihilate or eliminate or reduce to an ash all sorts of spiritual shortcomings and faults of the creature who wears them, they are called 'Bhasma'—the one that burns and reduces all impurities to ash.

Since they are visibly seen and reveal the magnificent glories and divine powers of Brahm (as manifested in the form of this stupendous creation), they are called 'Bhaasit'—something that is seen and is self-evident.

Since they cut through or eliminate all the troubles of the spiritual aspirant, they are called 'Kshar'—something that is caustic in nature and can cut through or burn through troubling issues and hardened crusts representing all the spiritual troubles faced by the aspirant.

And since they give protection to the wearer from the fear of delusions represented by phantoms and ghosts, as well as evil spirits such as demons, they are called Rakshaa—literally meaning to give protection.

[Note—*There appears to be a sudden change of tracks while this Brahman is being narrated. First we are told about Brahma having a desire of creating and doing Tapa for this purpose, and then the narration suddenly jumps to the conversation between Bhusund and Kalagnirudra.

The probable reason is that Kalagnirudra is the Lord who had annihilated the previous creation, and it is he from whom the present creation started to evolve. Lord Rudra is none but the supreme Brahm himself. It is from the latter that Brahma the

creator of the visible world was created. Further, Rudra, in his form as Shiva, is the patron deity of ascetics who wear the sacred ash on their body. Hence, Rudra is the most competent Authority to expound on these two subjects—viz. the process of creation as well as the various forms of the sacred ash known as Bhasma, along with its metaphysical and spiritual value and importance.

¹Sage *Bhusund*—It is not certain which sage was this, but a sage by the same name of *Jabal Bhusund* appears in the Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph no. 1 opening lines. Bhusund is known as ‘Jabal Bhusund’ because he was a disciple of the great sage Jabal/Jaabaal and took up the name of his Guru (moral preceptor, teacher and guide) as his surname. In this Upanishad named after him, the sage Jabal Bhusund approached Lord Shiva and asked the latter to fully enlighten him about the ‘Bhasma’ (the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice), what are its usage, along with the complete metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of Bhasma which enables the wearer to obtain Mukti (liberation and deliverance).

Another place where sage Bhusund is mentioned is in the epic Ramayana that describes the incarnation of Lord Vishnu as Lord Ram. He was a great devotee of Lord Ram in the form of a crow. His life is presented in the epic Ramcharit Manas written by the great poet-sage Goswami Tulsidas, in its 7th Kanda (Chapter), from Doha no. 105 to 125.

Earlier in his previous lives he was a human being. He used to stay in Ayodhya, the capital city of Lord Ram and was a great devotee of the Lord. But time became unfavourable for him and due to misfortunes that befell him he went to Ujjain, a famous pilgrim site. There he used to worship Lord Shiva and was given the Lord’s Mantra by some Brahmin. Bhusund used to repeat this Mantra of Lord Shiva in a temple. Once, the Guru summoned him and advised that the reward of worshipping Lord Shiva is to have steady and unflinching devotion for Lord Ram, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This did not go down well with Bhusund who thought that the Guru is misleading him and causing an insult to Shiva. So, once when his Guru arrived in the temple where Bhusund was meditating upon Shiva with the relevant Mantra, he did not show due respect to the Guru. This audacity and irreverence annoyed Lord Shiva and he cursed him to go to the worst type of hell and be born as a reptile (a serpent). The merciful Guru intervened on behalf of Bhusund and pleaded with Shiva to forgive him. At his intercession, Shiva blessed Bhusund that though he would have to be born as low forms of life to suffer for his misdeed, he would always be wise and enlightened amongst all such life forms; Gyan would always stand him in good stead, and as a result he would be elevated to a higher birth each time he was born again to progress rapidly in the evolutionary hierarchy to finally become a human once again. As a human he would become a Brahmin, the highest stature in this form.

As a result of this incident Bhusund became a serpent, and subsequently had to take birth in many low life forms. Finally he became a Brahmin. He was so much inherently devoted to Lord Ram that even as a child he used to enact incidents from the Lord’s life on earth. The learned father’s repeated attempts to teach him in the traditional method of education that was in vogue for learned Brahmins failed to enthuse the child Bhusund, and when the parents died he went to the forest as a mendicant. He roamed in the numerous hermitages of sages and seers, seeking knowledge of devotion for the Lord because he was charged with a strong longing to find his Lord Ram. By and by, he came to the hermitage of sage Lomas who used to live on the top of Mt. Meru. The sage, like so many previous sages, attempted to teach metaphysics and philosophy to the young Bhusund, but again the latter had scant attention for such things. While sage Lomas persistently espoused the cause of formless Divinity or the Nirguna Brahm, Bhusund persisted with his quest for the formed or Saguna Divinity in the person of Lord Ram, the form which was very dear and close to his heart. His persistence peeved the sage and he cursed him to be born as a crow, the scavenging bird. Bhusund took this not as a curse but as a blessing of

his Lord Ram. The sage too repented at his anger and was very moved by the innocence of Bhusund. He relented and reassured Bhusund that though he would have to become a crow as result of the curse but he would be the wisest bird in creation. The sage gave him the Mantra of Lord Ram. He kept Bhusund in his hermitage for some time and taught him the story of Ram, called the Ramayan. The sage divulged the secret that this divine story was revealed to him by Lord Shiva himself. He also blessed Bhusund that he would live as long as he wished, and death would not affect him; he would die only when he wished. The hermitage where Bhusund would establish himself would be glorified and no ignorance would ever come within one Yojan (roughly equal to 8 or 16 miles according to different measures) of it. Immediately there was a voice from the heaven which endorsed the sage's blessing and confirmed that Bhusund was indeed a great devotee of the Lord.

Then Bhusund went to Mt. Neel in the northern Himalayan ranges and established his hermitage there. It is here that once Garud, the legendary vehicle of Lord Vishnu, had gone for enlightenment on the advice of none other but Lord Shiva himself when he was overcome with delusions about the true nature of Lord Ram. At that time, Bhusund had already spent seven hundred and twenty Kalpas* worshipping and meditating upon Lord Ram. Whenever Lord Ram took birth as a human in each Treta Yug of the celestial cycle of four Yugs, Bhusund would go and visit the Lord to play with the child Ram. [Note—* 1 Kalpa is equivalent to 1 day in the creator Brahma's total life span of 100 years. Each Kalpa consists of 1000 four-Yug cycles, called the 'Chatur Yugs'. The visible creation's one life-span consisting of this four-Yug cycle called the 'Chatur Yugs' is this one day of Brahma. At the end of this Chatur Yug, there would be dissolution or the so-called 'dooms-day' when everything would be submerged in water. Then the next phase of life consisting of the next four-Yug cycle would start.

²The 'Kalagnirudra Upanishad' of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition precisely deals with this subject. It is published as Chapter 10 of the fourth volume in this series dealing with the Upanishads of this Veda. The word 'Kaal' means end or conclusion, the word 'Agni' means the fire, and 'Rudra' refers to the angry form of Lord Shiva when he burns everything to ashes at the end of a cycle of creation.

³Refer 'Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad' of the Sam Veda tradition.

⁴The *five forms of Shiva* listed in this Upanishad are Saddyojat Brahm/Shiva, Aghor, Vamdeo, Tat-purush and Ishan. It ought to be noted here that Shiva or Rudra are regarded by the Upanishads as being synonymous with Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Panch Brahm Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda deals with the concept of the 'Panch Brahm', or the five symbolic forms of Brahm, in its entirety. The fact that Brahm, Shiva and Rudra are the same Divinity known by different names because they perform different functions in creation has been expounded in the following Upanishads— *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 32, *Dakshin Murti or Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad*, *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* and *Skanda Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, and the Atharva Veda's *Atharva-shir Upanishad*.]

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Brahman 2

1. Kalagnirudra personifies the Fire element and the Soma element simultaneously. [The Fire represents dynamism, heat and energy, while Soma represents the soothing elixir that acts as a balm for the scorching heat of the fire. Thus, the Lord is severe and ruthless on the one hand, and soothing and calming on the other hand. The sacred ash that Lord Shiva smears over his body represents the calmed-down fire, i.e. though it has its origin in the hot fire it has become finally cool. This implies that though the Lord becomes angry at times when he watches the creation going out of hands and

wayward to the extreme, needing to be wiped out so that the slate can be cleaned for a fresh start, he soon becomes absolutely calm and tranquil, re-submerging himself in deep meditation.]

Sage Bhusund asked him to elaborate upon the Bhasma (sacred ash) further and how to smear it on the body in order to purify the latter (just like one takes a purifying bath in the water of a holy river).

(Upon this request, the Lord replied—) ‘There is only one Fire, and it enters every unit of creation to assume the form of its latent heat, energy and warmth which acts as the concealed fuel or the inherently inflammable nature of everything in existence. The fire element is in-built into the fundamental structure of everything in existence¹.

In a similar way, the ‘Bhasma’ in its symbolic form (as described in the concluding part of Brahman 1) is present in the inner self of all the living beings as well as in the external world².

The whole world is created from the Fire and Soma. [That is, the world needs heat and energy in the form of the fire element to exist, and water element is also required for existence as the great elixir of life that provides nourishment, acts as a lubricant, and has a cooling and soothing effect. Water is represented by ‘Soma’ because the latter term applies to the cool juice extracted from a plant of the same name that is used during fire sacrifices as a cool drink offered to the Gods. The moon is also known as Soma because it is the heavenly pitcher of Amrit, which is the elixir of life stored for the use of Gods. Both the fire and the water were the primary ingredients needed to start the process of creation—the former provided the heat and energy, and the latter acted as the liquid that nourished life in its bosom and acts as a general soothing balm for the incumbent nascent creation. No life is imaginable without both these elements.]

The fire element represents Lord Rudra’s astounding ‘Teja’, or his stupendous glory, majesty, grandeur, radiance, splendour, cosmic powers, potentials and authority. When these virtues are revealed in the form of the burning fire and its leaping flames, they are Rudra’s dynamism on display, and represent the physical form that this element of Teja took. Therefore, ‘Tej’, in the form of the dynamic aspect of the fire element, is the sublime and subtle Rudra’s gross body which is called Raudri³. [In other words, ‘Raudri’ is the dynamic face of Rudra just like Sita is the dynamic face of Brahm—refer Sita Upanishad which is Chapter 9 of this volume.]

Soma is the personified form of the grand quality of Rudra that takes care of the creation by providing it with the soothing and rejuvenating elixir of life in the form of the water element. Once the creation started to be formed as a result of the efforts made by Rudra (Brahm), he created Soma (the water element) to harbour and nourish the nascent creation (or the embryo) and take care of it when it was born (or matured). It is this Amrit or Soma that gives perpetuity to life and its various ingredients. Therefore, Soma is the personification of the sublime mystical power of Rudra to create and sustain life in all its forms. It is therefore the symbolic gross body of these subtle and sublime virtues of Rudra⁴.

The stupendous powers and dynamism that Rudra possesses is manifested in the form of ‘Tej’ or the fire element which is symbolised by the power of ‘Vidya’ (knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment), or the power and authority that comes to a creature when he has knowledge. [Since knowledge is ‘enlightening’ and it ‘lights up the truth’ for the spiritual aspirant, it is like the Sun which lights up the world with its light and removes darkness represented by ignorance and its attendant delusions. The Sun is also the heavenly cauldron of fire, and is a vivid symbol of the eternal fire

element present in this creation. Even when the entire earth is drowned in the doomsday water, the Sun continued to maintain its fire that would eventually provide the heat and the energy that is needed for the next phase of creation. In fact, the Sun is regarded as the most magnificent and undeniable visible form of Brahm. The relation of the Sun representing the 'Tej' and the Moon representing the 'Soma' has been explained in note no. 6 appended to this verse.]

On the other hand, the 'Kalaa' that the creature exhibits—i.e. the variables of character, temperament, inclination and basic nature that characterizes all the individuals in this creation, and which not only vary from one situation to another in the same individual but are never alike in any given two individuals—is a symbol of the Soma aspect of Rudra. [The word 'Kalaa' is usually used in regard to the changing shape of the Moon's disc. The Moon continues to change every night. Each shape of the Moon is called its one Kalaa. Though the Moon is the same entity, but it is never the same on any two given nights. Likewise, a wise person who has seen the light of true knowledge, or has become enlightened realises that though the same Atma or the pure consciousness resides in all living beings, their gross bodies, inherent nature and character traits are never the same in any two individuals. This realisation has a calming effect on the restlessness of the mind of the wise man as now he becomes firmly established in the eclectic concept of 'non-duality' which stresses that inspite of what appears on the surface, the real truth about this creation is one. He sees the Moon change every night but knows for certain that the external view is not the correct thing as the actual Moon does not change at all. With this wisdom, he becomes steady in the knowledge of the universality of the Atma, the pure consciousness and the true 'self' that is a universal and immutable divine entity that is the only constant in this variable, fickle and ever-changing creation.

Now, when the term Kalaa, literally referring to the changing faces of the Moon, is linked to Soma, it acquires a different connotation. The Moon itself is also known as Soma as it is the storehouse of the heavenly elixir meant to give eternity and bliss to the Gods. Therefore, the term Soma refers to the liquid that is cool and invigorating, that provides life and bliss to the creature, qualities which are the characteristic virtues of water. It is exactly opposite of Tej, or the fire, that burns and scorches.

In iconography and mythology, the Moon is shown as being tucked in the lock of hairs on the head of Shiva. In other words, while Shiva acts as Rudra in his ferocious form as the concluder of creation, a form synonymous with the 'fire element', he is also the benevolent and merciful Lord of creation who takes care of the world and provides for its happiness and welfare, a fact that is symbolized by the presence of the Moon as an ornament on his head. This is also why ascetics experience the bliss of self-realisation that is like tasting nectar dripping from the head when they meditate, because their patron God is Shiva who carries the heavenly pitcher of Amrit, the nectar of Gods, on his forehead, and pours this nectar for the benefit of his devotees, the ascetics.]⁶ (1).

[Note--¹The 'fire' need not be in the form of a leaping, blazing, scorching flame. All forms of energy are basically the fire element in their forms. There are numerous types of energy that we have—such as for instance light energy, heat energy, kinetic energy, wind energy, electric energy, water energy, atomic energy etc. All of them are one or the other form of the fire element or the 'Tej' element because all have dynamism in them. It is a well established principle of physics that energy can change its form but still retain its primary name of 'energy'—viz. electric energy is converted into light and heat energy in the electric bulb; the heat energy of coal or the kinetic energy hidden in the running water of rivers is converted into electric energy in

power houses, and so on and so forth. Further, the atom is the fundamental unit of all things in this world, and since this atom harbours the fire element inherently in its electrons as the 'atomic energy' which is scientifically proved to be the most powerful form of energy known to mankind, it follows that everything that would have an atom as its basic building block would also conceal the fire element in it in a latent form. That is why it is said in this Brahman that the fire element is in-built in the structure of all things in existence.

In other words, it is the hidden 'fire element' present in everything in existence that not only gives it its inherent energy, heat, warmth, strength and vitality to retain its originality and natural character by helping it to keep its structure intact but also helps this creation to be energized and active. Even the coldest of the elements such as water secretly harbours the fire element in its bosom. This is proved by the fact that water can absorb heat and get warm, it boils and then becomes very scalding like the actual fire, it produces steam not only when it is boiling but also when it is in the form of solid ice as fumes of condensed air can be observed over large ice blocks, and it is an established fact of physics that ice is formed when water gives out its latent heat and cools down. Frozen water just cannot harbour any life; it is only when it is 'warm' that water can be expected to sustain life. Hence, it is correct to say that water also harbours the fire element latently in its bosom.

The air is hot as its movement creates friction which brings out or squeezes out the hidden fire element inside it. Since the sky is filled with this air and also harbours the greatest fire-ball of fire known as the Sun, it is too deemed to be an all-inclusive receptacle of the fire element. The earth is warm and that is why it harbours life in the first place inspite of the fact that a vast reservoir of the natural coolant, the water, covers almost three-quarters of its surface as the ocean, seas, rivers, lakes and other bodies of water. As we go deeper into the bowls of the earth, temperatures rise exponentially. The solid-looking metals become hot and melt on being heated, the rocks get scorching hot in the sunlight and retain their heat even after sunset, and coal, the most vivid and day-to-day proof of fire element being latently present in solids, is found endlessly inside the earth itself. Even the disintegration process of otherwise dead entities which have no apparent trace of fire in them, such as for instance a dead body of a man, is dependent upon warmth as is proved by the fact that if the same body is put in a freezer it would stop decaying. The process of fermentation and decay are directly dependent upon the fire element, and therefore they produce heat.

In short, there is nothing that remains aloof from the effects of the fire element, and there is nothing that can exist without the benevolent intervention of the fire element in one form or the other.

²This refers to the metaphoric significance of the term Bhasma as described in the concluding part of Brahman 1 above. The various characteristic qualities that determine the nature and temperament of the creature as well as the world in which he lives are the Bhasma referred to here. Further, it signifies that a wise and self-realised man realises the futility of pursuing and remaining engrossed in the external world, and therefore is motivated to burn all his desires for it—that is, he reduces all his desires for this world to ash; he eliminates the world itself by symbolically burning to ash all his desires for its charms and attractions. For him this world of material sense objects of pleasure and comfort are as good as Bhasma or the ash. He offers everything, including all the deeds done by him in the course of his daily life as he interacts with the external world as well as his desires and passions, as an offering to the supreme Brahm. This approach to life reduces everything to ash in the sense that no consequences of the deeds done by him accrue for him, and he is thereby freed from the horrible fate of having to suffer from the result of his deeds. He does not have to take a new birth because he has already burnt his ego and desires to 'ash', and with no fresh desires to be fulfilled and no ego to be satisfied, there is nothing to

drag him in this world and force his Atma to assume new body or take a new birth upon the demise of the gross body.

This is a metaphoric way of saying that everything is reduced to a Bhasma or the sacred ash for an enlightened man. He lives and enjoys the world with total dispassion which is symbolized by his wearing the Bhasma on his body. He is in close contact with the world just like his body is in close contact with the Bhasma, but for all practical purposes he knows that the world has no life and substance in it just like the Bhasma which is the burnt-out residue of things of value put into the raging fire. Firewood may have some value, but its ash is of no value whatsoever.

³The 'fire' represents the Supreme Being's stupendous dynamic ability to generate something from virtually nothing, and then to maintain it. This required exemplary effort as well as a high input of determination, energy, strength and vitality. This was represented by the fire element. Brahm forged together an alliance of apparently opposing factors and brought them together on the same platform so that they forgot their inherent animosity and begin to cohabit. Such as for example bringing water and fire together in the bowls of the earth or the body of the creature which is warm, indicating the presence of the fire, and has liquid contents in the form of blood, urine, mucous and other things indicating the presence of the water element. Brahm has brought the fire and the wind together as both co-exist in the creature's body as the warmth and the vital winds present inside it, as well as in the sky where air is the all-pervading entity but the leaping flames of the fire and the flying sparks of the fire are also present. Brahm allows the earth and the water elements to co-exist amicably as is clear when we observe that that water of the ocean is prevented from overflowing and submerging the earth though the ocean forms three quarters of the earth's surface, while at the same time reining in the earth and preventing it from soaking up water like dry sponge does. Brahm inspires the sky to become magnanimous enough to keep the elements formed as a result of this alliance in their respective places, and not let them collide with each other and be self-destructive; the invisible binding effect of the sky prevents all the entities embedded in its bowls from floating away into its endless bowls to be lost for ever. This forging and welding together of the most delicate and formidable alliance and keeping it in place for eternity is not a joke, and it required astounding effort on the part of Brahm, depicted in the form of his dynamic powers that are revealed as the heat and energy—the 'fire'—that could actually enabled Brahm to bring this marvelous feat into effect.

It must be noted here that the term 'Rudra' is not limited to being Lord Shiva's one form, but it applies as well to the supreme transcendental Brahm in the latter's dynamic form as is clearly stressed in a number of Upanishads, chiefly the Atharvashir Upanishad of the Atharva Veda. Therefore, the fire element is the dynamism of Brahm on display. It is through this element that the creative energy of Brahm was able to carry out the process of creation.

⁴Now, Brahm, the Supreme Being, needed water to cool down the cosmic cauldron just like we have heavy water to cool down nuclear reactors which would melt if there was no coolant. He also needed some fluid medium to carry the delicate embryo of creation and to nourish it in its nascent stage before it became self-sustaining. So Brahm created water or Soma—the cosmic elixir of life that provides nourishment to all the creatures of this world.

⁵The word Tej means glory and radiance. Obviously, knowledge and wisdom gives the person immense glory and fame. His knowledge makes him shine in this world, and also become a source of light symbolizing knowledge for others. Hence, a wise, erudite and learned man has the fire element in him as his self-illumination known as the 'Tej' which stands for the intensity of his wisdom, erudition, knowledge and spiritual illumination.

Similarly, each individual has his individual character which differs from the other. This is like the many facets of the fire which constantly changes in shape while burning. The flame is never steady but always flickering; its colour, type and contour

are never the same on any two occasions. This is the varying Kalaa of fire that is reflected in the creature's behaviour, temperament, nature, thinking process and emotions etc. which undergo change under different set of circumstances, and are different in different creatures.

⁶The concept of the Sun and the Moon as two aspects of Rudra helps to link the two entities in the metaphysical context. When the brilliant light of knowledge represented by the splendour of the Sun shows the true and correct path to the spiritual aspirant, when this knowledge begins to shine in his inner self, he would become self and Brahm realised. The light radiating out from the inner-self of the wise, enlightened, self-realised and Brahm-realised man makes him effuse a divine halo around his body much like the shining disc of the moon. Just like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, this divine halo around the enlightened man and the holiness and aura that surround him are the reflection of the glory of the self-illuminate brilliant Brahm residing in the inner-self of such a man. The high spiritual stature of his is reflected in all his habits, his nature and temperament, his thoughts, behaviours, actions and deeds etc.

Such a wise and enlightened man would also realise that though the numerous creatures have different bodies and show various character traits, they are in fact the numerous versions of the same divine Brahm revealed in each of their forms. This is because though the external features of the Moon appear to change every night, basically the entity that is called the 'Moon' is the same. Likewise, all living beings are basically the same Atma revealed in their individual forms though these forms may be widely different from one another. The gross body and its external characteristic features, as well as the mind-intellect that forms an inseparable component of this body though at the subtle level, may differ from creature to creature, but the basic identity known as the consciousness or the Atma that resides in this body would be the same in all the creatures of this creation.

The Sun represents the fire's heat, light and energy—i.e. it stands for the Tej, or the magnificent glory and the radiant splendour of the fire on display. In fact, the Sun is the fire element visibly seen in all its splendorous glory; it is fire personified. On the other hand, the Moon represents the light and life-support virtues of Brahm that are soothing and balm-like instead of the scorch usually associated with the fire.

In other words, the power of knowledge is that light which not only illuminates the bearer of this knowledge as represented by the Sun, but it can also light up or enlighten others like the Moon being lighted by the light of the Sun though the Moon has no light of its own. In other words, keeping company of wise and enlightened men would have its great positive affect on ordinary mortals so much so that eventually they would also inculcate the same degree of wisdom and enlightenment as the master they held in great esteem.

There is another spin to this connotation. Though the light given by the Sun is the same every night, the Moon does not reflect this light equally, for it changes its shape every night. This means that though knowledge is equally empowering and enlightening, different creatures accept and use it differently. That is why everyone does not benefit from reading the scriptures. The same body of knowledge would benefit different creatures in different ways and degrees.

The Moon represented by the terms Kalaa and Soma also symbolises the calmed-down aspect of the fire element as the light of the Moon is cool as opposed to the same light of the Sun which is hot.]

2. The Sun and the Moon are manifestations of the stupendous powers and dynamism that Rudra possesses as manifested in his two creations, the fire and the water elements called the Tej and the Soma respectively. In fact, the sharp and powerful dynamic aspect of the Rudra in the form of the Tej or the fire element and its powerful Shakti representing the energy, heat and light inherent to the fire is

represented by the Sun, and Rudra's calmer form or aspect, his soothing and healing power, his ability to rejuvenate and revitalize are revealed in the form of the Soma as represented by the Moon (2).

3. The Tej or brilliant and radiant aspect of the fire element is represented by the Electric, while the Soma or the life-sustaining elixir aspect of the water element is represented as the various types of Rasas or juices and their inherent six types of tastes¹ that are present everywhere in this world (3).

[Note—¹The six types of tastes are the following—sweet, salty, sour, bitter, pungent or hot, and astringent. Sometimes acidic (vinegar) and bland are also regarded as separate category of tastes. Refer Garbho-panishad, verse no. 1 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

4. The Amrit (the elixir of life) is produced from the Agni (the fire), and the latter is enhanced by the former. Hence, this world is a manifestation of both the Amrit and the Agni (because it is created out of them as stated in Brahman 1, and both are necessary for its survival). Both of them are therefore like oblations made into the sacrificial fire (4).

[Note—The word Amrit refers to the ambrosia of life in all its many variations and connotations. It is a metaphor for life in all its colourful, dynamic, vibrant and lustrous form. The opposite of Amrit is 'Jahar' or the poison that snuffs life out.

Since 'life' itself depends upon the warmth, energy, heat and light provided by the fire element, it is appropriate to say that Amrit, a symbol or metaphor of life, was created from Agni or the fire. Again, the virtues of fire such as heat, energy, warmth and light are needed to produce food, procure and cook it, then digest it and make its nourishment available to the body to help it survive. So, Agni is akin to the elixir called Amrit that sustains life on this planet. Only a living world engages in dynamic activities and makes vigorous efforts in many ways. Any activity generates energy and heat as is evident in all spheres of daily life; a man sweats when he does a strenuous exercise because his body gets hot and requires cooling by perspiring; the rubbing together of any two objects causes friction and this generates heat and even a spark of light which is like the self-generated 'electric' mentioned earlier. If there was no life in this world, it would be like being in the 'ice age' when there was no fire evident on the earth and everywhere it was ice and more ice. Thus, the world as we know it today is a visual embodiment of these two primary elements of creation—the Agni and the Amrit. They are like oblations made to the sacred fire because this whole exercise is undertaken by the Supreme Being himself, and a wise man regards all the activities as an obligatory deed done to carry forward the mandate passed on to him by the Supreme Being to help perpetrate this creation. Hence, all forms of exercises that sustain life in the form of the Agni and the Amrit are like oblations offered to the deity known as Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

5. The Soma has an elevating and uplifting tendency as it makes a man look upwards, while the Agni has an inherent tendency to make him look downwards. This known world is situated between these two (5).

[Note—The Moon representing Soma, which is another name for Amrit, the elixir of life, is so soothing, revitalizing and energizing that one wishes to look up at it after a day's hard sweat and toil. A man would lie on grass and gaze endlessly at the moon to calm down his nerves. This is a symbolic way of saying that the Soma is uplifting for his spirits. On the other hand, the Agni represented by the scorching and blindingly dazzling Sun makes a man wince and look down to avoid its glare. A hot day knocks him down and he feels tired and low on energy. This is a symbolic way of saying that the Agni makes him look down. Again, remaining engaged in the

activities of the world is like being near the Agni because this world never gives peace and bliss and keeps the man agitated and restless as compared to being aloof from it and remaining engrossed in one's own inner self or doing meditation which is always rejuvenating for the soul like one lazing on the grass and looking up at the Moon which is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of Amrit, and hence called Soma.

The whole world lies in between these two extreme states of existences. On the one hand is the man who is neck-deep involved in the affairs of the world and retires in the night completely worn out, only to rise up the next day and repeat the cycle, and on the other extreme end is the man who is totally unconcerned with the world around him and lives a life of total detachment, remaining completely indifferent to and dispassionate towards everything. The first state is akin to the Jagrat or waking state of existence of consciousness, while the second is like the Sushupta state of deep sleep marked with complete indifference and blissful state of consciousness. The entire world oscillates between these two states—a man remains engaged in the activities of the world, goes off to sleep and begins to dream, then goes on further to snatch perfect rest in the deep sleep state, and reverts back by the same path to wake up in the world again. This situation is metaphorically stated in the statement that the entire world exists between the Agni (the Jagrat state of activities requiring heat, energy and light) and Amrit (the totally indifferent state of bliss obtained in the Sushupta state). Since the intermediary state is called the 'dreaming state of consciousness', it follows that the world in which a creature lives is also like a dream—i.e. it has no reality, and is deluding. In fact, like the dream itself, the world is the creation of the mind, a pictorial depiction of what the mind thinks and imagines. Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 9-18.

Another interpretation would be the fact that the entire world lives between the two aspects of existence—i.e. the 'day' symbolised by the Agni because it is during the day that the Sun, a visible emblem of the Fire God, shines, and the 'night' symbolised by the Moon which is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of Soma or Amrit.]

6. The Agni element has a pulling-down effect on the Amrit that drips from the Soma element. In other words, the aspect of creation that is represented by the Agni or fire element acts as a drag on the creature's spiritual progress in the upward direction symbolised by the experiencing of bliss and restfulness that comes with having tasted the nectar of Soma element (6).

[Note—When the aspirant has tasted the spiritual bliss that comes with self-realisation which is likened here to having tasted the nectar of Soma, the compulsion to engage in the affairs of the material world is like him being forcibly pulled down into the hellish fire of Agni. He feels tormented and scorched; all his peace and bliss are reduced to ashes. The Agni symbolising the vicious form of this world acts as a drag on his blissful state of having drunk the Soma, the ambrosia of self-realisation.]

7. While one aspect of the Agni element (representing the various aspects of this material world and the desire to remain engaged in them and doing deeds to enhance one's material well being) that acts as a drag on the creature and pulls him down is like the Kalagni or the fire of the dooms-day (that would kill or ruin him), the other aspect of the Agni element (representing the virtues that lift him spiritually just like the hot air that can lift the balloon) is like the Soma which is uplifting for his soul instead of pulling it down asunder.

Thus, the same Agni can be both uplifting as well as degrading¹ (7).

[Note—¹If the man is wise enough, he would use the opportunity of having got the body of a human being in striving to do noble and auspicious deeds, doing

contemplation and meditation, and generally endeavouring to acquire knowledge of the reality of this world and his 'self', as well as to learn the ultimate spiritual Truth intelligently so that he can break free from the endless cycle of birth and death, because it is only possible to do so as a human and not in other forms of births as animals, birds, insects etc. The reason is that only a human being can think intelligently and decide his fate, only he can research and choose from the various options open to him, only he can read, enquire, discuss and deduce, only he can keep company of those who are wise and enlightened, only he can meditate and contemplate, only he can regulate his deeds and actions, and only he can help himself to break free from the chain of birth and death. In fact, every man is able to decide for himself whether or not he would like to break free from all the spiritual fetters that shackle all living beings in this creation; he is the one who is actually able to do so amongst all the living beings because he can exercise control over his natural instincts and habits, he can actually control his sense organs, and he can actually distance himself from all the temptations of this world.

Naturally, this would be uplifting and liberating for his soul—symbolised by the Agni or fire, because its flame always rises up, and because it is a treasury of dynamic power and force that is translated into strong will-power of the man and his diligence and sincere effort that actually helps him to attain his spiritual objectives. Further, this is like Soma because it provides eternal bliss and happiness to an attained and self-realised man, an enlightened and wise man. The efforts that a wise man makes for his spiritual upliftment is a manifestation of the Agni element that is latently present in his inner self acting as the force that thrusts him upwards or aids in his spiritual upliftment.

On the other hand, if a man is stupid enough to waste his energy and strength—forms of the Agni latently present inside him—in pursuing this world and remaining ever-engrossed in its activities, it is tantamount to the Agni pulling him down. If he remains pervert and engaged in enjoying the urges of the sense organs, if he spends his stamina and energy in pursuing this world and its sense objects, then he would be consuming his latent energy for lowly purposes, which means that his innate energy and dynamism has ruined him, has led to his downfall, instead of lifting him up.

To illustrate this idea, let us understand that while the flame has a natural tendency to rise and move upwards, it pulls down anything that it comes in contact with by burning them and reducing them to ashes. Tall trees are reduced to ash, and huge buildings are reduced to rubble once they catch fire, though the flames leaping through them always go skywards. The same fire can throw sparklers high up in the air while pulling down erect structures, such as a canopy, that stand over it.]

8. [Verse nos. 8-9 describe how the same 'Shakti' (power, energy and knowledge) can be the 'Adhar' (base) that produces two different results depending upon how one handles it. On the one hand is the spiritually uplifting Shakti or dynamism of Shiva, the cosmic Consciousness, which is compared to the Soma, the elixir of eternal life, that forms the Adhar or basis of a person's spiritual elevation and ultimate liberation and deliverance, and on the other hand is the denigrating and demoting aspect of the same Shakti which proves to be like the dooms-day fire of hell, called the Kalagni, that would pull him down to this world of delusions and ignorance and keep him ensnared there if the man is careless and falls prey to temptations.]

The divine and sublime form of the Kalagni (here representing Lord Kalagnirudra himself personified; the spiritual energy of cosmic Consciousness that comes with self-realisation that is a metaphor for Lord Shiva) that is responsible for the (spiritual) upliftment of the creature is based on the 'Adhar Shakti*' symbolised by the Soma

located in the lower end (of the body). So, while the Kalagni refers to Lord Shiva, the Soma is a symbolic form of his divine Shakti (8).

[Note—We observe here that the same word Kalagni represents at once the doomsday fire that is ruinous for the creature as well as Lord Shiva in his powerful, spiritually liberating form. Similarly, Shiva's dynamic form as Shakti also has a double role to play—either as an uplifting force for the spirit that would pave the way for the creature's liberation and deliverance, or a degrading force by engulfing the creature in enjoyment of material comforts and sensual pleasures of the world that would bog him down forever in the quagmire known as the 'world'. The word 'Adhar' means the base upon which something rests or relies. Hence, the entire exercise of self realisation and enlightenment is based on the premise that it gives immense peace, tranquility, bliss and happiness to the creature which is equivalent to his Mukti, or his freedom from all fetters related to the body and the world. It is this power or 'Shakti' that keeps him going; it is the 'Adhar' or foundation upon which self realisation and enlightenment on the one hand, and the creature's final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation on the other hand depend. This is because the natural tendency of every creature is to swerve towards things that would give him peace and bliss as opposed to things that would be the cause of his sufferance and pains. When a wise man discovers that meditating upon the Truth or Shiva is a provider of eternal bliss and tranquility to him as compared to the pursuing of the material world which gives only transient happiness, it is natural for him to follow that path which leads him upwards instead of the path that would bog him down in this world.

The Tantra philosophy and the Upanishads that deal with Yoga based on this school of thought says that there are various Peeths or seats of divine energy inside the body where both Lord Shiva and his dynamic form Shakti are established. During the process of Yoga, the vital winds or Prans are made to pierce through these centers on its way up to the top of the head where Lord Shiva's enlightened form symbolically resides. The symbol of Shiva, the Shiva Lingam, is said to be established in the Mooladhar Chakra located in the lower part of the abdomen where the genitals are located. The bliss that the practitioner of Yoga experiences when this area is titillated as the Pran rubs against it en-route upwards towards the head is like enjoying the ecstasy of drinking the intoxicating liquid called Soma. So, the 'fire' that kindles self realisation and enlightenment is at once spiritually uplifting for the creature as well as a provider of great bliss and happiness to him.

There are many Upanishads that endorse this view point. For instance, the fact that the body is an abode of Shiva has been endorsed in the following Upanishads—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165-168, Canto 2, verse nos. 6-10, 20, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-15, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-5, 13-16, and Canto 6, verse nos. 32-33, 47; and the Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11. (b) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 48-59.

Similarly, the fact that the body is an abode of Shakti (the dynamic manifestation of Shiva and revealed as a divine Goddess) and the location of the four Peeths or seats where it is established is narrated in the Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 6-12.

The fact that the body is an abode of both the aspects of Lord Shiva—i.e. as his neutral form as Shiva and his dynamic form as Shakti—is expounded in the Krishna Yajur Veda's Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 75, and the Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4.

The Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 10 describes the establishment of the Shiva's symbol, the Shiva Lingam, in the body.

*See note no. 1 of verse no. 9 below.]

9. While the sublime and enlightened form of Shiva is located upwards (in the head), his more mundane and grosser form as the Shakti is located downwards (in the lower part of the body)¹.

The entire world is situated between these two. It is Shiva and Shakti that rule over this world² (9).

[Note--¹This observation has different connotations. One is that 'Shiva' refers to the sublime and subtle aspect of consciousness symbolised by its location in the head which is a metaphor for crown or citadel, or the highest stature of wisdom and enlightenment that a creature can achieve, while 'Shakti' here refers to the grosser aspect of the same consciousness that pulls the aspirant down from his exalted stature and keeps him bound to lower aspects of life that are symbolised by the Shakti's location in the lower part of the body. It ought to be noted here that intelligence and noble thoughts have their center in the head, it is in the head that the mind and intellect are located which help one to become enlightened, wise and erudite, it is the mind that helps one to discriminate between the good and the bad, to decide and analyse and select what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected because it is the mind that makes the difference between a wise man and a criminal or an animal, while sensual indulgences and pleasures of the sense organs are metaphorically depicted as being located in the lower part of the body, such as the abdomen where all the organs of digestion, excretion and reproduction are located which indicate constant desire for indulgences and gratification of the sense organs, such as eating, drinking, sensual pleasures, merry-making and generally remaining engrossed in satisfying one's natural instincts. It is the head that can inspire a man towards nobler goals in life, whereas the lower part of the body would only make him seek comfort and pleasure from day to day.

The second interpretation is that the dynamic power of consciousness represented by Shiva's Shakti is needed by an aspirant to succeed in his spiritual endeavour. Earlier, verse no. 8 has called this reliance on Shakti as the 'Adhar' or base.

This Shakti is like the fire of the oven which is always lighted below the grate in order to cook food placed on top of the grate. It is the Adhar or basic requirement for cooking food and the very heart of the oven because if this fire is extinguished the oven would be worthless and the food cannot be cooked. Similarly, the fire burning in the household hearth helps in ventilating the house as the hot air rises above the chimney and fresh air is drawn in from the outside through the doors, windows and ventilators.

When these two instances are applied to the process of Yoga, the symbolism becomes very obvious. During Yoga exercises, great strenuous effort is made to lift the Pran, the life conscious factors, from the lower part of the body, and make it travel to the head where the practitioner experiences the thrill of self-realisation and the ecstasy of enlightenment. The entire process involves a number of steps and all of them rely upon Shakti or the dynamic forceful powers of consciousness to succeed.

In the context of Yoga, great amount of energy or 'Shakti' is needed to control the Pran, the vital winds, by means of doing Pranayam (breath control exercises), Dhyana (concentration of the mind), as well as various other exercises such as Aasanas (sitting postures), Bandhas (closure of various openings of the body such as the anus) and Mudras (general postures of the hands, legs, head, fingers etc.) so that the Pran (life consciousness represented by the vital winds) can be diverted from the lower part of the body and made to go upwards to attain enlightenment after overcoming many hurdles, such as overcoming the various Granthis or knots present in the body, not to mention the strenuous effort that is needed to activate the Kundalini (the coiled subtle energy center located in the lower end of the spine) and the Chakras (the whirling energy centers of the body) that together help in successful completion of Yoga. Since the muscles of the abdomen are involved in the entire exercise, and the fact that Kundalini and the clutch of important Naadis (nerves) through which Pran is

made to move upwards to help in obtaining success in Yoga are located in the lower end of the body, it is said here that the dynamic aspect of Shiva as represented by the Shakti is present in the lower part of the body. All these have been elaborately dealt elsewhere in the Upanishads that deal with the concept of Yoga.

When Yoga is successful, the ascetic experiences bliss of self-realisation, and this happens when the Pran reaches the forehead. That is why Shiva's sublime form is said to be located in the upper part of the body, i.e. in the head. Besides this, Brahm is also said to reside in the top of the head in the region called the Brahm-Randhra which is the hair-like slit on the top of the cranium.

The location of Shiva in the head refers to the fact that the symbolic third eye of wisdom is located in the forehead. Lord Shiva is regarded as the wisest and the most enlightened God, and his exalted seat is in the head symbolised by this third eye. It is here that the ascetic experiences the bliss obtained by self-realisation; it is in the head that the grand virtues of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment symbolised by Shiva are located. It is in the head that the brain is located, and it is the thinking power of the brain and its ability to control the functioning of the rest of the organs of the body of the creature that makes the head so exalted and honoured in the scheme of things vis-à-vis this creation. An ascetic endeavours to concentrate his vital Pran and its energy here in order to experience the ecstasy of self-realisation, it is here that enlightenment has its exalted seat. On the other hand, the mundane aspect of conscious life as lived in the gross world of material sense objects and symbolized by enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the body as well as the material objects of the world are demeaning for the spirit of the ascetic. Hence, they are said to be located in the lower part of the body where his genitals and excretory organs along with the other organs related to his ordinary life spent in sustaining his body are located. A lowly and fallen man would spend his Shakti or vital energy or Agni inherently present in his body in pursuing sensual enjoyments, and in eating and drinking.

²The world of the living creature metaphorically lies between these two extremities of the body—one is the lower part symbolising his tendency of enjoying the world and its sense objects and sensual pleasures, and the upper part symbolising his tendency to acquire knowledge, seek the truth and achieve higher and nobler goals in life. As the former pursuit would pull a man down from his natural exalted stature, it is said to be symbolically present in the lower part of his body, and since the latter pursuit is uplifting for his soul, it is symbolically said to be located in the upper part of the body.

Another way of interpreting this verse is to say that the entire existence of a creature is marked by two milestones in his life—one is his involvement in the world which leads to his spiritual downfall, and the other is that which gives him a level of wisdom and enlightenment that leads to his spiritual upliftment. While the former would be equivalent to the lower form of Shiva's dynamic power that is responsible for keeping the creature moribund and engrossed in this artificial world by pulling him down, the latter aspect would be Shiva's higher form of dynamic power that is uplifting for the soul. All creatures fall within this parameter—there are either spiritually enlightened or are engulfed in the darkness of ignorance and delusions. These are like the two outer pegs that mark the boundary within which the world lives.]

10. [Verse nos. 10-16 define the true meaning of the term Bhasma which literally means the physical ash that is produced by burning anything, but in metaphysical context it has a very broad import. There are two other Upanishads which deal with the concept of Bhasma—one is the Bhasma Jabal Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition, and the other is the Kalgñirudra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which bear an uncanny resemblance to the theme of Bhasma and how to prepare it, how to wear it, what is its true meaning and significance etc.]

The world is repeatedly reduced to Bhasma (ash), i.e. annihilated or eliminated or decimated by the Agni (or the ruthless form of Rudra as the Kalagni; or the enlightened form of Rudra as the Shiva principle). This Bhasma is the Virya or the symbolic sperm (product; result; reward) of Agni. [Refer verse no. 11 below.] (10).

[Note—The simple meaning here is that an enlightened man who has known the spiritual truth, who is aware of the falsehood and grossness of the material world as well as his own body, who has become self-realised, and who understands the reality of Shiva principle—such a man would burn all his desires and wants for good; he would literally reduce them to ashes. With all desires and wants eliminated, the material world is also eliminated or reduced to ashes. This is the height of spiritual awakening for which the term Shiva is a metaphor and an aphorism.

There are other ways of interpreting this verse also. One is that Lord Shiva in his ferocious form as Rudra reduces this world to ashes when evil and perversion have reached the climax. The Virya or sperm here in this context would mean indulgences in sensual pleasures and engaging in all sorts of perversions and evil deeds in order to satisfy the desires of the body and its sense organs. This is not only demoting for the spirit but also exhausting for the vitality and strength represented by the Agni or the fire element that is present in the body of the creature. This indulgence incites or stokes the fire of passion and lust that consumes the body fast and reduces it to Bhasma or sacred ash. All the energy, strength and vitality are sapped and exhausted by a man who indulges in this world and its uncountable temptations.

The second interpretation would be that a wise, self-realised and enlightened man is one who has realised the Shiva principle—i.e. the Truth and the Reality that exists behind the façade of falsehood and half-truths. He is the one who has experienced the spiritual Truth and the bliss that inherently accompanies it. This fills him with ecstasy and he does not bother to find enjoyment by getting indulged in the transient comforts and pleasures of the material world and its sense objects. For him this world is as good as non-existent. In other words, he has burnt all his desires for seeking gratification for his senses and acquiring the numerous pleasures and comforts that this world has to proffer to him. For all practical purposes, the Agni or the fire of the Shiva principle (i.e. the fire of renunciation that is kindled by Self realisation and Truth realisation that is known as the Shiva principle) has reduced everything to Bhasma or ash. No desires, wants, aspirations etc. are present in the creature who has reached this exalted state of existence. The Virya or sperm in this context would be the reward of his realisation of the Shiva principle or the awareness of the spiritual truth of his ‘self’ and the falsehood of the world that kindles renunciation as well as enlightenment.

The word ‘Virya’ is derived from the root ‘Vir’ meaning strong, powerful and vigorous. Therefore, Virya is the entity that possesses the essence of these glorious virtues that are deemed to present in a creature; it embodies these powerful and dynamic forces of creation. It is an essence of the Agni or the fire element because the sperm is generated by the nourishment that the body extracts from the food eaten by the creature, and it represents all the strength, vitality, vigour, power and stamina that the creature possesses. Since a new generation is produced when this sperm is ejected in a fit of ‘heat’ (passion) and implanted in the female who is ‘hot’ (sexually excited), it is used as a metaphor for Agni.]

11. [This verse defines the term ‘Bhasma’ as well the Mantra used to invest and empower it with stupendous spiritual and mystical powers.]

The term Bhasma (ash) means to reduce all the sins or misdeeds and their negative consequences to ashes. [The Bhasma of the sacred fire has the magical ability to eliminate all sins and their negative affects, and thus pave the way for the aspirant’s

spiritual welfare. However, it must be noted that the present Upanishad uses the term Bhasma to mean the ash that is produced by using dried cakes of the cow-dung for the purpose of fuel to the exclusion of all other types of fuels. Refer Brahman 1.]

Hence, those who understand its true meaning utter the Mantras ‘Agniriti Bhasma¹’ etc. as prescribed in the Vedas to invest the Bhasma (the sacred ash) with stupendous spiritual and mystical powers so that when the empowered Bhasma is applied on the body, it can cleanse it or purify it of all the worldly taints in the true sense² (11).

[Note—¹The Mantra ‘Agniriti Bhasma’ in the present context would mean that the proper way to worship the sacred Agni or the fire is to understand the importance of the Bhasma or the ash produced by it. This Bhasma is the essence or the Virya of the Agni as stressed in verse no. 10 above. It embodies all the dynamism, virtues and glories that are the characteristic attributes of the fire element as narrated in the preceding verses, qualities for which the fire is not only so much feared but also as much revered, honoured and welcomed in this world.

The destructive power of the fire to burn and reduce to ashes whatever it touches or whatever is put into it is ‘feared’, but it is only feared by ignorant people who do not understand that this negative trait of the fire is a boon in disguise because this quality enables the fire to destroy all the sins and their consequences as asserted in this verse. The fire helps to purify by burning and reducing to ashes all the negativity in the man.

So the term Bhasma assumes two distinct meanings here—one is to understand that this ash embodies all the positive, laudable, glorious and powerful virtues of the fire element but excludes its negative aspects such as its excessive heat and scorching nature, and the other is to understand this ash symbolically stands for the power of the fire to reduce to ashes all the impurities and negative traits that are present in a creature.

To wear the Bhasma on the body also has two interpretations—One meaning is to symbolically accept all the virtues of the sacred fire and declare that the wearer (the spiritual aspirant) has now onwards become a flag bearer of these virtues that he vows to uphold. He in fact declares that by accepting the ash he has become as pure as the fire element itself, and that he has put his sinful past behind him. The second interpretation is that he has burnt to ashes his ego, desires and attachments with the material world and its inherent falsehoods, and instead has become enlightened enough to de-link and distance himself from them. He has symbolically burnt the world and its myriad temptations and charms to ash, thereby freeing himself from the fetter of worldly attachments, involvements and compulsions. This ash on the body would be a constant reminder to him of this state of his exalted existence.

²This is in contrast to ignorant people who think that the term Bhasma has only a physical dimension meaning ‘ash’. They forget that the fire sacrifice itself is a symbolic way of burning everything to ashes. This ‘everything’ does not mean only physical offerings of material things to the fire but has a wider metaphysical import to include one’s negative temperaments, worldly attachments and desires, and all shades of Vasanas and Vrittis (desires, passions, lust, natural inclinations and habits) which affect the purity of the ‘self’ of the spiritual aspirant. They are all supposed to be reduced to ashes in the fire of renunciation, detachment and dispassion that is kindled by the knowledge of the ‘self’ which is pure consciousness and the awareness of the Absolute Truth known as the Shiva principle.

Smearing of this ash is treated as being equivalent to having a ritualistic purifying bath in some holy river because if the ash is smeared with proper wisdom and understanding it has a profound symbolic cleansing property that supersedes the cleaning affect of the river, because while the latter can only wash the dirt of the external body which however is gross and perishable and not the ‘true identity’ of the aspirant, it can never clean or wash the inner self which is the entity that requires the

actual cleaning and washing. In contrast, if the Bhasma or ash of the sacred fire sacrifice is worn with proper wisdom, it can accomplish this inner cleaning, the inner purging.

Thus, the symbolic bath taken by the way of wearing of the ash on the body by the aspirant with proper wisdom and knowledge is far superior to any other forms of purifying one's self.]

12-13. When this Virya (or the essence) of the Agni (or the fire element), i.e. the Bhasma (the ash of the sacred fire in which dried cakes of the cow-dung are exclusively used as fuel as well as an oblation made to the consecrated sacred fire) is symbolically mixed or conjoined with the Soma (or the elixir of eternal bliss represented by the ecstasy and spiritual well being that comes upon self-realisation and attainment of the Shiva principle)¹, it produces the same eclectic effect and rewards the aspirant with the same benefits that are produced or achieved by doing holistic Yoga, complete with all its eight limbs (called the 'Ashtang Yoga'—or the eight-fold path of Yoga)², and being successful in it. [In other words, the spiritual benefits of wearing the sacred Bhasma are equivalent to following the rigid principles of the eight-fold path of Yoga, which is a very strenuous and a difficult proposition, and obtaining success in it.]

In fact, these eclectic benefits are available to the aspirant who wears the sacred Bhasma even without his taking the trouble of doing the Ashtang Yoga. The sacred Bhasma empowers him to obtain control over Nature and attain super-natural powers called the various Siddhis³. [These same mystical powers are available on success in Yoga and have been listed in the Upanishads dealing with this philosophy.]

The sense of spiritual upliftment, fulfillment, contentedness, peace and bliss that comes by wearing the sacred Bhasma after fully understanding its metaphysical significance is akin to being successful in Yoga. This is because the word Yoga literally means 'bringing about a union or fusion', and the Bhasma brings about a union between the soul of the individual creature involved in this world and living in a gross body, and Shiva, the cosmic Soul. [The term 'Shiva' is very relevant here as this Lord is the patron deity of those who do Yoga. Besides this, Shiva represents the Supreme Being known as Brahm.]

A man who wears the Bhasma wisely is doing a symbolic form of Yoga. This is because he goes about his routine life in the normal manner but remains profoundly detached from everything he does. That is, he is able to establish a most unusual union or fusion or coordination between two most unlikely and contradictory situations—on the one hand he lives in a materially oriented world of sense objects, remains involved in its activities and continues to enjoy the world normally, and on the other hand he is able to remain completely detached from them and non-involved in same sense objects, he is able to maintain a safe distance between his inner self and the external body that is actually concerned with worldly involvement. He maintains his internal poise and calm inspite of all the turmoil that overwhelms his existence externally in this world. This is a great achievement that is tantamount to his doing Yoga comprehensively with all its eight disciplines (12-13).

[Note—¹When renunciation and dispassion representing the essence of understanding the true meaning of the fire sacrifice is self-generated as result of kindling the fire of self-realisation and enlightenment that comes with proper understanding of the Shiva principle, it gives genuine bliss, peace, calmness and tranquility as well as steadiness, contentedness and a sense of fulfillment to the spiritual aspirant. These latter virtues are metaphors for Soma because literally the latter refers to the extract of the Soma

plant which has an intoxicating, stress-reducing and bliss-inducing effect on the drinker.

This achievement is also obtained by being successful in Yoga—the successful Yogi (one who practices Yoga) also experiences true spiritual bliss and tranquility along with becoming enlightened.

²*Ashtang Yoga*—The eight paths or steps are the following:-

(i) *Yam**—broadly meaning self restraint and it covers such virtues as non-violence (*Ahinsa*), honesty and truthfulness (*Stya*), abhorring theft (*Asteya*), abstinence, celibacy and detachment from passions (*Brahmacharya*), and non-accumulation and non-possession (*Aparigraha*).

(ii) *Niyam**—or observance of principles or codes of conduct in a religious pursuit. Such as having good habits and contentment, observing austerities and penances, self-study of scriptures, following a righteous, virtuous and noble way of life etc.

According to *Skanda Puran*, the ‘Yam and Niyam’ mentioned above are ten, and they have been described in *Skanda Puran* in these words:-

सत्यं_क्षमाऽऽर्जवं_ध्यानमात्स्यमहिंसनम्॥ दमः_प्रसादो_माधुर्यं_मृदुतेति_यमा_दश।
शौचं_स्नानं_तपो_दानं_मौनेज्याध्ययनं_व्रतम्॥ उपोषणोपस्थदण्डौ_दशैते_नियमाः_स्मृताः॥__
(स्कन्दपुराण, ब्रा० ध० मा० ५/१९-२१) _

The ten ‘Yams’ are—truthfulness, forgiveness, simplicity, Dhyān (meditation, concentration of the mind), lack of cruelty (or presence of compassion and mercy), forsaking violence, restraint of mind and sense organs, pleasant demeanors and sweet towards all).

The ten ‘Niyams’ are—cleanliness/ablution, bath (purification of body), Tapa (austerities, penances, sufferings), alms and charities, keeping silence, Yagya (sacrifices, religious rituals), self study, observance of vows, keeping fasts, celibacy. (*Skanda Puran*, Bra. Dha. Ma. 5/19-21).

*The 10 Yams and 10 Niyams—The *Varaaha Upanishad* of *Krishna Yajur Veda* tradition, in its Canto 5, verse nos 11-14 lists the ten Yams and ten Niyams.

(iii) *Aasan*—the various postures of the body adopted while doing Yoga or meditation. This is the physical aspect of Yoga. The various postures are designed to free the body from toxins, and they calm down the body as well as the mind which is trained to focus on *Brahm* or *Atma*, which is pure and infinite consciousness and a fount of light and enlightenment, instead of wandering aimlessly and getting entangled in a web of miseries and confusions represented by this world. Some of the *Upanishads* that describe the various *Aasans* are the following—(i) *Shukla Yajur Veda* = *Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 35-52 describes seventeen *Aasans*; *Mandal Brahmin*, *Brahman* 1, section 1, verse no. 5. (ii) *Krishna Yajur Veda* = *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 15-17; *Yog Kundali*, Canto 1, verse nos. 5-6; *Yog Tattva*, verse no. 29; *Yog Shikha*, Canto 1, verse no. 84. (iii) *Sam Veda* = *Jabal Darshan Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-13.

(iv) *Pranayam*—the control of the life-giving fresh breath or the vital wind force of life called *Pran*. It helps remove distractions and agitations of the mind, removes the various toxins present in the blood, opens up clogged veins and arteries, relaxes the nerves, and ultimately helps to elevate both the body and the mind. It activates and re-energises the battery of the body. The importance of *Pranayam* in Yoga can never be fully emphasised because it is the main tool of Yoga. Some of the *Upanishads* describing the process of *Pranayam* are the following—(i) *Shukla Yajur Veda* = *Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad*, 2/53, 2/92-120. (ii) *Sam Veda* = The entire Canto 5-6 of *Jabal Darshan Upanishad*; *Yoga Chudamani*. (iii) *Krishna Yajur Veda* = *Brahm Vidya*, verse nos. 21-22, 66-76, *Dhyān Bindu*, *Yoga Kundali*, Canto 1, verse nos. 19-62, *Yoga Tattva*, *Yogshikha*.

(v) *Pratyahar*—this is the state of withdrawal of the mind from agitations caused by the stimuli-inputs reaching it from the five sensory organs of perception of the body, which act like radars collecting various information from the outside world.

With the lack of inputs, i.e. the radar going blank, the mind does not have to bother itself about the output, which is the control of the organs of action. Hence, it finds time and energy to relax and contemplate and ponder upon other more important matters of life such as the spiritual and ethereal rather than spending its energy in the humdrum, routine work of the world. The entire Canto 7 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme.

(vi) Dharna—it means training of the mind to focus on one point; it is concentration of the mind as opposed to its constant state of being in a flux, always volatile and restless. It helps sharpen the intellect and empowers it with tremendous potentials like the rays of laser —precise, incisive, sharp, powerful, effective and surgical in nature. It also refers to firm conviction, belief and faith in the chosen path. The entire Canto 8 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme.

(vii) Dhyan—uninterrupted contemplation and meditation without an object used as a medium to concentrate the mind. The intention here is to heighten awareness of the pure-self and to establish oneness with the macro-soul of the cosmos. It results in the achievement of calmness, peace and tranquility. The practical benefit in life is the calmness and serenity achieved by a seeker/aspirant during the process of Dhyan, and this calmness and tranquility spills over into all other aspects of life, thereby strengthening the emotional, intellectual and spiritual fabric of the creature. The entire Canto 9 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme.

(viii) Samadhi—it is the final step and final stage of meditation, and it is a trance-like state of existence wherein the creature remains virtually awake in this world, but on a subtle plane he remains totally oblivious of the existence of the surrounding gross world. This Samadhi leads to bliss and happiness. In this state, the seeker/aspirant merges himself with the supreme Self, which is the real Truth and absolute Reality. Such people become truly enlightened souls who have developed union with their parent, the Brahm. The entire Canto 10 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme.

All these limbs of Yoga work together in unison. The 1st five steps are mainly concerned with tuning the body and mind leading to its focus on the truth in the 6th and the 7th steps. The integration of the body, mind and soul into one spiritual whole, and removing of the barrier between the microcosmic Atma/soul of the individual and the macrocosmic Atma/soul of the cosmos is achieved, resulting in ultimate felicity and beatitude of the 8th step.

These eight fold path of Yoga have been listed in Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 11—11 ½ and Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 24-25 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, as well as in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 28-34, and Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 3-10 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition.

The first five steps of Yoga, i.e. Yam, Niyam, Aasan, Pranayam and Pratyahara are considered external processes or 'Bahiranga Yoga', while the last three, i.e. Dharna, Dhyan and Samadhi are called the internal processes or 'Antanranga Yoga'. Patanjali says in his 12th maxim of the first chapter of Yog Sutra that success in Yoga can be achieved by a coordination of practice and detachment. While 'practice' obviously implies the observation of rules and steps of Yoga as defined in Yoga treatises, 'detachment' means the consciousness that has given up desires for objects either seen of or heard of. This detachment should be comprehensive in the sense that the practitioner of Yoga should also be indifferent towards the three Gunas or qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama that dominate all behavioral patterns in this world.

These eight steps of Yoga designed by Patanjali are meant to guide the spiritual aspirant gradually and in a systematic manner to progress higher in his spiritual endeavours and ultimately achieve the supreme state of eternal blissfulness that comes with inner awakening and experiencing the divine source of light and enlightenment that resides in one's own bosom.

The first two steps, i.e. Yam¹ or abstentions, and Niyam² or observances, result in calmness of body and mind which are essentials in success in any enterprise. This preliminary moral training provides the aspirant with the solid ground which helps avoid future digressions from the main path of Yoga. The third step, i.e. Aasan or various sitting postures, helps one to exercise control over the physical body. The fourth step, i.e. Pranayam or breath control, helps to harness the stupendous energy of the different vital winds present inside the body and divert their inherent powers for the spiritual as well as physical benefit of the aspirant's mind-body complex. The fourth step, i.e. Pratyahar or control over the sense organs, helps him to detach himself from the external objects of this distracting world and focus all his attention inwards. These first five steps of Yoga, i.e. Yam, Niyam, Aasan, Pranayam and Pratyahar are considered external processes or 'Bahiranga Yoga'.

Next come the internal processes or 'Antanranga Yoga' which consists of the last three steps. Thus, sixth step, i.e. Dharna or fixed attention, helps to rivet or fasten the mind to one object which is the aim of Yoga. Constant practice of this sixth step called Dharna leads to the seventh step called Dhyan or continuous meditation and contemplation, without any break. The culmination of all these seven steps is the last stage or the eighth step called Samadhi or the trance-like transcendental state of deep absorption of the mind. The difference between Dharna and Dhyan is that the former is a temporary fixation of the mind while the latter is a higher state of fixation of concentration of the mind where it is not disturbed by any other thoughts. To draw an analogy to explain the relation between Dharna and Dhyan we may cite the instance of water and oil or any other viscous fluid such as honey or jelly. Drops of water dripping from a tap are like Dharna, while the continuous and interrupted flow of oil is like Dhyan.

Patanjali has defined Samadhi as the eclectic and mystical state of the mind when it is full of the revelation of the object concentrated upon, a state in which the aspirant loses awareness of all external as well as internal existence. He even forgets about himself.

It should be noted here that the second last step (Dhyan) which leads to Samadhi is a 'reflective knowledge', i.e. it consists of three elements of knowledge. These are—the 'Dhyata' or the awareness of the person who concentrates, the 'Dhyan' or the process of concentrating, and 'Dhyeya' or the object concentrated or meditated upon. It is like saying 'I am meditating on such and such object'. When these distinctions are removed, then it is the state of Samadhi.

The main thrust of Yoga is not mere arrest of the mind or mere physical exercises, but train the aspirant to realise his true self and its divine nature by rigorously following certain well defined and tested techniques.

³There are said to be eight Siddhis or mystical powers that come with success in Yoga. They are the following— (i) 'Anima' means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) 'Mahima' is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, knowledge and skills; (iii) 'Garima' is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance, (iv) 'Laghima' is to have simplicity and humility; (v) 'Praapti' is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired; (vi) 'Prakramya' is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa' is to be able to have lordship or sway over others; and (viii) 'Vashitwa' is to be able to control and subdue others.

References—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 151-155, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 23-24.

The wise and enlightened ascetic is one who does not get deluded by the various Siddhis that naturally come to him as a reward of success in Yoga. This fact has been affirmed in Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22, 62, 76-79; and Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 62.

Besides these eight Siddhis there are said to be two more types of Siddhis according to the Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 151-155 classifies all Siddhis into two categories—Kalpit and A-Kalpit. The Kalpit Siddhis are the ones which are created with efforts made for them using various means and methods. They have a limited scope, are perishable, and have imaginable powers and potentials that can be predicted. On the other hand, the A-Kalpit Siddhis are those which are self-generated or uncreated by any artificial means, are natural and with unimaginable mystical potentials and powers that cannot be predicted.]

14. Say, how can death touch anyone who has tasted this elixir of eternity? How can death affect someone who has grasped the essence of the Shiva principle and its dynamism called the Shakti (as outlined in the forgoing verses)? Indeed, such an enlightened aspirant is deemed to have conquered death, he has indeed vanquished the fear of death, and that is why he is honoured by the title of ‘Mritunjay’—one who has obtained victory over death (14).

[Note—‘Death’ is an adjunct to birth. Birth is a precondition for death. That which is born must die. Therefore, that which has no birth would not die. The Shiva principle is the Truth of existence, and it is always constant, unchanging and immutable, hence is eternal and infinite as opposed to falsehood that constantly changes and undergoes mutations. The Truth vis-à-vis life and existence is that there is only one Consciousness that actually matters in this creation, and that this Consciousness has no physical body or grossness in it. It is constant, steady, immutable, universal and pure holy entity. It neither comes into being nor comes to an end. It is called the Atma that lives in the creature’s gross body. It is therefore Truth personified. This Consciousness is the creature’s truthful ‘self’. Actually it is the gross body in which this ‘self’ or Atma lives that dies and comes to an end; it is the body that too suffers and enjoys, and not the Atma which is pure consciousness and the ‘truth’. Hence, an enlightened man who has understood the Shiva principle is never subjected to death; he has no fear of death; he never dies. He employs the energy and dynamism of his ‘self’, known as the Shakti, to become wise, erudite and enlightened, instead of frittering this unique power in the pursuance of falsehood and delusions.]

15. I have disclosed to you this most esoteric and secret as well as the purifying and spiritually elevating knowledge.

A person who has relied on this knowledge pertaining to the real meaning of the two components of creation called the Agni and Soma (as enumerated and elucidated in this Brahman) does not have to take a birth again. [That is, he gets Mukti, i.e. he finds final liberation and deliverance from this body and the entrapments of the world.] (15).

16. He who symbolically burns his body to ashes in the fire representing Shiva (i.e. in the fire of self-realisation and renunciation) by taking the help of Shiva (i.e. knowledge about the supreme Truth called the Shiva principle, and the awareness of the pure Consciousness known as the true ‘self’) and Soma (i.e. finds pleasure in doing so, enjoys the exercise and obtains bliss and satisfaction from it) becomes not only eligible to obtain the Amrit or the elixir of eternity and profound bliss but actually achieves success in obtaining it (16).

[Note—The ‘burning of the body’ means he has detached his ‘true self’ known as the Atma, his pure conscious ‘self’ which is sublime and subtle, from the body which is gross, inane and mundane. Such a person is self-realised because he has understood the great truth that the body is merely a habitat of the Atma and not to be mistaken as the ‘self’. He has distanced himself from everything associated with the body and its

desire for constant gratification; he has renounced the illusionary and misleading charms of the world of material sense objects because he has realised their transient and perishable nature. He has understood that it is the body—and not the Atma—which is affected by its interactions with the external world, and this interaction creates longings for the material sense objects of the world and the desire to enjoy them and acquire more of them. This interaction also has a negative effect on the man in as much as the numerous negative sensory inputs from this world snatches away all his peace and happiness, and instead keep him constantly miserable and tormented. All these developments, if intelligently analyzed by him, fills him with complete detachment and renunciation; he begins to loathe the body and treats it as the root of all the hurdles that prevent his spiritual liberation and deliverance as well as peace and rest—and this understanding is tantamount to burning his body to ashes in the fire of self and truth realisation.

He aims for eternal calmness and blissfulness that eludes him while he is associated with the body and the world through the medium of this body. Once the body is eliminated, the soul is freed from its bondage like a de-caged bird. This is the Mukti or liberation and deliverance that the aspirant has so painstakingly wanted to achieve.]

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Brahman 3

[This Brahman serves two purposes. One, it narrates how the sacred ash is to be produced and worn by an aspirant, and in this it bears great similarity to the Kalagnirudra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, and Bhasma Jabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda traditions. And second, it uses the body of the cow and compares it to various components of knowledge and metaphysics, thereby drawing a parallel between the cow and the other eclectic aspects of creation. This is why the cow is regarded as holy in Hinduism.]

1. After being enlightened about the great metaphysical and spiritual importance of the Bhasma¹, sage Bhusund asked Lord Kalagnirudra to tell him about the proper way of wearing it on the body. [The sacred ash is worn on the body either as a paste rubbed or smeared on the body, or as a mark of the Tripundra—a three-line mark symbolic of divinity and holiness that stands for Lord Shiva and is worn by all the worshippers of this deity. Lord Shiva is regarded as a synonym of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Divinity and the Supreme Being. Thus, wearing of the Bhasma in any form is symbolically investing the wearer's body with the divine virtues and holiness associated with Brahm and the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice, thereby making the body as consecrated as a temple. It also helps to purify and give a sense of holiness to what is otherwise a gross and inane entity known as the 'body'. This body which is unfit to harbour the sacred Atma—the holy soul, the holy Spirit, the pure consciousness representing Brahm, the Supreme Being—inside it now becomes fully competent to do so after it is sanctified by application of the Bhasma.]

The Lord told him—'Bhasma should not be made from the dung produced by the following types of cows—a cow with deformed body or one having any anomalous growth, a cow which is mad, a cow which is wicked and mischievous, a cow which is dirty and filthy as well as sad and weary, a cow which has bad behaviour and evil tendencies, a cow which is thin and emaciated, a cow which is barren, a cow which is restless and aggressive, a cow which does not produce

milk, a cow whose body is weak, feeble and decrepit, a cow which is unable even to graze and eat grass (i.e. one which is extremely weak, old and diseased), a cow which feeds things not meant to be eaten, such as clothes made of Kush grass or bark of trees (birch), or one who eats carcasses (i.e. who is not a pure herbivore), a cow which is pregnant, a cow which has conceived only recently, and a cow which is sick.

The dung of a good and healthy cow is to be used in preparing the Bhasma.

The dung that lies on the ground should not be picked up and used. Instead, it should be collected fresh while the cow is producing it, and before it falls on the ground. It is alright to retrieve dung from a clean place if it is not possible to collect it while being produced fresh by the cow.

It is preferable to use the dung produced by a Kapilaa cow (the one with reddish-brown skin with white spots) or a fair skinned cow, and if this is not feasible then other cows can be considered subject to her having no faults as noted in this verse above.

The Bhasma made from picking up dung at random from all sorts of places should not be used. The Bhasma should be first consecrated and sanctified before being worn on the body.

In this connection there is the following Shloka (scriptural verse)—‘The power, potentials and authority that comes to someone depends upon the level and type of Vidya (knowledge, erudition, skills and wisdom) that he has. It is Vidya that empowers him. All the three Gunas (basic qualities in an individual; the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna corresponding to the noble, the mediocre and the mean qualities respectively) depend upon Vidya². Vidya itself is dependent upon these three Gunas³ (1).

[Note—¹The term *Bhasma* has been explained in the earlier Brahmanas. It refers to the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice in which the cow’s dung is exclusively used for the purpose of fuel as well as an oblation to the sacred fire to the exclusion of all other types of fuels or oblations. This sort of Bhasma is the physical characteristic of the ash, but the Bhasma that is described in Brahman 2 has a sublime and subtle meaning that rises above the physical aspects of Bhasma and deals with its metaphysical importance and significance in relation to the aspirant’s liberation and deliverance from the body and the world which is of a greater value and importance for him and his long term spiritual welfare.

Having thus explained the two aspects of Bhasma, the present Brahman narrates how the physical form of Bhasma is to be worn on the body so that its spiritual benefits are arrived at. This is like using the formula correctly in order to solve a problem in science; merely applying the formula would not help as a wrong way of using it would not solve any of the problems, but would give a wrong result instead.

²The three basic Gunas or qualities are the following—(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the *Sata Guna* or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The *Raja Guna* is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the *Rajasic Guna* or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of *Tama Guna* has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

These distinctions come from knowledge of what is good, auspicious, righteous and noble, and what is not. Knowledge also tells the man how to overcome the dominance of certain negative traits and replace them with higher values. The knowledge that helps to distinguish between the good and the bad, and how to change for the better is called 'Vidya'. The benefits of this knowledge are immense. Once a man realises the difference and that there are ways to improve himself, a wise and intelligent man would strive hard to improve his self and inculcate positive qualities and virtues in him while gradually eliminating the negative ones. So, even though he might be having a predominance of *Tama Gunas* at certain period of time, he might ascend and reach the top by having exemplary proportion of *Sata Gunas* by constant practice. *Vidya* also helps him to put to good use whatever he knows, whatever skills he possesses, and whatever assets that are available with him.

The opposite would be lack of *Vidya*, or having *A-Vidya*, which roughly means ignorance. Such a man would keep on rolling in the disgusting quagmire and filth of his present circumstances without even being aware that there is filth and muck all around him. How can then one expect him to improve his dire fate?

This is how the Gunas depend upon *Vidya*.

³Next is how the *Vidya* depends upon the various Gunas. Since the Gunas condition a man's thoughts and mental abilities, his natural instincts, desires, habits, behaviour and temperaments, they will definitely play a role on how he interprets the

knowledge that is available to him. The same knowledge can play a constructive role in the hand of one man and a destructive role in the hand of the other. A simple example would illustrate the point. The explosive power of dynamite is used by one man to construct tunnels in mountains for railway tracks and roads, or extract minerals from the hard rock lying deep in the bowl of the earth by blasting his way through, or even during emergencies to evacuate victims trapped under huge boulders or behind insurmountable obstacles such as solid rocks that need cutting through to extricate the survivor during natural calamities such as earthquakes, and the same dynamite is used for blowing up people and buildings during savage wars. Similarly, atomic energy provides an endless and uninterrupted supply of electricity to millions of homes on the one hand, and wipe out cities in wars on the other hand.

So a wise man who has a predominance of Sata Guna in him would, for instance, see the assets that he possesses as not being his exclusive fiefdom that has to be jealously guarded, but as an asset held on behalf of the Lord and as an opportunity provided to him by the Lord to serve the latter. Now, one man would use this tenet of serving the Lord as means to serve his own interest by bargaining with the Lord for favours, another man would think that service to the Lord is giving donation to already rich priests who feed upon misconceptions in society, and the third man would serve poor and suffering brethren as a means of serving the Lord. The point is very clear here—it is the inherent Guna in a man that has conditioned his brain to twist or mould things to suit his temperament and his hidden wishes.

Another instance is that while one man would see the Lord in pilgrim places and waste his entire life visiting them in the belief that he is doing a religious duty and hopes for his salvation by doing this ritual year after year, another would see the Lord in shrines, and the third would see the Lord in the man in front, while still there would be a fourth man who would see the Lord everywhere—front, behind, top and bottom. So, the same knowledge of scriptures pertaining to the Lord is interpreted and accepted differently by different people depending upon the ratio of different Gunas in them—or the level of Vidya, i.e. the level of wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment that he has acquired.]

2. The cow symbolises all the three Gunas. [The cow is regarded as a representative for all the living beings in creation. The mind and intellect of all the creatures are conditioned by the ratio of the three Gunas that form an integral part of their character. Their personality and uniqueness are determined as a net result of the combined effect of these three Gunas present in them.]

The dung produced by the cow is just like the Vidya (wisdom, erudition, mental skills and knowledge that a man possesses) that is a product of the combined effect of the three Gunas that a man possesses (as outlined in verse no. 1 and its note above). [The dung is the output of the cow's body after it has eaten all sorts of food available to it and extracted its nourishment from them. Similarly, a man comes in contact with all sorts of knowledge and things while he lives in the world, and although he cannot avoid them, the trick lies in extracting the best from of all knowledge and things available to him, and rejecting the rest. The actual knowledge that he gains from his interaction with the world of profound diversity and complexities and variables, the lessons he learns from his experiences are the ones which would be of any use to him. The rest is worthless as far as he is concerned. This knowledge and its implementation help the man to shape his character, thoughts and personality. Since knowledge is extracted only from the choices available to him, the quality of knowledge, and its subsequent affect on the man's overall life is directly related to the source of his knowledge—viz. the company which he keeps, the books he reads, and the general environment in which he lives. This is like the case of the dung being directly related to the quality of food eaten by the cow. Hence, with the

long-term good of the man in view, it is important for him to keep tabs on the source from which he gathers his knowledge. Wrong source would give wrong knowledge, and wrong consequences would follow in its wake.]

The Upanishads are like the cow's urine. [The cow's urine is the filtered part of the body's fluids that are not retained inside but pushed out of the body into the external world. The urine is the liquid produced out of the solid food eaten by the cow, its nourishment extracted, digested and dissolved in the blood which then takes the nutrients to various parts of the body to benefit the cow, and finally filtered in the kidneys to be converted into urine. The urine in a sense is a product of the cow's blood as much as is its milk. It represents the juices extracted from the food eaten and digested by the cow. In the same way, the Upanishads are the juice of the Vedas which has been extracted from the latter, understood and analyzed by ancient sages and seers, and then expounded upon by them for the benefit of the disciples and the forthcoming generation. It represents the essence of the Vedas that has been extracted and presented in a homogenous body of knowledge. The cow grazes upon green grass symbolising fresh and reinvigorating knowledge that the Vedas contain, and extracts the essential nourishment present in it that gets dissolved in the blood, and then filtered and presented in the form of the fluid called urine. Therefore, as compared to the difficult and raw knowledge of the Vedas, the Upanishads present them in an easy-to-grasp form which is pre-digested and a ready-made elixir of eclectic knowledge that can benefit the spiritual aspirant.]

In this sense also, the Bhasma (sacred ash) that is produced from the cow's dung is also the best form of ash that can be used for smearing on the body (as compared to the ash that would be produced by using other materials, such as firewood, the most common and universal fuel that is used for the purpose of the fire sacrifice) [This is because Bhasma is likened to Amrit, the elixir of eternity and bliss, as well as to Agni, the dynamic and energizing force of Nature, which are rejuvenating and purifying respectively as narrated in Brahman 2.] (2).

3. The calf of this cow is like the Smriti Granthas¹. The cow is therefore vested with high virtues and it is from her dung that the Bhasma is to be made.

First, the cow should be sanctified by the Mantra 'Aagava' (3).

[Note--¹Technically the term 'Sruti' means that which is 'heard', and 'Smriti' means that which is 'based on memory or recollection' or which is 'remembered and recollected'. The word 'Grantha' means a 'treatise or book'. Traditionally, the most ancient of scriptures for which no dates are determined and which are regarded as old as civilisation, such as the primary Vedas and their expositions in the form of Upanishads, and the latter day mythological histories based on the fundamental tenets, axioms and maxims of the Vedas in order to explain them by the method of story-telling are called Purans and Itihaasas. They are categorized as *Srutis* because they were based on the process of 'hearing'. The ancient sages had initially 'heard' the Mantras etc. in their mind during their meditation and contemplation sessions, and then they had divulged what they experienced or heard to their disciples by the oral process of preaching. The disciple became aware of the teaching by 'hearing' them being taught by their learned teachers, rather than by reading them in some text book.

On the other hand, the various books or treatises penned by a chain of saints and sages of the later half of civilisation who had thoroughly studied the *Srutis* and had hitherto preached them by the oral method now decided to pen down their teachings for the sake of authenticity and standard. So they wrote down their knowledge in their independent commentaries on the *Srutis* based on their memories and their own interpretations of their tenets, axioms and maxims. These came to be known as *Smritis* because of two reasons—one, it was based on the 'memory' of these learned

teachers, and second, they bore the name of the author to commemorate his memory and contained the essence or juice of his own deductions and thoughts which he had thought to the essence of the ancient scriptures called the Srutis and which he had thought proper to bring into writing himself for posterity. There are instances when their teachings were compiled and edited by their disciples and named after the teacher—for instance the Brihad Parashar Smriti which was named after the great sage Parashar to honour his memory but actually penned by another sage named Suvrata.

So, though traditionally the primary scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Purans and Itihaasas are all called 'Sruti Granthas' because these scriptures were 'heard' by great sages and transmitted orally, but technically only the original Vedas and Upanishads should be titled as 'Srutis' because they were revealed or 'heard' by enlightened and learned sages and seers when they meditated, i.e. they were revealed to them while in deep meditation and were 'heard' by their mind. They were then taught to the disciples who received them by 'hearing' these scriptures instead of reading them, and their transmission through generations also depended upon 'hearing' them. The Upanishads come under the category of the Sruti Granthas because essentially they are expositions on the Vedas and, more importantly, were a part of the Vedas and hence revealed as part of the latter. Thus, technically only the very early scriptures are to be called the Sruti Granthas.

The latter day scriptures should therefore technically be called 'Smriti Granthas' because they were based on 'memory and recollection'. After the original scripture was revealed to a particular saint or ascetic, its passage down the line would automatically depend on 'memory' and 'recollection' rather than original revelation. These are a sort of secondary scriptures. Therefore, under this category would come the Purans and Itihaasas which were ancient traditional histories that had to be remembered, as well as those Upanishads that were not included in the Vedas but were later day additions and were so-called because of their profound importance which was no less than the original Upanishads. The Purans and Itihaasa fall under the category of literature called Smriti Granthas because their transmission relied heavily on memorizing events and their sequences as any modern student of history would have to remember the many dates and events of the past and commit them to mind by memorizing them by heart. The later day Upanishads are called Smriti Granthas also because though they were expositions on the philosophy of the Vedas and earlier Upanishads but still they relied heavily on what the teacher remembered, what he spoke based on this memory, and how the disciple interpreted these teachings himself that would affect this teaching as it was passed on to the next generation.

Therefore, more broadly speaking and technically prudent, though not traditionally correct, would be to include all the scriptures that came into being *after* the original revelations of Vedas and Upanishads as 'Smriti Granthas' because they all relied upon memory and recollection.

Again, there cannot be an artificial boundary between these categories of scriptures as it would be wrong and impractical. This is because, for instance, though the Vedas and Upanishads are 'Sruti Granthas' because they were 'heard or revealed to the mind of seers and sages who had heard them during meditation and contemplation', their teaching and transmission depended upon 'memory and recollection'. So it is obvious that they are both 'Srutis' as well as 'Smritis'. Similarly, though the later day books written by sages and named after them are called Smriti Granthas in their memories or because they relied upon their memory to write them as there was no previous book to refer to, they are also 'Sruti Granthas' as well because these first authors had only 'heard' them being taught by their own teachers.

So we can justifiably put the later day Upanishads and Purans under the common category of both Sruti as well as Smriti Granthas because of the simple reason that their were first heard (Sruti), and then memorized (Smriti) for the purpose of

preaching and transmission to the next generation as no written version were available in ancient times. Similarly, though the Vedas were first heard while meditating, and hence primarily 'Srutis', their perpetration and survival depended upon their being remembered by heart, and hence were 'Smritis' as well. This applies to all the principal scriptures.

Now, let us examine the second generation of scriptures such as the ones which were named after some great sage and seer who had first expounded them and are therefore named after them. These are traditionally categorized as the 'Smriti Granthas'. This is because they 'remind' one of the great truths of the Sruti Granthas. Some of these latter day Smriti Granthas are the following—(a) the Angiras Smriti named after sage Angira who was one of the ten primordial sages mentioned even in the Rig Veda and who is credited with the revelation of the Mantras of the Atharva Veda, (b) the Atri Smriti named after sage Atri an ancient philosopher and writer (it deals with topics such as gifts, prayers, austerities and penances), (c) the Brihaspati Smriti named after sage Brihaspati who was an ancient teacher of Arthashastra (economics and political science), (d) the Brihat-Parashar Smriti was written by a sage named Suvrata who was probably a disciple of the great sage Parashar on whose memory this scripture was named by its author (it deals with noble duties that are ordained for the various sections of the society as well as certain Yoga disciplines), (e) the Parashar Smriti named after sage Parashar (it deals with the 4 Yugs, the daily duties of a the four Varanas or sections of the society, study of the Vedas, remarriage of widows, purifications, penances and austerities etc.), (f) the Daksha Smriti named after Prajapati Daksha (it deals with the duties of the four Ashrams (sections of life), various types of actions, making gifts, purification rites, Yoga and its branches, the combined philosophies of duality and non-duality or Dwaitya and Advaitya etc.), (g) the Devala Smriti named after sage Devala who is mentioned in the epic Mahabharata along with another sage Asita (it deals with purification rites), (h) the Gobhila Smriti named after sage Gobhila (it deals primarily with a householder's duties such as wearing the sacred thread, observing sacraments, offering respects to the spirits of dead ancestors etc.), (i) the Kaatayaana Smriti named after a sage of this name (it deals with details of wearing the sacred thread, worship of various goddesses and Lord Ganesh, the Vedic sacrifices and chanting of Mantras, purification etc.), (j) the Narad Smriti named after sage Narad, (k) the Samvarta Smriti which contains the teachings of sage Samvarta as given to sages Vaamdeo and others (it deals chiefly with duties of monks and hermits), (l) the Vyas Smriti that is attributed the legendary sage Veda Vyas, the author of the Purans and the classifier of the Vedas (it ratifies the authority of the Sruti and Smriti Granthas, and deals with such subjects as the sixteen duties, mixed castes, marriage, the three types of Karmas or deeds, the greatness of the householder etc.), (m) the Yagyavalkya Smriti is penned by the famous sage Yagyavalkya to whom the major part of the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad is attributed and to whom is attributed the Shukla Yajur Veda (it deals with such topics as religious duties, marriage, Varna and Jaati, donation, faith and devotion, civil duties, crime and punishment, austerities and penances, etc.), and (n) the Yama Smriti which was written by a sage named Yama (it deals with penances and austerities).

In this verse, the calf is compared to the Smriti Granthas because the calf came into existence after the mother cow had come into existence. In the context of the scriptures, since the Smriti Granthas came into being based on the memory of what the original primary scriptures called the Sruti Granthas had taught, the former were a product of the later. Hence, the Smriti Granthas are like the 'calf' produced from the 'cow' representing the Sruti Granthas.]

4. By pronouncing the Mantra 'Gaavo Bhago Gaav' the cow should be made to drink water to quench her thirst.

The aspirant (who wishes to prepare the sacred Bhasma) should observe fast on the Chaturdashi (fourteenth) day of the Shukla or the Krishna Paksha of a month (i.e. the bright or the dark half respectively of the lunar month) (4).

5. Getting up in the morning on the following day (i.e. after the day on which fast is observed), the aspirant should ensure that he is calm and poised. He should first take a purification bath and wear clean and washed clothes. Then he should sprinkle some water on the hind part of the previously sanctified cow (5).

6. The cow should be made to stand up and its urine should be collected while saying the Gayatri Mantra¹. The urine is to be collected in a vessel made of gold, silver, copper or earth (clay pot) (6).

[Note—¹The Gayatri Mantra is the following:—OM BHURBHUVAHA SVAHA¹, TSAVIURVARENYAM², BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAH³, DHIYO YO NAH PRACODAYAT⁴. It means ‘OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahm. He is the lord of creation of the terrestrial, the celestial and heavenly worlds. I offer my oblations to you. That Brahm is luminous like the sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on the righteous and noble path’. The four phrases of the Gayatri Mantra are clearly marked by small numerals in this Mantra. This Mantra appears in the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).

Details of this grand Mantra are given as note no. 2 appended to verse no. 6, Canto 1 of Nrsingh Purva Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter no. 7 of our present volume.]

7. If the above vessels are not available, then the urine can be collected in the leaf of the lotus flower rolled into a conical shape that resembles the horn of a cow.

The cow's dung should be collected while some fragrant incense is lighted (so as to suppress the foul smell of both the urine and the dung) and the Gayatri Mantra is being pronounced (7).

8. A householder should accept the urine and dung before they fall on the ground.

The Mantra ‘Srirme Bhajantu’ is to be said while the cow's dung is being sanctified (8).

9. While picking out residual food particles sticking to the dung, the Mantra ‘Alaxmirma’ should be said. [It means those things that are of no use.]

Then the collected urine is poured on this dung while saying the Mantra ‘Santava Sinchaami’ (i.e. ‘I am irrigating or watering the sanctified dung’) (9).

10. With this moist dung, he should make fourteen balls while saying the Mantra ‘Panchaanaam Twiti’. These balls are to be dried in the sun's light (i.e. they should be left in the open to dry in the heat of the sun) (10).

11. Then the dried up balls should be kept in a container made of any of the materials mentioned earlier (in verse nos. 6-7).

Using the Mantras of the ‘Griha Sukta¹’ (a hymn used by a householder to perform fire sacrifices and other religious duties) the aspirant should establish (ignite) the sacrificial fire and duly worship it (11).

[Note—¹The *Griha Sukta* appears in the Pippallaad branch of the Atharva Veda. It is included in this volume as appendix no. 5 at the end.]

12-13. The six lettered Mantra of Lord Shiva¹ is said while these dried and sanctified balls of cow-dung are lifted and placed on the lighted fire. It must be noted that this Mantra is to be repeated for each individual ball as it is picked up and placed on the fire.

The word 'Swaha' is said while offering these balls to the sacred fire as an oblation to the deity. [The word 'Swaha' is said whenever an offering is made to the sacred fire.]

It should be remembered that the offering called 'Ajyabhag' that is made to the Adhar (sacred fire)² is made before the main sacrifice is done (12-13).

[Note—¹The *six-letter Mantra of Shiva* has two versions as follows—(i) According to the Atharva Veda's Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 8, it is 'OM Namaha Shiva OM'. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + OM = 6.]

(ii) According to the Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 4 of the Atharva Veda however, it is 'OM Namaha Shivaaye'. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 6.]

²The proper way of doing a fire sacrifice has been described in detail in the Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 1, section 2, verse nos. 2-7. It describes what these two terms mean in the context of the fire sacrifice.

Briefly, when fire sacrifices are done, the sacred fire that is lit to invite the patron God to the ceremony is called the Ahawaniya fire, or the invocational fire. The first offering is made to the north of it while pronouncing the Mantra 'Agneya Swaha'. The second offering is made to the south of it with the Mantra 'Somaaya Swaha'. These offerings consist of clarified butter. These are called 'Adhar' and 'Aajya Bhaag'—the share of the Fire God and the Moon God respectively. Since Brahman 2, verse nos. 1-2 of the present Brihajjabal Upanishad asserts that Agni and Soma are virtually the two aspects of the same cosmic Divinity that creates and sustains life in this creation, the offering made to this Divinity or Brahm through the two Mantras mentioned above in this paragraph are the shares or 'Bhaag' that are offered to the fire located to the north and south of the main fire-pit.

The central part of the fire between these two ends is called the 'Awapasthan'. It is in this that the main oblations intended for the patron deity who is being invoked are made.]

14. Now, the oblations to the main fire are being narrated. First, twenty-three oblations are made in the honour of the God of death, i.e. Lord Rudra or Shiva, and five oblations are made in the honour of Brahma, the creator, by uttering the Mantra 'Namo Hiranyavaahave' (I bow before Lord Hiranyagarbha) (14).

15-16. While offering oblations to these two Gods, their names are invoked or reverentially remembered by using the fourth case or inflexion of the Sanskrit grammar.

The worshipper should touch the shoulder by saying the Mantra 'Ritam Cha Satyam', and all the other external organs of the body by the Mantra 'Yasya Vaikuntha'. [This is done to sanctify the body and establish the deities Rudra and Brahma on the shoulders and other organs respectively.]

Then he should make offerings to the sacred fire nine times by saying the Mantra 'Swischsta Kritam' (15-16).

17. The sanctified water kept in the pot for offering to the sacred fire as a token of conclusion of the fire sacrifice should be sprinkled on the fire by saying the Mantra 'Purnamatim'. [That is to say that he has successfully completed the offerings.] (17).

18. Some of the water of this pot should be sprinkled on the head by the worshipper by saying the Mantra 'Brahamane Swamritam'. [This is to say that he makes himself purified by establishing Brahm on his head.]

The remaining water is then sprinkled in all the directions around him (18).

19-20. The Brahmins or the priests are given donation and gifts. After that the fire is calmed down or converted into its hidden form by covering it with dried rice stalks. The worshipper does this while thinking to himself—"I am laying the Gods to rest so that their stupendous powers and supernatural deeds are kept secret. I also am covering the burning fire and requesting the Fire God to retire so that it can secretly empower the ash (that would be now produced by the doused sacred fire) and conceal himself in it along with the other Gods. For this purpose, I am covering the Jatveda fire¹ with these stalks of rice. [In other words, while the fire was burning brightly, its brilliance was a vivid proof of the presence of the Fire God. But this Fire God is so terribly hot and horrifically scorching that it is impossible for the worshipper to establish this God on his body like he has done with the Lords Rudra and Brahma (see verse nos. 15-16). So he requests the Fire God to calm down and hide himself in a latent form in the cool ash or Bhasma that is produced from the fire sacrifice so that he can establish the Fire God on his body when he smears the ash on it.] (19-20).

[Note—¹The *Jatveda Fire* is the cosmic all-pervading Fire element that is uniformly and universally present wherever there is sky element or open space. It is represented by the word Bhuvaha.

Jatvedas is the name of the Sun God as well as the Fire God. The Sun is indeed the most evident form of the fire element and possesses all the virtues and qualities of the latter. When two pieces of wooden drills known as *Arani* are rubbed together vigorously, they produce fire though prior to this rubbing no fire was visibly there. This rubbing is symbolic of the Tapa done by Brahm at the beginning of the creation to create the energy needed to initiate the process of creation which is represented by the latent fire element or its personified subtle form as the Fire God who is invisible. The more gross form of this fire element and the visible aspect of the Fire God is the celestial Sun.

It has been explained by Yam, the death God, to Nachiketa in Kathvalli or Kathopanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 8 as follows—"That fire element known as Jatveda (which is glorious and brilliant as the Sun God—the 'Jatvedas') present between the two Aranis (which are the wooden drills used to kindle fire during a fire sacrifice by rubbing them vigorously against each other), is as glorious, radiant, splendorous and magnificent as the embryo nourished in the womb of pregnant women.

This reverend 'fire' is worshipped, honoured and adored by righteous men (sages and seers) who are free of all delusions and confusions, who do not make errors of judgment, and who are wise and learned in such matters, by doing the fire sacrifice using various offerings meant to pay their obeisance and to show their respect to this exalted 'fire'.

Verily, this splendorous, radiant, majestic and brilliant 'fire' known as Jatveda (represented by the Jatvedas or the Sun in the sky, and the latent fire element present concealed between the two drills which reveals itself when a vigorous attempt is made to ignite it during a fire sacrifice) is indeed the supreme transcendental Brahm in that form or manifestation."]

21. The fire is covered so as to keep it latently alive for thirty days. [That is, it is covered in such a way that the fire-pit maintains its heat for one month, and the embers are allowed to smoulder slowly. If any fresh firewood is placed into it any time or even at the end of a month, it is easy to kindle a new fire from these embers. In other words, the fire is not completely doused but kept in animated suspension, in a latent form, hidden behind the covering put over the fire-pit to hide the fire's existence. This fire is able to rise up on its own accord with the slightest hint, needing no external help to do so, thereby eliminating the need to undergo the cumbersome process of lighting the fire afresh.]

After having covered the fire, the worshipper should first feed Brahmins (priests), and then feed himself. While eating, he should keep quiet (21).

22-24. If the worshipper wishes to have a greater quantity of Bhasma, the amount of dried cow-dung that is offered to the consecrated fire should be proportionately increased.

On the morning of the second or the third day of the fire sacrifice, the Bhasma can be picked up and marked or smeared reverentially on the body. For this purpose, the worshipper should first have a bath and then wear washed, clean and white clothes, a garland made of beads of white sandalwood, and a white sacred thread.

Having done so, he should say the Mantra 'OM Tad Brahm' (i.e. OM salutations, you are indeed a symbol of the supreme Brahm) and remove the ash formed by covering the fire with rice stalks and dousing it or cooling it down by spreading it on the ground around the fire-pit. [Refer verse no. 19-20.] (22-24).

25. The sacred fire is worshipped by various formal rituals such as 'Awahan' (invocation) employing the relevant Vyahriti Mantras of the Jatveda fire (i.e. 'Bhuvaha'—see note of verse no. 19-20) (25).

26. The Bhasma is accepted (picked up from the ground) while saying the Mantra 'Agnirbhasmi' (i.e. this ash is a symbol of the Fire).

The coarse ash is to be rubbed and made into a fine powder (26).

27-28. Now, for the purpose of making a paste the following procedure is prescribed—Water in which sandalwood is dissolved or sanctified urine of a Kapilaa cow (i.e. a cow with skin that is reddish-brown with white spots, and who is most docile, simple and humble) is to be used as the fluid for this purpose. In it is added a fine powder made of ground Kapoor (camphor), Kumkum (a red colour or copper colour made from the pollen of the flower of the plant *Crocus sativus*), Kashmir (yellow colour; light-tinged saffron; saffron that is especially grown in the northern Indian state of Kashmir), Mushir (commonly known as Khas—the scented root of the grass *Andropogon muricatus*), and Chandan (sandalwood).

While the grinding and mixing of these ingredients is done, the Mantra 'OM Brahm' (i.e. OM is Brahm; Salutations to Brahm) is said reverentially (27-28).

29-30. A wise and expert worshipper should slowly add the liquid (water in which sandalwood had been previously dissolved, or the cow's urine as said in the 1st paragraph of verse nos. 27) to this finely grounded and mixed powder (made according to verse no. 28) by saying the Mantra 'OM Anoraniyaaniti'. The liquid should be added carefully so that a smooth past is made out of the ingredients (29-30).

31-32. Clean water is then added in drops seven times by saying the Mantra ‘OM’ (representing Pranav or Brahm).

The Bhasma prepared as above should be applied on the various parts of the body along with the pronouncing of the relevant Mantras as follows—On the head by saying the Mantra for Ishan, on the forehead and other frontal parts of the face by saying the Mantra ‘Tatpurush’, on the thighs by saying the Mantra of Lord Aghor, on the genitals by saying the Mantra for Lord Vamdeo, and on the legs by saying the Mantra for Saddyojat*. [Refer Brahman 4, verse nos. 1-4.]

Thereafter, the supreme Mantra OM which precedes all the Mantras and is the crown jewel of a Mantra (as it directly relates to the supreme transcendental Brahm) is pronounced while applying (smearing, spreading) the Bhasma on all the organs of the body. [That is, after it has been applied to the specific places mentioned above, the remainder of the Bhasma is picked up by the fingers and spread over the body while saying OM.]

In the above described method, the sacred and consecrated Bhasma should be applied to all the organs of the body from the leg to the head (31-32).

[Note--*The five names mentioned here all pertain to Lord Shiva and all refer to the supreme transcendental Brahm. This fact is asserted in the Panch Brahm Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 5-23.

See also Brahman 4, verse no. 1, and Brahman 7, verse no. 1.]

33. The person who wishes to wear the sacred Bhasma on his body (and derive spiritual benefits by this symbolic exercise of establishing all the five divine forms of Shiva or Brahm on his own body, thereby making it as sanctified and holy as a shrine) should wear clean clothes and symbolically clean his mouth with a sip of clean water before starting the exercise, and once completed the mouth is again cleaned by another sip of clean water.

Other daily routine religious affairs such as observing sacraments, doing Japa etc., or daily chores of the world should be done only after the above ritual of wearing the sacred Bhasma on the body is completed as the first thing in the morning (33).

34. [This verse describes the four types of Bhasmas.]

The consecrated Bhasma is of four types—the first is called ‘Anu Kalpam’, the second is called ‘Op Kalpam’, the third is called ‘Upop Kalpam’, and the fourth is called ‘A-Kalpam’.

The Bhasma (sacred ash) that is directly produced from the fire sacrificial pit and is a fine powder free from any dust, un-burnt fuel, residual charcoal or other contaminants is of the best type and called the Anu Kalpam.

The Bhasma that is made from dried cow’s dung that is found in the forest and grounded to a fine powder and mixed with other ingredients (as narrated in verse nos. 27-28) is called the Op Kalpam variety.

The Bhasma that is made from cow’s dung picked in the forest and then ground to a powder and mixed with cow’s urine to make small balls (‘Pindas’) that are offered to the sacred fire is called the Upop Kalpam type of Bhasma.

Finally, the Bhasma that is taken from a temple of Lord Shiva (i.e. that which is not prepared by the worshipper himself but taken from a temple’s fire-pit) is called the A-Kalpam Bhasma. It is also called ‘Shat Kalpa’ Bhasma.

All these four types of Bhasmas can destroy or annihilate sins and their evil consequences, and provide the wearer with Moksha. That is, if the sacred ash is worn

with due wisdom, it is potent enough not only to help the wearer get rid of the burden of current sins but also paves the way of his spiritual liberation and deliverance from this body and the world. Lord Kalagnirudra becomes pleased when the Bhasma is worn with due respect and wisdom, and he becomes benevolent and munificent towards a worshipper who wears it (34).

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Brahman 4

[This Brahman continues on the theme of application of the sacred Bhasma on the body that was the concluding part of Brahman 3. It describes how and when the Bhasma can be applied.]

1. After this (i.e. after being told about the way of preparing Bhasma as outlined in Brahman 3), Bhususnd asked Lord Kalagnirudra about the proper method of taking a symbolic bath with it. [That is, just like a man cleans himself by bathing in water and scrubbing off dust from his body, the sacred ash is also applied on the body to wash off the sins of the wearer. This fact has already been said in verse no. 34 of Brahman 3 above. So, this Brahman continues with the theme.]

The Lord preached—‘The Bhasma should be rubbed by pronouncing the Mantra ‘OM’. It should be empowered with divinity and made all-powerful using this eclectic and all-incorporating Mantra of Pranav (Brahm).

Then the five relevant Mantras pertaining to the five deities should be said while this consecrated Bhasma is applied on various parts of the body (as already mentioned in Brahman 3, verse nos. 31-32). Hence, it should be applied on the head by saying the Mantra for Ishan, on the forehead and other frontal parts of the head by saying the Mantra ‘Tatpurush’, on the thighs by saying the Mantra of Lord Aghor, on the genitals by saying the Mantra for Lord Vamdeo, and on the legs by saying the Mantra for Saddyojat.

The Bhasma is applied on the whole body, from the leg to the head, and then water is sipped to clean the mouth—this is the symbolic way of taking bath with the sacred Bhasma. After that, clean white cloth is worn just like one wears clean clothes after his bath.

This is the sanctioned way of bathing with the sacred Bhasma according to the Vedic tenets (1).

2-4. A diligent worshipper should take ‘Bhasma Snan’ or purification bath using the sacred and sanctified ash by the above described method.

The Bhasma is placed on five spots on the top of the head (on the cranium) by saying the Mantra of Ishan, on the face at four spots by saying the Mantra of Tatpurush, on the heart at eight spots by saying the Mantra of Aghor, on the genitals at thirteen spots by saying the Mantra of Vamdeo, and on the legs at eight spots by saying the Mantra of Saddyojat*.

In this way, the sacred Bhasma is worn on the entire body (2-4).

[Note—*This paragraph means that a particular Mantra is repeated so many times and each time the Bhasma is applied on different spots of the part of the body mentioned against that particular Mantra.]

5. The Bhasma should be applied everywhere except the mouth (i.e. it should not be applied on the lips).

The ritual of Bhasma bath can be done at the time of dawn and dusk (called the Sandhyas because these two times mark the period when the two halves of the day, i.e. the sun-lit phase and the dark phase of the night, meet each other). It can also be done at midnight. [This is usually done by those ascetics who do night meditation.] (5).

6. Since this application of the sacred Bhasma (ash) on the body is as purifying or cleansing by nature as taking normal bath with clean water, it can be done whenever the worshipper feels the need of cleaning himself. Some of these occasions are the following—after sleep, after taking meals or drinking water (as done by weary travelers), after finishing important work (as a busy man does to relax and refresh himself after some strenuous exercise), after being touched by a woman and an eunuch, or by animals such as a vulture, a cat, a duck or a mouse (6).

7-8. In other words, the Bhasma should be applied whenever one comes in contact with anything or anyone that is impure and polluting for him.

On the other hand, there is no need to apply Bhasma and clean oneself when one comes in contact with his Devta (the deity whom he worships), the Agni (the fire), the Guru (teacher), or a Briddha (an old man). [This is because they are not considered impure or corrupting.]

Bhasma should also not be applied on the body if one is forced under circumstances to travel on a path that is not considered auspicious and good for him. [This is because when he has crossed over and reached the other end of the path, he would have the chance to clean himself by ‘washing off the negativity’ that might have clung on to him during his actual journey through the inauspicious path which he was forced to take recourse to due to certain most difficult and unavoidable situations which were not under his control.]

The conch shell should be used to add water to the dried Bhasma (7-8).

9. Those who are experts in this knowledge say that the sandalwood dissolved in water should be added to the Bhasma before it is applied on the body. The sandalwood-mixed Bhasma is the one which bestows knowledge (enlightenment) upon its wearer.

This exercise of mixing sandalwood with water is to be done before noon, for in the afternoon hours it is prohibited (9).

10-12. [The following verses have an uncanny resemblance to the Kalagnirudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda.]

After that, sage Bhusund asked Lord Kalagnirudra the way to wear the Tripundra¹. In this context, the scriptural verses are as follows—‘The Tripundra symbolises the Trinity Gods—i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder.

A pinch of the sacred Bhasma should be picked up with the help of the joined fourth and third fingers touching the end of the thumb while saying the main Mantra having six letters. [This Mantra is ‘OM Namō Shivaye’. Refer verse no. 12-13 of Brahman 3.]

This sacred Bhasma is to be applied by a Brahmin (a learned person) on his head, face and other parts of the body at thirty-two, or sixteen, or eight or five spots (10-12). [These spots are described in the following verses.]

[Note—¹The word *Tripundra* has two parts—‘tri’ and ‘pundra’. Tri means three while the word Pundra refers to the three horizontal lines marked on the body (the forehead, the chest and the shoulders) by Hindus. The Pundra can be horizontal or crosswise lines, in which case it is called the ‘Tiryak Pundra’, or it can be vertical or upright lines, in which case it is called ‘Urdhva Pundra’. The Triyak Pundra or Tripundra is worn by devotees of Lord Shiva and initiated ascetics and is marked by the paste of the ash obtained from the pit of the fire sacrifice by mixing it with water.

The three lines of the Tripundra stand for the entire gamut of the triad of creation—i.e. for all the aspects of creation in its three dimensional aspect—such as the Trinity Gods i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Rudra the concluder as stated in verse no. 10 above, the three Gunas such as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna, and the three sacred fires such as the Ahawaniya fire, the Grahapatya fire and the Dakshinagni fire as stated in verse no. 36 of this Brahman 4.

The metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of the Tripundra have been narrated in Brahman 7, verse nos. 5-7 of the present Upanishad. It is also the subject of exposition in the Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition when sage Sanatkumar had enquired about it from Lord Kalagni Rudra and explained by the Lord himself.]

13-15. The above mentioned thirty-two spots are the following—(i) the (top of the) head, (ii) the forehead, (iii-iv) the two ears, (v-vi) the two eyes (eyelids), (vii) the nose, (viii) the mouth (lips), (ix-x) the two sides of the chest, i.e. on either side of the breast bone, (xi-xii) the two wrists, (xiii) the heart, (xiv-xv) the two sides of the rib-cage, (xvi) the navel, (xvii-xviii) the two groins, (xix-xx) the two knees, (xxi-xxii) the two shin bones, (xxiii-xxiv) the two soles, (xxv-xxvi) the two thighs, (xxvii-xxviii) the two legs (feet), (xxix-xxx) the two hips, and (xxxi-xxxii) the two heels (13-15).

16. There are eight Vasus—viz. Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash (16).

[Note—The Vasus are the personified forms of the essential things that the supreme Creator created in this world so that the forthcoming creation would be well provided for and its essential needs taken care of. Some of these essentials were Fire (‘Anal’) that gave light, heat and energy, Air (‘Anil’) that breathed life into the creature’s body and prevented suffocation, Water that acted as the soothing balm, the lubricating liquid and the nectar of life (‘Soma’), a dwelling (a ‘Ghar’), whether it was a cave, a crevice, a tree branch or a mud hut that the creature needed for its residence and protection against the vagaries of Nature, the virtue of compassion and kindness (‘Kripa’) to let one’s neighbour too live and enjoy life to the full, and so on and so forth. These were the ‘assets’ that were personified as various Gods named above.]

17-18. The Tripundra is marked on the thirty two spots on the body (as narrated in the foregoing verses) after invoking the names of these eight Vasus and prefixing their names with the word ‘Namaha’ (literally meaning ‘I bow before you’).

Now, the sixteen places or spots where the Tripundra is to be marked are the following—(i) the (top of the) head, (ii) the forehead, (iii-iv) the two ears, (v-vi) the two shoulders, (vii-viii) the two sides of breast bone, (ix-x) the two wrists, (xi) the heart, (xii-xiii) on either sides of the navel, (xiv) the Adam’s apple, (xv) the navel, and (xvi) the spine (back bone) (17-18).

19. While the Tripundra is marked at the above sixteen spots on the body, the worshipper should invoke the following names—Shiva, Shakti, Saad, Isha and Vidya (19).

20. At the same time, the worshipper should also remember (invoke) the holy names of the nine Shaktis such as Vaamaa etc¹, along with the sixteen Gods², Naasatya, Dasra and the two Ashwini Kumars³ (20).

[Note—¹The *nine Shaktis* are the various forms of the divine dynamic power, potential, authority and energy of the Supreme Being that has taken the form of nine Goddesses. These Goddesses are worshipped as Mothers of creation and they complement the Supreme Being. The nine divine Goddesses, also known as the patron Goddesses in Tantra literature dealing with occult forms of divine worship, are the following—‘Maha Tripur Sundari’ (महा त्रिपुर सुन्दरी), ‘Tripur Amba’ (त्रिपुर अम्बा), ‘Tripur Siddhi’ (त्रिपुर सिद्धि), ‘Tripur Malini’ (त्रिपुर मालिनी), ‘Tripura Sri’ (त्रिपुरा श्री), ‘Tripur Vasini’ (त्रिपुर वासिनी), ‘Tripur Sundari’ (त्रिपुर सुन्दरी), ‘Tripur Reshi’ (त्रिपुर रेशि), ‘Tripura’ (त्रिपुरा).

According to another version, the nine divine Goddesses are the following—Vaamaa (the divine consort of Lord Vamdeo, one of the forms of Lord Shiva), Durga (the Goddess who rides a lion and is considered a manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, and who had slayed the demon named Durg), Gauri (the divine consort of Lord Shiva; another name of Parvati), Bhagwati (another name of Parvati; the divine Mother Nature personified and from whose womb the entire creation has emerged), Parvati (the consort of Shiva; had derived her name because she is said to be the daughter of the king of mountains, called ‘Parvat’ in Sanskrit), Laxmi (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and the patron Goddess of good fortune, prosperity and wealth), Saraswati (the divine consort of Brahma, the creator, and the patron Goddess of knowledge), and Aditi (the mother of all the Gods).

The system of worshipping of the divine Goddess envisages that she is a personification of all the dynamic powers and essential energy of all the Gods rolled into one. The chief Goddess is known as Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva who is regarded as the greatest and most senior amongst the pantheon of Gods, and hence honoured by the epithet ‘Maheshwar’. Parvati is also known as Durga who is worshipped in nine different forms. These nine forms of Durga are called ‘Nav Durgas’ or nine Durgas. They are also called ‘Nav-Shaktis’ or the nine personified forms of the divine dynamic power and energy of the Supreme Being.

Thus, according to the Kavach Stotra of Devi-mahatamya, the nine Shaktis are the following—Shailputri (literally, the daughter of the Lord of Mountains), Brahmchaarini (one who is perpetually a celibate and self-restrained), Chandraghantaa (one who is as beautiful as the moon), Khushmaandaa (one who is always cheerful), Skandamaata (the mother of Skanda, also known as Lord Kartikeya, the son of Shiva and Parvati and a commander of the army of Gods), Kaatyaani (the Goddess who personifies the holy consort of the great ancient sage of the Vedic period, named Var-ruchi Kaatyaan), Kaalraatri (a personification of the night of the doomsday), Mahagauri (the great Goddess known as Gauri, another name of Parvati, the divine consort of Maheshwar or Lord Shiva), and Siddhidaatri (one who gives mystical powers and bestows her devotees or worshipper with success in everything).

According to Brahmaand Puran, the names are the following—Neelkanthi (one whose throat is blue-tinged), Kshemankari (one who takes care of her dependents), Harasiddhi (one who gives all Siddhis—mystical powers), Vanadurga (the patron Goddess of the forest), Rudradurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Lord Rudra), Agnidurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Agni, the Fire God), Jayadurga (the

Goddess who gives victory), Vindhyavaasini (the Goddess who lives in the Vindhya mountain ranges), and Ripumaaridurga (the Goddess who vanquishes enemies).

²The *sixteen Gods* who are worshipped as patron Gods during ritualistic forms of worship are the following—Shiva, Rudra, Indra, Vishnu, Prajapati Brahma, Surya (the Sun God), Vignesh (Lord Ganesh) (mentioned in verse no. 4/22), and the eight Vasus (mentioned in verse no. 4/16), i.e. Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash, and Ishan or Isha (mentioned in verse no. 4/19).

³The *Ashwini Kumars*—They are the twin sons of the Sun God and the medicine men of the Gods.]

21. Besides the sixteen spots mentioned above, the following are also the other alternative spots where the Tripundra can be marked—(i) the (top of the) head, (ii) the tuft of hairs on the cranium, (iii-iv) the two ears, (v-vi) the two arms, (vii) the nose, (viii) the heart, (ix) the navel, (x-xi) the two thighs, (xii-xiii) the two knees, (xiv-xv) the two feet, and (xvi) the back (spine) (21).

22-23. [Now, the patron Gods who are deemed to be present in all these spots on the body are being enumerated.]

The following deities (Gods) are said to be present in the places mentioned above where the Tripundra is marked on the worshipper's body—Shiva (the most enlightened, wise and renunciate God who is deemed to be a synonym of the supreme transcendental Brahm), Indra (the king of Gods), Rudra (one of the many forms of Shiva responsible for conclusion of creation), Surya (the Sun God), Vighnesh (Lord Ganesh; the God who removes all obstacles and ill-omens), Vishnu (the sustainer, nourisher and protector of creation), Sri (Goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, who is the patron deity of all good fortunes, prosperity, majesty and fame in this world), the patron deity who resides in the subtle heart (i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm in the form of the pure conscious Atma or soul), Prajapati who dwells in the navel (i.e. Brahma the creator as well as the Sun God who both are regarded as the creator and caretaker of this living world, hence called 'Prajapati'—one who is the Lord of his subjects), Naag (the serpent who is said to support this creation on its hood), the Naag Kanyas (the mythological beauties who are supposed to be offspring of the Naag and inhabit the subterranean world), and the two Rishi Kanyas (the daughters of an ancient Rishi, a sage or seer) (22-23).

24. Besides the above deities and their locations, the feet is the symbolic site of the 'Samudra Tirtha'. [The word 'Samudra' means the ocean or sea, and the word 'Tirtha' means a holy pilgrim site. Hence, the feet correspond to the ancient pilgrim sites located on the shores of the ocean or the sea, such as the Dwarka Tirtha on the western seaboard, the Puri Tirtha on the eastern seaboard, and the Rameshwaram Tirtha on the southern tip of the mainland. These are the main pilgrim sites, and there are countless others which are all deemed to be present in the feet which is a metaphoric way of saying that a pilgrimage to these places is dependent upon the leg or the feet. This is because a pilgrim can reach any holy site if his legs allow him to go there, or if the legs carry him there.]

The divine deities mentioned herein above (in verse nos. 22-23) are also present in the shoulders. [That is to say, these deities are not only restricted to the specific spots listed earlier in verse no. 18-21 but are also present in the region of the shoulders.]

After having enumerated the sixteen places where the Tripundra can be marked, now are listed the eight places where it can also be assigned. These eight spots on the body are the following—(24).

25-26. (i) The (top of the) head, (ii) the forehead, (iii-iv) the two ears, (v) the two shoulders, (vi) the two shoulders, (vii) the heart, and (viii) the navel. These are the eight places where the Tripundra can be marked (25-26).

27. Those who are expert in the proper way of applying the Tripundra say that there are five spots where it can also be applied. These five places are the following—(i) The (top of the) head, (ii-iii) the two upper arms, (iv) the heart, and (v) the navel (27).

28. If the worshipper is unable to wear the Tripundra as described in the forgoing verses of this Upanishad, then it can simply be applied on the following nine spots on the body (to derive the same benefits)—the forehead, the heart, the navel, the throat, the wrists, the elbows, the shoulder blades, the back (spine), and the top of the head (28).

29. [This verse lists the Mantras that are to be said when the Tripundra is marked on the eight designated spots on the body as enumerated now.]

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the forehead, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Brhmane Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the supreme Brahman).

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the heart, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Prabhanjanaaye Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the Lord Prabhanjan, one of the vital winds that controls the opening of the anus).

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the navel, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Skandanaaye Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the Lord Skanda, i.e. Kartikeya).

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the throat, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Vishnave Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the Lord Vishnu).

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the middle of the abdomen, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Prabhanjanaaye Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the Lord Prabhanjan).

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the wrists, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Vasubhyo Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the Vasus).

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the backbone, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Haraye Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the Lord Hari, one of the names of Lord Vishnu).

While wearing or marking the Tripundra on the top of the head, the Mantra which is to be said is ‘Parmaatmane Namaha’ (I bow reverentially to the supreme Lord known as the Parmatma, the Supreme Being).

While making the mark of the Tripundra on the forehead, the worshipper should invoke the Mantra ‘Namaha Shivaye’ (I bow before Lord Shiva) and simultaneously meditate upon the Lord who is known as Trinetrum (one who has three eyes—two conventional eyes and one eye of wisdom and enlightenment located in the forehead), who is Trigunaadharam (the supreme Lord who is the bearer of all the three basic aspects of this creation such as its origin, its sustenance and its conclusion, or the one who is the base upon which all the three Gunas such as Sata, Raja and Tama are founded), and who is the Lord from whom the Trinity Gods (i.e. the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder Rudra) are born. [This

Lord is none other than Lord Maheshwar, the great Ishwar or Lord of creation who is also known as Shiva, Ishan, Isha etc. This Lord is synonymous with the supreme transcendental Brahm. This fact is endorsed Krishna Yajur Veda's Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 32, and in Dakshin Murti or Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad.] (29).

30. The Mantra 'Pitribhyam Namaha' (I bow before the holy spirit of my ancestors) is said while marking the Tripundra below the forehead (on the nasal bone).

The Mantra 'Ishaanayebhyam Namaha' (I bow before the Lord known as Ishan) is said while marking the Tripundra above the forehead (on the front part of the skull).

The Mantra 'Ishaabhyam Namaha' (I bow before the Lord known as Ishan) is said while marking the Tripundra on either side of the body (rib cage) (30).

31. The Mantra 'Swachhabhyam Namaha' (I bow before the Lord that keeps my abdomen clean and purified) is said while marking the Tripundra abdomen.

The Mantra 'Bhimaye Namaha' (I bow before the Lord known as Bhim, i.e. who is steadfast, strong and robust; the Lord who keeps my back strong and sturdy) is said while marking the Tripundra below on the backbone (on the spine).

The Mantra 'Shivaye Namaha' (I bow before Lord Shiva) is said while marking the Tripundra on the two hips (31).

32. The Mantras 'Neelkanthaaye Namaha' (I bow before the Lord with a blue-tinged throat, i.e. Lord Shiva) and 'Sarwa-atmane Namaha' (I bow before the Lord who is the soul of all living beings) are said while marking the Tripundra on the top of the head (on the cranium).

If a worshipper wears the Tripundra in the proper way as narrated herein above, all his sins and their consequences that have accumulated over numerous births are destroyed or eliminated. [And as a result, he becomes eligible to obtain Mukti—liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation.] (32).

33. If the divine Tripundra is worn (marked) on the throat, the worshipper's sins are destroyed, while all his sins along with diseases from which he might be suffering are eliminated when this Tripundra is worn on the ears (33).

34. Just as all the sins caused by the use of the throat (such as by speaking lies, speaking ill of others, or using abusive language etc.) are eliminated by wearing the holy Tripundra on the throat, and the sins caused by the use of the ears (such as hearing evil things) are eliminated by wearing the holy Tripundra on the ears, all the sins caused by the use of the upper arms (or hands) are eliminated by wearing the holy Tripundra there. [Since all the deeds are done with the aid of the hands, this verse implies that all the evil deeds and their horrific consequences are decimated if one devotedly wears this Tripundra on the hands.]

Similarly, when this Tripundra is worn on the chest, the sins committed by the Mana (mind and heart) are eliminated.

When this Tripundra is worn on the navel, the sins committed by the genital organs are eliminated.

When this Tripundra is worn on the backbone, the sins committed by the anus are eliminated (34).

35. When this Tripundra is worn on either side of the body, the sin of adultery committed by way of embracing a woman, who is not one's wife, is eliminated. [This is because an adulterous man sleeps, sits or walks with his lover constantly by his side, either the right or the left. His 'side' becomes polluted and corrupted by the sin of adultery. Hence, when he applies the Bhasma on the sides of the body, it is symbolically washed and cleaned of the sin created by being touched by the adulterous woman.]

Hence, it is advisable to wear (mark) the sign of the Tripundra (the three lines) and smear the Bhasma (sacred ash) as prescribed in this Upanishad on all the organs of the body. [These act as a shield to perpetually protect the worshipper from any future transgressions by the powerful forces of sins as well as to always keep him spiritually cleansed and purified as it acts as a constant reminder to him that the Lord is firmly seated on his body, and so he must be on his guard against committing any sin because the Lord is watching each of his deeds, actions, movements and thoughts.] (35).

[Note—It must be noted that this pardon or immunity is not meant to say that one is given a blanket immunity or pardon, or even a license to commit all types of evil deeds in the hope of being excused of his misdeeds simply because he is wearing the mark of the Tripundra, but it is prescribed as a means or an avenue that is provided in the scripture for those who wish to sincerely relent for their past misdemeanors, are sincerely regretful, and want to amend themselves. It is expected that when a man wears the Tripundra he would be conscientious and strive to uphold the dignity and honour of this holy mark. He must not do anything that would undermine the exalted stature of a person who wears this holy mark. To err is human, to do something wrong unknowingly or inadvertently or even under circumstantial compulsion is excusable, but to continue to commit sins and go on doing wrong, and ignore them willingly, is absolutely unpardonable. A person should be given all the chances for atonement and redemption if he is sincere and willing to do so.]

36. By wearing them (i.e. the Tripundra and the Bhasma) one gets the same eclectic benefits that comes by symbolically wearing or honouring or paying tributes to the three Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva/Rudra), the three holy fires (i.e. the Grahapatya fire, the Ahawaniya fire and the Dakshinagni fire), the three Gunas (the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna), and the three Lokas (i.e. the past, the present and the future; the terrestrial world, the heavens and the nether world) (36).

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Brahman 5

1. When the Bhasma (the sacred ash) is worn on the body, it should be first empowered with divine powers and vested with holiness by invoking the relevant holy Mantras called the 'Manostotra' as prescribed by the Vedas.

The spiritual benefits derived by a worshipper by wearing the Tripundra on the head are equivalent to chanting the Mantras of the Sam Veda (or reading this Veda).

If the Tripundra is worn on the middle part of the body, the wearer is rewarded with a long life as a blessing of the Trinity Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva/Rudra) (1).

2. The same benefit is obtained by wearing it (the Tripundra) on the two upper arms and the forehead.

The Brahmins (i.e. the first class of people in the traditional Hindu society who are deemed to be learned and are usually teachers, preachers and preceptors) and the Kshatriyas (i.e. the second class of people in the society usually assigned the task of giving protection to the rest of the society) should wear the Bhasma and the Tripundra on the navel, the head, the heart and the two sides of the body (i.e. on the left and the right of the rib-cage) (2).

3. The first three sections of the society, i.e. the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas (i.e. the third class of people in the society who are responsible for providing all the necessary material things needed for living a comfortable life by the members of the society) are expected to wear the Tripundra made by the Bhasma (sacred ash) obtained by doing Agnihotra (fire sacrifice).

The householders should primarily wear it on the heart.

The ash should be in the form of fine powder and free from other contaminants (such as un-burnt dung or other offerings that have been offered to the sacred fire during the rituals) (3).

4. Great sages have asserted that the above sacred ash is really worthy of wearing. For the householders, this Bhasma is especially prescribed for the purpose of wearing (4).

5. A Brahmachari (a celibate person who observes strict laws of self control and other religious vows) should wear the Bhasma derived from offering of Samidha¹ to the sacred fire.

The Shudra (people who belong to the fourth rung of the society according to the ancient system of classification, and are usually assigned the task of serving the other three classes) is required to wear the Bhasma that is got from the sacred fire of a household of a person who performs fire sacrifices according to Vedic traditions (5).

[Note—¹*Samidha* is an offering made to the sacred fire during the performance of the fire sacrifice ritual. According to the Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8, there are *seven* types of Samidhas (fuel for the fire sacrifice; the firewood) and seven types of Yagyas (fire sacrifice). The seven types of Samidhas are the fuels that are needed to keep the fire of the sacrificial pit lit. It is a general term for the firewood. Wood from seven types of trees are used for this purpose as follows—Ashvattha (*Ficus religiosa*), Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*), Chandan (sandal wood), Devdaaru (pine), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Nayagrodha (Indian fig tree), and Palaas (*Butea frondosa*).

The wood from the following trees are not to be used for the purpose of Samidha—Bibhitak (*Terminalia bellerica*), Kapittha (wood apple), and Neem tree.

Each stick of the firewood should not be thicker than the thickness of the thumb, must have the bark on them, and should not be eaten by wood-worms or insects, or infected by any kind of germs—i.e. should be fresh.]

6. All members of the society should wear the Bhasma and the Tripundra (the three lines marked on the body from a paste of this sacred ash).

By wearing them, Sanyasis are blessed with truthful and absolute Gyan (true enlightenment that culminates in knowledge of the Absolute Truth; knowledge of the supreme transcendental Brahman who is also known as Shiva, the Truth), while Vanprasthas¹ are blessed with truthful and sustained Vairagya (honest renunciation,

dispassion, detachment and non-involvement with this material world and its sense objects) (6).

[Note—¹The life of a person is divided into four sections of roughly twenty-five years each. These are called the *four Ashrams*. They have been described in note of verse no. 8 below.]

7. Those persons who are castigated from the society (or are considered out-castes due to some or the other reason)¹ can also wear the Bhasma, but they are required to use the ash of the funeral pile in the cremation ground.

Devotees of Lord Shiva should wear the Bhasma got from a fire sacrifice done with proper Mantras and in accordance with established traditions in a temple of Lord Shiva.

To emphasis the immense importance and great significance of wearing the Bhasma and the Tripundra, there are Slokas (verses of the scripture) that endorse this view—‘A Brahmin who has worn the Tripundra made from the (paste of) Bhasma on his head is deemed to have studied (the Vedas and other scriptures), observed all the sacraments, and performed all the religious rituals (7).

[Note—¹Such people are called ‘Chandals’. The Chandal performs last rites of the dead and stay in the cremation ground and away from inhabited areas of cities and villages.]

8. Even a man who has become so wayward, deviant and fallen that he has abandoned all traditional codes of proper conduct and rules of behaviour as sanctioned for the four Varnas and Ashrams¹ in the society by the ancient scriptures, a man who has not done any religious or auspicious deed and has forsaken the virtues of righteousness, probity and propriety in his life, can obtain pardon for his misdemeanors, misdeeds, sins, reckless behaviour and deviance from established norms by wearing the Tripundra made of the sacred Bhasma. [This verse provides all people who have, for some reason, not been following the righteous path an avenue to redeem themselves and mend their ways so that they can put their past behind and look forward for a better life and a better future. The scriptures are not like a cruel tyrannical king’s dictate that has to be followed ruthlessly out of fear of merciless punishment for those who do not obey their orders, without giving them even a chance for repentance, rectification and redemption, but a considerate, merciful and magnanimous charter that shows the fallen man a path that can be followed by him for his own self-redemption and welfare no matter how sinful or bad his past might have been if he is really and sincerely interested in his liberation and deliverance from the horrific consequences of his past misdeeds and unrighteous conduct. After all, it is perfectly alright to err as a human being, but what is more important is to realize the fact that one has committed an error and that he should rectify himself at the first available opportunity.] (8).

[Note—¹The four Varnas and the four Ashrams—

(a) The four *Varnas*--The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are— (a) Brahmins*—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society,

dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras—the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

Yajur Veda 31st Chapter, 11th Mantra says that Brahmins are the mouth of society, the Kshatriyas are its arms, Vaishyas are its stomach or abdomen, and Shudras are its legs. The body is regarded as a symbol of the society. As is obvious in this analogy, all these four units of the body must function properly and in close cooperation with each other in order that the body can survive and live comfortably and carry on with its assigned duties in an orderly fashion. The mouth is important because it is the medium by which the body takes food and speaks; the arms procure food and gives protection to the body against enemies; the stomach digests food and supplies the whole body with the energy needed by it; the abdomen holds all the internal organs; and the legs carry the body wherever it wants to go such as the place where food is available. Since food is the basis necessity of life, this instance is cited here. And the logic can be extended to everything else. Each component of the society must work properly in order that the whole society survives; each component is as vital as the other; each has its own importance in the bigger picture.

*The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahman.] An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject. The eclectic virtues of Brahmins have been expounded in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 5 as well as in Canto 3, Brahman 8, verse no. 10

These four classes of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped as well as feels the pain equally if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain. The four classes had specific jobs cut for them so that the society could function smoothly.

The Brahmins have their origin from the mouth of Brahma the creator. Since the mouth is used to give advice and teach others, the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guide to their brethren. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exist, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas, who were created from the arms of Brahma, were those sons of his who would give the needed protection and security to their other brethren. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour to provide for the maintenance and financial and material well being of the society for merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life. So he created the Vaishyas from his thighs, symbolizing labour, to pick up the mantle of mundane

affairs of life. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras created from Brahma's feet symbolizing service.

None of these classes were meant to be inferior or superior to one another; they were all parts of the body of the same Brahma. In fact, the leg bears the burden of the body; just imagine what would have happened if Brahma had not created anyone from his legs? How would the Brahmin walk, how would the Kshatriya fight, and how would the Vaishya do his commercial activities if he could not walk? Similar arguments can be applied to other classes.

The origin of the four classes in the society have been described in detail, inter alia, in the following Upanishads—Shukla Yajur Veda tradition's Subalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse 6, and Canto 2, verse 1; and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/11-15; Rig Veda tradition's Aetereyo-panishad, 1/1/4.

Reasons for classification—The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 10 states the reason for the classification of the society in four classes.

Colour of the skin--It ought to be noted here that the genesis of creation as outlined by the Upanishads describe the colour of the skin of the creatures that came into being. The colour of the skin was used symbolically to indicate the dominance of one or the other of the three basic Gunas, the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, in a particular individual that determines to which class of society he belongs, and which formed the basis of this classification which depend heavily on the quality displayed by an individual to become eligible to belong to one or the other class. The Gunas displayed by him holds a greater importance than his mere birth in a particular section.

For example, in Mantriko-panishad, verse no. 5 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition it is said that Maya, which has created this entire world by its delusion creating powers, has the following three colours—white (fair; grey; all the light shades), dark (brown, black, yellowish and all shades of colours that are not essentially white) and blood red (or copper colour). Since the offspring gets the colour of the skin of the parent because the colour often is indicative of the race to which a particular species belongs, there would therefore be creatures having these three basic colours in varying hues and shades. Now what is the significance of these three colours? These three colours represent the three basic qualities, called Gunas, present in all the creatures. Even as an offspring gets the colour of the skin of the race to which it belongs, the inherent characters of all creatures are inherited from their mother, and this mother is Maya. The white colour stands for the best category of qualities called Sata Guna, the red colour stands for the second and medium quality called Raja, and the dark colour stands for the meanest quality called Tama. The word Tam itself means 'dark' and it stands for the worst type of qualities leading to sinful and pervert nature in a man which makes his life hellish; the word 'red' is a metaphor for anger, vehemence, vengeance, agitations, restlessness, short temper, strife, hatred, envy, jealousy and the other such negative worldly characteristics in a person; the colour 'white' stands for peace, tranquility, prosperity, happiness and wisdom, all of which are the characters of noble and gentlemanly persons. Refer also Shewata-shwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse 4-5; Paingalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3; Mantriko-panishad, verse no. 5 in this context.

According to some versions, there are five or six Varnas instead of four as described above.

The 5 Varnas are the following—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra and Nishad who belong to the hunting and boatman tribe.

The 6 Varnas are following—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, Nishad (who belong to the hunting and boatman tribe) and Chandala who perform last rites of the dead and stay in the cremation ground and away from inhabited areas of cities and villages.

(b) The four *Ashrams*—The life of a Hindu man is divided into four segments or sections of roughly twenty-five years each. These are called the ‘Ashrams’. They are the following—(a) Brahmacharya—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style of a boarding school. (b) Grihastha—when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihastha Ashram which is a householder’s life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life alongside the dealings with this deceptive world with all its accompanying horrifying problems. (c) Vanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting-off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and meditation, living a life of total renunciation, and begging for food for survival while single mindedly endeavouring for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.

These four Ashrams, their characteristic features and virtues are described in detail in an Upanishad called ‘Ashramo-panishad’ belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition. Refer also to Narad Parivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 2, which is Chapter 8 of the present volume, as well as to the Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 3 in the context of one taking the vows of Sanyas, the renunciate way of life which is the fourth and the last phase in the life of a man which prepares him for his final liberation and deliverance from this world.]

9. Those persons who do not wear the Bhasma and perform religious rituals do not get the desired spiritual rewards and neither do they ever get Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death) even after taking numerous births. [This verse merely highlights the importance of the Bhasma in the sense that if one wishes to derive the best result from any religious activity done by him, such as doing the fire sacrifice etc., then he must wear the consecrated Bhasma on his body.] (9).

10. A person who wears the Tripundra is freed from the evil consequences of great sins committed in some past time of his present life, and even those of the previous lives (10).

11. If a person becomes annoyed or angry at seeing the Tripundra on the head of any other person then it should be understood that the former is not from a noble and refined family, or has not been initiated into the religious fold and been baptized, or has not undergone the normal purification process and obtained consecration (by being given the sacred thread or the Mantra that is given to all children when they are baptized according to Hindu system) (11).

12. Wearing of the Tripundra and Bhasma is prescribed by the Vedas; the importance of its wearing and its holiness is described by them. Therefore, those who do not have faith in the Tripundra and the Bhasma, and do not wear them with due reverence, suffer from the bad consequences arising from defective purification or consecration rituals that are done for a newly born child, and such people lack from the benefits that normally accrue with proper baptism and initiation into the religious fold. This is a certainty.

On the contrary, those who do not suffer from such defects of baptism or other rituals done for purification of the child at his birth have a natural respect for and faith in the sanctity and the power of the Tripundra and the Bhasma, and such people wear them with firm conviction and devotion (12).

13. A wise and learned person must know that if a man forces someone wearing the Bhasma and the Tripundra to suffer, or tortures him or causes misery to him in any way, then surely the man who causes such sufferance or misery is highly despicable and born to Chandal parents. [That is, a man who makes the religious man who wears the Tripundra undergo sufferance or misery is not of a noble birth, and is surely a lowly and fallen man. He is an evil and ignoble man who is no better than the lowly Chandal who is an outcaste, and whose vocation is to burn dead bodies in the cremation ground.] (13).

14. If a man becomes angry or gets upset by merely seeing someone wearing the Bhasma and the Tripundra then such a man is cursed and he commits an offence which is equivalent to having committed a great and horrible sin—this is conclusion of the scriptures (14).

15. Criticism of the Tripundra is like a direct insult of Lord Shiva (because it is a symbol of the Lord).

In the same vein, wearing the Tripundra on the body is like establishing Lord Shiva on it and consecrating it as a holy abode of the Lord (15).

16. Cursed is a man and woe betide him who does not wear the Bhasma (as the mark of a Tripundra) on his head. Cursed is a town, a village or a habitat, and woe betide it, that does not have a shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. A birth (i.e. a life) in which a person does not worship Lord Shiva is contemptible and cursed. Any body of knowledge that does not enlighten one on the Shiva Tattva (i.e. the Shiva principle; the knowledge of the Absolute Truth) is similarly contemptible and abhorable, and worth avoiding (16).

17. The Bhasma is a symbol of the fire emanating from (the eyes of) Lord Rudra (one of the forms of Lord Shiva, especially the one which is dynamic, forceful and energetic). [The Bhasma or the sacred ash is produced when the offerings are made to the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice. The fire reduces all these offerings to ash, and it is a sort of condensed and purified form of all the offerings as the raging fire would have burnt all the impurities put into it. Here the symbolism is clear—the angry and uncompromising form of Shiva, who himself stands for the eclectic virtues of truth, holiness, divinity, righteousness and auspiciousness, is known as ‘Rudra’, and in this form he burns all the evil elements that taint a worshipper’s inner being, thereby cleansing him from the inside. When the ash is worn outside the body, it is like cleansing the outside as well. Again, Lord Shiva is known for his immense wisdom

and enlightenment, and hence whenever he observes things tainted with corruption and which do not conform to the principles of probity, propriety, auspiciousness and righteousness, he ignites the fire hidden in his eyes to send out rays to clean the system. These rays are like the laser rays, and they are very powerful and precise. Like the laser rays used in modern surgery that hit directly and precisely to burn the ‘cancer cells’ in order to protect the rest of the body of the patient, the fiery rays emanating from the eyes of Lord Shiva strike at the root cause of a devotee’s spiritual decline and burn all the ‘impurities and tainted elements’ in him. That is, they eliminate all his evil tendencies and the horrific spiritual consequences of all his evil deeds, evil behaviour, evil thoughts and mental decadence in order to protect his soul. Thus, what remains is the pure and holy ‘self’.]

Therefore, this Bhasma is a source of spiritual strength and powers. Hence, a person who wears this Bhasma is ‘spiritually strong and empowered’ at all times; he is strong and powerful (17).

18. A person who has firm faith in the esoteric spiritual powers of Bhasma to provide purification from all sorts of sins and misdemeanours is rewarded with the same. That is, all his misdeeds and their accumulated horrible consequences are reduced to ashes or eliminated.

The Atma or the pure conscious ‘self’ of a person who is cleansed by taking a virtual bath with the Bhasma (i.e. who has worn the sacred ash in the prescribed manner on his body) is deemed to be most holy, purified, taintless, uncorrupted and immaculate. Such a person is the one who is said to have ‘Bhasma Nistha’—one who has firm believe in the mystical and esoteric powers of the Bhasma, and who is fully devoted to honouring and wearing it in the proper way (18).

19. A person is also called ‘Bhasma Nistha’ if he smears the sacred ash on his entire body, if he wears the mark of the Tripundra made of (a paste of) this Bhasma, or if he sleeps on a spread of the sacred ash on the ground (19).

[Note—The mystical powers of the sacred Bhasma have been enumerated below in Brahman 6.]

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Brahman 6

[This Brahman describes five astounding mystical powers of the sacred Bhasma (the consecrated holy ash of the fire sacrifice) by illustrating them citing a story from the Purans. Each power is like an honoured title or an epithet assigned to the Bhasma. Hence, this Brahman describes the ‘Naam Panchak’ or the five names by which the Bhasma is known. For instance, the first power is its ability to give life to a cursed man who is condemned to death. This is described in verse nos. 1-4. The second is its power to eliminate the curse of horrific sins. This is narrated in verse nos. 5-6. The third is its power that established a unique similarity between Lords Vishnu and Shiva and to provide all round welfare and auspiciousness to a devotee. How this came to happen is narrated in verse nos. 7-11. This power is endorsed by Lord Vishnu himself. The sacred Bhasma is so powerful that various Gods stand around to attend the devotee who wears it, and it is a bestower of all wisdom, erudition and knowledge to its wearer—these two additional facts, bringing the total number of glorious virtues of Bhasma to five, have been outlined in verse no. 12.

The mystical powers and the glory of the sacred Bhasma have been enumerated also in Brahman 4, verse nos. 32-36, and in Brahman 7, verse nos. 2-4.

Earlier, Brahman 1 has listed these names of the sacred Bhasma as Vibhuti, Bhaasit, Bhasma, Kshar and Rakshaa.]

1. In the continuing discourse, sage Bhusund then asked Lord Kalagnirudra about the importance of the 'Naam Panchak'—the five names or epithets that are given to the sacred Bhasma (the sacred ash derived from a fire sacrifice) as an honour for it, and to describe the astounding mystical and esoteric powers that it possesses. [A story from the Purans is cited here to illustrate each power that the Bhasma possesses.]

The Lord answered—'There was a Brahmin named Dhananjay who was born in the clan of sage Vashistha. [Sage Vashistha was one of the sons of the creator Brahma, and was the court priest of the kings of Ayodhya where Lord Vishnu took an incarnation as Lord Ram whose story has been narrated in the great Ramayana.]

He had a hundred wives. From the eldest wife a son named Karun was born. His wife was named Shuchismita. Animosity and ill-will developed between Karun and his other brothers. He could not bear with this tension and went to have a divine sight or Darshan of Lord Narsingh (a half man and half lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu) situated near a shrine dedicated to the Goddess Bhavaani (one of the forms of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva).

Someone had offered a lemon to the idol of Lord Narsingh. Karun picked up the lemon and smelled it. The servitors of the Lord (i.e. of his shrine) saw this and cursed him that he would be born as a mosquito for a hundred births. Karun accepted this curse and became a mosquito.

He made efforts to contact his wife Shuchismita and asked her to help him. When she came to realize his predicament, her relatives kept this mosquito in a pot of oil.

The wife took that body of her husband who had been transformed as a mosquito and went to take shelter with and to seek the intervention of Arundhati (the wife of sage Vashistha).

The holy Arundhati reassured Shuchismita and told her not to grieve. She said, 'I will bring him back to life by using the sacred ash of the holy fire (that was constantly present in her home).' Then she invoked the most powerful Mantra called the 'Mritunjay Mantra' (literally meaning the Mantra which can conquer death) and sprinkled the sacred ash on the body of the insect (mosquito). Shuchismita began to wave the fan to provide refreshing air (1).

2. Karun got up and regained his consciousness as a blessing of the powerful rejuvenating and restoring effect of the Agnihotra (i.e. of the holy ash taken out of the pit of the sacred fire sacrifice) that was sprinkled on his body as a mosquito.

When a hundred years passed (symbolizing the curse of a hundred births as a mosquito), he was killed by someone of his own caste or clan (2).

3. He was once again revived as a blessing of the sacred Bhasma.

The five Gods (i.e. the Lokpals or custodians of the world) live in Kashi (the holy pilgrim city of Varanasi in north India) because they know the astounding mystical powers of the Bhasma (3).

4. I (Kalagnirudra or Shiva) too bless the dying man with life relying on the esoteric and most astounding rejuvenating powers of the Bhasma. Dadhichi had also known

this mystery of the Bhasma. He used to live in his hermitage by smearing the Bhasma on his body (4).

[Note—*Dadhichi* was an ancient sage who willingly sacrificed his life to help the Gods win over the Demons. He was the son of sage Atharvan, the progenitor of the Atharva Veda and the first sage who initiated the tradition of Fire worship, and his wife Shanti. The well known sage Pippalaad was his son. Dadhichi is a synonym for the highest ideals of self-sacrifice for the general good.

It so happened that once the Gods deposited all their weapons with him for safe keeping, promising to return at some fixed time. When they failed to show up and upon observing that the weapons had begun to rust, Dadhichi dissolved them in water and drank the solution. The ingredients of the weapons got deposited in his bones, especially the back bone. Thus, his bones became extremely strong. When the Gods came asking for their weapons, the sage told them what he had done, whereupon the Gods requested him to give them his backbone from which an invincible weapon can be crafted by which their formidable enemy, the demon king Vrittaasur, could be slain. Dadhichi conceded and gave them his backbone from which was made Indra's invincible weapon called the Vajra (thunder-bolt).

He did not die, but used the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice to remain alive in his hermitage as is clear from this Upanishad.

Verse nos. 1-4 narrate the power that the Bhasma has which can help the wearer overcome the fear of death.]

5. [The second story is now being described to emphasize the importance of Bhasma as an eliminator of all the evil effects of horrible sins.]

Now the astounding mystical and esoteric power of the sacred Bhasma—that it can destroy or eliminate all the sins and their horrific consequences—is being narrated.

On the occasion of the marriage of sage Gautam, the Gods saw his wife Ahilya and became so infatuated by her bewitching beauty that they lost their self-restraint and the sense of ethics, wisdom and rationality. This was not expected from them, and thus this very despicable thought of becoming sexually passionate about a sage's wife was a horrible sin. This evil thought became the cause of their being eclipsed by the dark shadow of sin. To get reprieve, they approached sage Durbasa and requested him to do something to calm down the horrors of this sin.

The sage promised them to do something to calm down the evil effects of this ignoble act. He said, 'I had on earlier occasions given (or prescribed) the sacred Bhasma empowered by using the 'Shatrudra Mantra' (i.e. the sacred hundred names of Lord Rudra or Shiva that are used as mystical formula called a Mantra; it has divine and mystical powers) for the purpose of redemption from and calming down of the horrible effects of even the most horrendous of sins such as the killing of a Brahmin.'

Saying this, the sage gave this most excellent and mystically empowered Bhasma to the Gods. As a result of its divine powers, the Gods were able to redeem and absolve themselves from this sin. Instead of being condemned, acquiring ignominy or getting demoted from their exalted stature of godhood because of this sinful act (of becoming passionate with a sage's wife), they not only were given a pardon from their sins but also became all the more glorious as a blessing bestowed upon them when they wore the Bhasma which is especially empowered and blessed by me (i.e. by Lord Kalagnirudra or Lord Shiva) (5).

6. They rejoiced—'All our sins and evil thoughts that were caused by the dominance of Tama Guna (which is the lowest of the three qualities in all the creatures, and

which makes them swerve towards sins and harbour evil thoughts) have been eliminated by the auspicious effects of wearing the sacred Bhasma which is infused with astounding mystical powers of redemption and salvation that is derived from it being sanctified and empowered by the use of the Shatrudra Mantra. [Refer verse no. 5.] (6).

7. This magical ability of the Bhasma is really astonishing.

Listen to more wonders of this mystical Bhasma. It is on the strength of this Bhasma that Lords Vishnu and Shiva have acquired wisdom and enlightenment. It is an eliminator of the horrors of grave sins such as the killing of a Brahmin. It can bestow immense good fortunes, majesty, grandeur and fame.

Lord Vishnu had scooped up some Bhasma with the help of his finger nails from the chest of Lord Shiva, sanctified and empowered it with stupendous mystical powers with the help of the two divine Mantras, one of Pranav (i.e. the Mantra of OM) and the other of the famous Gayatri Mantra, and then wore it on his head and body. [The Gayatri Mantra is given as a note to verse no. 6, Brahman 3.]

Lord Shiva said to Lord Vishnu—‘Meditate upon my divine form in your heart.’

When Lord Vishnu meditated, he had a divine and auspicious vision of Lord Shiva. He exulted in excitement—‘I’ve seen! I’ve seen (the magnificent divine form of the Lord)!’

Then Lord Shiva requested Lord Vishnu to gulp down a little of the sacred Bhasma.

Lord Vishnu said that first he would take a symbolic bath with this Bhasma (i.e. smear it over the body) before gulping it down (7).

8-9. After taking permission from Lord Shiva, Vishnu gulped down some Bhasma. Then a magical event occurred there—after eating the Bhasma with great devotion for Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu’s complexion changed to the radiant colour of pearl. This complexion made Lord Vishnu appear to be like a reflection of Lord Shiva, an image of Shiva (because Shiva’s glowing complexion is also like that of a pearl due to the rubbing of the sacred ash on his body). [Normally, Vishnu is of a blue complexion like that of the sky. When he ate the Bhasma, it changed to the radiant colour of pearl.]

It is since then that Lord Vasudeo (i.e. Lord Vishnu) has become clear complexioned (8-9).

10. Lord Vishnu declared—It is not at all possible to have a full knowledge of the magical powers and mystical effects of the Bhasma as well as of the glorious majesty, the divinity, the cosmic powers and mystical abilities of Lord Shiva.

[Prayer that were offered by Vishnu to Lord Shiva—] ‘I repeatedly bow most reverentially to Lord Shiva. I have come to seek refuge at the holy feet of the Lord (10).

11. Oh Shambho (Shiva)! Let me have steady and constant devotion for your holy feet.’

Lord Vishnu declared as follows—‘A devotee who prays in this way and wears the sacred Bhasma in honour of Lord Shiva would deem to be my (Vishnu’s) devotee.’ (11).

[Note—Earlier in verse nos. 8-9 it has already been said that after imbibing the sacred Bhasma, Lord Vishnu had undergone a transformation and appeared to be a reflection of Shiva. That is, there appeared to be no difference between Vishnu and Shiva. This fact that both of them are the same cosmic Divinity or the Supreme Being having two names because they perform different functions, the former being the sustainer and protector of creation, while the latter, in his form as Rudra, is the concluder of creation, has been affirmed in other Upanishads as well—for instance, the entire Rudra Hridaya Upanishad and Skanda Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda are dedicated to this theme. Verse nos. 4, 8-9 of the Skanda Upanishad are specifically explicit on this point.]

12. Hence, this sacred Bhasma is called ‘Bhuti-Kaari’—i.e. one that purifies, cleanses, and bestows all kinds of welfare and auspiciousness (to its wearer).

The eight Vasus¹ stand in attendance in its front, the eleven Rudras² are to its south (rear; behind), the twelve Adityas (Suns)³ are to its west (left hand side), the Vishwa Devas (the patron Gods of the various worlds) are to its north (upper side; above), the Trinity Gods consisting of the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder Shiva are to its south (below), and the Sun and the Moon stand on its either sides. [Here, the reference is to the wearer of the Bhasma. This verse implies that all these Gods stand ready to attend to any of the needs of the wearer of the Bhasma, and are ever eager to give their protection to him from all the sides.]

The Brihajjabal Upanishad and its proper knowledge is a fulfiller of all desires and expectations; it is a doorway to Moksha (liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation); it is a personification of or equivalent to the three primary Vedas—viz. the Rig, the Yajur and the Sam Vedas; and it is like Amrit or the elixir of life that gives eternity and bliss.

A person who has a proper and comprehensive knowledge of this Upanishad becomes most wise, erudite, sagacious and learned inspite of his being as naïve, immature, unsophisticated and ignorant as a child. He becomes a learned one who is deemed to be a universal Guru (moral preceptor, teacher and guide) for all. He is elevated to an exalted stature so that he becomes eligible to give the holy Mantras to others.

This Upanishad is like a divine Mantra which possesses the mystical power to help one overcome death. A devotee or spiritual aspirant should accept it from a learned Guru and make it into a charm, and then wear it on the throat (as a necklace), the upper arms (as an armband) or on the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the head).

The obligation of the Guru is so great upon the disciple that the entire earth with its seven continents cannot suffice as a fee for the Guru. It is rather better to give a cow as a fee to the teacher as it would be sufficient (12).

[Note—¹The *eight Vasus* are Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Pratyush and Prabhash. Refer verse no. 16, Brahman 4 of this Upanishad. Refer also to Nrisingh Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3 and its accompanying note no. 3, which is Chapter 7 of this volume.

²The *eleven Rudras* are the eleven forms of Lord Shiva. They are the following:-- (i) Mannu (मनु), (ii) Manu (मनु), (iii) Mahinas (महिनस), (iv) Mahaan (महान), (v) Shiva (शिव), (vi) Ritdwaj (ऋतुध्वज), (vii) Ugrareta (उग्ररेता), (viii) Bhav (भव), (ix) Kaal (काल), (x) Vamdeo (वामदेव), and (xi) Dhritvrat (धृतिव्रत). The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har (हर), Bahuroop (बहुरूप), Trayambak (त्र्यम्बक), Aparajeet (अपराजित), Shambhu (शम्भु), Vrishakapi (वृषाकपि), Kapardi (कपर्दी), Raivat (रैवत), Mrigvyadh (मृगव्याध), Sharva (शर्व), and Kapaali (कपाली). Refer also to Nrisingh Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3 and its accompanying note no. 2, which is Chapter 7 of this volume.

³The *twelve Adityas* are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = 12 in number.

According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata (धाता), Arayma (अर्यमा), Mitra (मित्र), Varun (वरुण), Anshu (अंशु), Bhug (भृगु), Indra (इन्द्र), Vivaswan (विवस्वान), Pusha (पूषा), Parjanya (पर्जन्य), Twashta (त्वष्टा) and Vishnu (विष्णु).

The *Sun God* is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as Dhata during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as Aryama during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as Mitra during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as Varun during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as Indra during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as Vivaswan during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as Pusha during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as Kratu during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as Anshu during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as Bhag during the tenth Hindu month of Paush also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as Twasta during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as Vishnu during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March). Refer also to Nrisingh Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3 and its accompanying note no. 3, which is Chapter 7 of this volume.]

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Brahman 7

[This Brahman describes two things—one is the importance of the Bhasma and the Tripundra (from verse nos. 1 to 7), and the other is the importance of the Rudraksha beads (in verse no. 8).]

1. Once, the king of Videha, King Janak¹, went to the great sage Yagyavalkya and asked him to elucidate about all the rules and regulations pertaining to the process of

sanctifying the Bhasma (the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice) and wearing of the Tripundra (the three lines made on the body by using this duly empowered Bhasma).

Sage Yagyavalkya replied—‘One should offer oblations to the sacred fire using the five sacred Mantras of the Vedas such as ‘Saddyojat’ etc. [The five divine Mantras referred to here have been narrated earlier also in Brahman 3, verse nos. 29-32, and Brahman 4, verse no. 1. These Mantras are dedicated to the supreme transcendental Brahman, and they have also been described in detail in the Panch Brahm Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 5-23.]

The sacred ash is invested with mystical powers by invoking the Bhasma Mantra. It is lifted by invoking the ‘Manastok Mantra’, mixed with water (to form a paste) by saying the ‘Trayush Mantra’, and worn (marked) on the head, forehead, chest and the shoulders by invoking the ‘Trayambak Mantra’. [The Bhasma Mantra is narrated in Brahman 2, verse no. 11, the Mantras needed for its preparation are narrated in Brahman 3, verse nos. 3-25, and the Bhasma accepted and applied on the various parts of the body by invoking the different Mantras as enumerated in Brahman 3, verse nos. 26-32.]

A person who wears the Bhasma in the prescribed manner becomes purified and cleansed; he becomes eligible for obtaining Moksha (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation).

Such is the immense potentials and importance of wearing the sacred Bhasma in the aforesaid manner is that its systemic wearing is equivalent to performing a religious ceremony or a ritual using the divine Mantra of Lord Shiva, called the ‘Shatrudra Mantra’ (1).

[Note—¹King Janak was regarded as the most enlightened and a self-realised dispassionate king of his times who was well-versed in and had a deep knowledge of metaphysics and principles of the Upanishads. He used to hold regular conclaves or assemblies where great sages and seers of the time were invited to discuss and preach on spiritual and metaphysical subjects. The Brihad Aranayak Upanishad, Brahman 3, Cantos 1-9 mention one such great conclave where great sages and seers had participated, and where sage Yagyavalkya was finally declared the undisputed winner, while Brahman 4, Cantos 1-4 describe how Janak had accepted Yagyavalkya as his teacher and asked the latter to preach him.

The level of Janak’s learning and erudition is evident from another incident when sage Shukdeo, the enlightened son of sage Veda Vyas who had classified the Vedas, compiled the Upanishads, and written the voluminous Purans, was advised by his learned father to go to king Janak to learn profound principles of metaphysics and spiritualism. Janak had tested Shukdeo’s eligibility, aptitude and competence by making him wait for prolonged time before even giving him a hearing. The entire episode along with the profound teachings of Janak forms the subject matter of the text of Canto 2 of the Maho-panishad of the Sam Veda tradition.

In the Ithihas-Purans, especially the one dealing with Lord Ram such as the epic Ramayana, he is shown as being the father of Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram. He is called ‘Videha’ because he was so highly enlightened and self-realised that he knew the truth of the teaching of the Upanishads that the ‘self’ is not the gross body but the pure consciousness Atma, the soul, the spirit. This led him to be totally detached and disinterested in his body and what it does. He was so unconcerned about the body that for all practical purposes the body did not exist for him—i.e. he was ‘one without a body’, or a ‘Videha’.]

2. King of Videha, Janak, asked—‘What is the reward of wearing the Bhasma¹?’

Sage Yagyavalkya replied—‘As a divine grace of wearing the sacred Bhasma, all the Gods obtain Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance); all of them obtain the form of Mukti called ‘Sayujya Mukti’².

Verily, as an auspicious blessing and a reward for wearing the sacred Bhasma, they do not have to take a birth again; indeed they do not have to be re-born again (2).

[Note—¹The glorious and divine mystical powers of the sanctified Bhasma have described in Brahman 4, verse nos. 32-36, Brahman 5, verse nos. 18-19, and the whole of Brahman 6.

²There are four types of *Muktis* or deliverances for a creature— viz (i) *Salokya* which refers to finding an abode in the supreme divine abode of the chosen deity of the seeker; (ii) *Sayujya* which refers to intimate union between the individual soul of the creature and the supreme Soul of creation which is the supreme transcendental Brahman manifested in the form of the Lord whom the aspirant worships as his patron deity or Lord God. It implies to become one with the Lord; to merge one’s own identity with the Lord so that one becomes inseparable from his Lord; this form of salvation is very similar to the one that comes under the definition of Kaivalya; it is also called the ‘Param Pad’ or supreme state of being one with the Lord. (iii) *Samipya* which refers to being able to reside near the Lord to serve him; and (iv) *Sarupya* which implies that the aspirant becomes one with the deity whom he worships as his ideal.

Therefore, when the Gods wear the sacred ash they become as holy and divine as Lord Shiva himself.]

3. King Janak of Videha asked sage Yagyavalkya to further elaborate upon the immense spiritual rewards of wearing the sacred Bhasma and its great significance.

The sage replied that many exalted sages who had attained the highest stature of spiritualism and were honoured by the title of a ‘Paramhans’¹ had obtained the same Mukti (or an exalted state of existence) that is available to the Gods (as described in verse no. 2) by the divine grace and blessings of the sacred Bhasma. Some of these sages were Samvartak², Aaruni³, Shwetketu⁴, Durvasa⁵, Ribhu⁶, Nidagh⁷, Jadbharat⁸, Dattatreya⁹, Raivat¹⁰, and Bhusund¹¹.

The sage asserted that such is the eclectic glory and divine powers of the sacred Bhasma that these sages could attain a stature as that possessed by the great Gods (3).

[Note—¹A *Paramhans* is a person who has become self-realised and Brahman-realised, and consequently is regarded as being wise and enlightened as well as immensely holy and pure. He is therefore compared to a Swan which is regarded as a wise bird that invariably picks up the best and discards the rest. According to legends, the Swan would pick up pearls from an assortment of gems and jewels, and show no attention to or interest in the rest. It is also known to drink only milk and leave the excess water which had been added to it as an adulterant. A *Paramhans* is a *Sanyasi*, a renunciate ascetic who is most wise, self-realised and enlightened. All the Upanishads that describe the concept of *Sanyas* stress on the exalted nature of a *Paramhans* ascetic.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 37-38 describes the characteristics of a *Paramhans*

²Sage *Samvartak*—He was the son of the great sage Aangiras. Brihaspati and Uthya were his brothers. [Mahabharata, Adi Parva, 67.] He is probably the author of the ancient work called ‘Samvarta Smriti’ which is in the form of his teachings to sages Vamdeo and others. The topics dealt with in it are related to Brahmacharya (i.e. the life of immaculacy and observance of self righteousness), Prayaschitta (i.e. expiation for various sins), duties of a householder, a forest dwelling ascetic as well as a *Sanyasi* (a renunciate monk), a king etc.

³Sage *Aaruni*—He was the son of sage Arun Anupveshi, and belonged to the kingdom of Panchaal. He is one of the more important sages mentioned in the

Upanishads. He was the father of another great sage named Shwetketu and had taught his own son the profoundly esoteric secrets of that by knowing which all that is unknown becomes known. [Refer Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, Canto 6.]

He was a disciple of the sage Dhaumya. He was such a faithful and obedient disciple that once when his teacher had asked him to stop the water that had breached the embankments of his field during a heavy downpour, Aaruni lay down on the ground himself to block the breach as all his other efforts to stop the leakage had failed. The Guru (teacher) Dhaumya was exceedingly pleased at his devotion to duty, his sincerity and obedience, and therefore he blessed him that he would acquire all knowledge even without studying them formally, that he would get immense renown, glory and majesty, and that he would be especially blessed by the Lord and accepted as his devotee. It is since then that Aaruni became famous as 'Uddyakak'—one who fastened or bound the embankment.

He had participated in the great metaphysical debate held in the court of the wise and enlightened king Janak of Videha in which sage Yagyavalkya had defeated all the assembled Brahmins. Aaruni had himself asked Yagyavalkya a question about who the Antaryaami (the one who resides in one's inner self and knows everything, even one's secret thoughts) was, and the latter replied this in a comprehensive manner. [Refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 3, Brahman 6.]

He was very humble and readily acknowledged his limited knowledge of the fathomless unknown. This is proved by the fact that he had no second thoughts in requesting king Pravaahan, the son of king Jaivali, to teach him the 'Panch Agni Vidya' or the metaphysical knowledge about the five holy Fires. [Refer—Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, Canto 5, sections 3-10; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 6, Brahman 2.]

⁴Sage *Shwetketu*—He was the son of sage Aaruni and a grandson of sage Arun, and belonged to the lineage of the ancient sage Gautam. So, on numerous occasions he is referred to as 'Gautam' in the Upanishads. He is one of the more famous sages appearing in the Upanishads. He was taught the principles of metaphysics pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahma by his father Aaruni (also known as Uddyalak). [Refer—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6.]

He was initiated as a disciple very early in life at the age of 12 years and studied the Vedas for 24 years. But he was very arrogant and haughty of his knowledge. [Refer—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 1, verse no. 2.] When he returned from his teacher's hermitage, his learned father was sorry at this mentality of his son. The father asked him if he knew about that by knowing which even the unknown could be known. When Shwetketu replied in the negative, his father taught him this great esoteric secret in the whole of Canto 6 of the Chandogya Upanishad.

His arrogance led him to taste defeat and humiliation at the hands of king Pravaahan, the son of king Jaivali, of Panchal, when the king asked him about Brahm. [Refer—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, section 3, verse nos. 1-5.]

In another incidence, he could not answer questions about the 'Vaishwaanar Atma' (the cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading and omnipresent) when approached by five noble householder sages Aupmanyu (the son of sage Upmanyu), Paulashi alias Satyayagya (the son of sage Pulush), Bhaallavi (the son of sage Bhalavi), Bhaalarveya alias Indradumnya (the son of Bhaallavi), Shaarkaraakshya (the son of sage Sharkaraaksha), and Budil (the son of sage Ashwatarashwa). They then went to king Ashwapati (literally a king who had a large cavalry and a huge stable of war horses) who elaborated on this aspect of metaphysics. [This episode is narrated in Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, sections 11-24.]

It was Shwetketu who had assigned specific duties to priests who perform the elaborate fire sacrifices. He was very annoyed at the promiscuity of the people of his time and had thus initiated reform in this direction by establishing and systematizing

the institution of marriage. He is credited in this context to have penned an abridged version of the Kaamsutra (the science and principles of Erotica) which was originally written by Nandi, the mount of Lord Shiva.

One of his talented disciples was the learned sage Upkosal. [Refer—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 4, section 10.]

His wife was named Suvarcala who was the daughter of sage Devala. His brother was sage Nachiketa who had been blessed by the God of death, Yama, himself, and who is the cause of the revelation of the famous Katho-panishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda. His sister was Sujata, the wife of sage Kahola. Another famous sage Ashataavakra was his nephew.

⁵*Sage Durvasa*—Sage Durvasa was a highly enlightened sage inspite of his reputation of being anger personified as he is regarded as being an incarnation of Lord Rudra, the angry form of Lord Shiva. The depth of his metaphysical and spiritual knowledge is revealed in the form of an Upanishad known as the Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is included as section 2 of Chapter 27 of the present volume. This Chapter is ‘Gopal Tapini Upanishad. A brief life-sketch of sage Durvasa is appended as a note of verse no. 2 of this particular Upanishad.

⁶*Sages Ribhu and* ⁷*Nidagh*—An entire Upanishad called the Annapurna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition is dedicated to these two sages. It was revealed as a preaching of sage Ribhu for the benefit of Nidagh. It is Chapter 16 of this current volume. For a brief pen-sketch of sages Ribhu and Nidagh, the reader is advised to refer to the note of verse no. 1, Canto 1 of this Annapurna Upanishad in this volume.

⁸*Jadbharat*—There was an ancient king named Bharat who was very devout, valorous, influential and renowned. India is also known as ‘Bhaarat’ after him. Towards the end of his life, he became infatuated with a fawn, as a result of which he had to take a birth again as a deer. Upon death, he was re-born in a Brahmin’s household as ‘Jadbharat’. His father was a learned man who read the Vedas and belonged to the clan of seers named after the great ancient sage Aangiras. [Aangiras was the sage who first started the ancient tradition of ‘fire worship’, was the first sacrificer and the forefather of sacred rituals. He had achieved such great mastery of the fire element that he could replace the Fire God and take over his duties during rituals if the latter did not oblige the worshipper. The Purans describe him variously as being the mental-born son of Brahma, the creator, and as having sprung forth from the sacrificial fire of the Varun God (the Water God; also sometimes referred to as the Sun because the latter is responsible for rains).]

Jadbharat had remembered his past life and how attachment to a fawn had resulted in his demotion to being born as a deer in the next life. So in this new life as a human he was extra cautious and remained aloof from and dispassionate towards the temptations of all charming things of this material world and its sense objects to avoid falling in the trap of Moha (attachments) once again. To avoid the world he intentionally pretended to be crazy, insane, intoxicated, wild and possessed by some spirit, appearing to be blind and deaf, and remaining moody, unpredictable and disinterested in everything. This helped him to avoid any contact with society as people avoided him like the plague, and this allowed him to roam alone like a mendicant who is out of his mind. In fact, the term ‘Jada’ means one who is utterly stupid, foolish and insane.

His learned father tried his best to teach him the Mantras and the Vedas, but inspite of his best of efforts he did not succeed in teaching Jadbharat even the basic Gayatri Mantra. In due course of time, his father died, and his mother handed him and his sister over to his step-mother for custody before she died herself. After his father’s death, his step-brothers did not care for him. Jadbharat continued to pretend to be crazy, answering people in most uncivilized manner whenever they taunted him for his stupidity or illiterate behaviour. He did whatever people told him to do, without

bothering for the consequences, and ate whatever was available without paying heed to whether it was worthy of eating or not. He never ate for taste or satisfaction of the body. He was equally immune to praise and insult, to comfort and suffering—because he had understood, as the result of divine grace, without being formally taught on the subject, that his ‘true self’ is not the body but the pure conscious Atma that is eternally blissful and contented, that is immune to insults and praises, and that never suffers, enjoys, takes a birth and dies.

He always remained naked whether it was hot, cold, rainy or windy; this made his body strong, resilient, stern and robust; it became immune to the affects of weathers and seasons. He neither took a bath nor scrubbed his body; this made him sport a most unconventional, dirty and unkempt look.

When his half brothers found him absolutely useless, and to prevent him from working in other people’s fields for free for food in return, they assigned him the task of looking after the embankments in their own field to avoid embarrassment. Unaffected and unconcerned, Jadbharat did whatever he was told to do, and ate whatever was given to him to eat, without giving a second thought to it, without complaining or fussing.

A miraculous incident is related to his life. Once it so happened that a chieftain of some tribe wished to make a human sacrifice to please some deity to beget a son. The man who was to be sacrificed escaped, and so his assistants caught hold of Jadbharat when they were searching for a replacement man. They found him standing in the dead of night on one leg, protecting the field against wild animals. They took him away without any resistance, then bathed, dressed, fed and prepared him for being sacrificed before the idol of the deity. But as soon as the priest raised the sword to swoop down upon him, the deity revealed itself and snatched the weapon from his hand, and cut off the heads of all the people who had wished to sacrifice Jadbharat!

There is a story which describes his high wisdom and level of enlightenment. Once, king Rahugana of the kingdom of Sindhu-sauvir was going to sage Kapil for hearing discourses. On the banks of river Ikshumati, the palanquin bearers needed a man to help them carry the weight, and they engaged Jadbharat because of his strong body. But as they walked, Jadbharat avoided stepping upon any insect on the way, resulting in his steps mismatching those of the other bearers. This resulted in the carriage swaying or rocking violently from side to side. Naturally, this annoyed the king who severely admonished the palanquin bearers. They told him that the cause of the rocking of the palanquin and the resultant inconvenience to the king was due to Jadbharat, at which the latter was at the receiving end of the king’s wrath. Jadbharat listened to the king with exemplary patience, and in return answered the king in such a way that the latter realised that he was no ordinary human but some highly self-realised and enlightened sage in that disguise. So the king immediately knelt down in front of him, and received the sage’s blessings along with his teachings on subjects pertaining to spiritualism and metaphysics.

⁹*Dattatreya*—An entire Upanishad is named after this great sage who is regarded as a combined revelation of the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, in as much as he possessed the virtues of them all. The life-sketch of Dattatreya is given as a note of verse no. 4, section 1 of the Dattatreya Upanishad which is included as Chapter 30 of our current volume of the Upanishads of the Atharva Veda tradition.

¹⁰*Raivat*—He was a king of Aanarta, and is mentioned in *Srimad Bhagvat* in its Chapter 52, Canto 10, verse no. 15 wherein it is narrated that his daughter named Raivati was married to Balraam, the elder brother of Krishna, at the behest of Brahma the creator. It is believed that Raivat was born in Sata Yuga, the first of the 4-Yuga cycle, when he had approached Brahma to know the destiny of his daughter. In the heaven, he stayed so long that the whole Sata Yuga passed, followed also by the Treta Yuga, So, his giving his daughter to Balraam in marriage during the Dwapar Yuga, which was the third era, proves that Raivat had an astonishingly long lifespan that covered three Yugas.

¹¹*Bhusund*—The first six Brahmanas of the present Brihajjabal Upanishad are dedicated to the discourse between sage Bhusund and Lord Kalagnirudra. His brief life is included as a note at the end of Brahman 1.]

4. King Janak asked sage Yagyavalkya once again—‘What are the benefits of wearing the Bhasma?’

The sage replied—‘By wearing (smearing of) the Bhasma on the body, all the pores of the body from where the hair follicles emerge become de-facto Shiva Lingams¹. [The ‘Shiva Lingam’ is a symbol of Lord Shiva and is shaped like an erect cylinder which is encircled by a rounded horizontal flat platform at its base. This Shiva Lingam is consecrated in all the shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva. In the present case, by saying that each pore of the body of the wearer of Bhasma becomes a Shiva Lingam, it is meant that the whole body, the entire being of the wearer, becomes holy and sanctified, and it becomes a de-facto shrine of the Lord. It is to emphasize the profound sanctifying and purifying powers of the sacred Bhasma.]

Since the sacred Bhasma is rubbed on the whole body, and since each pore of the body has become a Shiva Lingam, it follows that the spiritual rewards of wearing the sacred Bhasma on the body is equivalent to offering the Bhasma to as many physical Shiva Lingams in temples of Lord Shiva.

All the sections of the society, whether they are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas or Shudras, get the same auspicious benefits and blessings, the same grace and benediction by wearing the sacred Bhasma as are got by offering it in a shrine of Lord Shiva’ (4).

[Note—¹Some of the Upanishads that describe how the Shiva Lingam can be visualized as being present on the body are the following—(i) The *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition has a number of verses dedicated to this symbolic worship of Lord Shiva in the form of the Lingam—viz. Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 167-168; Canto 2, verse nos. 6 (Naad Lingam), 8-14, 20; Canto 3, verse nos. 1-15; Canto 5, verse nos. 2-5, 5-16 (as abode of Shakti); Canto 6, verse no. 33. (ii) The *Brahm Vidya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 80 describes the Shiva Lingam symbolically present in the body.]

5. In some other time, king Janak, accompanied by sage Pippalaad¹, went to the divine abode of Prajapati (i.e. Brahma, the creator of this world inhabited by living beings). He asked Prajapati about the importance of wearing the mark of the Tripundra (the three lines made by a paste of the sacred ash) on the body.

Prajapati replied—‘The great metaphysical importance and spiritual significance of the Tripundra are same as those of Lord Shiva (because it is a symbol of the Lord and represents his divine authority and cosmic powers) (5).

[Note—¹Sage *Pippalaad*—A brief life-sketch of this sage is given in *Prashna Upanishad*, Canto 1, note of verse no. 1. This Upanishad is Chapter 1 of the present volume.]

6. After that, Pippalaad went to Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Vishnu the sustainer of this creation to know more about this Tripundra and its esoteric secrets, metaphysical significance and mystical powers.

Lord Vishnu endorsed the views of Prajapati and reaffirmed that the importance and authority of the Tripundra are equivalent to those of Lord Shiva (6).

7. Then Pippalaad went to Lord Kalagnirudra and requested him to describe the eclectic glories and mystical powers of the Tripundra.

The Lord replied—‘The mysteries and astounding powers of the Tripundra cannot be described in words. A person who is adorned by the Bhasma (the sacred ash by the paste of which the Tripundra is marked on the body) finds Mukti—i.e. he gets liberation and deliverance.

A person who sleeps on a bed of Bhasma finds the sort of Mukti called ‘Sayujya’ (to be very close to one’s Lord, which in this case is Lord Shiva), and is freed from the cycle of birth and death. If he simultaneously reads the sacred Mantras of Lord Rudra called the ‘Rudraadhye’ along with wearing the Bhasma, he finds a stature that gives him immortality.

Indeed, a wearer of the Vibhuti (i.e. the sacred ash endowed with stupendous mystical powers and majesty, the ash that is honoured with the title of ‘Vibhuti’—i.e. one that is grand, has glory, majesty and immense fame) becomes one with and inseparable from the supreme transcendental Brahm (i.e. he acquires a spiritual stature that makes him equivalent to the Lord of creation).

He gets the same rewards as are found by taking a holy bath in various pilgrim sites. He gets the same reward as is obtained by taking a holy bath in Kashi (the pilgrim city of Varanasi situated on the banks of the holy river Ganges and where Lord Shiva is said to permanently reside).

He gets the same magnificent glory and acquires the same mystical energy, powers and authority as possessed by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (7).

8. [This verse describes the spiritual importance and metaphysical significance of the Rudraksha beads. This concept has also been explained in the Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, and the Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

On some other occasion, sage Sanatkumar¹ asked Lord Kalagnirudra—‘Oh Lord! Please tell me about the metaphysical importance and spiritual value of the Rudraksha² beads’.

The Lord replied—‘Rudraksha was created from the eyes of Lord Rudra. [Refer Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad of Sam Veda, verse no. 2.] That is why they are called ‘Rudraksha’—one that has emerged from the eyes of Rudra, and therefore represent the Lord’s eyes.

At the time of doomsday, Lord Rudra had closed his eyes after having annihilated this creation. It is from these closed eyes that Rudraksha seeds were created. This is also why it is called ‘Rudraksha’—something that makes one weep, something that has been born from the eyes of Rudra who had mercilessly concluded this creation. [Perhaps Lord Rudra had closed his eyes to cool them down after they had spewed fire and brimstone that burnt this world to ashes, or perhaps he was overwhelmed by the destruction and ruin that unfolded before his eyes that made him wince with regret, and forced him to close his eyes as he wept at the havoc and ruin that spread before him. Tears must have rolled down from these eyes, and these metamorphosed into the seeds that came to be called the ‘Rudraksha beads’. Shiva is an eternally merciful Lord, so he must have invariably felt immense regret at having had to carry out this nasty job of burning down everything during the doomsday. But the Lord was duty-bound to do so as a part of the cosmic cycle of destruction and construction mandated by none other than the Supreme Being himself, and Shiva is none other than the latter. In other words, it is Shiva himself who had laid down the laws of creation and conclusion, the laws of Nature, and so he must adhere to these

cosmic laws in order to maintain their sanctity and effectiveness. This was necessary to maintain a balance in Nature because when the evil, the decadence and the vices in this world go beyond limits, the Lord was obliged to assume the non-forgiving and ferocious form of Rudra to clean the slate so as to begin afresh, and to ensure that noble, holy, pious, humble and righteous creatures who were about to be crushed by the ascendant evil forces could be given a chance for living a new life free from fear.]

By narrating the glories and majestic powers of Rudraksha one gets the auspicious rewards which is equivalent to having donated ten healthy cows.

Touching the Rudraksha and wearing it gives auspicious rewards that are equivalent to donating a thousand cows.

By wearing the Rudraksha beads on the ears (as ear-ring), one gets the auspicious rewards which are equivalent to donating ten thousand cows.

As an auspicious effect of the Rudraksha, such a man is able to dissolve himself or become one with the eleven forms of Lord Rudra³. That is, he is deemed to be a living personification of Lord Rudra in all of the latter's eleven divine forms.

By wearing the Rudraksha beads on the head as a crown made of a rosary of Rudraksha beads, one gets the auspicious rewards which are equivalent to donating millions of cows.

By wearing the Rudraksha beads on the ears (as ear-ring) as well as on the head (as a crown of beads), one gets the auspicious rewards which are so great that they cannot be described or enumerated.

One should wear the Rudraksha beads as follows—forty beads on the head (as a crown or girdle), one or three beads tied to the Shikha (the tuft of hairs sported on the top of the head by Hindus), six beads on each of the two ears (i.e. a total of $6 + 6 = 12$ beads on the ears as ear-rings), sixteen beads on each of the two upper arms (i.e. a total of $16 + 16 = 32$ beads on both the arms as arm-bands or armlets), twelve beads on each of the two wrists (i.e. a total of $12 + 12 = 24$ beads on both the wrists as wrist-bands or bracelets), and six beads on each of the two thumbs (i.e. a total of $6 + 6 = 12$ beads on both the thumbs as rings). [Refer—Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad of Sam Veda, in its verse nos. 17-23.]

According to the sanctified tradition of doing the fire sacrifice and offering of worship three times of the day (dawn, noon and evening), one should wear the Rudraksha beads as described above along with a Pavitri made of Kush grass on one of the fingers, and then make oblations to the sacred fire. [The Pavitri is a symbolic ring of purification worn on one of the fingers when one does any religious ritual. It is made of Kush grass, also known as Darbha or Durba. Its botanical name is *poa cynosuroides*, and it is a dark green reed used during religious ceremonies.]

This is the proper and sanctified way of offering oblations to the sacred fire and doing the fire sacrifice (8).

[Note—¹Sanatkumar and others called *Sankaadi Rishis*—A brief note on sage Sanatkumar and Sankaadi Rishis has been given a note no. 2 of Kandika 1 of the Atharva Shikha Upanishad which is Chapter 5 of this volume.

²The *Rudraksha* beads are made from the seeds of the tree *Eleocarpus ganitrus* having five faces or surfaces, and are used in rosaries and necklaces are also called Kalagni-rudra beads because these are very much liked by Lord Shiva.

The great spiritual importance and metaphysical significance of the Rudraksha beads have been explained in the *Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad* of the Sam Veda tradition, and in the *Kalagni Rudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

³There are *eleven Rudras*—refer Brahman 6, verse no. 12, note no. 2 of the present Brihajjabal Upanishad.]

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Brahman 8

[This Brahman is devoted to highlighting the immense metaphysical significance, spiritual importance, majesty and greatness of the Brihajjabal Upanishad.]

1. Lord Kalagnirudra expounded upon the astounding greatness and the esoteric spiritual value of the Brihajjabal Upanishad, its reading and its implementation in the following way—

He who reads (i.e. studies), contemplates upon (i.e. thinks deeply and meditates upon) and pays due respect to (i.e. honours and has faith to what is being said) this Brihajjabal Upanishad daily, and on a regular basis, is blessed and made pure by the grace of the Agni (the Fire God), Vayu (the Wind God), Aditya (the Sun God), Soma (the Moon God), Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer, nourisher and protector) and Rudra (the concluder).

Verily, he finds the highest standard of purity and blessedness; he becomes universally pure and taintless much like these exalted and divine Gods themselves (1).

2. Such a person acquires so great and magnificent mystical powers, potentials and authority that he can, if he so wishes, overcome, supersede and exert control even over the great Gods such as Agni (the Fire God), Vayu (the Wind God), Aditya (the Sun God), Soma (the Moon God) and Udak (the Water God). [That is, he is mystically empowered to have control over the forces of Nature which are personified as these Gods.]

Not only them, but he can even stop the various powerful Grahās (planets, both the malevolent ones as well as the benign ones, which exert influence on the life of all living beings in this world) and the different types of severe poisons from having any effect upon the creature (2).

3. He is able to vanquish death. He becomes cleansed of all sins and their evil consequences. He becomes so blessed and cleansed that he is acquitted and granted pardon from many grave sins such as killing of a Brahmin, aborting a foetus, murdering a brave warrior or his widow, and all other sorts of killings¹.

In fact, he frees himself from all the entrapments of this mundane world and its ills. He is able to overcome all spiritual hurdles or obstacles that come in a creature's way and prevents him from finding final liberation and deliverance for his soul (3).

[Note—¹It must be noted here that this stanza does not mean that habitual murderers or those who commit such horrible sins as listed here are in any way encouraged, protected or condoned by this Upanishad. This provision of granting pardon is not meant as a blanket license for committing heinous crimes because it seemingly gives immunity from punishment and prosecution. It is neither the case nor the intention of this Upanishad to do so. The actual intention is to provide a means for repentance, reform and redemption to those who might have committed some grave sin due to a variety of reasons and compulsions, or even unknowingly, unwittingly and inadvertently under false knowledge that they are not committing any wrong, but when they come to become aware of their mistakes, they develop an honest and sincere wish to atone for their sins, to undo what wrong has been done by them. Since

every honest effort of repentance and reform should be encouraged and aided, and every man should be given a chance to improve his future inspite of his bad past, this Upanishad has sanctioned this pardon. Once a man does the fire sacrifice and understands the true meaning of wearing the sacred ash on his body, it is deemed that he has decided to keep his past behind, and sincerely and honestly wishes to move ahead in life.]

4. A regular and steady reader who diligently studies this Upanishad and contemplates seriously upon its philosophy is symbolically able to vanquish all the seven worlds such as the Bhuloka (the earth), Bhuvaloka (the sky), Swarloka (the heaven), Mahaloka (the greater heaven), Tapaloka (the heaven where ascetics doing Tapa live), Janahaloka (the mortal world inhabited by living beings), and the Satyaloka (the world of Truth where the enlightened souls live). [In other words, such a person is able to have access to all the divisions of creation, and no corner of creation is inaccessible for him. This is a natural corollary to the fact that he is blessed by all the divine Gods as listed in verse nos. 1 and 2.]

He can perpetually live in any of these worlds as he wishes (4).

5. The eclectic spiritual rewards and profound affect of reading, studying and contemplating upon this Brihajjabal Upanishad is equivalent to having read, studied and contemplated upon the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sam Veda, the Atharva Veda, the Aangiras Vidya (the detailed knowledge of performance of the fire sacrifice and worship of the Fire God), along with the study of all their branches and sub-branches, all the details of sacred rituals and religious rites, all the Naaraashanshis (liturgies and formal prayers offered at ritualistic worship), all the Purans (ancient mythological histories), and deep meditation upon the supreme Braham represented by the divine Mantra known as Pranav or OM (5).

6. A hundred men who do not wear the Yajyopavit (the sacred thread) are equivalent to one man who wears it.

A righteous and noble Grihastha (householder) who is untainted and uncorrupt is equivalent to a hundred wearers of the sacred thread.

A Vaanprashta (one who lives in the forest) is equivalent to a hundred such Grihasthas.

A Sanyasi (a reclusive man who has sincerely renounced this world and severed all ties with it; a renunciate and dispassionate monk, hermit, friar or ascetic) is equivalent to a hundred such Vaanprasthas.

A person who is a worshipper of Lord Rudra and repeats the Lord's divine Mantras is equivalent to a hundred such Sanyasis.

A practicing teacher and a learned preacher of the profound spiritual and metaphysical philosophy of the Atharva Veda and the great Upanishads of this Veda is equivalent to a hundred such worshippers of Rudra.

And a single enlightened teacher and learned preacher of this Brihajjabal Upanishad is equivalent to a hundred such teachers and preachers.

This Upanishad is endowed with stupendous glory, divine powers and majestic potentials. Those who read it and study it attentively, diligently and sincerely, those who contemplate upon its philosophy and think deeply upon it, those who implement its teachings in life and practice its philosophy, become so powerful and authoritative that they can even overcome or vanquish the powerful energy and scorching fire of the sun as well as the dynamic, powerful and forceful punch of the wind (i.e. they become more powerful than the sun and the wind); they become more

soothing and comforting by nature than the moon (i.e. they acquire a natural gift of holiness, piety and divinity which makes their presence most welcome as it is more spiritually blissful, comforting and soothing for all others around them than the physical light of the moon which is cool and usually regarded as soothing); they do not have to remain bound to certain limits like the pre-fixed orbits of the various planets (i.e. they are freed from all boundaries, fetters and limitations; they do not have to remain confined to pre-fixed destinies symbolized by the pre-fixed orbits of the planets which they are bound to follow and remain confined to for the entire span of their existence); they are able to cross or overcome even the scorch of the fire and the greatest of sufferings in this world (i.e. even the fire cannot harm them, and the worst of horrors and torments do not affect them).

Indeed, they are able to vanquish all sorrows, miseries and grief; they are able to conquer even death and its fear.

[Since they have Lord Rudra as their patron Lord, even death is not able to harm them in the conventional sense because Rudra is the God who controls death, and therefore 'death' thinks twice before approaching the Lord's worshipper against his wishes. In practical terms it means that such persons become highly self-realised and enlightened, having understood that the body that dies is not their true 'self', but it is the pure conscious Atma that is their true 'self', and that this Atma is eternal and blissful, that it is beyond the purview of death and sufferings.]

When a person reaches this state of enlightenment, there is not the slightest hint of sorrow or grief; there is no hint of sufferings and torments. On the contrary, there is an all-pervading and all-encompassing state of eternal blissfulness, immense contentedness, tremendous grace and universal happiness. It is a state of blessedness; it is a state of profound tranquility, peace and serenity that comes with Brahm-realization.

Such a man is able to have access to the supreme spiritual stature of being Shiva realised. This exalted and eclectic state of being is always adored and revered by great ascetics. As a result of this achievement they do not have to remain trapped to the cycle of repeated births and deaths in this world. [That is, they find final emancipation and salvation for themselves.]

This fact is endorsed in the following Richa (hymn of the Veda)—‘Tad Vishnoha Param Padam Yatra Pashyantha Suryaha. Diviva Chakschuraatatam. Tad Vipraaso Vipnyavo Jaagrivansaha Samandhite. Vishnoyati Param Padam’.

OM salutations! This is the absolute, universal and irrefutable Truth that this Upanishad expounds upon and espouses.

Amen! (6).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 7

Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad/ Nrisingh Purvatapiniyu-panishad

This is a revealed Upanishad as it is a discourse given by Prajapati Brahma, the creator, to answer certain questions asked by the Gods. It expounds upon both the Saguna and the Nirguna aspects of the supreme transcendental Brahm (i.e. on the formed aspect of Brahm having specific attributes as well as the unformed, invisible, attributeless and cosmic aspect of the same Divinity). It lays emphasis on that aspect of Brahm which is very dynamic, most powerful, invincible and strong, and which had revealed itself as a half lion and half man incarnation to save the devotee named Prahalad from the tyranny of his demon father Hiranyakashipu. Since a 'man' is the best in the higher order of living beings, and the 'lion' in the lower order of creatures, the form of the Supreme Being as half man and half lion is to depict the fact that he represents the best of everything in this creation.

The 'Tapini' group of Upanishads is the one which mostly deal with the details connected with Upaasana (meditation) of a particular deity to whom they are dedicated, and by whose name they are known. The word 'Purva' refers to the commentary on this Upanishad as narrated by the renowned sage Adi Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820).

The Upanishad is divided into five sections called 'Upanishads' themselves, and have a total of 77 verses or Mantras.

In Canto or Upanishad 1 it is described how there was only the causal water everywhere before this creation came into being, how the creator Brahma emerged atop a divine lotus that came out of this water, and how Brahma had done Tapa (severe penance and austerity) to initiate the process of creation. It was then that he 'saw' or realised or obtained the powerful Nrisingh Mantra by whose dynamic powers he was enabled to start the process of creation. This Upanishad refers to this Mantra revealed in the Anushtubh (or Anushtup) Chand style of composition. A parallel is drawn between the four steps or lines of this divine Mantra, and the earth, the semi-Gods in the lower heaven (called the Antariksha), the higher Gods such as the Vasus, Rudras and Adityas in the upper heaven (called the Duloka), and Brahm. Again, the four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva) are also symbolically represented by these four lines of the Nrisingh Mantra. Then the Upanishad eulogizes the profoundness and greatness of repeating this Mantra, and enumerates the immense rewards got there from. The four steps of this Mantra are also likened to the various things and beings in creation, such as fire, gods, vital airs, the sun, the moon, the Trinity Gods, and so on. A devotee can have a divine vision of the deity by repeating this Mantra.

Canto or Upanishad 2 describes how the Gods conquered sin and its consequence death when they were preached this Nrisingh Mantra by Brahma the creator. Then meditation using the divine Mantra OM as representing Pranav or Brahm, and its synonymous nature with the four Vedas and the sacred fires is narrated. It is followed by the method of using this OM for the purpose of Nyas (investiture). Then follows a detailed exposition on each of the words of the Nrisingh Mantra.

Canto or Upanishad 3 describes the Beej (seed) and Shakti (dynamic power) of the Nrisingh Mantra. Prajapati Brahma asserts that Maya (the power of creating delusions) is its Shakti, and the Akash (the sky) is its Beej. It is from Maya Shakti that

Brahma can create, and it is from the Akash that everything sprouts and expands because the vast cosmic space of the sky is the crucible that harbours the entire creation, right from its primordial stage to its birth, growth and development, and till its conclusion.

Canto or Upanishad 4 deals with the ‘Angamantras’ or subsidiary Mantras. They are OM, the Savitri Mantra of Yajur Veda (same as the first part of the Mahanarayan Upanishad, 15/2), the Laxmi Mantra of Yajur Veda. This is followed by the famous ‘Nrisingh Gayatri Mantra’.

Canto or Upanishad 5 describes the powerful Sudarshan Chakra or the discus of Lord Nrisingh. The Sudarshan Chakra is held by Lord Vishnu, the second of the Trinity Gods who is the protector of creation. This discus has six, or eight, or twelve, or sixteen or even thirty two spokes with corresponding teeth. The esoteric method of meditation connected with them is also narrated. Finally, a long litany of benefits got by worshipping Lord Nrisingh with the Mantra is described.

A minor Upanishad called ‘Nrisingh Shat-chakra Upanishad’ describing the Chakra (wheel of worship) dedicated to Lord Nrisingh is included as Addendum no. 1 of this Chapter.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Upanishad (Canto) 1

1. It is said that in the very beginning when this creation did not exist, there was only the causal water everywhere, and nothing else. From this primordial water emerged a divine lotus, and Prajapati Brahma, the creator, sat on its petals. Prajapati Brahma developed a desire to create the world. It is a well established principle in creation that what one sincerely desires or wishes, the inner self begins to speak (and think) in accordance with it, and the creature’s actions also correspond to such desires or wishes. [This is because his mind becomes focused on fulfilling his desires and wishes. It becomes polarized and restricted in one direction, concentrating all its divine energy and strength on efforts to ensure that the wishes and desires are fulfilled.]

In this connection, wise Rishis (learned sages and seers) have asserted—‘In ancient time, at the time of initiation of creation, the first to come into existence from the Mana (mind) was Kaam (desire). That is why those who are constantly meditating upon the ‘self’ and observe its behaviour and nature regard this Kaam as the fetter of the Atma (which is the pure consciousness that is their true ‘self’). [This is because by having some kind of Kaam (desire) pertaining to this world of material sense objects, the Atma would be focused on it, thinking of it always, and devoting all its time and energy in the pursuit of this desire. This would act as detraction and is a cause of constant annoyance for the Atma, robbing the latter of its freedom and peace.]

Those who are wise, sagacious and learned believe that Kaam is created or has its origin in the Mana (mind) of the creature, and that it is the Mana which is the cause of creation of the Prakriti (or ‘nature’) as well.

It was the primordial water that became the ‘cause’ of this creation (because it is from this ‘causal’ water that Brahma was born atop a lotus, and it was the latter who initiated the process of creation by developing a desire for it, and then taking

necessary steps to realise his desires or achieve success in fulfilling his wishes). It is from this water that the creation was created.

Those who know this esoteric secret are able to get or have access to whatever they wish to have (1).

2. Brahma did Tapa (severe austerity and penance) with the noble intention of initiating the process of creation. As an auspicious effect of this Tapa, he had a divine vision or obtained the mystical Mantra of Lord Nrisingh¹ which would empower him to succeed in the noble endeavour of creation. This Mantra was composed in the Anushtup Chanda style².

Brahma created this visible world with the help of this Mantra (i.e. this Mantra empowered him with the mystical powers to create). That is why this visible world is called a manifestation or revelation of the Anushtup Mantra. All the Bhuts (elements) have been created by, or have their origin in this Mantra. All of them get their vital life, and derive the strength and energy to survive from this Mantra, and at the end of their life span they collapse into this Mantra and merge with it.

Indeed, this Mantra of Lord Nrisingh composed in the Anushtup Chanda is the symbolic creator of this entire creation. [This is because even the creator Brahma had got his initial power to create out of this Anushtup Mantra.]

Anushtup is the Vaani or speech personified. In other words, the spoken word is a manifestation of the Anushtup Chanda. It is the Nrisingh Mantra composed in this particular style of metre of verse that has empowered the faculty of speech to speak and express one's inner thoughts. [Obviously, a hymn composed in any metre, whether it is Anushtup or something else, is revealed when it is said aloud, and this entails the use of voice or the faculty of speech. The dynamic powers of the Mantra is revealed when it is repeated or chanted aloud during ceremonial worship or even during personal meditation when a person repeats the Mantra to derive mystical benefits from it. The spoken words of the Mantra help to spread the divine dynamic energy contained in the syllables of the relevant Mantra into the surroundings, and this energy gets uniformly diffused in the space where the Mantra is said. This not only benefits the speaker but even those who hear it.]

A man gets birth and comes to death with this Vaani (speech). [This is a metaphoric way of saying that a man's speech and words can lead to his rising to an exalted stature and acquiring great fame and respect in society on the one hand, or lead to his ruin and infamy on the other hand. It is the man's words and his utterances that can cause strife, hatred, animosity and ill-will, or spread brotherhood and love around him.]

Hence, this Anushtup Chanda is regarded as the best amongst all the Chandas³ (2).

[Note—¹The *Nrisingh Mantra* that was revealed to Brahma has been described in Canto 2 of this Upanishad.

Nrisingh or *Narsingh* is the half lion and half man incarnation of Lord Vishnu to slay the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting Prahalad, his son, because the latter worshipped Vishnu. Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting his own son Prahalad because the child was a devout follower of Vishnu. After having killed the demon, Nrisingh started roaming in the forests, striking terror in the hearts of all the creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of 'Mahadev' as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. [Refer *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 8.] Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot (refer

Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 19) and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called 'Rudra', the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

This 'half lion and half man' form of the Lord is a visible image that has a cosmic counterpart as the 'half man and half female' manifestation of the Lord that is known as 'Ardha-Narishwar'. This cosmic form of Brahm as Ardha-Narishwar has two components—the right half is depicted in iconography as being a male representing Shiva, the great God, the other half is female representing his divine Shakti known as Parvati or Uma. This Shakti represents the dynamic energy of Shiva. When this applies to Brahm, the male aspect refers to the Supreme Being himself while the female aspect applies to Maya which is the dynamic power that Brahm employed to initiate this magical creation. This depiction is basically envisioned to drive home the point that Brahm and Shakti are inseparable in the context of the creation of the world. This elementary method of reproduction is known as 'asexual reproduction' and is depicted by many asexual plants and animals even today. For instance, the one-celled amoeba reproduces itself by cleavage. On the other hand, if we were to regard Brahm in its purest form as the cosmic Consciousness, then Brahm would not need the other half of the Maya, and would only be one and universal entity which has no definite and describable form and shape, it has no characteristic features, attributes and qualities. This form of the sublime and most subtle Brahm is known as either the Hiranyagarbha or the Viraat Purush depending upon the level of subtlety and grossness which is assigned to it, the former being more subtle than the latter.

The 'lion' part is a metaphor for the grand qualities of unmatched authority, stupendous strength, physical prowess and complete and unchallenged sway over the entire domain of creation just like a lion has over the forest and its inhabitant wild animals. This term is symbolic of the inherent stupendous might of the supreme Brahm as the unquestioned and powerful Lord of this forest-like world inhabited by myriad varieties of living beings, called the Jivas, just like a dense forest infested by wild animals. Similarly, the 'man' part symbolises the fact that Brahm is the most highly placed Lord much like a human being who represents the highest level in the ladder of evolution.

In other words, even as the lion is the unquestioned lord of the wilds and the man is of all the living beings, the supreme transcendental Brahm is the unquestioned Lord of all that exists with all its variations in this creation, whether in its primary form represented by the wild and primitive animals of the jungle or in its more evolved and developed form represented by the man, with all the other stages of creation included in between these two.

Lord Nrisingh is the fourth incarnation of the Supreme Being who had taken various forms to ward off and overcome evil forces in creation when they become ascendant and overcame the good and the righteous. The Lord did this to maintain order in the creation which is like his offspring.

So when one of his great devotees known as Prahalaad was being extremely tormented by his own father, the demon Hiranyakashipu, the Lord appeared as Nrisingh—or as a half lion and half man form—from the pillar to which the innocent lad was tied by the demon to prove to him the omnipresence and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being. Nrisingh is a personification of the grand virtues of dynamism, power, energy, valour and strength, and hence is worshipped by warriors and rulers in general. The Mantra of this Lord is believed to be very powerful and effective against enemies and opponents.

Iconographically, there are many forms of Nrisingh. Some of them are as follows—as seated (Aasin), as standing (Sthaanak), as boon-giver (Vardaayak), as ferocious and angry (Ugra), as striding (Yaanak), in the company of Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and the divine consort of Vishnu (Laxmi-Nrisingh), as seated in

Yoga or doing meditation like Shiva (Yoga-Nrisingh), as a resident of a mountain (Girija), etc.

His images depict him in either the two-hand form or in a four-hand form. In the latter case, the two back hands hold a conch and discus like the case of Vishnu. The two front hands are shown as killing the demon Hiranyakashipu by forcing the latter on his lap, tearing his abdomen, and yanking his entrails out by his sharp nails.

An entire Puran called Narsingh Puran is likewise dedicated to this Godhead. This Puran glorifies Nrisingh as an incarnation of Vishnu, and is regarded as being synonymous with Narayan, one of the names of Lord Vishnu who is none but the Supreme Being called Brahm. Since Lord Vishnu himself is a macrocosmic, all-inclusive and invisible form of the supreme transcendental Brahm, therefore Nrisingh is a de-facto visible form of the otherwise invisible Brahm.

The Shuk Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 27, while describing the process of invoking one of the components 'Asi' ('is') of the Maha Vakya (the great saying of the Vedas) 'Tattwamasi' ('that essence is you') says that the Shakti (dynamic energy) of this individual component 'Asi' is Nrisingh.

The Skanda Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 13 praises Lord Nrisingh as an incarnation of the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector, and Shiva the concluder of creation. His divine and glorious virtues are similar to Brahm. Earlier in this Upanishad it has already been established that these three Gods of the Trinity are Brahm personified, as well as the fact that the creature's Atma or pure 'self' which is Consciousness personified, are also Brahm personified. Hence, by worshipping Nrisingh one is offering prayers to Brahm and honouring the grand virtues of creation exemplified by the latter. He is also offering worship to the 'consciousness' that represents Brahm in the physical body of Lord Nrisingh.

²The *Anushtup Chanda* has four lines and a total of thirty-two syllables or letters. Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4.

³The word *Chanda* has two connotations—one is the style in which the hymns of the scriptures were composed, and the other is something that covers another thing, or acts as an enclosure that encircles all other things, or an awning that gives protection or shade, or something that wraps or envelops everything else. Since the creation is divided into four basic divisions or constituent parts, each step of the Anushtup Chanda is like one step of this creation. The four parts of this creation assumes many forms—viz. the four Vedas such as the Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva; the four types of creatures such as Swadej (those born from sweat and dampness, e.g. lice), Andaj (those born from an egg, e. g. birds), Jarayajuj (those that develop as an embryo lodged in the womb, e.g. man), and Uddbhij (those born from seeds, e.g. plants); the four types of Anthakarans (the inner self—which are Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (the faculty of concentration, paying attention and memory; knowledge and sub-conscious), and Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance); the four Ashrams (sections in a man's life, such as Brahmacharya, Grishastha, Vaanprastha and Sanyas Ashrams); the four Varnas (classes in society, such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras) etc.]

3. One should know that out of the first step of this eclectic and divine Mantra (i.e. the Anushtup Chanda in which the Nrisingh Mantra was revealed to the creator Brahma), which is also known as Sam (because it can be sung melodiously like the hymns of the Sam Veda), were created the earth with its seven continents, the mountains and the oceans.

It is to be understood that from the second step of this Mantra were created the Yakshas (a type of demi-god), the Ghandharvas (celestial musicians) and the Apsaras (celestial lady dancers; the damsels living in the heaven) who inhabit the Antariksha (the lower heavens).

Again, one should understand that out of the third step of the same Mantra were created the Vasus¹, the Rudras², the Adityas³ and other Gods who inhabit the Duloka (the middle level of the heaven above the Antariksha and below the upper heaven where the Supreme Being lives).

Finally, it is to be understood that out of the fourth step of this divine Mantra was created the supreme Brahm who is most immaculate, without any taints or faults, most pure and holy, like the great Vyom or the sky that is fathomless, infinite, measureless, all-encompassing and all-pervading. This Brahm is completely free from Maya—i.e. Brahm is not at all affected by any kind of delusions and its negative effects.

When a living being understands this esoteric secret, he is able to obtain the essential fountain of Amrit (which is the elixir of eternity and eternal bliss, felicity and beatitude) (3).

[Note—¹The Vasus—These *Vasus* are the various patron Gods who preside over the essential elements of life. They are eight in number as follows—Vishnu who is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and ‘Ray’ representing glory and fame. The element ‘Fire’ is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The ‘fire’ element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essential aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv (ध्रुव), Dhar (धर), Som/Soma (सोम—the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods), Aapha (आप—water), Anil (अनिल—wind), Anal (अनल—fire), Pratush (प्रत्यूष) and Prabhaas (प्रभास).

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory;

to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The *Ekakchar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

The *Atharva-shikha Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Kandika (Canto) 1 says that the Vasus were created in the beginning of creation from the first Matra 'A' of OM representing the first leg of the supreme Brahm along with Brahma the creator, the Rig Veda, the Gayatri Chand and the Grahapatya Agni.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash.

²*Rudras*—There are said to be eleven Rudras which are the different forms of Lord Shiva. They are the following:--(i) Mannu (मनु), (ii) Manu (मनु), (iii) Mahinas (महिनस), (iv) Mahaan (महान), (v) Shiva (शिव), (vi) Ritdwaj (ऋत्ध्वज), (vii) Ugrareta (उग्ररेता), (viii) Bhav (भव), (ix) Kaal (काल), (x) Vamdeo (वामदेव), and (xi) Dhritvrat (धृतिव्रत). The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

(2) The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har (हर), Bahuroop (बहुरूप), Trayambak (त्र्यम्बक), Aparajeet (अपराजित), Shambhu (शम्भु), Vrishakapi (वृषाकपि), Kapardi (कपर्दी), Raivat (रैवत), Mrigvyadh (मृगव्याध), Sharva (शर्व), and Kapaali (कपाली).

(3) Lord Shiva has eleven forms, and one of them is 'Rudra', which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called 'Maheshwar'. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God.

The word 'Rudra' is literally used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness. But this is a very misleading title for Shiva because there are a number of great Upanishads which describe Rudra as none but the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged, who sustains it and in whom the creation would finally collapse. It is this Brahm in the form of Rudra who is treated as the supreme Lord God of creation, and hence is called Maheshwar. Refer also to *Brihajjabal Upanishad* (Chapter 6 of this volume), Brahman 6, verse no. 12, note no. 2.

The *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition and *Atharvashir Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition are exclusively dedicated to this theme. The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the esoteric significance of the Shiva Tattva or the essential knowledge of Shiva who is the greatest Guru or moral preceptor and teacher of the creatures.

The *Atharvashir Upanishad* of Atharva Veda is especially relevant here because it explains the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra himself, and upon close reading it would be very clear that Rudra is describing Brahm when he describes himself.

³Adityas— The *twelve Adityas*—(a) According to mythology, there are said to be *twelve Adityas* which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

(b) According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyavalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man.

Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation.

(c) According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata (धाता), Arayma (अर्यमा), Mitra (मित्र), Varun (वरुण), Anshu (अंशु), Bhug (भृग), Indra (इन्द्र), Vivaswan (विवस्वान), Pusha (पूषा), Parjanya (पर्जन्य), Twashta (त्वष्टा) and Vishnu (विष्णु).

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as Dhata during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as Aryama during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as Mitra during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as Varun during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as Indra during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as Vivaswan during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as Pusha during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as Kratu during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as Anshu during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as Bhag during the tenth Hindu month of Pausa also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as Twashta during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as Vishnu during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

Since the Sun God is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Viraat Purush, he is like an Emperor who, during his sojourn across the sky which is like his

vast realm, is accompanied by many sages called Rishis, celestial courtesans called Apsaras, celestial musicians called Gandharvas, servants called Rakshas or demons, guards known as Bhalls, and serpents called Naags. The Rishis walk in the front singing the Lord's glories in sacred hymns; the Apsaras dance to the music scores by Gandharvas; the Rakshas (demons) push the chariot from rear; the Bhalls take care of the chariot and guide it along, while the Naags pull it forward.

These attendants are also different like the forms in which the Sun God is worshipped in different months as described above. The list is outlined month-wise in the following sequence—Rishi, Apsara, Gandharva, Raksha, Bhalla and Naag.

(1) The month of Chaitra—Rishi is Pulastya; Apsara is Kritsthal; Gandharva is Tumburu; Raksha is Heti; Bhalla is Rathkrit; and Naag is Vasuki.

(2) The month of Vaishakha—Rishi is Pulaha; Apsara is Punjiksthal; Gandharva is Narad; Raksha is Praheti; Bhalla is Ojaha; and Naag is Kachaneer.

(3) The month of Jyestha—Rishi is Atri; Apsara is Menaka; Gandharva is Hahaa; Raksha is Paurusheya; Bhalla is Rathaswan; and Naag is Takshak.

(4) The month of Ashadha—Rishi is Vashishta; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Huhu; Raksha is Shukra; Bhalla is Chitraswan; and Naag is Sahajanya.

(5) The month of Sravan—Rishi is Angira; Apsara is Pramlocha; Gandharva is Vishwaivasu; Raksha is Varya; Bhalla is Srota; and Naag is Elapatra.

(6) The month of Bhadrapad—Rishi is Bhrigu; Apsara is Anumlocha; Gandharva is Ugrasen; Raksha is Vyagha; Bhalla is Aasaaran; and Naag is Shankhapal.

(7) The month of Ashwin—Rishi is Gautam; Apsara is Ghritaachi; Gandharva is Dhananjay; Raksha is Vaat; Bhalla is Suruchi; and Naag is Sushen.

(8) The month of Kartik—Rishi is Bhardwaj; Apsara is Varchaa; Gandharva is Parjanya; Raksha is Senjit; Bhalla is Vishwa; and Naag is Eeraawat.

(9) The month of Margashirsha—Rishi is Kashyap; Apsara is Urvashi; Gandharva is Ritsen; Raksha is Vidyu-chhatru; Bhalla is Taksharya; and Naag is Maashankha.

(10) The month of Paush—Rishi is Aayu; Apsara is Purvachitti; Gandharva is Sfurja; Raksha is Arishtanemi; Bhalla is Uurna or Oorna; and Naag is Karkotak.

(11) The month of Magh—Rishi is Jamdagni also known as Richik-tanaya; Apsara is Tilottama; Gandharva is Shatjit; Raksha is Brahmapet; Bhalla is Dhritrashtra; and Naag is Kambal.

(12) The month of Phalgun—Rishi is Vishwamitra; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Suryavarchaa; Raksha is Makhaapet; Bhalla is Satyajit; and Naag is Aswatar.

Refer also to *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 6, verse no. 12, note no. 2.]

4. All the four Vedas¹ along with their branches and sub-branches are the symbolic four legs or steps of this Mantra (4).

[Note—¹The *four Vedas* are the following—Rik/Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva. Refer verse no. 22 of the *Sita Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition. This Upanishad is Chapter 9 of the present volume of ours.]

5. [The following verses now go into the detail of the Nrisingh Mantra.]

How should one meditate upon this divine Mantra? Who is its patron deity or God? What are its limbs? What is the category of the Gods worshipped by this Mantra? What is the Chanda (its composition style)? Who is its Rishi (the sage who had first saw or visualized this Mantra while meditating)? (5).

6. Prajapati Brahma (the creator) said—‘A wise person, who recognizes that this divine Mantra is adorned by the glory and magnificence that is comprehensively encrypted in the single word ‘Sri’ (meaning fame, majesty, honour, glory, magnificence, grandeur, wealth and prosperity), which is its Beej Mantra¹ (or seed Mantra), and that it has the same eclectic glory, stupendous authority and divine

powers as possessed by the renowned Gayatri Mantra², is blessed with 'Sri'—that is, such a person who knows this fact as stated herein above acquires all the eclectic virtues and majesty that this word 'Sri' stands for or symbolizes.

The word Pranav or OM is uttered before all the hymns of the Vedas. Those wise and erudite persons who know or recognize this Pranav or OM as an integral part and parcel of this Sam Mantra (which is regarded as the 'best amongst the Mantras', here referring to the Nrisingh Mantra composed in the style of the Anushtup Chanda) becomes a conqueror of the three worlds collectively called Triloki. [That is, he is regarded as the most learned and wise in the entire world. The three worlds are the terrestrial, the heavenly and the nether.]

A person who is wise enough to know that the Mantra of Laxmi (the patron Goddess of wealth and prosperity, and whose abbreviated name and form is the word 'Sri') consisting of twenty-four letters or syllables is like the Yajur Veda itself, gets immense fame, majesty, wisdom and knowledge, besides having a long life.

A person who knows about this Sam (i.e. the eclectic Nrisingh Mantra composed in the Anushtup Chanda style that can be melodiously rendered) obtains access to Amrit (the elixir of eternity and bliss; of beatitude and felicity). Hence, one should endeavour to learn and be acquainted with this Sam complete with all its limbs (branches and details) (6).

[Note—¹The *Beej*, literally the seed, is the syllable or letter which is the basic sound-form from which the Mantra has sprouted much like a tall tree having its origin in the humble 'seed'. During formal ritualistic forms of worship using worship instruments as well as during the process of 'Anga Nyas', which is the invocation of the chosen deity and assigning various designated parts of the body where this deity is to invest its supernatural powers for the benefit of the worshipper. The Beej Mantra is the root or seed formula around which a particular Mantra is built, and which gives the Mantra its basic and inherent power and mystical strength.

The Beej Mantra is like the 'seed or root' from which the rest of the Mantra evolves and is said to derive its mystical and stupendous powers and potentials. This Beej Mantra is like the seed having the tree secretly present in it, and the Mantra would then be like the fully grown-up tree. Even when grown, the tree needs the root to anchor it and derive its nourishment from the ground. Hence the two epithets 'seed' and 'root' used to describe the Beej Mantra. Each deity has a specific Beej Mantra dedicated to it, and one Beej Mantra may apply to more than one deity.

In Hinduism, meditation and contemplation upon a chosen deity is done by the help of a Mantra as a specific formula dedicated to invoke its powers as well as to concentrate the mind and its various faculties on the deity along with aiding the process of meditation and contemplation. This is done by doing Japa which involves repetition of the given Mantra. In fact, Japa is an integral part of any religious exercise, even for success in Yoga because it helps to harness the latent and dormant energy in the body by focusing the mind on the purpose at hand. The Beej Mantra is used for its concentrated energy and strength alongside its ease of use and usefulness in offering oblations or doing Anga Nyas (which is establishing the divine powers of the deity on the different parts of the body to purify them, empower them and strengthen them with dynamic energy and holiness associated with the Mantra).

²The famous Gayatri Mantra is composed in the style of an Anushtup Chanda. It is the following—OM BHURBHUVAHA SVAHA¹, TSAVIURVARENYAM², BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAH³, DHIYO YO NAH PRACODAYAT⁴. It means 'OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahm. He is the lord of creation of the terrestrial, the celestial and heavenly worlds. I offer my oblations to you. That Brahm is luminous like the sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on the righteous and noble path'.

The four phrases of the Gayatri Mantra are clearly marked by small numerals in this Mantra. This Mantra appears in the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).

(iii) There are 24 Rishis of Gayatri Mantra. They are the following— Vamdev, Atri, Vashistha, Shukra, Kanva, Parashar, Vishwamitra, Kapil, Shaunk, Yagyawalkya, Bharadwaj, Jamdagni, Gautam, Mudgal, Veda Vyas, Lomas, Agstya, Kaushik, Vatsa, Pulastya, Manduka, Durvasa, Narad and Kshyap.

The 24 Chandas (metres) of Gayatri Mantra are the following— Gayatri, Ushnik, Anushtup, Vrihati, Pankti, Trishtup, Jagati, Ati Jagati, Shakvari, Ati Shakvari, Dhriti, Ati Dhriti, Viraat, Prastarapankti, Kriti, Prakriti, Akriti, Vikriti, Sankriti, Aksarapankti, Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Jyotismati.

There are 24 Devtas (Gods or patron deities) of Gayatri Mantra. They are the following— Aagneya, Prajapati, Saumyam, Ish, Savitri, Aditya, Bhrishapti, Maitravarun, Bhagdaivatya, Aryamaishvar, Ganesh, Twastra, Paushna, Indra, Vayu, Vamdeo, Maitra Varunidaiv, Vaishvadev, Matrik, Vaishnav, Vasu Dev, Rudra Dev, Kuber and Ashwini.

The 24 Shaktis (divine powers or the female aspects of creation) of Gayatri Mantra are the following— Vaamdevi, Priya, Satya, Vishva, Bhadravilasini, Prabhawati, Jaya, Santa, Kanthaa, Durga, Saraswati, Vidruma, Vishlesa, Vyapini, Vimla, Tamopaharini, Sukhma, Vishwa-yoni, Jaya-vasa, Padmalya, Paraa, Sobha, Bhadra and Tripada.

The 24 Varnas (colours or shades) of Gayatri Mantra are the following — Campakam (yellow), Atasi (hemp), Vidrum (coral), Sphatik (crystal), Padam (lotus), Tarun-aditya (rising sun-red), a mixture of Shankha (conch), Kunda (white jasmine) and Indu (moon), Pravaal Padma (red-lotus), Padmaraga (emerald), Indranilamani (sapphire), Mukta (pearl), Kumkum (a red colour or copper colour made from the pollen of the flower of the plant *Crocus sativus*), Anjam (collyrium-black), Rakta (blood red), Vaidurya, Ksaudra (champa; yellow), Haldi (turmeric yellow), Kunda Dugdha (white as jasmine), Ravikanthi (sun-white), Shukpuccha (a tail of a parrot), Shat-patra (white lotus), Ketaki (light yellow), Mallika and Karavira.

The 24 Tattvas (essence, elements) of Gayatri Mantra are the following—earth, water, fire, air, space (called the 5 Mahabhuts), smell, taste, vision, sound, touch (called the 5 Tanmatras), generative organ, excretory organ, feet, hand, mouth (called 5 organs of action), nose, tongue, eyes, skin, ear (called 5 organs of perception), Pran, Apan, Vyan and Samaan (called vital airs).

The 24 Mudras (postures) of Gayatri Mantra are the following— Sumukham and Samputam, Vitatam and Vistrutam, Dwimukham and Trimukham, Chaturmukham and Panchmukham, Sanmukham, Adhomukham, Vyapakanajalikam, Shakatam, Yampasham, Sanmukho-mukham, Vilambam, Mustikam (closed fist), Matsyam (fish like), Kurmam (tortoise), Varahakam (boar like), Singhkrantham (lion like), Mahakrantham (a great lion like), Mudgar (Pelion like), Pallavam, Trishulyoni (trident like), Surabhi (cow like), Akshamala, Lingakam (phallus like) and Ambujam (blue lotus).

Refer also to Atharva Shikha Upanishad (Chapter 5), Kandika 1, note no. 4, and Brihajjabal Upanishad (Chapter 6), Brahman 3, verse no. 6, note no. 1.]

7. Wise men do not wish to preach to incompetent, unprepared or ineligible persons, such as women and the Sudras (low castes), the two Mantras called the 'Pranav Gayatri Mantra' which is like the Sam Veda, and the 'Mahalaxmi Mantra' which is like the Yajur Veda itself personified. [The Pranav Gayatri Mantra is narrated above

as a note of verse no. 6, while the Mahalaxmi Mantra is narrated below in Canto/Upanishad 4, verse no. 11 of the present Upanishad.]

A wise and erudite aspirant should be well versed in the Sam (sacred hymn) having thirty-two letters or syllables—i.e. the hymn composed in the Anushtup Chanda and the subject matter of the present Upanishad. A person who knows is able to access the essence of Amrit—i.e. he obtains an eternal fount of bliss and everlasting beatitude and felicity.

Even if the Mahalaxmi Mantra¹, which is as powerful and effective as the Gayatri Mantra, the Pranav Mantra (i.e. the divine word OM) and the Yajur Veda are made known to incompetent or ineligible persons such as a woman or a Sudra, the latter still do not get the expected high stature and the benefits that are expected by having access to the aforesaid divine Mantras and the Veda, but remain fallen and downgraded instead, subject to misfortunes and restlessness that is associated with ignorance and delusions as they have a natural inclination to slide downwards, remain mired in worldly delusions and temptations, and inclined to enjoy the material world and gratify their sense organs, leading to a general spiritual decline and moral degradation. In this state of affairs, the teacher who gives or teaches the Mantra should be extra cautious about the receipt of these Mantras, because otherwise they too are dragged along with the disciple in a downward spiral² (7).

[Note—¹The *Maha Laxmi Mantra* is given in Canto 4, verse nos. 11-12 of this Upanishad.

²It must be noted here that this restriction is not meant to demean women or the Sudras in any way because a woman is regarded highly in the scriptures as a personification of Mother Goddess, and the Sudra occupies an important place in the scheme of things planned by the supreme creator as asserted in the Yajur Veda 31st Chapter, 11th Mantra which says that Brahmins are the mouth of society, the Kshatriyas are its arms, Vaishyas are its stomach or abdomen, and Shudras are its legs. The Subalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse 6, and Canto 2, verse 1 describes the origin of these four classes in society as follows—‘From this Brahma, the creator, emerged the rest of the creation. From his mouth came into being the Brahmins; from his arms were created the Kshatriyas; from his thighs evolved the Vaishyas; and from his legs were created the Shudras.’ Say, how someone can stand without his feet! Hence, it is not the intention of this Upanishad to demean either the woman or the Shudra.

The probable reason for singling them out as being ineligible is that both the woman and the Sudra are so busy with daily chores of life that they might not find the necessary time and energy to devote themselves to observing the rigorous discipline ordained in the scriptures for worshipping the deity of this Mantra, or even repeating this Mantra and meditating by using it in the proper fashion.

A woman has to spend a great part of her life in producing children, and then rearing a family and taking care of its routine affairs. So it becomes practically difficult for her to observe a strict code of conduct and rigorously adhere to the discipline needed for recitation and practice of meditation employing the various Mantras. She has no time on her hands to read the scriptures and take part in metaphysical discussions as her hands are already full. Further, she is also found to be more talkative and fickle. She finds it hard by nature to spend a life of serenity and meditation. She is more interested in her children and more attracted to the material comforts and pleasures of this world. This mental attitude of hers makes her unsuitable as a candidate for learning and practicing the great tenets of the Upanishads and the Vedas. This is the general case, and there are indeed exceptions to this—for example there was the great woman sage named Gargi who had participated in a religious conclave called by king Janak and attended by great and learned sages and seers of that time. It was she who was the first to declare that sage

Yagyavalkya was the undisputed leader of the entire brotherhood of saints, unmatched in his wisdom, erudition and knowledge. This incident is described in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 3, Brahman 7.

Then there was Maitreyi, the wise wife of sage Yajgyavalkya, who was as wise and enlightened as her husband. The sage had preached her the profound knowledge of the Atma and principles of metaphysics himself in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 4, and Canto 4, Brahman 5.

Similarly, the Shudra is usually regarded as being so over-burdened with the problems of mundane life and serving the other three classes of society that he rarely finds time for physical rest. He does not have peace as he is always on his toes to do one or the other chore for the society. How can a person whose mind is engrossed in the humdrum affairs of life, whose hands are full with so many chores to be done, and who is always restless and worried to fulfill his obligations ever be expected to have the inclination or find the time and energy to meditate and contemplate on esoteric subjects?

Constant distraction in the form of obligations and call of duty prevent normal women and Shudras to find time and energy needed for the study of the scriptures and other esoteric matters coming under the overall jurisdiction of Mantras, metaphysics and spiritualism.

Therefore, if a woman and a Shudra are competent and free from the fetters that usually tie them down to this humdrum life and its affairs, they would not fall under the barred category as said in this Upanishad. It ought to be understood that the edicts and tenets of the scriptures should be treated in the proper light; their 'spirit' is to be understood, and this is more important than misinterpretation of their intention by merely reading their words and letters.

The idea is that this Mantra should not be given to 'incompetent and ineligible' candidates who are not mentally prepared to accept it, or who cannot devote the required time and energy and attention of the mind needed to make the Mantras effective, or who do not have the mental aptitude and intelligence needed to delve on the difficult subject related to Mantras just like the case of not every student in a school having the proper aptitude for science, mathematics etc. not being allowed to pursue these technical subjects. This is because if they fail to derive the expected benefits from the Mantra, it would give a wrong signal to others. Others would not look at the worshipper's own incompetence, but blame the Mantra for its ineffectiveness and its lack of validity. Hence, if an upper caste man is not competent he too is not eligible to receive any of the Mantras.

Refer verse no. 9 below.]

8. Prajapat Brahma continued—'One should understand that all the Gods, the various forms of the divine fire, the living beings, the vital winds or airs (called the Prans), the organs of the body (i.e. the five organs of perception and five organs of action, called the Indris), the animals, the food, the Amrit (referring to the liquid that sustains and harbours life, i.e. water), Samraat (literally the Emperor, here referring to the highest form of human beings), Swaraat (Brahma the creator), and Viraat (i.e. the Viraat Purush, Lord Vishnu)—all of them represent the first Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (i.e. the Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantras of Gayatri such as Pranav or OM, and Laxmi as well as and Nrisingh were revealed).

Similarly, one should understand that the four Vedas such as the Rig/Rik, the Yajur, the Sam and the Atharva, the Sun and the divine Purush living in this Sun represent the second Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (as described above). [The Sun is regarded as a visible manifestation of the majestic and stupendous glories of the Supreme Being. The external splendorous disc of the Sun is the gross body of this Supreme Being, and the eternal 'fire' that burns inside this disc and

which empowers the Sun to shine brilliantly, to foster life in this world by its light, heat, warmth and energy, represents the subtle body of the Supreme Being that resides inside this disc. This subtle form is known as the 'Purush', the Supreme Being concealed as the dynamic 'fire' that lives inside the external body or the disc of the celestial Sun that actually makes the Sun what it is worth. This Supreme Being is the 'soul' of the Sun; he is revealed as the eternal 'fire' burning inside the Sun; his dynamism is manifested as the light, heat and energy emanating from the Sun. It is this concealed 'Purush' or the Supreme Being himself who is being referred to in this stanza.]

Likewise, one should understand that all the medicinal herbs and the Moon, which is the king amongst the stars, represent the third Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (as described above).

Finally, one should understand that the Trinity Gods consisting of the creator Brahma, the sustainer and protector Vishnu, and the concluder Shiva, along with Indra (the king of Gods) and the imperishable supreme Lord of creation (i.e. Brahm) represent the fourth Paad (or leg or step) of the divine Sam Mantra (as described above).

A person who becomes acquainted with the esoteric meaning and the divine form of the holy Mantra is able to obtain eternity and blessedness (8).

9. In the Anushtup Chanda which is revered as the grand holy Mantra (of Lord Nrisingh to whom this Upanishad is dedicated, and which is referred to above and given in the note of Canto 2, verse no.6), the words 'Ugram' is the first word of the first step.

The word 'Jwalam' is the first word of the second step. The word 'Nrisingh' is the first word of the third step. And the word 'Mrityu' is the first word of the fourth step.

A person who understands this is able to attain eternity and blessedness.

If someone is to be given this Mantra, or taught this Mantra, then the right candidate is a son who is obedient and serves his parents affectionately and diligently, or to a disciple who is devoted to his teacher, and is obedient. Great care should be taken for not giving or teaching it to incompetent or ineligible persons who do not have the necessary aptitude¹ (9).

[Note—¹Refer verse no. 7 above.]

10. The Nrisingh (half man and half lion) form of the Lord who reclines on (a bed made of the coiled serpent called the Seshnath who floats on) the celestial ocean of milk called the Kshirsagar (i.e. Lord Vishnu) is worthy of meditating and contemplating upon, and aimed to be reached or attained by learned Yogis (ascetics) as the highest and the most divine destination. [Lord Vishnu's name is mentioned in the first Paad or line or step of the holy Nrisingh Mantra which is being described in Canto 2 of this Upanishad.]

A person who becomes acquainted with the esoteric meaning and the divine form of the holy Mantra is able to obtain eternity and blessedness (10).

[Note—The form of the Lord cited here is the 'peacefully reclining form known as 'Yog Nidra'. This refers to the Turiya state of consciousness, which is the fourth state of existence. It is attained as soon as one crosses the Sushupta state of consciousness, which is the third state of existence. In this fourth state, the ascetic is expected to taste the nectar of bliss and contentedness as a reward of success in Yoga. Hence this reference to Lord Vishnu's reclining state as the highest spiritual destination sought by an ascetic.]

The word 'Nidra' means sleep, and the word 'Yoga' of course means meditation. Hence, obviously, the combined phrase 'Yog Nidra' means that stage in meditation when the ascetic lives in a state equivalent to that obtained in sleep. In practice, it means deep meditation and contemplation.]

11. The word 'Viram' is to be understood or regarded as the second half of the first word of the first Paad (or step or line) of the holy Sam Mantra. [This Mantra is the divine Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrsingh narrated in Canto 2, verse no. 6 and its accompanying note. The first letter is given in verse no. 9. All the following stanzas follow the same pattern as this present one.]

The syllables 'Tam and Sa' constitute the second half of the first word of the second Paad (or step or line) of the same Sam Mantra.

The syllables 'Ham and Bhi' constitute the second half of the first word of the third Paad (or step or line) of the same Sam Mantra¹.

A person who is wise and erudite enough to understand that whatever that exists is nothing but this Sam (the Mantra) manifested in its form is indeed learned and enlightened, and he obtains the essence of Amrit, the elixir of eternity, of bliss, of beatitude and felicity.

A person who accepts this eclectic, divine and holy Mantra from a wise and learned teacher not only obtains Mukti (or liberation and deliverance) from the fetters of this gross body as well as the world himself but acquires the ability to give Mukti to others as well.

This Mantra is so potent and powerful that an aspirant who takes its shelter or seeks its blessings becomes naturally inclined to desire Mukti inspite of his remaining engrossed in the mundane affairs of the world and the entanglements of humdrum life.

A person who does Japa with this eclectic Sam Mantra (i.e. he constantly repeats this hymn dedicated to Lord Nrsingh), and meditates upon Lord Nrsingh using this Mantra is able to have the Lord's divine vision in this life itself.

There is no other easier way of finding Mukti (liberation and deliverance) from this world in the current era of Kali Yug².

An aspirant who becomes acquainted with all the limbs or branches or connotations of this Sam Mantra (dedicated to Lord Nrsingh), is able to access the elixir that provides eternity and blessedness (11).

[Note—¹The *Nrsingh Mantra* is interpreted both in the Anushtup Chanda style having four lines, as well as in the Gayatri Chanda style which has only three lines. The form cited here is the three-line Gayatri Chanda style of composition in which the third and the fourth lines are regarded as a single line. This Mantra is given in full in note no. 2 of verse no. 6 of this present Canto no. 1.

²*Kali Yug* is the fourth era of the 4-era celestial Hindu cycle of one revolution of the celestial wheel of creation and conclusion. This era is deemed to be most corrupt, pervert and sinful amongst the four eras, and this high level of decadence and sinfulness becomes the cause of the conclusion of one round of creation at the end of its term.]

12. Lord Nrsingh is a living personification of the virtues of Rit (righteousness) and Satya (truth). He is an incarnation of the Supreme Being who resides in the inner self of all living beings and knows their inner thoughts, as well as is all-pervading and omnipresent in creation.

His complexion is a combination of dark and grey colours. His visible external form is that of a half man and a half lion. [The lower half of the body is like a man's, and the upper part is like that of a lion.]

The exalted Lord Nrisingh's eyes are very ferocious and terrible. But this does not mean that he is cruel or merciless, for he is a provider of auspiciousness and all round welfare to all. [Actually, his fierce form is due to his anger at observing the horribly sinful deeds, that had gone beyond tolerable limits, of the demon Hiranyakashipu. This demon was so cruel and ruthless, and so inimical towards the Lord that he did not spare his own son Prahalad, a stout devotee of Lord Vishnu, from torture for his devotion for the Lord. One of the reasons why Lord Vishnu had to assume this odd form of Nrisingh is that the demon had a boon which said that he would not die at the hands of a man or an animal. So the Lord had to circumvent this injunction by assuming a most unconventional form of a half man and a half lion to kill him. Otherwise, Nrisingh is very loving and compassionate, and this is proved by the fact that immediately after killing the demon he lifted the young Prahalad on to his lap, and licked him lovingly, most affectionately and benevolently like a lion caressing its cub.]

This most unconventional form of Lord Nrisingh is none but Lord Shankar (Shiva) himself. His throat is blue-tinged, and the face is red. That is why his devotees worship him as 'Neel Lohit'—one with a blue and red countenance. [Lord Shiva is depicted as having a blue-tinged throat. This was caused when the merciful Lord had gulped the scorching poison that emerged when the ocean was churned by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternity. Shiva said the name of his own Lord who happens to be Lord Ram, and after gulping the poison kept it in his throat because if the poison reached the stomach it would have burnt to death the entire creation. His countenance is red because as the concluder of creation in his manifestation of Rudra he is depicted as being an epitome of anger and wrath, and the colour red is associated with anger and wrath. Here, Nrisingh is regarded as being the manifestation of Lord Shiva, though in the form of Rudra, because Nrisingh is as wrathful and angry as Shiva.]

Lord Nrisingh is none other but the Lord who is the divine husband of Uma (also known as Parvati and the Mother Goddess), who is also known as Pashupati (the Lord of animals, implying one who can control those who have animal-like evil and pervert tendencies) as well as Pinaakdhaari (one who holds the most invincible bow called Pinaak), and who is endowed with astounding radiance, dazzle, splendour and brilliance that resembles electric.

Lord Nrisingh is Ishan* (i.e. the great Lord called Maheshwar, one of the many names of Lord Shiva) who is the patron God of all esoteric knowledge, and he is the controller and the Lord of all the Bhuts (i.e. the elements as well as creatures of creation). He is the Lord of Brahma the creator (because Brahma was born atop the lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu, and Lord Nrisingh is an incarnation of Vishnu). He is the Lord of Brahmins (who are deemed to be representatives of Brahma amongst men). He is also the primary teacher who had enunciated the Yajur Veda. This Veda is nothing but Sam Mantra revealed.

A person who is aware of this esoteric secret obtains eternity and imperishability (12).

[Note—It has been repeatedly stressed in this Canto that whatever exists in this creation is one or the other form of Lord Nrisingh and his divine Mantra. In simple terms it means that since the entire world is a revelation of the supreme transcendental Brahm who permeates uniformly in it and is inseparable and indistinguishable from it much like salt is from salty water or air is from the sky, and since the primary primordial Mantra is OM representing this Brahm in his subtlest manifestation as sound from which all the rest of the letters and Mantras, including

the ones called Sam Mantra, were created, it follows that whatever that exists, visible or invisible is one or the other form of the Lord.

To illustrate this part we can take the example of water. The water is known to have the formula of H₂O. Therefore, all forms of water, whether it is a lake, a river, an ocean, a well, or as steam, ice, rain etc. would have the same formula of H₂O, though externally none of them resembles the other in the least. This formula is the basic structure and identity of 'water'. Hence, no matter in what form this creation exists, no matter which deity we are talking about, they have the same Brahm principle inherent in them; Brahm is intrinsic to them and inseparable from them.

This Upanishad establishes beyond doubt that there is no difference between Lord Nrisingh, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. Nrisingh is an incarnation of Vishnu, and at the same time he is also an incarnation of Shiva in his ferocious form known as Rudra, as well as Pashupati which means the lord of animals since half of his body was like a lion who is the lord of the animals on earth. Hence, the combined form of Nrisingh as a man and a lion is a metaphoric way of saying that Lord stands for the combined virtues and forces of Nature and the creation that are represented by Lords Vishnu and Shiva.

Refer also verse no. 10 above which clearly states that Lord Nrisingh is a manifestation of Vishnu.

*The word *Ishan* has been explained in the Atharva Shir Upanishad, Kandika 4, which is Chapter 4 of this volume. Ishan briefly is the Lord who presides over, controls and has an overriding authority over all the other Gods of creation. He has superseding powers and authority.]

13. The word 'Maha' is the first part of the concluding word of the first Paad (line or step) of the divine and holy Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh (which is composed in the Anushtup Chanda style and detailed in note of verse no. 6 of Canto 2).

Likewise, the word 'Vrato' is the first part of the second word of the second Paad (line or step) of the same divine and holy Mantra (of Nrisingh).

Similarly, the word 'Shanam' is the first part of the second word of the third Paad (line or step) of the same divine and holy Mantra (of Nrisingh).

And finally, the word 'Namaa' is the first part of the last word of the fourth Paad (line or step) of the same divine and holy Mantra (of Nrisingh).

All these words as well as the aspects of creation they represent, or everything that exists and covered by these words, is nothing else but a revelation of this Sam Mantra (i.e. it is revelation of Lord Nrisingh in these myriad forms).

A wise and erudite aspirant who is acquainted with these facts is able to obtain the essence of Amrit (i.e. he is able to obtain an eternal fount of blissfulness, beatitude and felicity).

The Sam Mantra is a personification of the supreme transcendental Brahm who is honoured, revered and adored with the epithet 'Sacchidanand'—i.e. one who is 'Sata' meaning absolutely true, 'Chit' meaning pure consciousness, and 'Anand' meaning blissfulness.

A realized and learned person who knows this fact is able to obtain the essence of Amrit, i.e. is able to access the eternal state of blissfulness and blessedness in this life itself.

An aspirant who knows the esoteric secrets of this Sam Mantra with all its limbs and branches (i.e. in all its intricate details) is able to obtain Mukti (liberation and deliverance) (13).

14. The Prajapati (creator) had created this visible world with the help of this Sam Mantra. That is why he is known as the creator of this universe. [Refer verse no. 2 of this Canto/Upanishad above.]

This world is born from this Prajapati (Brahma, the creator). A wise and erudite person who knows this fact is able to obtain access to the Brahm Loka (i.e. the abode of Brahm). [That is, a wise man is able to see beyond the physical structure of the visible world and understand the secrets that lie behind it and unfold its hitherto invisible aspects. Such a man is indeed rare; he is deemed to be the wisest and most learned amongst men. Once he can see or peer behind the charming exteriors of the visible world which are nevertheless delusory by nature, he is able to see the hidden 'truth', and this realisation makes him attain an exalted state of existence that is spiritually elevated and enlightened. He rises and stands on a high pedestal of self and Brahm realisation which is tantamount to having known the Absolute Truth of creation. Obviously, such a man would certainly reach a destination not normally accessible to those who remain trapped and deluded by the vision of charms and magnificence presented by the exterior façade of the material world of sense objects, which is actually a mirage.]

Hence, once having known the eternal and absolute Truth, or once having reached the highest level of realisation by being acquainted with the truth of Brahm, he loses his individuality by becoming universal like Brahm. In other words, he dissolves himself and merges with the supreme Brahm; he merges his own 'self' with the cosmic Self known as Brahm. [This state is called 'Brahm realisation', and is the ultimate destination for the soul of the creature when the latter merges finally with its primary source to become one with and inseparable from it. This is called the 'final Mukti or Moksha' from where there is no return to the cycle of birth and death. It means that the individual Atma of the seeker, or his pure conscious 'self', finds liberation from all sorts of spiritual fetters that shackle a living being to this gross body and an equally gross and deluding world. The liberated Atma is then able to escape from the bondage of the body and the world, and merge with its primary source known as the cosmic Atma which is Consciousness personified as the supreme Brahm.]

Therefore, he who is wise and erudite endeavours to learn about the intricacies of this Sam Mantra in detail. This leads to his obtaining the essence of spiritual nectar known as Amrit (which is the elixir of eternity, beatitude and felicity). This Amrit gives him his final peace and rest (14).

15. The word 'Vishnum' is the last part of the first Paad (line or step) of the divine and holy Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh (which is composed in the Anushtup Chanda style and detailed in note of verse no. 6 of Canto 2).

Likewise, the word 'Mukham' is the last part of the second Paad (line or step) of the divine and holy Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh (as noted above).

Similarly, the word 'Bhadram' is the last part of the third Paad (line or step) of the divine and holy Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh (as noted above).

Finally, the word 'Myaham' is the last part of the fourth Paad (line or step) of the divine and holy Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh (as noted above).

A wise and erudite person who is well acquainted with the esoteric secrets of this Sam Mantra (i.e. the divine Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh composed in the Anushtup Chanda style, and called 'Sam' because it can be sung melodiously and is spiritually uplifting for the soul) is able to access the essence of Amrit (which is the elixir of eternity and blissfulness).

Brahma is the one who knows the secret of this esoteric knowledge that has been expounded in this Upanishad. This most eclectic Anushtup Mantra is enshrined as the Atma of all, or is literally the soul and essence of everything in existence. It is established in the supreme Brahm and represents the latter. [That is, its divinity, holiness and authority is the same as that of Brahm who is the principal Lord of creation and the primary cause of its coming into being. Since Brahma initiated the process of creation by invoking this Mantra and getting empowered by it (refer verse no. 2 above), it follows that this Mantra was the primary ‘driver’ or the ‘dynamic force’ which was behind the entire process of creation. Again, since the supreme transcendental Brahm is the cosmic, supreme and ultimate Lord of this creation, the eternal, imperishable, infinite, all-encompassing, all-pervading and all-inclusive Supreme Being from whom the entire creation came into being, the Anushtup Chanda is virtually a personification of Brahm. They are deemed to be the two aspects of the same divine concept.]

A wise and learned aspirant who is acquainted with this fact is able to obtain the essence of Amrit—i.e. he is able to obtain the fount of eternal beatitude and felicity.

Lord Nrisingh blesses such a wise and learned person who follows the auspicious and righteous doctrines outlined in this Upanishad by fulfilling all his aspirations and desires for happiness and prosperity. The Lord gives him all the good luck and fortunes, all the fame, majesty and magnificence that are available in this world. Wherever such an aspirant dies or discards his mortal body, Lord Nrisingh ensures his salvation and emancipation at the same spot by enlightening him about the divine ‘Tarak Mantra’, i.e. the Mantra which paves the way of the dying man’s final liberation and deliverance from this world and body. After being initiated with this Tarak Mantra pertaining to Brahm, or after being enlightened about the supreme transcendental Brahm who is none but the Absolute Truth and the pure Consciousness of this creation, the dying man is able to automatically attain eternal peace and blissfulness. [This is made possible because the man now realizes that his Atma or soul, which is his ‘true self and identity’, is none else but Brahm personified, that this Atma is eternal, imperishable, infinite, ever blissful and contented, and that what is apparently dying is the mortal gross body and not this Atma. When the body dies and disintegrates into the elements, the ethereal Atma is liberated from its cage (body) and set free to become one with the fathomless vastness of the open sky. In the present context, it implies that Lord Nrisingh initiates him and accepts him into the fold of his devout devotees and humble worshippers. Once the Lord takes him under his wings, once the Lord accepts him as his devotee and ward, the destiny of the dying man is now onwards in the hands of the Lord, and this guarantees the man’s final emancipation and salvation. A parallel can be drawn here with Lord Shiva giving the same benefit to the dying man in the holy city of Kashi by uttering the holy Tarak Mantra—literally the Mantra which takes one across the fathomless ocean of birth and death—in his ears.] (15).

16. Hence, one should always do Japa (constant repetition) of this Tarak Mantra in the form of Sam. [This refers to the divine Mantra of Lord Nrising composed in the Anushtup Chanda style and described in this Canto 1. The full Mantra is given in note of verse no. 6 of Canto 2. Its other version is called the Gayatri Nrisingh Mantra, and it is described in Canto 4, verse no. 13 of this Upanishad.]

This Sam Mantra inherently has the stupendous cosmic dynamic powers of Brahm as its basic force and energy.

An aspirant who knows this esoteric secret of the divine and enigmatic Sam Mantra is deemed to be a sincere aspirant who seeks the absolute truth and the essence of eternity.

This Upanishad is honoured as a Mahopanishad, literally meaning the ‘great Upanishad’, because it enlightens the aspirant about the principal essence of the supreme Lord.

A person who follows the eclectic divine path shown by this Upanishad and worships the Lord by repeating his Mantra and meditating upon him with an auspicious aim in mind, verily indeed, he is able to obtain the full rewards of such worship and meditation as well as by doing sacrifices. He becomes one like Lord Vishnu. [In other words, by constantly remembering the Lord, he dissolves his own individuality and merges it with the Supreme Being. This is in accordance with the age old adage that one becomes what ones thinks of and what company one keeps. Since Lord Nrisingh is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the devotee becomes as holy and auspicious as Lord Vishnu by constantly remembering the Lord and being in communion with him.] (16).

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Upanishad (Canto) 2

1. In some ancient time, all the Gods—worried at, afraid of and tormented by the ascendance of myriad sins and evil tendencies in this mortal world, leading to death and all round decadence and degeneration—went to Prajapati Brahma (the creator) to seek his advice and to find a way out of their consternations and worries.

Prajapati Brahma preached them the divine Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh. By worshipping and meditating upon this Mantra and using it as a tool to overcome their fears, the Gods were successful in vanquishing death (i.e. they became immortal) and find freedom from sins and their evil effects (because this Mantra is purifying and a provider of auspiciousness). As a result, they were able to cross over this vast and formidable ocean-like world (characterized by sins and pervasions along with their horrible consequences, and the endless cycle of death and birth).

This is why a man who is afraid of death, sins and their evil consequences, and the vast entrapping ocean represented by this mortal world with its innumerable horrors, miseries and agonies should seek the shelter of this divine Anushtup Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh.

Verily, an aspirant who takes the shelter of this Anushtup Mantra is able to overcome all fears of death, of sins and their consequences, and of this ocean-like entrapping world. [In other words, this Mantra provides him a one-point solution to all his spiritual problems.] (1).

2. The four limbs of this Anushtup Mantra are like the four syllables or aspects of the divine Mantra of Pranav (Brahm), which is OM. [Refer also Canto 4, verse no. 2-3.]

The first letter of this OM is ‘A’. Its manifested form is the earth; its Veda (revealed knowledge) is the Rig/Rik Veda adorned with (i.e. consisting of) its glorious Richas (hymns); its Devta (deity or patron god) is Brahma; its Ganas (attendants) are the eight Vasus¹; the Gayatri Chanda² is inherent in its sound; and the Garhyapatya Agni^{*} is its integral part (i.e. this fire is its inherent strength, dynamism, energy and power, and it is intrinsically present in it). All these units or elements of creation are implied or vested in the first step or leg or aspect of Pranav represented by the first

letter 'A' of the divine Mantra OM. [In other words, they represent the first leg or aspect of the supreme Brahm.] This first Matra (a letter or syllable) of OM is equivalent to the first Paad (a line or step) of the divine Anushtup Mantra (dedicated to Lord Nrisingh).

The second letter of Pranav (Brahm), represented by the divine Mantra OM, is the letter 'U'. Its manifested form is the Antakariksha (the sky above the earth and the lower heaven); its Veda (revealed knowledge) is the Yajur Veda adorned with (i.e. consisting of) its glorious Mantras (hymns); its Devta (deity or patron god) is Vishnu; its Ganas (attendants) are the eleven Rudras³; the Trishtup Chanda⁴ is inherent in its sound; and the Dakshinagni* is its integral part (i.e. this fire is its inherent strength, dynamism, energy and power, and it is intrinsically present in it). All these units or elements of creation are implied or vested in the second step or leg or aspect of Pranav represented by the second component or syllable 'U' of the divine Mantra OM. [In other words, they represent the second leg or aspect of the supreme Brahm.] This second Matra (a letter or syllable) of OM is equivalent to the second Paad (a line or step) of the divine Anushtup Mantra (dedicated to Lord Nrisingh).

The third letter of Pranav (Brahm), represented by the divine Mantra OM, is the letter 'M'. Its manifested form is the Duloka (the deep space of the higher sky usually referred to as the upper heaven); its Veda (revealed knowledge) is the Sam Veda adorned with (i.e. consisting of) its glorious Sam (hymns); its Devta (deity or patron god) is Rudra (the angry form of Lord Shiva which brings about the conclusion of creation); its Ganas (attendants) are the twelve Adityas (Suns)⁵; the Jagati Chanda⁶ is inherent in its sound; and the Ahawaniya Agni* is its integral part (i.e. this fire is its inherent strength, dynamism, energy and power, and it is intrinsically present in it). All these units or elements of creation are implied or vested in the third step or leg or aspect of Pranav represented by the letter or syllable 'M' of the divine Mantra OM. [In other words, they represent the third leg or aspect of the supreme Brahm.] This third Matra (a letter or syllable) of OM is equivalent to the third Paad (a line or step) of the divine Anushtup Mantra (dedicated to Lord Nrisingh).

The fourth part or aspect or leg of Pranav (Brahm) is represented by the fourth component of the divine Mantra OM, and it is known as the 'Ardha Matra' as it is half-syllable or a half-vowel sound of the Sanskrit language. It is actually the protracted humming sound of the letter 'M' that reverberates at the end of saying OM, and it represents the cosmic ethereal sound called Naad⁷. [This is the sound of 'dot' or Anuswar placed on the top of a Sanskrit letter to sound like 'mum' with a protracted humming of the second 'm'.] Its manifested form is the Som Loka (the Moon which is regarded as a pitcher of elixir in the heaven); its Veda (revealed knowledge) is the Atharva Veda adorned with (i.e. consisting of) its glorious Mantras (hymns); its Devta (deity or patron god) is the supreme transcendental Brahm (who is the primary cause of coming into being of the entire creation, including the Trinity Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva); its Ganas (attendants) are the forty-nine Maruts⁸; the Viraat Chanda⁹ is inherent in its sound; and the Samvartak Agni* is its integral part (i.e. this fire is its inherent strength, dynamism, energy and power, and it is intrinsically present in it).

There is only one Rishi (or seer who had first seen or to whom this Mantra was first revealed during deep meditation) of this most divine and eclectic Mantra. [This Rishi is the creator Brahma. Refer verse no. 2 of Canto 1 of this Upanishad above.]

The fourth Matra (i.e. the 'Ardha Matra' representing the cosmic Naad that is heard at the end of pronouncing the Mantra OM) is most glorious, magnificent,

eclectic and divine, it is splendorous and illuminating, and it represents the supreme transcendental Brahm himself. [That is, when the aspirant actually gets deeply submerged in meditation, he experiences the presence of the eternal fount of bliss and ecstasy in his own inner self. He experiences the blessedness of self-realisation which illuminates his inner being, and he becomes enlightened. This is the state of Brahm-realisation; the state of extreme blessedness when beatitude and felicity is witnessed first hand, and this is tantamount to having reached Brahm. Indeed, this Brahm is nothing but Consciousness personified. The humming sound of OM completely overwhelms the aspirant or the spiritual seeker, and massages his nerves so much so that all his worldly worries, pains, agonies and sorrows are eliminated. This is equivalent to becoming liberated from the horrors of the mortal world and its accompanying fear of death.]

Indeed, this fourth Paad (step or aspect) of the Pranav, i.e. the Naad, is the fourth Paad of the divine Sam Mantra (i.e. of the Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh is composed, and which is the subject matter of the Cantos 1 and 2)¹⁰ (2).

[Note—¹The *eight Vasus*—refer note of verse no. 3 of Canto 1.

*There are *four diving fires*—viz. Garhyapatya, Dakshinagni, Ahawaniya and Samvartak. (a) The ‘Garhyapatya’ (the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies), (b) The ‘Dakshinagni’ (the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity; the fire lit at the site of a sacrificial fire ritual, near its south end), (c) The ‘Ahawaniya’ (the fire lit to invoke the Gods, to invite them to participate and accept the offerings made to them during a ritualistic fire sacrifice), and (d) The term ‘Samvartak Agni’ refers to the fire that engulfs the earth at the time of dooms-day, or the fire that brings about the conclusion of creation, and which represents that phase of the fire sacrifice when offering of oblations are complete and the sacred fire is let to burn out and calm down, because the word ‘Samvartak’ means the end of an era or a period of time, and Agni means fire.

References—The *Garhyapatya* fire has been described in the Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/3-6, 4/11/1-2, 4/17/4; the *Dakshinagni* fire in the Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/7-10, 4/13/1-2, 4/17/5; the *Ahawaniya* fire in the Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/11-16, 4/14/1-2, 4/17/6; and the *Samvartak* fire in the Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Kandika 1.

²The *Gayatri Chanda* has 24 letters and syllables in all which are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$. The Nrisingh Mantra according to this style of composition is called the ‘Nrisingh Gayatri’ and has been described in Canto 4, verse no. 13 of the present Upanishad.

³The *eleven Rudras* have been listed in note of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 above.

⁴The *Trishtup Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines in which each line has 11 letters; $11 \times 4 = 44$ letters in all.

⁵The *twelve Adityas* have been listed in note of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 above.

⁶The *Jagati Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines with 12 letters in each line, bringing the total number of letters to 48.

⁷*Naad* is the cosmic sound in ether which forms the background sound in this creation. It is from this Naad that all other sounds emerge, develop, spread, and finally collapse back into much like the consecutive waves that emerge from the surface of the vast and fathomless ocean, develop, spread and finally collapse into the ocean, only to be re-formed again and again endlessly.

⁸The *49 Maruts*—they are the Wind-Gods mentioned in Rig Veda, 1/37-39 and 1/165/3, 5, 7, 9. They are regarded variously as — (i) sons of Indra and Vrishni (Rig

Veda, 2/34/2), (ii) Sons of Rudra (Rig Veda, 2/33/1), (iii) similar to the Fire-God (Rig Veda, 6/66/2), and (vi) Indra God (Rig Veda, 1/165, 171). The Purans call them sons of sage Kashyap and Diti.

The *Atharva-shikha Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that the Maruts were created along with the Moon God, the Mantras of the Atharva Veda, the Viraat Chanda and the Samvartak Agni. It is the fourth leg or Paad of Brahm and corresponds to the Ardha Matra of the half a syllable that follows the third letter 'M' of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm.

⁹The *Viraat Chanda* is one in which the verse has four lines each having ten letters, bringing the number of letters to 40.

¹⁰The *four Paads of Brahm* have also been described in Canto 4, verse nos. 3-7 of this present Upanishad.]

3. The Anushtup Mantra consists of a total of thirty-two letters or syllables. Its first Paad or line or step has eight letters or syllables, and the remaining three Paads too have eight letters or syllables each, bringing the total to thirty-two. [4 lines x 8 letters = 32.]

This Anushtup Mantra is the hub around which the entire creation revolves. It is the central point from where the entire creation has evolved. [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 1.] The latter arises from this Mantra, and finally collapses into it. [This implies that this Anushtup Mantra is a manifestation of the supreme Brahm because whatever has been said in this verse applies only to Brahm and nothing else.] (3).

[Note—Refer verse no. 7 of the present Canto 2, as well as verse no. 1 of Canto 1.]

4. This Anushtup Mantra actually has five Angas (organs, limbs or aspects, of which four have been enumerated in Canto 1, verse nos. 8-9, 11, 13 and 15, and verse no. 4 above of the present Canto 2).

The fifth Paad (limb or aspect) is represented by the Pranav or the OM Mantra which is regarded as a monosyllabic sound. This OM Mantra or Pranav is needed to complete the Anushtup Mantra and endow it with its stupendous glory, power, authority, majesty, holiness and divinity.

A man's body is also said to have five parts or components—viz. the heart, the head (the forehead or the cerebrum), the tuft of hair on the top of the skull (on the cranium) which is called the Shikha, the shoulder blade, and the mind.

Therefore, when one does formal worship and wishes to empower the body with the mystical strength of the Anushtup Mantra, and ensure that the body is purified and sanctified by this Mantra in the formal way, he should say the relevant Mantra as follows—'Hridaye Namaha' (for the heart), 'Shirshe Swaha' (for the head), 'Shikhaye Vashat' (for the Shikha), 'Kavachaye Hum' (for the shoulder), and 'Astraye Phat' (for the mind). [These esoteric Mantras are said while making offerings during the Tantric or occult forms of worship.] This helps to establish a link between the body and the Anushtup Mantra.

One should establish coordination between the five aspects of the Anushtup Mantra and the five parts of the body as mentioned above. Thus, the first aspect or limb of the Mantra should be linked or coordinated with the first part of the body (i.e. the heart), the second aspect or limb of the Mantra should be linked or coordinated with the second part of the body (i.e. the head; the forehead or the cerebrum), the third aspect or limb of the Mantra should be linked or coordinated with the third part of the body (i.e. the Shikha), the fourth aspect or limb of the Mantra should be linked or coordinated with the fourth part of the body (i.e. the shoulder), and the fifth aspect or

limb of the Mantra should be linked or coordinated with the fifth part of the body (i.e. the mind)¹.

Even as all the units of this world are linked with each other and inter-dependent, these organs of the body and the limbs of the Anushtup Mantra too are linked to each other and inter-dependent (4).

[Note—¹This is like linking two components of an electric gadget so that electric current can flow unhindered and easily. When the Anushtup Mantra with five limbs or 'wires' is linked to these five points on the body, each of the five parts get attached to the relevant point of the Mantra. This ensures that the eclectic, the divine and the mystical powers of the Mantra are transferred to the body through these 'junction points'; there should be no short-circuit. Thus, the first limb of the Anushtup Mantra gets attached to and empowers or 'charges' the heart; the second limb does the same with the head, the third limb with the Shikha, the fourth with the shoulder, and the fifth with the mind. Since the most important part of the man's body which determines his thoughts and controls his actions is the mind, when it gets charged with the fifth limb—which is Pranav and its representative sound called the Naad (refer verse no. 2, last stanza)—the man becomes enlightened and overwhelmed with bliss and happiness. When the cosmic Naad begins to reverberate in his mind, he obtains the elixir of bliss and happiness; he begins to taste the nectar which vanquishes all his miseries and agonies pertaining to the body and the world.]

5. The OM is an acronym for the entire universe or creation. Therefore, it is proper that each letter or syllable of the Anushtup Mantra should be pre-fixed and suffixed with the divine monosyllable OM when it is invoked and vested on the body. Those who are well-versed with this procedure assert that it is the proper way of doing 'Anga Nyas', which is vesting the body with the mystical powers and strength of any Mantra (5).

6. [This verse narrates the full Nrisingh Mantra according to the Anushtup Chanda style of composition.]

The Anushtup Mantra has the word 'Ugram' in the first spot or place. He who knows this is able to obtain the essence of Amrit (which is the elixir of eternity and bliss). The word 'Viram' occupies the second spot or place. The word 'Mahavishnum' is at the third place. [This completes the first line of the 4-line Mantra.]

The word 'Jwalantam' is at the fourth place. The word 'Sarwatomukham' occupies the fifth place or spot. [This ends the second line of the Mantra.]

The word 'Nrisingham' is at the sixth spot or place. The word 'Bhishanam' is at the seventh place or spot. The word 'Bhadram' is on the eighth place or spot. [This is the end of the third line of the Mantra.]

The word 'Mritumritum' is on the ninth spot or place. The word 'Namami' is on the tenth place or spot. And the word 'Aham' is the final one occupying the twelfth place or spot.

A wise person who knows this eclectic and divine Mantra in the way narrated above is able to access the essence of Amrit (i.e. he is able to access the eternal source of beatitude and felicity) (6).

[Note—The Mantra of Lord Nrisingh composed in the Anushtup Chanda style as narrated in this verse is therefore the following—'Ugram Viram Mahaavishnum (step 1); Jwalantum Sarwatomukham (step 2). Nrisingham Bhishanam Bhadram (step 3), Mritumritum Namaamyaham (step 4)'. Refer also to verse nos. 9, 11, 13 and 15 of Canto 1. The meaning is briefly the following—'I bow respectfully before him who is most terrible, valorous, an incarnation of the great Lord Vishnu, blazing and splendid (like the fire or the sun), all-pervading and a representative of all the

aspects of this vast and myriad creation. Lord Nrisingh (the half man and half lion an incarnation of the great Lord Vishnu) is most terrible and awful, but auspicious and benevolent at the same time; he is the death of even the God of death (i.e. he causes the end of even Yam, the God who is responsible for the death of all other creatures in this creation).’ [Refer also to Prapannakchar Saar Sangraha, 23.]

This Mantra is deemed to be so esoteric, enigmatic, holy and divine that it is regarded as both of the Anushtup Chanda style and of the Gayatri Chanda style. Whereas the version having four lines as narrated above falls under former category, the one having three lines falls under the latter category. This present verse along with verse nos. 1-9, 13, and 15 of Canto 1 deal with the Anushtup Chanda version of the Mantra, while verse no. 6-7 of the same Canto describes it in its Gayatri version having only three lines. It must be noted here that besides the ‘Anushtup Gayatri’ version of the Nrisingh Mantra there is another version of the Mantra, and it is called ‘Nrisingh Gayatri’. This is narrated in Canto 4, verse no. 13.]

7. This Mantra consisting of eleven units or words is the one from which the entire creation has been born or revealed. [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 2-3.] It is the one which becomes the cause of conclusion of this creation. [Refer verse no. 3 of the present Canto 2.]

It ought to be understood that such is the glory and majesty of the Anushtup Mantra. A person who knows this is able to obtain eternity and imperishability (7).

8. [Verse nos. 8-18 now elaborately explain the significance and importance of each of the words of this Nrisingh Mantra.]

The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—‘Why is the epithet ‘Ugram’ used for Lord Nrisingh?’ [This word ‘Ugram’ usually has a negative connotation as it literally refers to being terrible, awful, angry, vehement etc., but here it means someone who has the formidable authority, strength and power, or someone who has the ‘terribly awesome’ strength and power to lift something or someone up from a low level of existence in which it or he/she presently is. The creatures of this mortal world have become so heavily burdened with sins and wrought in evils that their liberation and deliverance, their salvation and emancipation is indeed a formidable and daunting task requiring tremendous will, dynamism and strength. Since this is brought about by the Lord, he is honoured by this epithet ‘Ugram’.]

Prajapati answered—‘Lord Nrisingh always ensures the awakening, rising, elevation and upliftment of all the Lokas (various aspects of this creation; the different levels of creation; the various worlds such as the terrestrial world, the heavenly world, the nether world etc.), all the Gods, all the Bhuts (elements of creation and creatures in general), and all the Atmas (i.e. each individual soul; each individual creature). [That is, the Lord ensures that all his dependants and off springs progress in life; they do not remain mired and trapped in their present situation which they have got due to their past deeds, but always get a chance to rise higher and higher with each passing day and birth to finally attain the highest spiritual stature of being Mukta and Gyani, i.e. being emancipated and enlightened. This is because the Lord is very magnanimous and merciful by nature inspite of his ferocious external form which incidentally he had to assume when evil and perversion reached its zenith, and a quick and surgical remedy was the need of the hour.]

It is he (Lord Nrisingh) who creates, sustains, nourishes, develops and protects, and finally concludes everything and everyone in this creation. At the time of conclusion, he merges or dissolves the entire creation in his own self. [This is because he is the Supreme Being known as Brahm personified. The emergence,

evolving, expansion and dissolution of the creation in Brahm can be compared to the wave of the ocean. The wave arises from the surface of the ocean, it is the latter which creates the former, and then this wave reaches its height and is often seen like a huge wall of water, moves fast, and finally collapses back into the ocean to become one with it and indistinguishable from it. Once the wave makes its appearance, it looks much different from the ocean—for one, the ocean is flat while the wave is like a huge erect wall of water which crashes against an object like a bludgeoning battle-ram, overturning big ships and causing horrors and destruction on the shore. But after it calms down, no one can see any distinction between this wave and the ocean.]

The Lord himself shows grace and mercy on this world, and inspires others to do the same. All these factors (as enumerated herein above) are the reasons why he is honoured by the title of ‘Ugram’.

It has been said in the Rig/Rik Veda (the first of the four Vedas) that one should offer prayers and worship to the supreme Lord who is honoured and revered even by the scriptures. This Lord lives honourably and gloriously in the cave-like subtle heart of all living beings.

It is to be noted that this merciful Lord is not fearsome or frightening for his devotees inspite of his having assumed the form of a lion. [This is proved by the fact that immediately after slaying the cruel demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting Prahalad, his son, because the latter worshipped Vishnu, Lord Nrisingh had picked up Prahalad on to his laps, and licked and caressed him like a lion does to its cub.]

He is accessible to all any time and at any place, and gives them protection and benediction whenever and wherever needed.

He is called ‘Ugram’ because he diligently, aggressively and pro-actively ensures the all round welfare and well-being of auspicious people and his devotees, while being ruthless, merciless and uncompromising towards those who are wicked and sinful, slaying or eliminating such evil and pervert creatures with any reservations or regrets. These are some of the reasons why the Lord is called ‘Ugram’.

Oh Lord Nrisingh! We pray to you. Grant us auspiciousness and welfare. Let your fierce army not attack us, and let it go somewhere else’ (8).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the first word ‘Ugram’ of the Nrisingh Mantra.]

9. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—‘Why is the epithet ‘Viram’ used for Lord Nrisingh?’ [The word ‘Viram’ literally means one who is brave, valiant, courageous and valorous.]

Prajapati replied—‘The Lord makes all the different Lokas (worlds), all the Gods, all the Bhuts (elements of creation and creatures in general) and all the Atmas (individuals) remain active and agile. He makes them enjoy their deeds and activities. He constantly and actively creates them, establishes them, develops them, protects them, and finally concludes them. He is most gracious towards his devotees.

He is brave, courageous, valiant, valorous and diligent. He is active and agile in carrying out his duties towards this creation, and he does so steadily, consistently and persistently with unstinted courage and diligence on his part. He assumes the form of the Adharvayu priest who prepares and offers oblation of the Soma (a sanctified liquid) to the sacred fire during religious rituals. It is he, as this pries, who invokes the Gods and the patron deity during such ceremonies. These are the reasons why he is honoured with the epithet ‘Viram’. [Since all activities in this world require courage and diligence, the Lord is honoured with this title because he is the one who

controls each and every action and deed of all living beings as well as of the Gods. Even the latter cannot do anything without the wish and permission of Lord Nrisingh, or without the latter empowering them to do so. In short, whatever is done in this world is actually done by Lord Nrisingh, and this fact is implied when it is said that he lives in the subtle heart of all the Bhuts (units of creation such as the creatures, plants and elements) and the Gods—refer verse no. 8. Being the almighty Emperor of this creation, it is actually he who drives the edifice of creation in every meaning and aspect. If he does not wish then even the Gods, who are deemed to be self-sufficient and empowered themselves, would fail to act. Since Lord Nrisingh can control single-handedly such a vast and perplexing world of an astounding variety of creatures and Gods, who, more often than not, pull the creation in opposite directions and get at each others throat to usurp its limited resources, it really needs stupendous courage, strength and valour on the part of the Lord to control this world and its naughty inhabitants. It is similar to controlling a vast and diverse army of soldiers of different backgrounds, training, mentality and motivation, and coordinating their efforts to ensure victory. That is why he is called ‘Viram’—someone who is immensely conscientious and diligent while carrying out his obligations, besides being strong, brave, courageous, valiant and valorous.] (9).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the second word ‘Viram’ of the Mantra.]

10. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—‘Why is the epithet ‘Mahavishnum’ used for Lord Nrisingh?’ [The word ‘Maha’ means one who is immensely great, magnificent, grand and majestic, while the word ‘Vishnu’ refers to the sustainer, nourisher and protector of creation. Lord Vishnu is also the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic invisible gross body of Brahm, from whom the rest of creation came into being. Even the creator of the visible world, Lord Brahma to whom this Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed in verse no. 2 of Canto 1, was born atop a lotus that emerged from the navel of Vishnu. Hence, the word ‘Mahavishnum’ clearly means that Nrisingh is none but this great Lord Vishnu himself.]

Prajapati replied—‘Lord Nrisingh uniformly and universally pervades in, or is an integral and an inseparable part of all the Lokas (worlds), all the Gods, all the Bhuts (elements of creation and creatures in general) and all the Atmas (individuals).

Just like a ball of meat is uniformly soaked in fat, the Lord is uniformly and undeniably present in each unit and cell of the body.

Since this world is completely soaked in the spirit of the Lord, i.e. since the Lord is omnipresent, all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-inclusive, and since nothing exists outside the ambit of or the periphery formed by the Lord, it is natural that the world collapses into and merges with the Lord. [The analogy of the wave and the ocean cited in verse no. 8 by way of explanation also applies here. The wave does not arise in the sky or the land, so when it dies it naturally collapses and merges with its primary source, which is the ocean. Another instance is that of the sky and the sound. Sound arises in space, it travels in space, and it dissipates in space. Similarly, a plant comes forth from the earth, it grows upon the earth, it draws its energy and nourishment from the earth, and finally it dies and disintegrates to merge with the soil of the earth.]

[The immense glories and majesty of Lord Nrisingh has been lauded in the Rig/Rik Veda as follows--] ‘He who is the supreme caretaker of all the subjects (units; creatures) of this creation, he who is worshipped, honoured and revered by all the subjects (as their supreme Lord), he who is universal, omnipresent and all-pervading,

and he who is so unique that there has been no parallel like him ever—verily, it is this Lord Nrisingh who is inherently present or revealed in all forms of this creation. It is he who is illuminated or manifested in all his sixteen Kalaas¹ in everything.’

These are the reason why he is adorned by the title ‘Mahavishnum’ (10).]

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the third word ‘Mahavishnum’ of the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh.

¹The sixteen Kalaas—The word *Kalaa* has a wide application and briefly it refers to the a particular aspect or position or condition or situation of any entity. It refers to the special qualities, attributes, virtues, strengths, powers and potentials possessed by it. other connotations include—(a) shape, form, contours of a thing; (b) special qualities, art, craft, skills, expertise, attributes, tricks etc. that one possesses; (c) a division, portion, fraction, phase or degree; (d) brilliance, magnificence and grandeur; (e) the maverick and supernatural powers that someone possesses.

References—(i) Shukla Yajur Veda:-- Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of, Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse nos. 14-15. (ii) Sam Veda:-- Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 7. (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda:-- Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 18-19; Kalisantarna Upanishad, verse no. 2. (iv) Atharv Veda:-- Prashna Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 1-6.

As we have observed above, the word *Kalaa* represents the special qualities, art, craft, skills, expertise, attributes etc. that one must possess if he were to successfully reach his target in life. These different qualities and virtues present in a man symbolically make him perfect; they represent his various strengths and potentials, and they are said to be sixteen in number corresponding to and symbolized by the sixteen phases of the moon. Since a man is an exact replica of the ‘Viraat Purush’, who in turn is a subtle manifestation of the sublime Brahm, these sixteen qualities or attributes of a man refer to the sixteen qualities of Brahm himself that made him the Lord of creation. The presence of all these divine attributes makes a man complete and very powerful. Hence, these sixteen Kalaas represent all the magnificent good qualities that are present in this creation which enable a man to overcome all adversities, hurdles and ill circumstances. Since Brahm is the creature’s only sincere well wisher and succour in times of distress and dismay, and since Brahm possesses all the exemplary qualities grouped under the single word *Kalaa*, a man who is blessed with them is regarded as being equivalent to Brahm. Or in other words, he personifies Brahm with all his dignified virtues that are needed by a man to complete and get across the cycle of birth and death without hurdles.

These sixteen Kalaas of creation that are present in a man refer to the sixteen elements or primary components that form the basis of a man’s very existence and his nature and temperament. These are the fundamental building blocks of his subtle and gross body, its characteristic qualities as well as the world surrounding him and how the man lives in and interacts with it.

The sixteen Kalaas or aspects or facets of creation have been expressly listed in the Prashna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4. These sixteen Kalaas are the following—(i) Pran (life; life consciousness; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life manifested in the form of the vital winds; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (ii) Shraddha (the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) ‘Prithivi’ (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (the mind and heart complex and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour,

potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self; the sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause) (xiii) Mantra (the key or formula to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advice; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), (xiv) Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), (xv) Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and (xvi) Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature; the good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory that a creature has in this world).

These sixteen elements or units created by the Supreme Being are the sixteen Kalaas or aspects or fractions of creation. In other words, this visible creation is made up of these sixteen units in different ratios just like a colourful picture in mosaic is prepared by an expert artisan from bits and pieces of glass or stone which are independent units in their own right but when incorporated in the mosaic that forms the colourful picture they become an inseparable and an integral part of the latter. Even if one piece is removed, the picture is disturbed.

In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into sixteen parts.

The *Kalisantharna Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 2 says that these sixteen Kalaas are like sheaths or veils covering the Atma or 'self' of the man, and he can realise this glorious divinity residing in his bosom only when these Kalaas which are like impediments or hurdles in self and Brahm realisation are removed. When this Upanishad describes them as 'hurdles or impediments' in realising the glory of the 'self' it implies that although all these sixteen qualities are related to achieving glory and majesty in the world, they have nothing to do with 'self-realisation' and 'Brahm-realisation' which is possible only by abandoning everything related to this world as well as the body both in its gross part and its subtle part.

The *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 2 says that the divine entity that exhibits sixteen divine attributes lives in the body itself.

The *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*, Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse nos. 14-15 describes the sixteen Kalaas of Prajapati (the Lord of creation/world) in a symbolic manner by alluding to the phases of the moon. The fifteen nights of the dark or the bright phases of the moon when the disc of the moon continuously changes + one fundamental truth of the moon which is its disc that never changes inspite of its view from the earth that constantly changes.]

11. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—'Why is the epithet 'Jwalantum' used for Lord Nrisingh?' [The word 'Jwalantum' literally means an entity that blazes like the fire; an entity that is hot and radiant, glorious and splendorous, glowing and brilliant like a raging fire. The Sun also is an example to illustrate the meaning of the word 'Jwalantum'—one who burns or glows.]

Lord Prajapati replied—'All the Lokas (worlds), all the Gods, all the Bhuts (elements of creation and creatures in general), and all the Atmas (individuals) are illuminated (i.e. are lighted, are alive and active, are born and made known, made

aware of and got enlightened) by the divine grace of Lord Nrisingh who himself is illuminated. [It is like the case of the blazing sun in the sky which is self-illuminated and illuminates everything in this world that comes within its sight. In the Upanishads, the Sun is treated as a living and vivid symbol of Brahm, the Supreme Being—one of the many reasons being its natural eternal illumination, brilliance, dazzle and splendour.]

All forms of illumination and sources of light in this world get their inherent power to illuminate and show light from the Lord, and once thus empowered, they illuminate and show light to others in this world. [Again taking the analogy of the sun, the latter is self-illuminated like the Lord, and its light makes the moon shine. The moon has no light of its own, but when the sunlight falls upon it, it appears that it has its own light called the ‘moonlight’. Therefore, the moon only reflects the light of the sun to illuminate the world during the night. The word ‘illumination’ also refers to the grand and eclectic virtues of wisdom, erudition, enlightenment and discrimination that come with correct and truthful knowledge. Hence, it implies that those who are blessed by the Lord acquire these grand qualities, and then they ‘illuminate’ or ‘enlighten’ others with their own light of wisdom and knowledge.]

[The Rig/Rik Veda hymns have described the glories of the Lord in the following way—] ‘It is the Lord who in his cosmic form as the Savita (the sun) spreads light in all the directions of this creation, and it is he in the form of the Prasavita (the Mother Nature; the divine Goddess) who gives birth to the entire creation. It is the Lord who is not only eternally self-illuminated but always illuminates others too.’

[Taking the instance of the sun, the latter is eternally illuminated, though during the night there appears to be darkness everywhere. So, even after the doomsday when an all-enveloping gloom engulfs this creation, the Lord remains illuminated, though in a latent form, in his cosmic invisible form as the Viraat Purush. Like the sun re-emerging the next day to illuminate the world, the new phase of creation emerges from the Viraat Purush to become visible. Since the sun is at the core of life in this world as it provides light, heat and energy to it, and life in all its known forms would be simply inconceivable without the sun, the latter is also like the ‘mother’ who conceives the child and then not only harbours it in her womb but also takes care of its nourishment till the time the infant is born. Not only limited to this, the mother continues to look after the child even after birth, even during his adolescent days, and is worried about her child even when he grows older to become a self-sustaining adult.]

The Lord does Tapa himself (i.e. he remains constantly diligent and dedicated; he himself remains active in being auspicious and righteous), and makes others follow him. [And if they do not follow his advice, the Lord becomes compelled to punish such evil and sinful persons to protect the rest of the creation, and maintain the law and order situation in his cosmic kingdom.]

The Lord is himself splendorous and radiant with the glorious virtues of divinity, holiness, auspiciousness and righteousness, and makes others in his cosmic kingdom conform to these noble virtues (so that they become eligible to be called his subjects).’

These are the reasons why he is honoured and revered by the epithet ‘Jwalantum’ (11).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the fourth word ‘Jwalantum’ of the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh.]

12. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—‘Why is the epithet ‘Sarwatomukham’ used for Lord Nrisingh?’ [The word ‘Sarwatomukham’ has to parts—one is ‘Swarto’ meaning everything, everyone, everywhere, and in all situations; and the other is ‘Mukham’ meaning ‘mouth or face’. Here it means that the Lord is present everywhere in each unit of creation in a uniform and universal manner. There is nothing that is not pervaded by him, there is nothing that is not within his purview or authority, and there is nothing that is not known to him.]

Prajapati replied—‘All the Lokas (worlds), all the Gods, all the Bhuts (elements of creation and creatures in general), and all the Atmas (individuals) are seen, heard, felt and taken care of by the Lord even though he has no physical organs or any physical body. He goes everywhere, remains everywhere, knows everything, sees everything, feels everything and takes care of everything.

He is universal, uniform, omnipresent, omniscient, all-knowing, all-encompassing, all-pervading and all-including.

[The Rig/Rik Veda lauds the Lord in its hymns in the following way--] ‘The Lord who was all alone before the beginning of this creation has revealed himself in the form of this creation or universe. It is this Lord who is the principal creator, sustainer and caretaker, as well as the concluder or annihilator of this world. We bow most respectfully to such a glorious and divine Lord.’

These are the reasons why the Lord is honoured and revered by the use of the epithet ‘Sarwatomukham’ (12).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the fifth word ‘Sarwatomukham’ of the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh.]

13. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—‘Why is the epithet ‘Nrisingham’ used for the Lord?’ [The word ‘Nrisingh’ has to parts—one is ‘Nar’ meaning a man; and the other is ‘Singh’ meaning a lion. Here it means that the Lord represents two highest forms in creation—one is the ‘man’ who is not only the virtual Lord of all living beings in this world but is the most wise, intelligent, powerful, authoritative and highly developed creature amongst them, representing the higher forms of life in the cosmic kingdom, and the second is the ‘lion’ who occupies the same position amongst the members of the animal kingdom which is the lower form of life. Lord Nrisingh represents, therefore, the best of all the worlds taken together.]

Prajapati replied—‘Amongst all the creatures it is the man who is highly developed, most intelligent and wise, extremely powerful, immensely strong, very valiant and authoritative. At the same time, the lion is also known to be physically very strong, powerful and valiant amongst animals. This is the reason why Lord Nrisingh is honoured by this epithet of Nrisingh which is a combination of the two words ‘Nar’ meaning a man, and ‘Singh’ meaning a lion.

This eclectic and divine form of the Lord is a provider of auspiciousness and well being for this world; it is an eternal, ancient, traditional and primeval truthful (i.e. the primary, real or essential) form of the Lord; it is his imperishable and infinite form. [That is, one should not look only at his external unconventional form as a half man and a half lion form which is terrible, fear inspiring and very odd, but understand the underlying philosophy that this peculiar form represents.]

[The Rig/Rik Veda lauds the Lord in its hymns in the following way--] ‘It is Lord Vishnu (the sustainer, nourisher and protector of creation; the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic invisible and all-pervading form of Brahm, the Supreme Being) who had revealed himself as Lord Nrisingh, and is worshipped by his devotees in this form.’ [That is, when one worships Lord Nrisingh he is actually worshipping Lord

Vishnu.] Devotees pray to this form to have access to numerous forms of strengths and powers (to overcome numerous problems and hurdles in life which require special strength, energy, valour and courage, along with skill, wisdom and knowledge, to be get over them).

In spite of being in a fierce form of a half man and a half lion, the Lord does not instill any kind of fear whatsoever in his devotees. Rather, they feel reassured and protected.

The Lord roams about freely everywhere on this earth, including the lofty mountains. [This is an obvious reference to both the man and the lion. The lion roams freely in the forests and the mountains, fearing nobody, as it is the lord of the wild. The implied meaning here is that a wise man who understands the import of this Upanishad and is blessed by the Lord becomes empowered and infused with such glory that he too can walk fearlessly in the mountains and forests like a lion. This is true because ancient sages and hermits used to stay alone in dense forests and mountain caves among wild animals without any fear from them or being caused any harm by them.]

He is present in all the forms that this creation and its creatures have taken. [This is because the entire creation is a manifestation of this single Lord. This fact has already been asserted in verse no. 12 above.]

It is this Lord who is implied in the hymns chanted by those who sing prayers in honour of the Lord, or those who chant the Mantras while making offerings to the sacred fire during rituals.

The entire creation is measured by his three steps. [This has reference to Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Vaaman or a mendicant dwarf Brahmin who had measured the entire creation in three steps during the fire sacrifice of the demon king Bali¹.]

These are the reasons why the Lord is honoured and revered by the use of the epithet 'Nrisingham' (13).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the sixth word 'Nrisingham' of the divine Mantra of Lord Nrisingh.

¹The legend of Lord *Vaaman* is briefly this—King of demons known as Bali, who was a grandson of Prahalad for whom Lord Vishnu had revealed himself as Nrisingh/Narsingh, had conquered the whole world, including the heavens. The Gods were deprived of their kingdom in the heaven, and so their mother Aditi requested Lord Vishnu to intervene on the behalf of the Gods. Vishnu incarnated as *Vaaman*, a dwarf Brahmin mendicant. He approached Bali who was famous for his charities and munificence and asked for a gift of land that could be measured by three steps. When Bali agreed, Lord *Vaaman* measured the earth with his one step and the heaven with his second step. Taken aback, Bali offered his own head for the third step, at which the Lord placed his feet on it and pushed Bali to the netherworld. But the merciful Lord saw the injustice done to a magnanimous Bali who had been righteous and firm in his vow of making charity, and never rescinded on his commitments. So, the Lord made him the king of the nether world, and himself took up the job of protecting him there as his gatekeeper. This incarnation of Lord Vishnu is his fifth and followed the Nrisingh form which was the fourth. The idea behind this *Vaaman* incarnation is that even the most humble looking man can indeed have the stupendous power of the Spirit that even the most powerful gods and kings lack.]

14. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—'Why is the epithet 'Bhishanam' used for the Lord?' [The word 'Bhishanam' literally means an entity that is terrible, awe-inspiring, fearful, grave, formidable.]

Prajapati replied—'The Lord's fierce and formidable form instills fear and awe in all the Lokas (worlds), all the Gods, all the Bhuts (elements of creation and

creatures in general), and all the Atmas (individuals) in this world. They run hither and thither out of his fear, but the Lord is afraid of none. [This is not to mean that the Lord is a cruel tyrant who wishes to subdue his subjects with roughness and high-handedness. It means that it is necessary for the Lord to maintain stern demeanours so that the wicked and the evil creatures can be kept under leash. The fear of the Lord injects angst in the heart of the sinful and the cruel, and not his devotees and righteous persons. If a king of any kingdom shows undue softness, excess kindness or mercy, then it would be difficult for him to enforce discipline and order in his kingdom, for his good virtues of kindness and forgiveness would be misinterpreted by the pervert and the wicked as his weakness, his inaptitude and lack of will, which in turn would be detrimental for the overall control over the vast realm of the kingdom which has all sorts of subjects residing in it, some of whom are so rogue that only severity of punishment and hard spanking can control them. This is true even in a civilized society where there are some rogue elements that have no scruples about anything, who do not understand the language of 'Dharma', or the codes of conduct, civility, morality and ethics, and the only language they understand is the language of the stick. So, if a king has to maintain law and order in his kingdom and ensure that his righteous subjects can lead a happy life, then he must look stern and fearful to those who are inveterately wicked, mischievous, pervert and sinful, in spite of the king being most kind and graceful at heart. The same thing applies to the Lord of the universe. It is only the sinful who are afraid of his ferocious form, and not his devotees—and this fact has already been affirmed in verse nos. 8 and 13 above. This observation is endorsed below in the next paragraph.]

[The Rig/Rik Veda lauds the Lord in its hymns in the following way--] 'It is out of the fear of the Lord that the Wind God keeps on moving, the Sun God keeps on illuminating the realm, the Fire God and Indra (the king of gods) carry on their assigned duties, and the fifth God known as Mritu (the God of death) too remains diligent in his duties.' [All these Gods represent the various forces of Nature. So, the supreme Lord is the controller of these units of creation so that the wheel of creation keeps on rotating smoothly. If the Emperor is slack, the whole administrative structure of the empire would become slack and crumble under its own weight. The Lord's sternness is necessary to keep the different forces of Nature under tight leash. Otherwise the situation would be much like that of a chariot having many horses who cannot be controlled by the charioteer. The obvious result would be the chariot rocking violently and eventually toppling over. Bridling the creation and reining-in its wayward forces are as important as being merciful to the creation.]

These are the reasons why the Lord is honoured and revered by the use of the epithet 'Bhishanam' (14).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the seventh word 'Bhishanam' of the holy Mantra of Lord Nrsingh.]

15. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—'Why is the epithet 'Bhadrum' used for the Lord?' [The word 'Bhadrum' is defined below.]

Prajapati replied—'The word 'Bhadrum' means that the Lord is most auspicious, graceful, kind, gentle, civil, courteous, suave and affable. He himself is radiant and glorious, and bestows these grand virtues on others. The Lord is adorable and honourable himself, and he grants these virtues on others (who worship him and adore the principles he stands for).

[The Rig/Rik Veda lauds the Lord in its hymns in the following way--] 'Oh Lord who takes care of devout worshippers and seekers! Let us hear only auspicious

words in our ears, and see only auspicious things with our eyes. Oh Lord! Let us have a healthy, well-nourished, strong and robust body with which we can offer prayers and oblations to you while living a life till its full term and carry out the Lord's assignments in this world.'

These are the reasons why the Lord is honoured and revered by the use of the epithet 'Bhadrum' (15).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the eighth word 'Bhadrum' of the holy Mantra of Lord Nrsingh.]

16. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—'Why is the epithet 'Mritumritum' used for the Lord?' [The word 'Mritu' means death, and 'Amrit' means the elixir of eternity. Hence, the term 'Mritumritum' means freedom from death. Its import has been described below in the next stanza.]

Prajapati replied—'When the Lord is remembered or invoked by his devotees and worshippers he frees them from the fear of death, or makes them immune from death—both the types of death, i.e. one that is inevitable at the end of their lives, and the second that comes prematurely (such as from an accident or disease).' [This stanza means that such persons are given eternity and imperishability in the sense that they do not have to take a birth again, and are elevated to the stature of Gods. It also implies that such persons find Mukti or Moksha—i.e. final liberation and deliverance for their souls by merging it with the supreme Brahm from where there is no coming back into this world of miseries and pains, a world marked by a continuous cycle of birth and death. If there is no birth, naturally there would be no death because death is dependent upon birth. Anything that takes birth must die; if it does not take birth it would not die.]

[The Rig/Rik Veda lauds the Lord in its hymns in the following way--] 'The divine Lord who grants all successes, abilities and powers of achievement in both spheres of life—viz. in the physical world of material sense objects as well as in the spiritual realm, the Lord in whose refuge and under whose patronage one finds the elixir of eternity and blissfulness, while being averse to him leads to downfall and the torments that accompany various miseries and death, and the Lord who is ardently followed by the Gods who themselves follow the path of righteousness and auspiciousness—verily, we offer oblations to the sacred fire of the sacrifice for this Lord who is 'Sachidanand'—one who is a personified form of 'Sat' or truthfulness, 'Chit' or pure consciousness, and 'Anand' or blissfulness.

These are the reasons why the Lord is honoured and revered by the use of the epithet 'Mritumritum' (16).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the ninth word 'Mritumritum' of the holy Mantra of Lord Nrsingh.]

17. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—'Why is the epithet 'Namaami' used for Lord?' [The word 'Namaami' means to bow down before someone in reverence and honour.]

Prajapati replied—'The Lord is worshipped and offered prayers and oblations by all the Gods, all the wise and enlightened ones, and all the spiritual aspirants who aim for liberation and deliverance, for emancipation and salvation. That is why he is adored by all.'

[The Rig/Rik Veda lauds the Lord in its hymns in the following way--] 'We most humbly bow before the divine and holy Lord, and offer our greatest of respects to him who is also honoured by Brahma the creator, who is the very foundation and

support for Brahma and the Vedas (or upon whom the glory and majesty, the power, authority and sanctity of both rest), and who has been accepted as the patron Deity and the Lord by other Gods such as Indra (the king of Gods), Varun (the Water God), Mitra (the first of the twelve Adityas or the principal Sun), Aryama (a junior Aditya who is worshipped during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav which roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May) and others.’

These are the reasons why the Lord is honoured and revered by the use of the epithet ‘Namaami’ (17).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the tenth word ‘Namaami’ of the holy Mantra of Lord Nrsingh.]

18. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma—‘Why is the epithet ‘A-ham’ used for Lord?’ [The word ‘A-ham’ means ‘it is me; it is I’. Its import is described below in the next paragraph.]

Prajapati replied—‘The Vedas and other scriptures declare—‘I (the Supreme Being) predate the sacrifice which resulted in the creation of this most ancient world.

It is I who is the source of the creation of Amrit (the elixir of eternity, bliss, beatitude and felicity).

It is me who is known as Anna (the food eaten by all living beings which sustains the life of each single creature in this world). [The food has two components—one is its gross external form, and the other is its inherent strength to foster life, which is its subtle quality. The gross body of the creature which is visible from the outside symbolizes the gross aspect of the food, and is therefore called the Anna Maye Kosh or the food sheath. This external covering encloses the actual creature in its subtle invisible form, which is called the Pran Maye Kosh or the inner cell that is the living component of the complete entity. So, this virtue of the Lord means that all the visible gross aspects of the creation as well as all the invisible subtle components are nothing but the Supreme Being in these forms.]

It is I who empower both the Jyoti (illumination, light) and the Shakti (energy, strength, power, authority, dynamism) to exhibit their stupendous glories and magnificent virtues. [For instance, it is the Lord who empowers the fire to give out light and heat energy. It is the Lord who makes the sun shine and give out its brilliant light, heat and energy.]

The auspicious offerings that are made to me are utilized by me to provide welfare to all the rest of the creation. On the other hand, those who are selfish and eat Anna themselves (or enjoy the material things of the world themselves without sharing them with others), I devour them (i.e. I punish them).

It is me who has revealed himself as this universe. It is me who lights it up with a golden light. [This refers to the sun on the one hand, and to the virtues of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment which are also equivalent to ‘light’. The ‘gold’ is a precious metal, and is used as a metaphor for all the virtues that are priceless and much sought after by the world. Hence, the ‘golden light’ is the most precious form and the most eclectic form of spiritual knowledge that is being referred to here.]’

True spiritual aspirants are those who know this secret. This knowledge is expounded and elucidated in this great Upanishad (18).

[Note—This verse explains the significance and importance of the eleventh word ‘Aham’ of the holy Mantra of Lord Nrsingh.]

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Upanishad (Canto) 3

[This Canto essentially expounds upon the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta or the eclectic philosophy of non-duality. It espouses that there is one single universal Truth known as the Consciousness in this creation. It is this Consciousness that is seen in various shapes and forms in this creation depending upon the mental caliber and level of the viewer's intelligence. So, once the spiritual aspirant becomes wise and enlightened enough to see this Truth everywhere, or to realise that the cosmic Consciousness is all-pervading and all-encompassing, he has nothing to fear from, he has nothing more to search, nothing more to desire or long for, and he has nothing to hate or love either. For him, his own 'self' is as much Brahm as the other creature. For him, all the numerous Gods and countless forms in which this creation exists, including its numerous elements and objects, have their origin in one single Brahm who is as vast and fathomless as the sky. He develops exemplary equanimity and fortitude; he finds eternal peace and calmness for his soul. He in fact becomes as deep and vast in these virtues as the sky itself. The last two verse nos. 5-6 aptly summarise this conclusion.]

1. Once upon a time, the Gods asked Prajapati Brahma, the creator—'Oh Lord! Please enlighten us about the Beej (seed, essence, the base) and Shakti (dynamic energy, vitality and strength) of this divine Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh.' (1).

2. Prajapati Brahma replied—'The ancient and most powerful Shakti or dynamic energy of Lord Nrisingh is called Maya (the power to create delusions), and it is with this Shakti that the visible world was created. [Therefore it follows that the world itself is a delusion like the illusionary world created by the magician using his magical powers.]

It is this Maya Shakti that not only creates this world but also sustains it and eventually becomes the cause of its conclusion. This is why this Maya is the inherent Shakti (dynamism; energy; active ingredient) of Lord Nrisingh's Mantra. Once an aspirant becomes aware and well acquainted with all the aspects of this Maya, he becomes free from all sins¹, he obtains victory over death², and he accesses the eternal fount of blissfulness and blessedness called Amrit³.

Such a lucky man is able to cross over this ocean-like world and obtain all sorts of blessedness and spiritual prosperity (happiness, contentedness, peace, tranquility, blissfulness, beatitude and felicity) that one can hope for (2).

[Note—¹He overcomes sins because he would have realised that all the misdeeds he does to satisfy his desires and gratify himself by pursuing this material world of sense objects is like running after a mirage in the desert, seeking water. This chase would hasten death because there is no water in the mirage. So, when a man becomes enlightened about the falsehood of the charms of this world, and the falsehood of the world itself, he would not do anything unrighteous and wrong just to satisfy himself and the natural urges of his sense organs at the cost of getting trapped in a vicious cycle of sufferings that would inevitably come in its wake. No one wants to suffer. He would also have realised the actual 'truth' in this creation as well as about his own self—that is, he would have become self-realised and enlightened. This development would pre-empt all inclinations of getting involved in any kind of sins, misdeeds and misdemeanours that is degrading and demeaning for his 'truthful self'.

²He defeats death in the sense that he has nothing to fear from as to what would be his destiny or fate when he leaves this mortal body because he is rest assured of his

emancipation and salvation. Angst of death, morbid fear of death arises from fact that a man has to suffer from various sufferings and torments as a punishment for his recklessness and misdeeds in life. For instance, if a man does not take proper care of his health he would fall ill and suffer its consequences. Binge eating or eating wrongly just to satisfy the taste buds makes a man conscious of the ill fate that awaits him, and this creates fears. So a sinful man is afraid of death and his ill-fated destiny as to where he would go after death, he is uncertain of his future, but a righteous man has no such fears or doubts. Further, a devotee of the Lord has taken the refuge of the supreme Lord and put himself in the Lord's custody, therefore he is sure of salvation. Being blessed by the Lord, he would have become sufficiently enlightened to realise that it is the body which dies and not the Atma which is his truthful 'self' and is pure consciousness that is an eternal and imperishable entity.

³It is obvious that with all these developments, with the elimination of sins and the fear of death, the spiritual aspirant would have found the eternal fount of peace and tranquility. This gives him access to the nectar of life called Amrit.]

3. Wise men wonder whether this Maya Shakti of the Lord is 'Hriswa/Hrasva', 'Dirgha' or 'Plut'. [These three words refer to the three aspects of creation. The word 'Hriswa/Hrasva' refers the smallest step, the initial phase of anything, the beginning; the word 'Dirgha' refers to the most evolved, highly developed, the expanded and widespread form of the same thing; and the word 'Plut' symbolises the basic or elementary form or the rudimentary form that remains at the end of conclusion and from which a fresh beginning is made.]

When the wise aspirant worships the Lord holistically and uses his divine Mantra for the purpose of meditation and contemplation, he is able to benefit from all these three aspects of the Maya Shakti. That is, the 'Hriswa/Hrasva' aspect of the Lord's Maya Shakti helps to destroy all his sins and their consequences. As a result the aspirant obtains Amrit, the elixir of eternity and blessedness that gives infinite bliss and happiness. The 'Dirgha' aspect of the Maya Shakti bestows upon him immense fame, good name, magnificence, grandeur, majesty, authority, prosperity and well being. He obtains Amrit which gives him all that he desires. And finally, the 'Plut' aspect of Maya Shakti blesses him with wisdom and erudition which also makes Amrit accessible for him.

[Note—From the perspective of creation, the word 'Hriswa/Hrasva' refers to the small beginning of creation in the form of primary forms of life such as algae and fungi. The word 'Dirgha' refers to the most evolved, highly developed and widespread form such as the higher species of animals and the highest rung occupied by the humans. And the word 'Plut' symbolises the rudimentary forms left after the present creation comes to an end, or the conclusion of the creation itself.

In the present context the word 'Hriswa/Hrasva' would mean making a small beginning by abstaining from sinful deeds and thoughts. The word 'Dirgha' would mean reaching the higher stage of auspiciousness and righteousness when one becomes perfect and immaculate. Obviously such a man acquires immense good name, powers and authority. And the word 'Plut' would refer to the ultimate state of enlightenment and self-realisation when nothing more is sought and needed.]

4. In this context the Rishi (the ancient seer or sage who had been initiated into this Mantra) says—'Oh the ethereal sound represented by the monosyllable word that sounds like a hum and represents the dot put on a letter in the Sanskrit language. [This refers to the divine Mantra OM which is a monosyllabic word, and a humming sound is heard at the end of its pronunciation.]

With the intention of crossing this vast and formidable ocean-like world, and to attain a long life while I live in it, I collect all the auspicious and necessary accouterments (i.e. I come fully prepared and have vowed to dedicate myself to goodness and auspiciousness) and present myself most humbly and devotedly, and with great diligence and sincerity before the great cosmic Shakti (dynamic aspect) of the Lord revealed in the form of Sri Shakti represented by Goddess Laxmi (the Goddess who presides over wealth and prosperity and who is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu), the Mother Goddess known as Ambika (referring to the Goddess Uma or Parvati who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva and regarded as the most senior form of Goddess from whom all the rest of Goddesses were revealed), the Brahmi Shakti (referring to the Goddess Saraswati who is the divine half of the creator Brahma and is the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom and erudition), and the Sashthi Shakti represented by Indra (the king of Gods whose army is commanded by Lord Kartikeya who is the son of Shiva who is reputed to relentlessly vanquish evil and sins). [All these are the various dynamic forms of the supreme Brahman through which he regulates and sustains this world. Laxmi is needed to provide all the necessities of life. Ambika is the female aspect of creation or the 'mother' without whom no child can be born, and therefore is the main pedestal upon which the edifice of creation rests. Brahmi Shakti is Saraswati or knowledge which is a most vital and basic component of creation because even for doing basic things in life relevant knowledge and skill are needed. And finally, physical strength represented by the army of Gods headed by Kartikeya is needed to actually control this formidable creation once it has come into being.]

I take the refuge of the Vidya Shakti (the power of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment) that would ultimately make me witness Brahman, the supreme transcendental Lord.

I seek your refuge and blessing, and bow most reverentially before you. Please give me your protection and patronage.' (4).

5. The Akash (sky) is the place which gives refuge and support to all the Bhuts (elements as well as the creatures of this creation). All the Bhuts have their origin in the sky; they develop, grow and expand or spread in the vast fathomless realm of the sky, and ultimately collapse into and vanish in the sky. [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 9, and Canto 5, verse no. 9 in this context.]

This is why it is said that the sky is the 'Beej' or seed from which the entire creation has emerged (5).

[Note—This is because everything that is born needs space to grow and develop. The origin of this creation too took place in the vast bowl of the cosmic space. The sky acted as the huge crucible where the cosmos was conceived, where it developed and grew, and in which it lives. At the end it would collapse into the sky much like a wave which originates from the surface of the ocean, develops and grows and spread on the surface of the ocean, and finally collapses into the same ocean.

Taking another example of a tree we see that a tree has its origin in the seed hidden in the earth. This seed develops into a huge tree which not only draws its nourishment from the earth but is also rooted or anchored to the earth. In other words, the earth gives the tree its support and foundation; the earth acts as its base; the earth is its progenitor. The tree produces a new seed, and it dies and perishes itself in the same earth. Hence, the earth is compared to the sky, while the tree is comparable to the Bhuts referred to here—the earth, like the sky, is where the tree is conceived, grows and develops into a full-blown structure. Finally, the tree dies and perishes in the earth. The new seed left by the tree sows the spark of a new tree. Similarly, the

sky creates the Bhuts or elements, they develop into myriad forms of creatures and things, they develop and grow to their full life and potentials, and finally die and perish into the vast bowl of the sky. At the time of death, their gross bodies disintegrate into the basic Bhuts or elements from which it was cast in the beginning. These Bhuts left after the end of the previous generation form the 'Beej' or crop of seeds from which a new generation eventually comes into being, and the cycle continues to rotate.

In other words, everything that has come into being exists in the space of the sky; nothing exists beyond the limits of the sky. The sky is boundless, endless and without limits. Therefore, it is an apt synonym for Brahm.]

6. The wise ones have said that the supreme Lord, who is self-illuminated and glorious, is also self-established in his exalted divine abode or exalted stature. [That is, the Lord does not need any other support for rest much like the case of the sky cited above which gives rest and acts as a basis for the rest of creation but does not have or does not need anything for its own origin or rest or basis or foundation. In other words, the sky is self-sufficient, self-created and self-established. Hence, the 'sky' is the most apt metaphor for Brahm.]

All the Vasus¹ residing in the Antariksha (the sky above the surface of the earth; the lower heaven) are none but this supreme Lord in their forms.

It is this same supreme Lord who arrives in a household as a guest.

The sacred fire established on the altar of the fire sacrifice as well as the person who offers oblations to this fire are both manifestations of this supreme Lord.

It is this supreme transcendental Lord who resides in this mortal world called the Bhu Loka (where the mortal living beings live), in the heavens called the Swarga Loka (where all the Gods live), and in the highest heaven called the Satya Loka (the 'truthful abode' where the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu lives).

It is this supreme Lord who lives in the Akash or sky. [That is, the Supreme Being rules over the sky uniformly. In the language of the Upanishads it simply means that Brahm is uniformly present in the sky because the cosmic Consciousness is all-pervading and all-encompassing. There is no place where Brahm is not present, and neither is there anything in existence that is out of reach for Brahm. Since everything has its origin in the sky, since everything lives in the space of the sky and develops in it, and since everything is a manifestation of Brahm, it follows that both the sky as well as the things it harbours are Brahm in their individual and combined forms.]

It is this supreme Lord who has revealed himself as the ultimate Absolute Truth in all forms of creation, such as the gross forms seen as earth and its water bodies and mountains.

All the good deeds and auspicious actions are revelations of this supreme Lord.

A wise, erudite and enlightened man who knows this esoteric fact is able to obtain the eclectic reward as narrated earlier (in verse nos. 2-3). Verily, this is what this great Upanishad says and affirms (6).

[Note—¹The *Vasus* represent the primary Gods representing the principal forces of creation, such as the 'air or the wind' symbolizing Pran or the vital forces of life, the 'water' symbolizing the elixir of life and the lubricant for this world, and the 'fire' symbolizing light, heat, dynamism, vitality and energy. All of them are actually the same supreme transcendental Brahm who has assumed these forms to carry on with the multifarious obligations related to the upkeep of the creation created by none other but himself. Since this creation is his own creation, it is the Lord's duty to take care

of it in the form of the different Vasus. The Vasus have been described in a note appended to verse no. 2 of Canto 2.]

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Upanishad (Canto) 4

1. The Gods once again asked Prajapati Brahma—‘Oh Lord! Please enlighten us about the other holy Mantras which are deemed to be subtly included in, are implied by, and are an integral part of the Anushtup Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh.’ (1).

2. Prajapati Brahma replied—‘The four divine Mantras—viz. the Pranav Mantra (i.e. OM)¹, the Savitri Mantra (which is also called the Gayatri Mantra)², the Yajur-Laxmi Mantra (dedicated to Goddess Laxmi, the patron goddess of prosperity, welfare and good fortunes)³, and the Nrisingh Gayatri Mantra (i.e. a Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrisingh but composed in the Gayatri Chanda or meter)⁴—are deemed to be an inseparable and an integral part of, an implied subtle part of, and therefore equivalent to the Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh. [This Anushtup Mantra was the subject matter of discussion of the previous three Cantos 1-3.]

A wise and erudite person who knows this esoteric secret is able to obtain greatness, majesty, authority, supremacy, glory, mystical powers and renown in this world along with accessing the essence of eternity and blissfulness known as Amrit (2).

[Note—¹The Pranav Mantra of OM is a universal Mantra. Its significance and importance is narrated in Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 5.

²The Gayatri Savitri Mantra is given as a note no. 2 of verse no. 6 in Canto 1. Refer also verse no. 8 of the present Canto 4 below.

³The Laxmi Mantra is given in Canto 4, verse no. 11.

⁴The Nrisingh Gayatri Mantra is narrated in Canto 4, verse no. 13.]

3. OM¹ is imperishable and eternal. The entire visible world is an exhibition of the majesty, greatness, grandeur, stupendous powers and dynamism of OM representing the supreme transcendental Brahm. Each phase and aspect of creation, such as the past, the present and the future are dependent upon and controlled by OM. What lies beyond these three phases of creation and time are also deemed within the purview of OM. The entire creation, visible or invisible, is a revelation of Brahm and completely soaked or infused in or pervaded by Brahm. [That is, everything in this world is regulated by the Supreme Being. The word OM represents this Supreme Being like the words ‘His/Her Majesty’ used in modern language to denote the sovereign of country. All the limbs of the government are called ‘on his/her majesty’s service’. Likewise, the running of the entire creation is done on the behalf of the supreme Lord represented by OM. This word is like the Lord’s royal seal and insignia.]

Lord Nrisingh is none but this Brahm personified. Lord Nrisingh has symbolic four Paads, or has four aspects, facets or limbs² (3).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 2-5.

²The four limbs are the four states of consciousness and are described in the next verse nos. 4-7 below.]

4. [This verse describes the first Paad of Lord Nrisingh in the context of the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness.]*

He who pervades uniformly and universally in the visible world seen or witnessed or experienced or perceived during the waking state of consciousness called the Jagrat state, he who makes this external visible world the subject matter of perception done by the organs of the body (such as the eye, the nose, the tongue, the ears and the skin), he whose cosmic body consists of all the seven Lokas¹ as its organs, he whose nineteen mouth consists of the five organs of perception, five organs of action, five Prans (vital winds or airs) and four Antahakarans (the inner self and its four aspects)², he who is the de-facto enjoyer and lord of this material world, and he who is called 'Vaishwanar'³ because his body consists of the entire creation and his 'true self' called the Atma that lives in this cosmic body is the cosmic Consciousness that pervades uniformly in this creation—verily, this macrocosmic form of Supreme Being known as the Vaishwanar is the symbolic first Paad or aspect or facet of Lord Nrisingh (4).

[Note—*The Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7, describes the four Paads of Brahm in great detail. This Upanishad is Chapter 3 of the present volume. Since Lord Nrisingh and Brahm are the same divine entities with two names, the present verse should be read along with the verses of the Mandukya Upanishad to derive the maximum benefit by the reader.

¹The *seven Lokas* are the following— The *seven Bhuvans* or Lokas according to the Purans are the following:--According to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP) there are the following lokas-- 'Bhu' (भूः) or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha' (भुवः) or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha' (स्वः) or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha' (महः) or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha' (जन्ः), so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha' (तपः) or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 million miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam' (सत्यम्) or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 million miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

Refer also to Canto 5, verse no. 16 of the current Upanishad.

The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the Vedantic view are the following:-- the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head —viz. the two eyes + two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. Refer *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8.

²The *five organs of perception* are the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin.

The *five organs of action* are the hand, the leg, the mouth, the excretory and the reproductive.

The *five Prans* are the vital airs or winds such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaana. These five winds control all the functions of the body. These have been elaborately described in all the Upanishads dealing with Yoga.

The *four Antahakarans*—The word Antahakaran literally means the 'inner instrument' of the creature by which his mind works and receives the world. The word has two components—viz. 'Antaha' meaning 'inner', and 'Karan' meaning 'instrument that causes the mind to work'. The external organs of the body such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which are the organs of perception physically receive the inputs from the external world, but their actual functioning is due to this

Antahakaran or the inner instrument of the subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect complex because if the latter malfunctions the former are useless.

Out the three states of existence of the creature, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states, the mind is active in the first two states only, and therefore the Antahakaran is related to only the first two states of existence. But even here its main field of activity is internal and not external as is implied in the word 'Antaha' itself which means 'inner'. Therefore, the external organs of the body such as the organs of perception and action are only subsidiary and play an ancillary role only vis-à-vis the activity of the 'inner self' consisting of the mind, intellect and sub-conscious as well as the subtle heart which is the seat of various sentiments and emotions. This is simply because the inner self receives inputs from the outside world through the instrument of the external organs, and all the activity of the inner self in relation to the world in which the creature lives depend upon these external organs directly or indirectly.

The Antahakaran functions in four different ways and gets four different names according to these four functions. (1) It is called Chitta or sub-conscious mind and its ability to receive information and remember while performing the function of reception and retention. (2) It is called Mana or logical mind when it performs the function of questioning, doubting and willing. (3) It is called Buddhi or intellect when deducing, deciding and determining. And (4) it is called Ahankar or ego, self pride, arrogance of knowledge when it identifies itself with each of these functions—when it thinks that it has the ability to remember, to question and debate, to decide and will.

The word would therefore briefly mean the inner self of the creature consisting of the subtle body rather than the outer self consisting of the gross body. It is said to be one of the 19 Tattwas or essential elements that came into being at the very commencement of creation.

The Antahakaran with four dimensions is described in Shaarirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 4.

³*Vaishwanar*—The term Vaishwanar in simple words means the form of Brahm that is as large and as vast as the universe, enclosing it from all sides like a moat of a fort, and even existing beyond it. This all-inclusive, all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm is the 'Vishwa' or the vast world because this world is a manifestation of Brahm, it is Brahm revealed in its myriad and diverse forms, and it is the glory of Brahm on display. In fact, if one wishes to witness Brahm, he must observe Brahm at play in this world itself. The physical aspect of Brahm in the form of the visible world is equivalent to the Jagrat state of consciousness because it is in this state that the creature sees or perceives the presence of the physical world. Here the word 'creature' refers to his Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and his true self. This Atma is called Vaishwanar because, like Brahm, it is manifested as all forms of life in this world. Refer Mandukya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 3.

The word 'Vaishwanar' has many connotations as follows—(i) It is the fire used in sacrificial rituals. (ii) The microcosmic pure consciousness that resides inside the body of the creature, providing it with life, vitality and energy which helps it to digest food. (iii) Vedanta says that it is the pure consciousness that is a fraction of the Supreme Consciousness, and it resides in the body of the creature even as the Supreme Consciousness resides in the macrocosmic vast body of Nature or creation. It is representative of the supreme, transcendental entity that is the Lord and the primary cause and the governing authority of the whole creation. (iv) Since the creatures have myriad forms, it has as many forms as the creatures themselves, incorporating all of them in it. Hence, it is also called 'Viraat Purush' (which means the vast, colossus, all incorporating, all-pervading, almighty form of the microcosmic Atma of the creature as well as the macrocosmic Atma of the creation; it is measureless, infinite and eternal). This is the subtle form of 'Vaishwanar'. (v) The gross manifestations of this 'Vaishwanar' is the 'Annamaya Kosh' or the food sheath

which is one of the five sheaths enclosing the Atma of the creature. This is because, as the Vaishwanar Agni (fire), it helps in digestion of food. (vi) Its state of existence is defined as the ‘waking state of consciousness’ (refer Brahma Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 21). (vii) The word also means—relating to or belonging to all men, omnipresent, known and worshipped everywhere, universal, general, common, complete, immutable, full in number, a collective noun for all the Gods, one who is all commanding and almighty.

The word Vaishwanar refers to the universal fire element because the fire provides the light with which the creature sees the world. The fire removes darkness and illuminates the realm with its light. In this context, the Sun is the eye of Brahm in the sky because it is through this Sun and its fire that the world is lighted and energized. The faculty of sight in the eye of the creature is thus a symbolic presence of this Vaishwanar at the macro level of creation.

The Atma is called a Vaishwanar because the man becomes aware of the world when he sees it with his own eyes. This is why it is called the ‘waking’ state of consciousness. The presence of the consciousness known as the Vaishwanar in the eye is a metaphor for this waking state because when a man ‘sees’ anything only when he is awake and not while he sleeps.

Refer also to Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 21; Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse no. 15; and Atharva Veda’s Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 5; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 3; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse no. 11.

5. [This verse describes the second Paad of Lord Nrisingh in the context of the Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness.]

He who lives and pervades in the Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness and its subtle world of dreams, he who quietly knows everything that occurs in the dream or he who makes the creature subtly aware of what is perceived in one’s dreams, he who had seven organs¹ and nineteen mouths (as described in verse no. 4), he who is the Lord and enjoyer of the subtle world that exists in the Swapna state of existence—verily, that cosmic form is known as Hiranyagarbha², and it represents the second Paad or limb or aspect of Lord Nrisingh’s cosmic form (5).

[Note—¹The seven organs refer to the following—the five Prans (Pran, Apaana, Samaan, Udan and Vyan) + the mind + the intellect = 7.

It might also refer to the seven states of consciousness as described in Mahopanishad, canto 5, verse nos. 8-20 of Sam Veda tradition. Briefly they are the following—(i) ‘Beej Jagrat’ (the elementary waking state of consciousness), (ii) ‘Jagrat’ (or normal waking state of consciousness), (iii) ‘Maha Jagrat’ (or a greater waking state), (iv) ‘Jagrat Swapna’ (or a state in which a person is misled to erroneously believe in anything while he is wide awake in this world; literally meaning to ‘day dream’, or dream of imaginary things while a man is wide awake), (v) ‘Swapna’ (or a dreaming state of consciousness), (vi) ‘Swapna-Jagrat’ (or a state when a person’s dreams last long enough to influence him and he lives in his dreams so much so that they affect his mind while he is awake), (vii) ‘Sushupta’ (or the deep sleep state of consciousness).

²*Hiranyagarbha* is the cosmic subtle body of Brahm. It is from this Hiranyagarbha that the rest of creation came into being. The word also refers to the creator Brahma.]

6. [This verse describes the third Paad of Lord Nrisingh in the context of the Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness.]

The third state of consciousness is called Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness. During this state a sleeping creature neither sees any dreams nor has

any desires. He who lives and pervades in this Sushupta or deep sleep state of existence when the world exists in a state of complete dissolution or a virtual state of non-existence and no activity, he who is uniform, one, steady, unchanging and immutable, he who is Vigyan or complete knowledge personified, he who is blissful and self-illuminated with an eternal light of knowledge and enlightenment, he who remains the only one to enjoy the eternal fount of bliss, beatitude and felicity which are his own divine virtues, and he who is knowledge personified—verily, this is the third Paad or aspect or facet or form or limb of Lord Nrisingh (who is none but the supreme Brahm himself personified) (6).

7. [This verse describes the fourth Paad of Lord Nrisingh in the context of the Turiya or the post-Sushupta state of consciousness, i.e. the state when Sushupta becomes perpetual.]

He who has no awareness of the gross or the subtle, and at the same time knows everything (being omniscient and all-knowing), or in other words, he who is so mysterious and enigmatic that it is not possible to say that he knows anything or does not know anything (i.e. whether he is knowledgeable or ignorant), he who is not a grosser form of knowledge and enlightenment (i.e. he who does not represent the grosser aspects of creation that one comes to be aware of or enlightened about), he who is not visible (because he is not gross but most subtle like the air), he who cannot be held, caught or grasped (i.e. cannot be comprehended or perceived), he who cannot be used in practice (i.e. he is not a material thing or substance that one can physically see), he who is formless and without any attributes, he who is beyond imagination and conception, he who cannot be felt or perceived, he who cannot be defined or described, he who can only be experienced in the form of the pure Consciousness that is known as the Atma, he who is auspicious, munificent and a provider of all round welfare and well being to all the creatures, he who is free from deceit, conceit, falsehood, impersonation and illusions, he who is eternally calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil, and he who is a unique entity that has no parallel—verily, such a divine and glorious entity represents the fourth Paad or limb or aspect of the cosmic form of Lord Nrisingh.

This is what those who are wise and learned believe. It is this Lord in the form of the Atma (the pure conscious ‘self’, the cosmic Consciousness) that is worthy to be known (7).

[Note—These four states of consciousness have been described elaborately elsewhere in other Upanishads as well. (a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Subalo-panishad, Canto 4 full as well as Canto 9, verse no. 1-7; Paingalo-panishad, 2/11-15; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4-2/5; (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 59-64, 72; Canto 4, verse no. 11-20; Brahmo-panisha, verse no. 1, 20-21; Kaivalyo-panishad, verse no. 12-14; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15; Sarwasaaro-panishad, verse no. 4; Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 14. (c) Atharva Veda tradition—Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Atharvashikha; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 1, 24-26; Canto 6, verse no. 4, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-16, 19-20; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-8; Param Hans Upanishad, paragraph no. 6.]

8. Now the Savitri Mantra is being described. It is a Yajur Mantra (i.e. a hymn of the Yajur Veda and used during fire sacrifices) and composed in the Gayatri Chanda style. The entire world is soaked in it (i.e. its glories and divine effects spread throughout this world).

Its two letters or syllables represent 'Ghrini', next three represent 'Surya', and the final three letters represent 'Aditya', bringing the total number of letters or syllables to eight. In this way this Savitri Mantra is endowed with great majesty and magnificence that is equivalent to that of the Sun (because the forms mentioned here are the various names of the Sun God, and this Mantra is dedicated to the latter).

A wise and learned man who knows this Mantra and its esoteric secret in the way stated above is blessed with all round well being, prosperity, greatness and majesty ('Sri') that comes by worshipping the Lord with this Mantra, and for which the Sun is regarded as a metaphor and an analogue (8).

9. The Richa (hymn or verse of the Veda) affirms thus—'The Richas of the Rig/Rik Veda are self-illuminated like the supreme Brahm they refer to, and from whom they get their relevance, sanctity and authority. The self-illuminated, eternal and imperishable Brahm is revealed in the form of the 'Param Akash'—literally the highest, the vast, the infinite and the fathomless space of the cosmos which extends endlessly. All the Gods reside there in this Param Akash. [The word 'Param' means supreme and one without a parallel, while of course the word 'Akash' means the sky. Hence, the combined word means the sky that is infinite, fathomless, measureless and eternal. In other words, the hymns of the Rig Veda refer to the supreme Divinity that as eternal, infinite and imperishable as the sky. The sky was present even before the beginning of creation as the latter was conceived in its fathomless bowl. It is in this sky that this creation developed, grew and spread, and it is in this sky that it would ultimately vanish when it comes to an end. Everything in existence is enclosed by the sky; there is nothing that exists outside the limits of the sky. Similarly, nothing exists outside Brahm. Brahm is like this sky—possessing identical virtues of vastness and infinity, of being all-inclusive, all-encompassing and all-pervading. Since the Rik Veda was the first of the Vedas, it is symbolic of the initiation of creation as it contains the most primary and ancient body of knowledge. This knowledge later on evolved and developed into the other Vedas such as the Sam, the Yajur and the Atharva.]¹

An aspirant who does not have knowledge of this fact, then say what would he gain or find by reading and studying the Vedas!

On the contrary, those aspirants who know this fact about Brahm are able to have access to the supreme abode where there is bliss and happiness.' (9).

[Note—¹Refer also to Canto 3, verse no. 5, and Canto 5, verse no. 9 in this context.]

10. A wise and enlightened man who knows the esoteric secret of the Savitri Mantra as narrated herein above has no need for any other Mantras of the Rig, the Yajur or the Sam Vedas. [Refer also to Canto 2, verse no. 2, and Canto 5, verse no. 9. The implication is that this Mantra is self-sufficient. The idea is that the main intention of the Vedas is to show the light of Truth to the spiritual aspirant and enlighten him about Brahm. If this does not happen then reading the voluminous Vedas goes in vain. The Savitri Mantra is dedicated to the Sun God who is an epitome of brilliance and splendour, and therefore represents the light of knowledge which removes the darkness of ignorance. If this dazzling sun is not able to remove the darkness of the night, can a humble lamp do so? Surely not, and this is the meaning hinted here. If this Mantra cannot teach the man who Brahm is, nothing else would, and he would remain ever submerged in the pitch darkness of spiritual ignorance.] (10).

11. [Verse nos. 11-12 describe the divine Laxmi Mantra.]

‘OM Salutations! The great Goddess known as ‘Maha Laxmi’ is the most glorious, majestic, powerful, great and divine Goddess. She is the ‘Laxmi’* of the three worlds called the Bhu Loka (the terrestrial world where mortal creatures live; the earth), the Bhuvaha Loka (which is the lower heaven where the junior Gods and spirits live), and the Swaha Loka (the upper heaven where the Lord of the world Vishnu lives). [*The word ‘Laxmi’ is used here as an adjective to describe the glorious virtues and majestic qualities that give greatness and supremacy to an entity. It is usually measured in terms of grandeur, magnificence, prosperity, opulence, supernatural powers, sway and authority that such an entity possesses. In materialistic world it is usually a synonym for material wealth, prosperity, opulence and the fame that comes with them. The divine Goddess Laxmi, who is the consort of Lord Vishnu, personifies these grand and eclectic virtues. Since Lord Vishnu is another name for the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-inclusive form of the supreme Brahm from whom the entire creation has been born and who completely soaks it like water in sponge, it follows that Laxmi represents the dynamic qualities of the supreme Brahm in his form as Vishnu that helps the Lord to sustain, nourish and protect the world.]

Let the great Goddess Maha-Laxmi whose other name is ‘Kaal-Kaarni’ (i.e. the one who actively controls all the deeds and actions of the creature in all phases of time and circumstance) inspire and impel us towards doing auspicious, righteous and noble deeds.’ [The word ‘Kaal’ means time and circumstance in all dimensions and planes of existence such as the past, the present and the future. It also means death. On the other hand, the word ‘Kaarni’ is a female term referring to the divine Goddess who does anything, the force of Nature that drives this creation. Therefore, Kaal-Kaarni is the divine Goddess representing the dynamic forces of Nature that control all deeds and destiny of a living being. This force controls whatsoever a creature does, whatsoever happens in this creation. It also controls death and consequentially the re-birth of the creature.]

This Mantra dedicated to the great Goddess Laxmi in the Gayatri Chanda (style of poetical composition) is enunciated in the Yajur Veda, and is therefore called the ‘Maha-Laxmi Gayatri Mantra’ of the Yajur Veda. It has twenty-four letters or syllables (11).

[Note—Refer also to Canto 1, verse no. 7, and Canto 4, verse no. 2.]

12. The entire visible world is surely a manifestation of the Gayatri. [That is, it is the Divine Being who is honoured by the prayers of the Vedas composed in the Gayatri meter, and who is revealed in each unit of this creation. This creation is another form of Brahm, the supreme Divine Being.]

A wise and erudite aspirant who comes to know the esoteric secrets of the great Goddess Maha-Laxmi as revealed in the Mantra dedicated to her and composed in the Gayatri Chanda style, which in turn represents the entire Yajur Veda (or encrypts the entire Yajur Veda in an abbreviated form; or is an acronym for this Veda)—verily, such a person is able to obtain great fame, majesty, magnificence and superhuman powers (12).

13. [This verse describes the Nrisingh Gayatri Mantra¹.]

‘OM salutations! We have known Lord Nrisingh (by the medium of the Guru, a wise and learned teacher, and the scriptures).

We enshrine this Lord, whose nails are as strong as Vajra, in our heart. [Vajra is the weapon of Indra, the king of Gods; it is regarded as the most formidable, invincible and the strongest weapon in creation.]

Let this great Lord Nrisingh inspire and impel us to move on the path of auspiciousness, righteousness and nobility.'

This is the famous 'Nrisingh Gayatri Mantra' which is at the base from which has sprung forth the Vedas, and which is the cause of all the Gods coming into being. [That is, the Vedas and the Gods that they praise owe their origin and existence to this eclectic Mantra. Refer Canto 1, verse no. 2 where it is narrated that Brahma the creator had done Tapa and received the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh which gave him the power and authority to start the process of creation. Though the Mantra mentioned in Canto 1, verse no. 2 was in the Anushtup Chanda and the one mentioned here is in Gayatri Chanda, the implication is that no matter what method is used in the composition of the hymns, they have the same theological, metaphysical and spiritual importance. When this is seen with a broad perspective it means that all the Vedas and their hymns, all the scriptures and their verses speak of the same Absolute Truth, and if the latter is not grasped then it is useless to read and study any of the Vedas or the scriptures. To remain entangled in endless debates about words and grammar and other literary niceties is like missing the essence and instead remaining embroiled in meaningless external formalities. It is like missing the real diamond in a collection of worthless pieces of glass, or like missing the targeted mango tree bearing succulent fruits in an orchard of similar fruit-bearing trees. This fact is endorsed in Canto 4, verse no. 10.]

A wise and learned person who comes to know the esoteric secret of this Mantra is able to have access to the Lord (i.e. he is able to reach his spiritual destination of witnessing the presence of the Lord first hand) (13).

[Note—Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 6-7, and Canto 4, verse no. 2 also.]

14. The Gods asked Prajapati Brahma once again—'Oh Prajapati! Please tell us all the Mantras which help to please Lord Nrisingh.' (14).

15. Prajapati replied—'From each of the thirty-two letters or syllables of the Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, a prayer hymn is composed. They form 'Stuti Mantras' or hymns that are used to honour the deity. One should employ them to please Lord Nrisingh.

The thirty-two Mantras therefore are the following—

(i) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Brahma Bhu Bhurva Swastame Vai Namah.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation, and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Brahma the creator but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(ii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Vishnu Bhu Bhurva Swastame Vai Namah.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Vishnu who is the sustainer and protector of creation, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(iii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Maheswar Bhu Bhurva Swastame Vai Namah.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme

Lord of creation and it is he who has revealed himself not only in the form of Lord Shiva the great God who is the most enlightened in creation and is the concluder of creation, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(iv) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Purush Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the Purush, the male aspect of creation and representing the Viraat Prush, the macrocosmic all-pervading form from whom the rest of the creation came into being because it is the male who provides the sperm so necessary for creation and its re-production, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(v) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Ishwar Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Ishwar, the Lord God of is the Supreme Being himself, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(vi) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Saraswati Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Saraswati who is the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom and speech, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(vii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Sri Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Sri, the Goddess Laxmi who is the patron Goddess of wealth, prosperity and well being in this world, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(viii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Gauri Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Gauri, the divine consort of Lord Shiva and who is regarded as the universal Mother of creation, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(ix) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Prakriti Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Prakriti, or Nature, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(x) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Vidya Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Vidya, or

knowledge, skills and erudition of all kinds, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xi) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Omkar Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of OM which is the divine monosyllable word standing for Pranav or Brahm himself, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xii) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Tasmō-ardha-matra Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the Ardha Matra or the half-syllable used at the end of the pronunciation of OM and which stands for the conclusion of creation as well as the eternal and imperishable Lord who is proceeds this creation and precedes it, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xiii) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Ye Veda Sanga Sashakha Setihaas Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the Vedas and their accompanying scriptures along with their branches and Itihasas (ancient histories), but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation. The Vedas and their branches and other scriptures associated with them have been enumerated in the Sita Upanishad, verse nos. 21-31 of the Atharva Veda tradition. It is included as Chapter 9 of this volume.]

(xiv) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Ye Panchaagnaya Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the five sacred fires*, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] { *The five sacred fires have been described in the Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda tradition, Canto 4, sections 10 to 13, the five formal divine sacred fires are the following—(a) ‘Garhyapatya’ (the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies), (b) ‘Dakshinagni’ (the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity; the fire lit at the site of a sacrificial fire ritual, near its south end), (c) ‘Ahawaniya’ (the fire lit to invoke the Gods, to invite them to participate and accept the offerings made to them during a ritualistic fire sacrifice), (d) ‘Sabhya’ (the fire of the Vedic period which was continuously lit), and (e) ‘Awasathya’ (the fire of the later Smṛiti period). Worship of the three important fires have been described in Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 2, section 24, while Canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24 explain their great symbolic metaphysical significance. }

(xv) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Yaha Sapta Mahavyahriti Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the

form of the seven great Vyahritis*, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] [*The seven Vyahritis are the primary root words pronounced by the creator Brahma at the time of the beginning of creation and from which formed the nucleus around which the seven worlds formed. In other words, the rest of the creation was revealed from these primary sounds created by Brahma. The seven 'Vyahritis' are the words—(1) Bhu, (2) Bhuvaha, (3) Swaha, (4) Maha, (5) Janaha, (6) Tapaha, and (7) Satyam.

(xvi) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyachastho Lokapala Bhu Bhurva Swastasma Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of eight Lokapals* or custodians of the different worlds, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] [*The Lokpals are (i) Indra (the king of Gods), (ii) Agni (the fire-God), (iii) Yam (the death-God), (iv) Nirriti, (v) Varun (the Water God), (vi) Vayu (the Wind God), (vii) Kuber (the treasurer of Gods) and (viii) Ish (Lord Shiva; the chief Lord). Though Brahma and Anant (Vishnu) are also considered guardians of the world and are listed as the last two amongst the 10 Digpals, but the above 8 Gods are regarded as the lokpals.]

(xvii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyachastho Vasavaha Bhu Bhurva Swastasma Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the eight Vasus*, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] [*The eight Vasus are The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv, Dha, Som/Soma (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods), Aapha (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush, and Prabhaas.]

(xviii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Ye Chaikaadash Rudra Bhu Bhurva Swastasma Vai Namoh Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the eleven Rudras*, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] [*The eleven Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. They are the following:--(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugrareta, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda

1/43/1, and Taiteriyā Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened. The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparājeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali. }

(xix) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Dwadashaaditya Bhu Bhurva Swastasma Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of twelve Adityas*, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] {*The twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number. According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyavalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man. Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation. According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata, Arayma, Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta and Vishnu. }

(xx) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyachaatho Graha Bhu Bhurva Swastasma Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the eight Grahas*, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] {*The eight Grahas are Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, and the combination of Rahu and Ketu which are considered as one and not two entities as they are supposed to represent the ascending and descending phases of the Moon. The eight Grahas have been referred to in Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 2, verse no. 9. This Upanishad is in honour of Lord Rudra as another name of Brahm, and says that Rudra is a personification of the eight Grahas. }

(xxi) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Yani Cha Panchabhutaani Bhu Bhurva Swastasma Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of five Bhuts or primary elements*, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most

reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] {*The five Bhuts are sky, air, fire, water and earth.}

(xxii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Kaal Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Kaal who represents the force of creation which brings about an end of everything in existence, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxiii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Manu Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Manu who was the first Male in creation and it was from him that the human race was born, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxiv) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Mritu Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Mritu or death personified, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxv) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Yam Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Yam, the god of death and the one who decides whether the dead man goes to the heaven or hell, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxvi) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyachantaka Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Antak meaning the dooms-day, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxvii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Pran Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Pran, or the vital life-forces in creation represented by the vital winds or airs, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxviii) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Surya Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Surya, the Sun God, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxix) 'OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Soma Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.' [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Soma, the

Moon God, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxx) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Viraat Purush Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic, invisible but all-pervading gross body of the supreme Brahm, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxxi) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Jiva Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation and it is he who has not only revealed himself in the form of Jiva, the living being, the creature who inhabit this world, but also as the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.]

(xxxii) ‘OM salutations! Yo Ha Vai Nrisingh Devo Bhagwanyacha Sarwam Bhu Bhurva Swastasme Vai Namō Namaha.’ [It is Lord Nrisingh who is the supreme Lord of creation, and it is he who is everything there is in this creation, including the three worlds known as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I most reverentially and humbly offer my obeisance to this great Lord of creation.] (15).

16. These are the Mantras which please the Lord and he reveals himself before the worshipper. So, one who offers worship to the Lord with these Mantras is able to have a first hand divine vision of the Lord and is able to see his Viraat (vast, colossus) form. This helps him to obtain the essence of Amrit—the elixir of eternity, bliss, felicity and beatitude. This Upanishad endorses this eclectic view that he is sure to access this grand reward as mentioned herein above (16).

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Upanishad (Canto) 5

[This Canto describes the great worship instrument called a Chakra or wheel. This is used in ritualistic and mystical forms of worship of Lord Nrisingh. Since Nrisingh is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, this Chakra is also called Sudarshan Chakra (verse no. 2), the discus held by Lord Vishnu as his weapon which he uses to vanquish evil and sinful forces, and give protection to this world.]

1. Once the Gods approached Prajapati Brahma and asked him most respectfully—‘Oh Lord! Please tell us about the Maha Chakra which is relevant to the Anushtup Mantra (of Lord Nrisingh). Wise ascetics say that this Chakra provides Mukti (liberation and deliverance), and fulfils all the desires and aspirations of the worshipper.’ (1).

2. Prajapati replied—‘This great Chakra (wheel) is called ‘Sudarshan Maha Chakra’. [It consists of five consecutive rings or tiers, each outer ring resting upon its inner one with the support of spokes designed like carved petals of the lotus flower, and which act like pillars supporting a five storeyed house. The construction is so magnificently

balanced that the number of letters and spokes or lotus petals goes on increasing with each new tier or circle symbolizing the various layers of the multi-layered structure of the worship wheel. This results in the increase of the circumference of each successive ring of the whole Chakra. The entire structure is perfectly aligned and balanced around the central hub or core which is described in this verse no. 2. The rest of the concentric layers are described in verse nos. 3-7.]

The first ring has six letters or syllables. The six seasons are like its six spokes called 'Patra' because they are designed like the petal of the lotus flower. These Patras (which are like spokes of an ordinary wheel) are fixed to the hub or the central point of this ring. This ring is tightly gridled (encircled, clasped, enclosed or surrounded) by Maya. Since Maya (delusions, illusions, falsehoods, deceit) does not affect, or cannot touch or taint or corrupt the Atma (which is pure consciousness that is eternally enlightened and immaculate), it follows that this Chakra is surrounded by Maya only from the outside. That is, the Atma, which is at the core of creation, is not at all tainted or affected by any of the negativity associated with Maya. [The 'hub' or the central axis to which the spokes are attached, and which holds the wheel of creation represented by this symbolic Chakra or wheel of worship in its standard shape and designated form, is the Atma or the pure Consciousness around which the entire edifice of creation is built. It is around this central hub symbolizing the Atma that the entire creation revolves. If the hub is removed, the wheel would fall apart. The gridle is tightly fixed on the circumference of the wheel to hold it in shape. This Maya thus gives the edifice of creation its shape. This Maya is never able to touch the central hub represented by the Atma because the spokes of this symbolic wheel rigidly forces the Maya to maintain a safe distance from the Atma.] (2).

[Note—This verse describes this creation as a wheel hemmed in by Maya and at centered around the Atma which is at its core. This analogy of the wheel is cited in other Upanishads also, viz. (a) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shwetshwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no.4, 6; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.]

3. The second ring has eight letters or syllables which represent its eight spokes designed like a Patra (the petal of the lotus flower). [These spokes rest on the rim of the first ring and act like pillars that support the second tier. The rim of the first tier resembles the ceiling of the ground floor of a five-storeyed house. This rim acts as the base upon which rests the second ring or the second storey of the five-storey house. The rim or circumference of this second ring would therefore be like the ceiling of the second floor of this five-storeyed house, and it is supported by the eight spokes or pillars mentioned here.]

The divine Gayatri Mantra has eight letters or syllables in each of its steps or lines, and hence this second ring is regarded as being symbolic of the Gayatri. This is also girdled or surrounded from the outside by Maya. This Maya is present in all spheres of life and creation. [That is, Maya encircles or girdles each strata of creation. Right from the initial stages or phases of creation to the latter much evolved stages, nothing escapes Maya. Maya has a dominant and all-pervading presence in all the aspects and spheres of creation. The only entity that does escape from the affects of Maya is the Atma as outlined and explained in verse no. 2.] (3).

4. Outside of the second Chakra (as described in verse no. 3) is the third ring or tier or layer of the Chakra. It consists of twelve letters or syllables which form its twelve spokes designed like the Patra or petals of the lotus flower, and act like pillars supporting this ring. It is compared to the Jagati Chanda which has twelve letters or syllables in each step. Like its predecessors, this Chakra is also girdled from the outside by Maya (4).

[Note—Each step or ring of the Chakra represents one strata or tier of creation. What applies to the first ring also applies generally to the rest of them, the only difference being the details in the composition of letters of each ring that symbolize the level of development or evolvement in creation vis-à-vis the various creatures, the level of erudition and knowledge, the various natural forces that come into play etc. that are specific to a particular ring or strata and distinguish one from the other. But it must not be forgotten that all are an integral and inseparable part of the wheel of creation in as much as that even if one of them is removed, the entire structure would collapse sooner or later, besides losing its character of being a unique entity known as the ‘creation’ having magnificent and unparalleled qualities that are a combination or a synthesis of all the unique qualities that are specific to a given strata of creation. In other words, none of these rings or layers of creation—represented by the various rings of this wheel—have an independent existence of their own. The Atma mentioned in verse no. 2 is the central hub around which this wheel is built, and upon which this entire edifice known as the ‘creation’ is founded and erected.]

5. The fourth layer of the Chakra consists of sixteen letters or syllables which act like sixteen spokes designed like the Patra or petals of the lotus flower, and act like pillars supporting this ring. These sixteen Patras represent the sixteen Kalaas¹ of Lord Nrisingh, and therefore this Chakra is regarded as a personification of the Lord himself. [That is, it acquires the same power and authority if worshipped properly as possessed by Lord Nrisingh in person.]

This Chakra is also girdled or surrounded on the outside by Maya (5).

[Note—¹The concept of sixteen Kalaas has already been explained in Canto 2, verse no. 10 of this Upanishad.]

6. The outermost fifth layer of the Chakra consists of thirty-two letters or syllables which act like thirty-two spokes designed like the Patra or petals of the lotus flower, and these act like pillars supporting this ring. These thirty-two Patras represent the Anushtup Chanda in its entirety. [The Anushtup Chanda has four lines with eight letters in each line. Therefore the full verse has 4 lines x 8 letters each = 32 letters.]

This Chakra is also girdled or surrounded on the outside by Maya (6).

7. This symbolic Chakra is held in place with these spokes. The spokes represent the Vedas, while the lotus petals of their design¹ represent the Chandas in which the Vedas are composed. The wheel rotates on the strength of these spokes and their robust, self-sustaining design (7).

[Note—¹An analysis of this verse indicates that the wheel is visualized with a three-dimensional perspective. The spokes are not straight like a rod but cast in the shape of the petals of the lotus flower with the central spine around which the dome-like or cupola-like bulging design of a petal is moulded. The central spine that runs through this dome or cupola represents the Vedas, and it is hidden inside the outer shape of the lotus petal which is the visible part. This petal is beautifully carved and represents the Chandas or the style of poetic composition in which the Vedic hymns are composed. These enchanting and lyrical hymns are very melodious, extremely pleasant and sweet to hear, and therefore often times called ‘Saam’—verses that can

be melodiously sung, the melody that touches the heart and is rejuvenating as well as uplifting for the Spirit.]

8. The Sudarshan Chakra with the sixteen spokes designed like lotus petals is the one that is famous and most adored. One should do Nyas¹ in the central point (or the hub or the core) of this Chakra with the eclectic divine Mantra dedicated to Lord Nrsingh, i.e. the Mantra OM which is a monosyllabic sound and is also called Tarak Mantra (because it gives liberation and deliverance to its worshipper).

The six letters or syllables of the Mantra ‘Sahastraar Hum Phat’ are used to do Nyas in the six Patras (spokes designed like a lotus petal) of the first ring. [One letter is done Nyas with in one Patra or petal.]

The eight letters or syllables of the Narayan Mantra ‘OM Namo Narayan’ are used to do Nyas in the eight Patras (spokes designed like a lotus petal) of the second ring. [One letter is used to do Nyas with in one Patra or petal.]

The twelve letters or syllables of the Vasudeo Mantra ‘OM Namo Bhagwate Vasudevaaya’ are used to do Nyas in the twelve Patras (spokes designed like a lotus petal) of the third ring. [One letter is used to do Nyas with in one Patra or petal.]

The Nyas in the sixteen Patras or spokes of the fifth ring is done using the first letter of the various categories of vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit language with a dot on the top of each letter. [One letter is used to do Nyas with in one Patra or petal. These letters are the following—(i) the short vowels such as A (as in *done*), E (as in *if*, *in*), U (as in *full*, *bull*), Ri (as in *wring*), Ae (as in *may*), O (as in *Oh*), Ang (as in *clung*), Aha (a combination of the vowel A and consonant Ha); (ii) the consonant letters at the beginning of each category, such as Ka (as in *kerb*), Cha (as in *champion*), Tta (as in *ton*—pronounced from the base of the tongue), Ta (as in French ‘t’ pronounced from the front part of the tongue), Pa (as in *purse*), Ya (as in *yearn*), Sha (as in *shawl*), and Ha (as in *hut*).]

The thirty-two letters or syllables of the great Anushtup Mantra (described in Canto 2, verse no. 6, and elaborated in its verse nos. 6-18) are used to do Nyas in the thirty-two Patras (spokes designed like a lotus petal) of the fifth ring. [One letter is used to do Nyas with in one Patra or petal.]

This most magnificent and powerful Surdashan Chakra is the fulfiller of all desires and wishes of a worshipper. It is door or medium for obtaining Mukti (liberation and deliverance). It is a symbol of the Rig/Rik, the Sam and the Yajur Vedas. It is a personification of the supreme Brahm himself, and an embodiment of Amrit—the elixir of eternity, bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity.

The eight Vasus are established in its eastern side, the eleven Rudras are established in its southern side, the twelve Adityas are established in its western side, the Vishwa Deva (the Lord of the universe) is established in its northern side, the Trinity Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are established in its central point, and the Sun God and the Moon God are established in its two flanks (8).

[Note—¹Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra’s divine mystical powers in a particular point of the worship instrument. It makes that point or spot holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. Doing Nyas helps to purify this instrument and make it blessed. The word ‘Nyas’ refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the worship altar or instrument or even the body of the worshipper are touched and certain Mantras are said. Therefore, doing Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra’s supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and reposting it on the various

locations of the worship instrument and its vital parts, such as its central point, its spokes and rings. It makes the worship instrument powerful and effective as it now becomes energized with the dynamic powers of the deity to which this worship instrument is dedicated.]

9. The Richas (hymns) of the Vedas affirm—‘All the Vedas are inherently established or reposed in the cosmic form of Lord Nrisingh which is like the great Akash (sky), a form that is vast, measureless, fathomless, imperishable, eternal and infinite. All the Gods are likewise established or have their base in this cosmic form of the Lord. [This refers to the fact that the Gods are present in the endless heaven, and are not bound like the creatures of the earth. This virtue of being endless and infinite, of possessing endless powers and virtues are unique to Lord Nrisingh who is none but the Supreme Being himself.]

A wise and learned man who does not know the Supreme Being referred to in this verse benefits nothing by studying the Rig/Rik Veda and other Vedas.

On the other hand who are enlightened about this supreme Lord are able to obtain the most exalted stature and the best of spiritual destination in this world (9).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse no. 5, and Canto 4, verse no. 9. Both emphasise that the sky is the nearest analogue for Brahm whose manifestation is Lord Nrisingh. Since Brahm is an embodiment of knowledge, and it is from the former that the latter has emerged, it is a natural thing to say that the Vedas—i.e. the knowledge that they contain and the Truth that they espouse—are also like the sky.

Again, since all the Gods are none other than the same Brahm playing different roles in their forms, it follows that the Gods are an integral part of Brahm, they are inseparable and indistinguishable from Brahm.]

10. Even a child or a young man who acquires full knowledge of this mystical Sudarshan Maha Chakra becomes so powerful, authoritative and empowered that he is regarded as a Guru (an adroit, expert and skilled person) by all others. He becomes eligible to preach all the various Mantras. [This implies that he has had indepth and full understanding of the mysterious secrets and the metaphysical importance and significance of the Mantra of the Lord and its application in practice as outlined in this Upanishad. Obviously, it is only then that he is deemed to be learned and skilled in this field, and not otherwise.]

When the Sundarshan Yantra (worship instrument described in verse nos. 2-8) is used during formal forms of worship and doing fire sacrifices, the Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh (described in Canto 2, verse no. 6) is used for the purpose.

This Yantra is said to be so powerful and effective that it gives protection against the fear of demons (or all sorts of tormentors) as well as from the fear of death (and its accompanying horrors).

After receiving it in the proper way from a Guru (who had previously sanctified it and empowered it by doing Nyas and other rituals to give it its mystical powers and effectiveness), the worshipper should wear this Yantra as a charm around his neck, arms or the Shikha (which is a tuft of hair on the top of the head).

Even if the receipt of this Yantra gives the whole earth consisting of the seven continents to the Guru as his fees for providing it to him, it is still not sufficient a compensation. Hence, one should donate to his Guru as much land as is possible for him (i.e. whatever he can conveniently afford and spare) as the fee for acquiring this Yantra.’ (10).

11. The Gods asked Prajapati again—‘Oh Lord! What are the divine benefits or rewards obtained through this Anushtup Mantra? Please be kind to tell us.’ (11).

12. Prajapati replied—‘A person who does regular meditation and contemplation using this Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, and he uses it to do regular Japa (repetition) becomes as glorious and radiant as gold that is heated in fire. That is, he becomes purified and holy, and his countenance glows with the halo of divinity that effuses from his inner being and radiates out in all the directions like the light of a burning fire.

He is blessed and purified (i.e. made holy) by even the Sun God, the Moon God, the Wind God, the Absolute Truth representing the Supreme Being, by Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Rudra (Shiva) the concluder of creation, and by all the rest of the Gods—individually and collectively (12).

13. A person who does regular meditation and contemplation using this Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, and uses it to do regular Japa (repetition), is able to vanquish death. He becomes free from sins and their consequences. He is also absolved of the horrendous sin of killing a Brahmin, an embryo or a warrior. In fact, he is excused of the sin of all killings¹.

Such a man is enabled to cross this vast ocean-like world, and is also empowered to help others cross it (13).

[Note—¹It must be noted that this verse is not to be misinterpreted as sanctioning murder. It is only meant to give a ray of hope to those who might have committed some horrible sin in the past due to unavoidable circumstances, and now wish to atone for their misdeeds. They must vow not to repeat their mistakes again for the simple reason that while Lord Nrisingh to whom this Upanishad is dedicated is munificent enough to pardon sincere persons and forgive them for their sins, he is at the same time very stern and relentless in punishing the evil and sinful ones as is proved by his physical form and the reason of his incarnation as a half man and a half lion, which was to slay the demon who was tormenting even his son Prahalad.]

14. A person who does regular meditation and contemplation using this Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, and uses it to do regular Japa (repetition), acquires such immense and intense mystical powers that he can, if he so wishes, obstruct the path of fire, wind, sun, moon and water. He can also stun the Gods, obstruct their movements or override their decisions. He can obstruct the movement of stars and even neutralize the effect of the most potent poison (14).

[Note—This verse is intended to highlight the stupendous mystical powers that a worshipper of Lord Nrisingh acquires. It does not intend to mean that he can physically stop the sun, the moon and the stars from moving in the sky, but he can change the way they affect the destiny of a person as recognized by astrological calculations. By saying that he can override the Gods and the elements such as the fire, wind and water it is meant that he becomes as powerful as the Lord who supervises them, and that he accesses super-human powers and authority.]

15. A person who does regular meditation and contemplation using this Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, and uses it to do regular Japa (repetition), acquires such a great power that he can attract even the Gods, Yakshas (sort of semi-gods), Naag (legendary serpents who rule the nether world), Grahas (stars, both the benign as well as the malignant), and humans (both friendly as well as inimical). He indeed can attract everyone towards himself (15).

[Note—This draws a parallel from the celestial sun around which the entire solar system revolves. The planets keep their respective position in the vast space of the sky because they are pulled in towards the sun by the gravitational forces of Nature which prevents them from spinning out of the sun's orbit. The moon revolves around the earth and all the things on the surface of earth are held in their respective positions because of this attractive power of gravity. Even the entire administrative edifice of an empire is centered on one single office of the emperor. The wheel cited in this Upanishad is also centered on the hub. In other words, the worshipper who uses this Mantra to meditate acquires holiness and purity along with immense mystical powers that those around him look up to him in every sphere of life for guidance and help. He becomes the focal point for seeking advice and direction. He becomes a wise and expert teacher, and wherever he stays pupils and disciples gather around him. For such a person there is no distinction between an enemy and a friend—i.e. whether the God or the stars are inimical or friendly, he treats all of them equally and with the greatest of equanimity.]

16. A person who does regular meditation and contemplation using this Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, and uses it to do regular Japa (repetition), is able to vanquish (i.e. acquire prominence, honour and glory in) all the seven Lokas such as the Bhu Loka, the Bhurva Loka, the Swaha Loka, the Maha Loka, the Jana Loka, the Tapa Loka and the Satya Loka. [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 4.] (16).

17. A person who does regular meditation and contemplation using this Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, and uses it to do regular Japa (repetition), is deemed to have done (and therefore entitled to the benefits accruing from doing) the great Yagyas or fire sacrifices such as the Agnishtom Yagya¹, Ukthya Yagya², Shodhashi Yagya³, Vajpaye Yagya⁴, Atriraatra Yagya⁵, Aptoryaam Yagya⁶ and Ashwamedh Yagya⁷.

He is deemed to have done these sacred sacrifices in all the seasons of the year⁸ (17).

[Note--¹The *Agnisthoma*—This is the first of the Soma Yagyas where the sanctified liquid extracted from the herb called Som is used as offerings to the sacred fire and the Gods. It is spread over five days and requires an attendance of sixteen priests. It is performed in the spring season annually. Its climax is reached when the Soma juice is extracted at midday from the herb.

²The *Ukthya Yagya*—This is the fire sacrifice in which the hymns of the Sam Veda are used for recital and offering of oblations to the sacred fire.

³The *Shodashi Yagya*—As the name suggests, it is done continuously for sixteen days of the lunar calendar. It starts on the dark-moon day and finishes on the full-moon day. The word 'Shodasha' also refers to the sixteen purification rites enjoined for a twice-born from birth till death. It also means observing the sixteen obligatory steps in formal forms of worship—such as Awaahan (invocation of the deity), Aasan (offering of seat to the deity), Ardhya (offering oblations), Padya (washing of feet), Achaman (sipping of sanctified water to cleanse the mouth), Madhupark (offering of desserts or mouth sweeteners), Snan (ablution; bathing), Vastraavharan (clothing), Yagyopavit (wearing of the sacred thread), Gandha (offering perfumes), Pushpa (offering of flowers), Deep (showing ceremonial light), Naivaidhya (offering fresh oblations to the deity in the form of sweet pudding or porridge), Tambul (betel leaves), Parikrama (circumambulation), and Vandana (offering prayers).

⁴The *Vajapeya Yagya*—This is performed by one who desires unlimited dominion. This sacrifice had many special features and the number 17 plays a dominant role—for there are 17 animals that are sacrificed, 17 objects are distributed as fees for the priests, and it lasts for 17 days culminating in a chariot race in which the patron who does the fire sacrifice is made to win at any cost.

⁵The *Atiraatra*—This is form of Soma sacrifice but done in one day only. An ewe or ram is sacrificed for Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of speech, wisdom and knowledge.

⁶The *Aptoryaama*—This is a modification of the Agnisthoma Yagya and is done for the fulfillment of desire. The chief patron who does this sacrifice is expected to give one thousand cows as gift or charity. A fully decorated chariot is donated to the chief priest.

⁷The *Ashwamedh*—This is called the horse sacrifice because a horse is sacrificed in it. It is most ancient sacrifice and can be successfully done by very powerful kings or emperors. The horse is let free to go anywhere it wants for one year and the land where it sets foot is either annexed by treaties or by force in war. The actual sacrifice is though for only three days. The sacrificial horse is protected by the army and if by chance it is killed by the opposing king then the sacrifice is deemed to be defiled. In practical terms, it was a means to spread a king's area of influence.

⁸The *Chaturmaasya*—This is a fire sacrifice consisting of three independent sacrifices done at four-monthly intervals called the 'Chatur-maas' or a period of four months. Each sacrifice has an independent name, viz. Vaishwadeva, Varun-praghaasa and Shakamedh. Sometimes one more named Shunaashirya is also added if the Hindu lunar calendar shows an extra month. Each of these is performed on the full-moon day and mark the advent of a season—such as the Phalgun or Chaitra Purnamaasi (February-March or March-April), Aasaadh Purnamaasi (July), and Kaartika Purnamaasi (November). Sweet pudding or porridge and rice cakes are the main offerings.

Refer also to Chapter 2, Mundak Upanishad, section 2, verse nos. 3 and 8 of this volume.]

18. A person who does regular meditation and contemplation using this Anushtup Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, and uses it to do regular Japa (repetition), gets the eclectic reward of having studied the Rig/Rik Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sam Veda and the Atharva Veda.

He gets the eclectic reward of having studied the Angiras section of the Vedas. [This deals with the worship of the sacred fire and the performance of the fire sacrifices.] He gets the eclectic reward of having studied other scriptures such as the Purans (ancient mythological histories of the Hindus), the Kalpa Gathas (the stories of specific eras or ancient times), Narashanshi (formal prayers; liturgy), and Pranav (the divine Mantra OM pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahman).

Such a person is deemed to have studied them all and have become wisened in their tenets and philosophies (18).

19. A wearer of the sacred thread (and the worshipper of the Lord using the Anushtup Mantra as described in this Upanishad) is equivalent in glory and high honour to a hundred persons who have not worn the sacred thread (and therefore not been formally initiated into the religious fold).

A householder who studies the Vedas is equivalent in glory and high honour to a hundred Brahmacharis (celibates who observe strict rules of abstinence and self control over the senses).

A Vaanprastha (a person who has left the world and heads for the forest for doing meditation and tapa) is equivalent in glory and high honour to a hundred such householders.

A Sanyasi (a renunciate hermit or ascetic) is equivalent in glory and high honour to a hundred such Vaanprasthas.

A person who does Japa or repeats the divine Mantra of Lord Rudra (one of the forms of Lord Shiva) and meditates upon it is equivalent in glory and high honour to a hundred such Sanyasis.

A person who studies the Atharva Shikha Upanishad is equivalent in glory and high honour to a hundred such worshippers of Lord Rudra. [The Atharva Shikha Upanishad is Chapter 4 of this volume.]

A worshipper of Lord Nrisingh and who uses the Lord's Mantra for doing Japa and meditation is equivalent in glory and high honour to a hundred such wise persons who study the Atharva Shikha Upanishad. [Such is the tremendous glory and majesty of the Nrisingh Mantra.] (19).

20. The devotee of Lord Nrisingh who worships this Mantra of the Lord and meditates upon it is able to attain the supreme abode where even the wind has no access, where there is no heat and scorch of the sun, where neither the moon shines nor the stars twinkle, where there is no heat of the fire nor entry of death—a divine abode which is free from all sufferings and miseries, where there is perpetual bliss and happiness, an abode which is absolutely peaceful, tranquil and serene, which is auspicious and holy, which is adored by the Gods, which is the supreme destination aspired by ascetics, and which is the supreme object of all spiritual endeavours.

It is this abode or destination reaching where the devotee finds complete Mukti for himself—i.e. he finds full liberation and deliverance from this world and the cycle of birth and death; he obtains complete and unhindered emancipation and salvation for his soul (20).

21. The Richas (hymns) of the Rig/Rik Veda too affirm—‘Just like an ordinary man can see the splendorous sun in the sky, those who are wise and enlightened see the divine and supreme abode of Lord Vishnu with their subtle eyes of wisdom and knowledge.

Such wise, learned and enlightened persons bring this supreme abode to the knowledge of the ordinary people by teaching them about it and making them aware of its esoteric secrets.

He who knows this secret and who is enlightened about it is the one who is able to obtain this most exalted spiritual stature. Verily, this is what the Maha Upanishad (the great Upanishad) says. Amen! (21).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

THE END

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Addendum no. 1

Nrisingh Shatchakra Upanishad

This is a minor Upanishad which describes the six-faceted Chakra or wheel of worship dedicated to Lord Nrisingh/Narsingh, the half man and half lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It has only 8 verses, and it complements the Nrisingh Purvatapini

Upanishad which is Chapter 7 of this volume and which describes only the Sudarshan Chakra.

The present Upanishad derives its name from the fact that the creator Prajapati Brahma had referred to six Chakras or wheels of worship dedicated to Lord Nrisingh. Each of these independent Chakras are in a way an extension or variation of the main Sudarshan Chakra described earlier in the main text of the Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 5.

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1. Once the Gods went to the Satya Loka (the upper heaven; the abode of the truthful Lord) and asked Lord Prajapati Brahma, the creator—‘Please enlighten us about the Chakra (wheel of worship) dedicated to Lord Nrisingh.’

Prajapati told them about the Chakra of Lord Nrisingh which is as follows—The Chakra of Lord Nrisingh are six in number. [Hence the name of the Upanishad is ‘Shat Chakra = six wheels.’]

The first and the second Chakras have four spokes each; the third Chakra has eight spokes; the fourth and the fifth Chakras have five spokes each; and the eighth Chakra has eight spokes.

Thus, we have these six Nrisingh Chakras (1).

2. When the Gods asked Prajapati about their names, they were told that the first Chakra is called Aa-chakra (i.e. the first primordial wheel of creation), the second Chakra is called Su-chakra (i.e. the auspicious), the third Chakra is called Maha-chakra (i.e. the great wheel), the fourth Chakra is called Rakshan-chakra because it gives protection to the entire creation and its inhabitants, the fifth Chakra is called Duyt-chakra (i.e. the wheel surrounded or girdled by Maya—‘Duyt’ meaning deceit and delusions), and the sixth Chakra is called Asurantak-chakra (because it brings an end to the demons or evil forces of creation).

These are the six Chakras of Lord Nrisingh (2).

3. On being asked what the three ‘Valayas’ or braces that hold these wheels in place are, Prajapati replied that they are called Aantar (inner most), Madhyam (middle) and Vaahya (outer).

In relation with the worship Chakra, these braces are the Beej Mantras (i.e. the seed letters or syllables unique to a particular deity and used to empower the worship instrument).

Out of these, the inner one is called the Beej or seed, the middle is the Nrisingh Gayatri, and the outer Beej is the full form of the Nrisingh Mantra¹ (3).

[Note—¹The inner Beej is like the seed from which the entire tree sprouts forth. It is the Mantra for Pranav—i.e. OM. The importance of OM in this context has been described in Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 2-3. The Nrisingh Gayatri is narrated in Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 13. And the full Mantras of Lord Nrisingh are narrated in Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 15. This Upanishad is Chapter 7 of the present volume.]

4. The Gods asked—‘How many inner Valayas (braces) are there, and what are their Beej Mantras?’

Prajapati replied that they are six in number. The first Beej is called ‘Naarshingham’; the second Beej is called ‘Maha-Laxmyam’; the third Beej is called

‘Saaraswat’; the fourth Beej is the one that is specific to the worshipper’s deity¹; the fifth Beej is ‘OM’; and the sixth Beej is ‘Krodh Daivat’ (i.e. the Lord of anger, a reference to Lord Rudra, the angry form of Shiva).

These are the Beej Mantras of the inner most Valaya of the six Chakras of Lord Nrisingh (4).

[Note—¹This observation shows that these worship instruments can be used by all people to worship their personal deities. The use of Chakras need not be restricted to worshipping only Lord Nrisingh. This is due to the fact that Upanishads have a very broad view of spiritualism and metaphysics, not being dogmatic, inflexible or rigid in their approach. The main thrust is on treating the supreme transcendental Brahm as a universal Absolute Truth which is not bound or tied down by any specific criterion or dogmas, for it is applicable to all and each situation or aspect of creation. So it does not matter in which form the worshipper worships the Lord, and therefore this worship Chakra is equally applicable to all the deities. Its like the case of modern science whose principles are universally applicable but need to be fine-tuned according to the present application.]

5. The Gods then asked—‘How many middle Valayas (braces) are there, and what are their Beej Mantras?’

Prajapati replied that they are six in number. The first Beej is called ‘Naarsinghaaya’; the second Beej is called ‘Vidmaye’; the third Beej is called ‘Vajra-nakhaaye’; the fourth Beej is called ‘Dhimahi’; the fifth Beej is called ‘Tannha’; and sixth Beej is called ‘Singha Prachodayaat’.

Hence, these Beej Mantras form the middle Valayas of the six Chakras of Lord Nrisingh (5).

6. The Gods then asked—‘How many outer Valayas (braces) are there, and what are their Beej Mantras?’

Prajapati replied that they are also six in number. The first Chakra called Aa-chakra has ‘Atma’ (literally the pure conscious self) as its Valaya and Beej Mantra. The second Chakra called Su-chakra has ‘Priyatma’ (literally the dear Atma) as its Valaya and Beej Mantra. The third Chakra called Maha-chakra has ‘Jyotiratma’ (literally the self-illuminated Atma) as its Valaya and Beej Mantra. The fourth Chakra called Rakshan-chakra has ‘Mayatma’ (literally the Atma that is protected from Maya, or the Atma that is not influenced by Maya) as its Valaya and Beej Mantra. The fifth Chakra called Dyut-chakra has ‘Yogatma’ (literally the Atma that is engrossed in Yoga—meditation and contemplation) as its Valaya and Beej Mantra. And the sixth Chakra called Asuraantak-chakra has ‘Satyatma’ (literally the pure conscious, truthful, eternal, universal Atma) as its Valaya and Beej Mantra.

These are the outer Valayas and the Mantras of the six Chakras of Lord Nrisingh (6).

7. The Gods asked Prajapati the places where Nyas is to be done with these Mantras? [That is, what are the points on the body where these Mantras are used for the purpose of purification and invoking the worshipped deity to take its seat.]

At this, Prajapati replied—‘Nyas with the first one is done on the heart; with the second one on the head; with the third one on the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the top of the skull); the fourth one on all parts of the body; the fifth one on all the other entities (i.e. on all things and people around); and the sixth one in all the directions. [In other words, the divine powers of the Lord and the mystical powers of the Mantras

are invoked for the all round welfare of creation and not selfishly to satisfy one's own interests.]

A wise person who invokes these Mantras and invests his body with the mystical powers of these Chakras by symbolically wearing them on it is able to access all the accompanying mystical and spiritual benefits; he obtains super-human powers that come naturally and automatically with success in harnessing the divine energy and spiritual potentials of these six Chakras.

Lord Nrisingh is pleased on such persons. Such a person obtains the eclectic form of Mukti called Kaivalya. [That is, he obtains complete liberation and deliverance from this body and the world in as much as he does not have to take birth again.]

He is able to have access to all the worlds; he is able to know all about them. All the subjects of these worlds (i.e. all the creature) come under his control and become obedient to him.

These are the six Chakras and the way to do Nyas with them. This process is exceedingly purifying. This process pleases Lord Nrisingh greatly. Such a person is deemed to have knowledge of doing the best of deeds; he is deemed to have knowledge of Brahm.

Lord Nrisingh is not pleased without doing Nyas properly as described here. An aspirant cannot hope to be rewarded for doing auspicious deeds without doing Nyas as stated here, and neither can he expect these rewards without duly worshipping the Lord.

Hence, this is the right and the most holy thing to do; it is most purifying and auspicious thing to do (7).

8. An aspirant who studies and implements this Upanishad is deemed to have studied all the Vedas. Likewise, he is deemed to have done all the Yagyas (fire sacrifices). He is deemed to have taken a holy bath in all the pilgrim sites. He gets all the mystical powers that come with doing worship using all the known Mantras. He is completely purified and made holy. He is empowered and becomes powerful and strong enough to give protection to all. He is able to trounce the fear that comes from lowly evil spirits such ghosts, phantoms, vampires, ogres, hobgoblins and the like (i.e. such frightening spirits do not dare to harm him). He becomes fearless.

This esoteric and most enigmatic knowledge of the six mystical Chakras of Lord Nrisingh should not be divulged to unworthy persons who are unbelievers and have no faith and devotion (8).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 8

Narad Parivraajak Upanishad/ Narad Parivrajaako-panishad

This is major Upanishad dealing exclusively with the concept of Sanyas—the life of complete serenity, renunciation and dispassion, and one that deals with the truthful monastic way of life. It was enunciated by the great celestial sage Narad, and is revealed in the form of nine ‘Updeshas’ or teachings which we shall call Cantos in this Chapter.

It is a combination of prose and verses composed in the Anushtup Chanda (metre) style.

In Canto 1, the sages Shaunak and others have asked sage Narad about the way by which a person can find freedom and deliverance from the endless and stubborn fetters of this material. Narad, in his answer, starts with giving a detailed account of the four Ashrams and Varnas (phases of a man’s life and the classes in which the society is divided), and their relevant laws and tenets.

In Canto 2 sage Shaunak has asked Narad to give a detailed account of the sanctified process, of the formalities and procedure to be followed in accepting the life of Sanyas.

In Canto 3 sage Narad has asked Brahma, the creator, to describe the virtues of those who are eligible to accept the life and vows of Sanyas, and Brahma answers him in detail. In this process, Brahma explains the concept of ‘Aatur Sanyas’—i.e. about an aspirant who is very eager to accept the rigorous vows of renunciation as a means of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Cantos 4 and 5 explain in detail the due diligent process of accepting Sanyas and its tremendous importance and significance for the spiritual aspirant. The various types of Sanyas and their differences are enumerated in Canto 5.

Canto 6 deals with the eclectic concept of Turiyateet (which is the transcendental state of existence) and how to obtain it. It also highlights the various aspects of daily life of an aspirant who has accepted the vows of Sanyas.

Canto 7 describes the normal laws governing the life of various types of Sanyasis that would help them reach their goal of self-realisation, and provides them with the means by which such self-realised Sanyasis can find deliverance from the cycle of birth and death.

In Canto 8 Brahma extensively explains to Narad the divine Mantra OM pertaining to Pranav or Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, when the sage asked him about the Mantra which can help an aspirant to attain final Mukti (liberation and deliverance) from this world. It goes on to describe elaborately the meaning of the numerous terms that are used to indicate the various facets of the same universal divine entity known as Brahm that is supreme and transcendental. Here, almost all the esoteric terms used as adjectives or epithets for Brahm have been explained at a single place, and in this respect this Canto is unique in the pantheon of the Upanishads.

And finally Canto 9 marks the culmination of one’s spiritual search when he is enlightened about the supreme transcendental Brahm. Hence, this Canto attempts to narrate about this Brahm. It also describes in the process the signs of a self and Brahm realised ascetic, and how he obtains the ultimate destination for his self. This Canto concludes the most profound of Sanyas Upanishads.

This Upanishad appears to be highly repetitive as the same thing is being said again and again. One plausible reason is that sage Narad might have approached Brahma on different occasions, and each time asked the same question for clarification, or in the hope that some new thing would be taught to him. Each such occasion was recorded as a separate Updesh (teaching) or Canto. Another reason may be that the conversation between Narad and Brahma was recorded for posterity by different sages who were separated from each other by vast geographical distances. One did not know what the other recorded or taught his own line of disciples. When sage Veda Vyas, the compiler of the Vedas and the Upanishads, sat down to compile the Upanishads, he decided to collect all such versions and put them under one roof, giving each version one distinct number. Hence, since all these versions appear to be saying the same thing with slight variations in language and tenor, and they all relate to the same topic of Sanyas taught by the same teacher Brahma to the same disciple Narad, they were collectively called 'Narad Parivrajak Upanishad'. The objective was to present a comprehensive text on the subject of the renunciate way of life.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Updesh (teaching)/Canto 1

1. Once sage Narad¹, who is regarded as the most exalted in the fraternity of Parivrajaks (also known as Sanyasis; those who have taken the strict vow of renunciation and lead a life of total dispassion and detachment from everything and everyone in this material world; those who lead a serene life of a reclusive monk or hermit), went to all the holy pilgrim sites during his constant travel. All these places became more holy and purer as a result of his stepping foot on them.

This visit helped the godly sage to clean all impurities that might have tainted his mind, and consequentially obtained complete peace and tranquillity of the mind by having a divine sight of these holy places.

The sage was very rested and tranquil; he had all the sense organs completely under control and epitomised self restraint; he was completely renounced and dispassionate towards all. He had no animosity or malice towards anyone. Being in such a state of mind, he was absorbed in self contemplation and constantly meditating upon the truth about the 'self'.

During the course of his travels he came to a place called Naimisharanya. This holy pilgrim site is especially endowed with auspiciousness and the ability to bestow exceptional bliss and happiness when one lives a duly restrained and religious life here. Numerous sages, seers, hermits and ascetics used to live there.

The divine sage Narad had a holy view of this place where the soothing and soulful sound of the Indian lute, a sound that created an atmosphere of auspiciousness and spirituality filled with renunciation and detachment, wafted in the air as various sages and others sang hymns and offered sacrifices with Vedic Mantras using this musical instrument. Narad joined the celebratory atmosphere and religious fervour, deriving immense comfort and spiritual pleasure by listening to divine songs sung by others and himself singing the glories of the Lord to the accompaniment of the sweet

music of the lute. He did not talk of any worldly issues. The entire place and its surroundings, consisting of both the movable as well as the immovable entities, resonated with his melodious singing, and all the creatures remained submerged in spiritual ecstasy and a sense of immense exhilaration arising from it. It was a Utopian situation of an eclectic spiritual dimension.

Narad's divine songs, soaked in the nectar of devotion and submission to the supreme Lord, attracted all creatures alike, whether they were humans, animals, gods, Kinnars (a higher form of semi-god), Gandharvas (musicians of the gods) or Apsaras (celestial dancers in the court of Indra, the king of gods). They danced and swayed in blissful happiness and ecstasy of the highest order.

At that time, a special religious festival of a sacrifice extending for twelve long years was being organised there (and this explained the celebrations and festive environment). Great Gods, renowned sages and seers as well as the divine sages Shaunak and others had gathered on the occasion to participate. When they saw the great sage Narad amidst them they felt very glad and extended a very warm and heartiest welcome to him by duly paying their obeisance to him and honouring him. They collectively bowed at his august feet and gave him a high seat of honour.

All the assembled sages and seers took their respective seats, and when all were duly seated the great sage Shaunak² joined them to ask Narad—‘Oh great sage! What is the way to find freedom and deliverance from the fetters pertaining to this world? How can one find emancipation and salvation? Please be kind to enlighten us about it.’ (1).

[Note—¹Sage *Narad*—The celestial sage Narad is said to be a manifestation of the Supreme Being's Mana (mind and its thoughts, intentions, hopes, desires and wishes, as well as the heart and its emotions and sentiments). The Supreme Being implements his wishes and expresses his intentions and wishes by making Narad his spokesperson. Purans list uncountable instances when Narad has approached people—both the good and righteous as well as the demonic and unrighteous ones—to tell them the path best suited to them, and the wise ones treated this advise as the Lord's wish while the unwise ones still benefited from it because Narad's intention was always to turn a living being away from his sinful ways and lead him towards the good.

Since he is a personified Mana, he is as fickle, unstable and transient as the Mana—never staying at one place for more than a fleeting moment, always roaming here and there in the entire creation, having nothing to stop his path as he could go anywhere he wished. And the remarkable thing is that he was never unwelcome anywhere—even the demons welcomed him with the same respect as did the Gods.

It is believed that he is born in each Kalpa to carry out the wishes of the Supreme Being. [1 Kalpa is equivalent to 4.32 billion human years.] He was a Gandharva (a semi-God who is a celestial musician) named Upbarhan in the previous Kalpa. He was physically very charming and an expert musician. Once he showed his amorous intentions towards Urvashi, a celestial dancer, in the presence of Brahma the creator where he was supposed to show exemplary restraint, and this overt show of lust resulted in his being cursed by Brahma that he would become fallen and take birth in the mortal world as a Shudra (a low caste). So, he was born from a maid servant of low caste working as a devoted servant of a learned Brahmin. Under the constant companion of this great Brahmin, Narad developed noble and auspicious virtues in him even though he was a mere child of five years. He was very modest, devoted, pious, noble hearted and diligent.

Since he had the Lord's genes in him, his inclinations were more inclined towards the Spirit than the worldly charms of material sense objects which he detested from childhood. As luck would have it, once some wondering mendicants came to spend the four-month period of the rainy season in the hermitage of this Brahmin. Narad

served them with great devotion. Impressed by his service and having some inner vision of his high spiritual stature and the spark of divinity that was lying hidden in him waiting for an opportune moment to leap up and shine through, they blessed him, taught him meditation and contemplation, besides initiating the child into the path of the Lord.

Thus, the dormant fire of renunciation and spiritual awareness was immediately ignited in Narad's little heart and he wished to take to Sanyas (a renunciate's life marked by constant wandering as a mendicant in search of the supreme bliss and Truth), but he did not wish to hurt his mother's emotions. But the Lord had other plans for him, and soon his wish was fulfilled when his loving mother died of snake bite while milking a cow. Instead of grieving at such a loss in human terms, the child Narad felt happy as if the last fetter was broken and he was liberated from worldly obligations.

He immediately headed north towards the mighty Himalaya Mountains to do severe Tapa (penance and austerity) to attain access to the Supreme Being. The little one walked on and on, and finally he was so tired and exhausted that when he saw a cool lake he drank water, ate fruits that he found there, and sat under the shadow of a tree and became lost in meditation. Lord Vishnu revealed himself in his four-arm form in his heart, but Narad was so thrilled and excited with this divine vision that he wished to see the Lord in practical terms with his physical eyes rather than the subtle eyes while he was in deep meditation. But as soon as he opened the eyes, the Lord vanished. Most sorry and overwhelmed with this loss, the child began to cry bitterly. Then a cosmic formless reverberating voice said—'Oh son! Your penance is accepted, and I do love you. Though I bless you with an eternal life and that your memory of me would never be erased, but you would not be able to see me with physical eyes in this world. So go back to the world and carry out my divine mandate for me. Become my messenger and go preach the path of my devotion and holy name to this world so that other unfortunate creatures also can get liberation and deliverance from the fetters in which they have bound themselves with no one to show them an easy and practical way out of their predicaments. Go and preach my message to such people in every corner of the earth; go and preach my devotion and let them have faith in my holy name. Your salvation would come naturally and automatically to you as an unasked reward.'

Narad turned back with this divine mandate of the Lord to be carried out just like the great Apostles of Lord Jesus Christ had went, on the Lord's instructions, to spread his message to the people on this earth. Henceforth, he wandered in the entire creation like a mendicant, with an Indian lute upon which he sang the Lord's glories and his divine name, spreading the divine message of the Lord's mercy, compassion, benevolence and love everywhere, attempting to turn everyone towards the Lord and away from this sinful and mortal world so that each individual creature could get his spiritual liberation and deliverance. Such are the ways of great and holy saints that instead of being selfish to seek his own liberation and deliverance from the Lord as the grant of a boon and letting the rest of the world go to hell, Narad chose to sacrifice his own life, liberation and deliverance at the altar of larger good of creation and to fulfill the wish of the Lord. Of course there is another twist to this tale—the Lord does not select everyone to carry on his own divine agenda, and a soul who the Lord designates for this purpose is indeed the most favoured and lucky one—because the Emperor chooses only those upon whom he has utmost confidence to carry out his personal task. It is just like Jesus choosing his disciples and ordaining them the task of spreading his glorious Gospel of love and salvation.

Therefore, Narad, the apostle of the Supreme Being, is the most loved disciple of the Lord, and it is evidenced by the fact that he is the only saint who has unrestricted access to the abode of the Trinity Gods (Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation, Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder of this creation) besides every nook and corner of creation without hindrance and even without seeking any previous

permission and appointment from anyone, be it a God or a Demon or anybody else. Narad's visit was always for the host's long term good, so he was always welcome and revered.

When the time came and the age of the physical body ended, he left the mortal coil like a serpent leaves its cuticle and went to heaven to sing the Lord's holy and divine name in the presence of Brahma, the old patriarch of creation. At the end of the Kalpa, at the time of Doomsday, he merged and became one with Brahma, the creator.

When the new cycle of creation came into being, he was born again from the Mana (mind) of Brahma the creator after the Sankadi sages were born. That is why, in the present Kalpa, Narad is called the 'Manas Putra' of Brahma, i.e. the son born out of Brahma's mental powers or his wishes. With this heritage and gene running in his blood, it is natural that he is highly respected and regarded as one of the greatest devotees of Lord Vishnu who is the Supreme Being personified. It is from the navel of Lord Vishnu that Brahma, the creator of the visible world, was born atop a divine Lotus that emerged from it while he was reclining on the bed made of the coiled body of the legendary serpent named Seshnath who floated on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk called Kshirsagar.

Narad preached renunciation of this material world and an extreme sense of faith in and complete devotion for Lord Hari (Narayan, Vishnu, the Supreme Being). But this was against the process of creation, because if everyone followed the path preached by Narad and renounced the material world then the process of propagation of the world and its inhabitant creatures along with its development would come to a naught. So, when Narad preached renunciation and detachment from this material world of sense objects that was mortal, transient and never a giver of peace and happiness to the ten thousand mental sons who were created by Daksha Prajapati (the first male from whom the rest of the human race was born and who was assigned the task by Brahma to propagate creation) in order to propagate this human race, Narad obviously annoyed him. These sons were preached by Narad and they all became mendicants, renouncing their attachment with this life and all charms of the material world along with the desire to enjoy it, gratify their sense organs and remain entangled in affairs of this world. Daksha Prajapati was exasperated and he created another set of ten thousand sons. But when Narad again played spoil-sport, Daksha cursed him that Narad would have to remain on the move always and he would not be able to stay at one place for more than two 'Gharis'. [1 Ghari = 24 minutes. In practice the term means a very short period of time; a fleeting moment as small as batting an eyelid.] As a result of this curse, Narad became an ever-wandering mendicant. But this suited the divine mandate of the Lord—for now Narad was forced to keep on the move and reach newer corners of the worldly and celestial realm to preach the Lord's message amongst the mortal creatures on earth and the Gods and Spirits in the heaven.

It is believed that Narad is immortal and is symbolic of the stupendous powers of a man's mind. The mind is ever-wandering like Narad, and the subtle message in the entire lore is that one should tame this restless mind and train it to turn away from this mortal engrossing material world and instead turn towards the Lord for finding permanent liberation and deliverance from this world. A wise mind would teach (preach) the aspirant about the futility of pursuing this artificial world, and instead seek ways of finding the Truth that gives eternity and brings to an end the endless litany of miseries and horrors, perplexities and confusions, restlessness and agitations that are invariably associated with un-truth, delusions and ignorance.

Narad was the most erudite and scholarly devotee of the Lord. No other sage or saint could match him in his scholarly acumen and profundity of wisdom (ref. Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, section 1, verse no. 2). Narad is also credited with the composition of the great Sutra (formula or key) called 'Narad Bhakti Sutra' which defines the eclectic principles and characteristics of the spiritual practice called

Bhakti which is to have a profound and exemplary degree of devotion for and surrender to the Supreme Being. Narad himself epitomizes Bhakti at its most refined and developed form.

²Sage *Shaunak*—A brief life-sketch of Sage Shaunak is given in Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 3 as a note. It is Chapter 2 of this volume.]

2. The world famous sage Narad replied—‘If a man is born in a high and noble clan but still has not been formally initiated by the investiture ceremony of the sacred thread (called *Upnayan*), then first this must be done. All the forty-four consecration ceremonies and purification rites should be properly done. Then he should approach a Guru (a learned teacher) in his hermitage as his disciple or student.

There, he should please the Guru with his devoted and selfless service on the one hand, and diligently start a systemic study of the branch of the Vedas assigned to him. He should then progress in his studies, and gradually study all the branches and all the scriptures while serving the Guru for twelve years. During this time he should strictly observe the tenets of *Brahmacharya*. [This refers to a life of observation of strict self-discipline and self-control. It entails strict control of all the sense organs and their natural impulses. This ensures that the student is not only able to concentrate his mind and energy on his studies but also to preserve the vital energy of the body and the mind, as well as inculcate noble virtues during these formative years of his life.]

After this, he should lead a *Grishastha*’s (householder’s) life for the next twenty-five years, followed by another twenty-five years as a *Vaanprastha*. [The *Vaanprastha* is a person who leaves the house and literally heads for the forest, but in practice it entails visiting all the pilgrim sites, remaining aloof from worldly attachments, distancing oneself from all household affairs, and spending time in peace, study and contemplation. This is a preparatory stage for the fourth stage of *Sanyas* which is life of complete severance of all worldly ties.]

Wise people assert that *Brahmacharya Ashram* is of four types, *Grishastha Ashram* of six types, and *Vaanprastha Ashram* of four types. [The word ‘*Ashram*’ refers to a phase or period of life.] One should be loyal to his *Ashram*, i.e. he should faithfully follow the codes of conduct, do all the required deeds diligently and practice the sanctified way of life as designated for each of these three phases in his life.

After having led a fruitful and auspicious life according to traditional norms and sanctified by the scriptures, he should rise above from this world of material objects, i.e. he should become detached from and dispassionate towards this material world of sense objects, its accompanying pleasures and comforts, its charms and temptations, its joys and sufferings, and its entanglements and delusions. He should abandon all sorts of desires, hopes and expectations from his conscience, and free his mind, speech, deeds and body from them. He should completely overcome all sorts of *Vasanas*, or passions, yearnings, greed and wants. [That is, he must not allow his mind to harbour any desire or hope, nor expect anything from the body and the world. He should not spend his precious energy and time in pursuing this material world, and gratification of the self and the body. He should not expect that his body would give him support in his old days, or help him enjoy the pleasures and comforts of the world, and neither should he employ the body in this pursuit. He should not do deeds with expectation of a reward or gain something or to fulfil some aspirations, but only do them selflessly as an ordained duty done to serve the Lord and his extended form in the shape of this world or creation. He should use his speech not to gain some benefit from it, such as gaining name and fame as a scholar or wise person, but to help

others and to serve the noble cause of the Lord. He should not harbour any passions and worldly desires whatsoever because they lead to getting tied down in shackles.]

He should forsake all ill-wills and animosities with everyone, and exercise the greatest of self-control over his sense organs. Having thus prepared himself properly and wisely, he should enter the next and final stage of life called the Sanyas Ashram. [This is a life of total renunciation of all involvement with this world. It entails complete detachment and severance of ties with the world.]

Having taken to this auspicious path of Sanyas, an aspirant should spend his precious time in self contemplation and meditating upon the Absolute Truth about the pure conscious eternal and imperishable 'self'. A person who leaves his mortal body while thus remaining engrossed in this constant contemplation and meditation is able to attain Mukti. That is, he obtains liberation and deliverance from the mortal gross body as well as from this entrapping and deluding world of transmigration permanently.

Verily, this is what this Upanishad affirms. This is its great teaching (2).

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 2

1. After that, once again sage Shaunak and others requested the divine sage Narad—'Oh Lord! Please tell us the full detail of what constitutes the concept of Sanyas (i.e. please elaborate on a life of total and exemplary renunciation and dispassion when one has no attachment for anything in this world).'

Sage Narad looked at them with affection and benevolence, and began his preaching—'Oh great sages! It would be proper to hear about Sanyas in a comprehensive way from Brahma, the great grandfather of creation.'

So the exalted sages waited for the completion of the sacrifice, and then they accompanied sage Narad to the divine abode of Brahma in the heaven. There, meditating upon the supreme Brahm (the Supreme Being) and remembering the eclectic glories of the Lord in their hearts, the congregation of sages bowed before Brahma the creator most reverentially and prayed. Pleased, Brahma requested them to be appropriately seated.

Sage Narad took the initiative and humbly submitted before Brahma—'Oh Brahma! You are the Guru (teacher, guide and advisor) as well as a father for all of us. You are omniscient and all-knowing; you are well-versed in all the Vidyas (composite body of knowledge) that exist in this creation. So be kind to reveal the secret of something which we are very eager to know. There is no one in this creation who is better qualified and more competent than you who can satisfy our quest.

If you are ready to show your benevolence and grace upon us then please first tell us about the truthful identity, form and nature of a Parivrajak (a spiritual aspirant who has taken the vows of Sanyas, and is very sincere and diligent about it) along with the ethics, codes of conduct and other laws and regulations that govern this form of exalted life.'

When Narad made this request, Brahma closed his eyes for two 'Gharis' (literally a period of 2 x 24 minutes = 48 minutes because 1 Ghari equals 24 minutes, but here implying 'for some time') and began meditating to search for an appropriate answer that can show the path or way which would help a creature to find liberation and deliverance from the uncountable miseries, pains and torments associated with

this mortal world of an endless cycle of birth and death, a world which traps a creature in its vice-like grip.

He replied—‘Oh Narad! In some ancient time, the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading cosmic form of the Supreme Being who is the most sublime, divine, enigmatic and exalted Lord of creation, who is honoured and adored by and paid obeisance to in the ‘Purush Sukta’ (which is hymn of the Veda dedicated to the Viraat Purush) as well as the Upanishads, had preached some divine knowledge to me at the beginning of creation. I shall now divulge or reveal that most sublime and divine secret knowledge before you all.

The identity, form, nature and way of life of a Parivrajak are most mysterious, exquisite and enigmatic, besides being unique, sublime and honourable. Listen about it with great attention. If a child is born in a high clan and is very obedient towards his parents, but has not undergone the formal investiture ceremony in which he is given the sacred thread and initiated (i.e. baptised) formally, then the first thing to do or the first step to implement is to formally initiate him by the ceremony of the sacred thread.

Then the boy should leave his parental home and go to reside with a wise and learned Guru (teacher) in the latter’s Ashram (hermitage). The teacher must be wise, erudite and competent besides having great faith in, devotion for and knowledge of the Vedic scriptures. The aspirant should humbly pray to the Guru and submit himself before him (or surrender himself to him in the search of true knowledge). [That is, the disciple should place his all-round well being and the future prospects of his life into the able hands of his Guru like one relies upon one’s parents.]

The disciple must strictly follow the tenets as prescribed for a Brahmachari (a celibate person who shows exemplary self-restraint over his sense organs) for the next twelve years while serving the Guru selflessly and faithfully as well as devoting his entire energy, time and attention in studying all the scriptures and gaining knowledge. [This is the first phase of life.]

At the end of this period and after having acquired all knowledge to the best of his ability (i.e. after having completed his education), he should take permission from his Guru and marry an appropriate girl. Thereafter he should live life as a householder for the next twenty-five years. During this phase of life he should follow tradition to produce sons to carry forward his family line. [This is the second phase of life.]

At the end of this period he should step on the next (third) phase of life as a Vaanprastha (which is the beginning of life of renunciation and detachment; refer Canto 1, verse no. 2). This phase should ideally last for the next twenty-five years. During this period he should take a purifying bath three times of the day—at dawn, noon and twilight hours, and eat once a day—before sunset. He is expected to forsake well-tread paths passing through villages and towns known to him, and instead roam incognito and go that way where no one can recognise him. He should roam alone in the forest. [Actually the word Vaanprastha means someone who heads for the forest. But it should not be taken too literally as it is not practical for a modern man to go to the forest. The intention is to go out of the house unrecognised and move alone freely in the country, visiting pilgrim sites and other holy places that help the middle-aged man to live a carefree life of no worries and encumbrances. This is a virtual vacation for him that helps to rejuvenate his soul and body.]

He should eat coarse meals prepared from whatever grain of rice he can pick up from un-cultivated fields. [Such rice is grown naturally near ponds or where the field is submerged in water.] He should abstain from all the charms of the visible

world of material sense objects as well as all forms of enchanting sounds (such as music, songs) or pleasing words (such as praises that stoke his ego).

Having fully observed all the ordained forty traditional obligatory purification rites, called the various ‘Sanskars’, during his life time, he should now calm down his Chitta (sub-conscious) and ensure its uniform purity and holiness. He should abandon all sorts of hopes, desires, aspirations and expectations as well as all forms of jealousy, malice, animosity and ill-will towards all. On the contrary, he should inculcate the four-fold noble virtues for his spiritual welfare, called the ‘Saadhan Chastusthaaya’. [There are said to be four Saadhans of Vedanta, and they are called the ‘Saadhan Chastusthaaya’. These four spiritual disciplines of Vedanta are the indispensable tools that help the aspirant to reach his spiritual objective and fully benefit from the teaching of Vedanta; without them it is not possible for one to truly understand or implement the teachings of Vedanta. These four Saadhans or means for obtaining success in Vedanta are the following—(i) ‘Vivek’ or having the power to discriminate between the right and the wrong; (ii) ‘Vairagya’ or having a high degree of renunciation; (iii) ‘Sham-dishtak’ or having a uniform view of things in this world leading to equanimity, peace, quietude and serenity; and (iv) ‘Mumukshu’ or having a strong desire for Moksha, which is final liberation and deliverance of the soul.]

When the aspirant has fulfilled these criterions, he finally becomes eligible to accept the vows of Sanyas (1).

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 3

1. The celestial sage Narad asked Brahma once again—‘Lord! Who can take the vows of Sanyas and what are the eligible criteria for it?’

Brahma answered in detail as follows—‘Let us first explain who is eligible for taking Sanyas, and then we shall throw light on the sanctified due process of doing so. Listen carefully.

The following persons are not eligible to take to the path of formal Sanyas inspite of their being detached from this world and having renounced it—an impotent person, a fallen or lowly person (who has not lived up to the standard of life expected of him as a Brahmachari (i.e. while he was a student) or as a Grihastha (i.e. while he was a householder), a physically deformed person or one who has some part of the body severed, a person who is excessively lustful, passionate or promiscuous, a person who is either deaf or dumb, a person who is still a child or very young, a person who is crooked, deceitful and an impostor, a person who indulges in evil conspiracies, is scheming and cunning, a person who is more interested in wearing external signs and robes (to show-off his religious inclinations in the hope of getting false praise and gathering admirers around him) rather than sincerely inculcating the sublime and noble virtues of Sanyas internally, a person who is still in the third phase of life as a Vaanprastha (as described in Canto 2), a person who is a devotee of Lord Shiva, a person who is a paid teacher and accepts money or other benefits for imparting knowledge, a person who suffers from leprosy or other congenital or contagious diseases, and a person who does not perform the fire sacrifice or does not worship the sacred fire. [Refer verse nos. 3-4 below; it’s almost a repetition of these restrictions.]

Even if they have adopted the path of Sanyas, they still are not eligible to accept the teaching of the Maha Vakyas or the great sayings of the Vedas.

Only those who had internally inculcated the sublime and grand virtues of Sanyas even while they were leading the earlier phases as a Brahmachari (a student in the hermitage of a teacher) or as a Grihastha (a householder) are indeed the ones who are actually eligible to accept the path of Sanyas. [The implication is obvious here. The eclectic and grand virtues of renunciation and detachment from this material world and its false and ensnaring charms are qualities that are cultivated internally, and mere external show of being a Sanyasi (a noun used for a person who has taken the stern vows of Sanyas or renunciation and detachment from anything related with this world) would lead a man nowhere. Rather, it would only ruin him and cause him ridicule and pain which he could have well avoided if he did not take the vows of Sanyas at all. So, it boils down to the fact that even while a man may lead a normal life in this world, going about his normal life in a routine manner, he may still be highly spiritually evolved and is as good as a full-fledged and honest Sanyasi when compared to another man who may have formally accepted the vows of Sanyas, even sport some external signs of being a Sanyasi, but his mind, his sub-conscious and his heart are entangled in the world which he pretends to leave behind, or he is overcome with some physical discomfort due to some kind of deformity of the body which prevents him from finding peace and the ability to meditate and contemplate. Such a man should better not take Sanyas at all, for not only is he cheating himself and the rest of the world but is also demeaning and insulting the august institution of Sanyas.] (1).

2. The scriptures assert that a person who is not afraid of anything (including death and any kind of harm) himself, nor causes fear or dread to others in any way whatsoever is indeed an honest and true Parivrajak (Sanyasi) (2).

3-4. None of the following categories of people are eligible to take the holy vows of Sanyas—a Shanda (an impotent person), a Vikala (a physically deformed person or one who has some part of the body severed), an Andha (a blind person), a Baalak (an immature child), a Paataki (an evil and sinful person), a Patit (a fallen or lowly person who has not lived up to the standard of life expected of him as a Brahmachari—i.e. while he was a student, or as a Grihastha—i.e. while he was a householder), a Pardwari (a person who is excessively lustful, passionate or promiscuous; a person who eyes other women), a Vaikhaanas (a sage or hermit, because such a person is deemed to be already a wise and enlightened person who has renounced the illusionary charms of the world and has sufficiently progressed on the path of spiritualism), a Har-dwij (a person who is a devotee of Lord Shiva, because such persons are again expected to have already renounced the false world), a Chakri (person who is deceitful and an impostor, a person who indulges in evil conspiracies, is scheming and cunning), a Lingi (a person who is more interested in wearing external signs and robes to show-off his religious inclinations in the hope of false praise and gathering admirers around him rather than sincerely inculcating the sublime and noble virtues of Sanyas internally), a Paakhandi (a person who is crooked, a hypocrite, pretentious and deceptive), a Shipivishto (a person who suffers from leprosy or some other congenital or contagious diseases), an Anagnik (a person who does not perform the fire sacrifice or does not worship the sacred fire), a Dwitivaaren (a person who has taken the vows of Sanyas for two or three times previously, but each time got distracted and abandoned its vows), and a Brhit-Adhyaapak (a person who is a paid teacher and accepts money or other benefits for imparting knowledge) (3-4).

5. [Narad asked—] ‘What is the appropriate time for taking the vows of (or being initiated as an) ‘Aatur Sanyas’?’ [The word ‘Aatur’ means one who is very eager, anxious and sincere in obtaining something. Therefore, ‘Aatur Sanyas’ refers to accepting the vows of Sanyas when the person is very eager to receive its divine benefits on an emergency basis when there is no time for long formalities, or when he can’t resist his internal urge to become a Sanyasi, i.e. a person who has accepted the vows of Sanyas, inspite of his not reaching the fourth phase of life when ordinarily one should take the vows of Sanyas. This would be clear in the following paragraphs.]

[Brahma replied—] ‘The most appropriate time for taking to ‘Aatur Sanyas’ is when the man is about to die. Aside of this, there is no other time which is proper for accepting Aatur Sanyas. In fact, if one takes Aatur Sanyas at the proper time (which can be any time in life when he has developed a profound degree of renunciation and enlightenment), then it can provide the aspirant or seeker with Mukti (liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) (5).

[Note—In the context of this verse, refer also to verse nos. 10, 12-13, and 70 below of this Canto.]

6. Even in such a situation (such as when death is near), a wise man should accept Aatur Sanyas with proper Mantras (i.e. he should utter the holy Mantras while being initiated as an Aatur Sanyasi; he must not rush through it) (6).

7. There is virtually no difference between the due diligent process of accepting Aatur Sanyas and normal Sanyas. All the Mantras are related to certain Karma or deed, and all the Karmas are empowered, energised and sanctified by relevant Mantras. [That is, if the Aatur Sanyas is to be made effective as an instrument for giving Mukti or liberation and deliverance, then it must be empowered and energised and authorised by relevant Mantra. To illustrate, if we wish to light a particular electric bulb then we must click on the correct switch.] (7).

8. In fact, no auspicious religious Karma (deed; action) would be effective and sanctified if it is not empowered and energised by the relevant Mantra. Hence, one should not be in a tearing hurry to accept Aatur Sanyas by overlooking the necessity for invoking of the relevant Mantra.

Any Karma done without invoking proper Mantra is equivalent to, and as worthless and ineffective as offering of oblations to a dead fire when it has already calmed down to form ash. [During fire sacrifices, offerings are made to the sacred fire while it is burning brilliantly, and not when it has run its course and cooled down to leave smouldering charcoal or reduced to an ash in the fire pit.] (8).

9. Oh sage! The formal process of accepting Aatur Sanyas is deemed to be complete if one follows the due process as prescribed in the scriptures even briefly. [This is a special concession meant to save time because, as is obvious, death is near at hand and there is no time for elaborate formalities.]

Hence, it is sufficient to repeat the necessary Mantras in order to accept Aatur Sanyas (instead of undergoing the rituals and other formalities ordained for all other types of Sanyas as would be detailed in this Upanishad later on) (9).

10. If a person, who has completed all the fire sacrifices required to be done by him as a householder, has gone to a foreign land and develops Vairagya (renunciation and

detachment) there, then he can take the vows of Sanyas by doing the rite of Prajapatya Ishthi¹ in any water body available and accept Sanyas there. [Refer verse no. 77 in this context.] (10).

[Note—¹The *Prajapatya Ishthi* is a special fire sacrifice offered to the creator Brahma and done with a specific desire, which in this case is the desire for obtaining Mukti and Moksha—liberation and deliverance as well as emancipation and salvation. Usually the word ‘Prajapatya’ refers to the sacrifice done by a householder with the desire of begetting a son, or for an increase in the healthy population of the territory under his domain as desired by kings and emperors. Refer verse no. 70.]

11. This Prajaptya sacrifice is either done mentally, or by pronouncing the relevant Mantras, or by following the detailed process as prescribed in the Vedas and involving elaborate rituals and fire sacrifice. [These options are given to the aspirant considering the fact that he is away from home and all the necessary facilities might not be available to him in a foreign land.]

A wise person should choose the option best suited to his present circumstances and follow the instructions diligently to take Sanyas, for otherwise he is falls from grace and is deemed to have violated the auspicious and sanctioned path (11).

[Note—The most important thing to note here is that the sacrifice can be done in a symbolic manner ‘mentally’. In other words, any fire sacrifice, or for that matter any endeavour, is successful only when the mind is committed to it and wholly interested in it. Otherwise, the mind would cause immense amount of distraction, and even if the physical body remains involved in doing the sacrifice, the desired fruit would not be obtained. Doing a fire sacrifice with the mind somewhere else is as good as not doing it at all. The word ‘sacrifice’ itself implies a great deal of commitment, total and honest dedication and faith, gladly undertaking sufferance and observing due diligence on the part of the aspirant in order to achieve success in some noble cause. This can happen only with the involvement of the mind. If the mind is not fully convinced on the utility of taking Sanyas, if it does not have faith and devotion in this path, if it is not fully committed to reaching the spiritual goal of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation come what may, if it is fickle and undecided—then obviously the man is bound to fail in Sanyas. This fact is asserted in the next verse.]

12. It is only when one develops sincere and steady dispassion and detachment from all objects of this material world, it is only when renunciation sprouts spontaneously in the inner self of an aspirant that he should desire to take the vows of Sanyas. Otherwise he would fall from the auspicious path, become disillusioned and disgraced (12).

[Note—If one decides to renounce the world in a fit of emotions such as upon the death of someone very dear to him or loss of some property, then such fleeting sense of renunciation would pass off with time and sooner or later the man would start yearning for his lost assets and comforts of the world to which he was so accustomed. Though it might happen that out of fear or dread of being castigated in society he might remain a Sanyasi outwardly by wearing ochre clothes, but his mind and heart would be attached to this world and the charms he left behind. He would be frustrated and constantly filled with regret at having taken Sanyas in the first place, and such a situation is obviously counter-productive for his spiritual well-being. He would fall an easy prey to temptations, and would be neither here nor there. On the one hand he would have missed out on the opportunity of fulfilling his obligations to the family and society, and on the other hand the very purpose and intent of taking Sanyas,

which is to find freedom from this world, would be defeated as his mind and heart would still be locked in them. Refer verse no. 77 of this Canto 3 also in this context.]

13. Only a person who has developed deep, sincere, steadfast and honest sense of renunciation and detachment should take the path of Sanyas. A person who has the slightest trace of attachments to this world and family should best avoid it, and instead live in the house.

A sinful and fallen Brahmin who accepts Sanyas inspite of having latent attractions for and attachments to this world and its material charms surely goes to hell. [That is, he suffers a lot and is punished for his deceit.] (13).

14. Only a Brahmin (or any other learned person) who has his tongue (i.e. taste and speech), the genital organs (i.e. sexual desires), the stomach (i.e. yearning for food) and limbs (i.e. hands and legs) under strict control, and one who has not married¹—only such a person is eligible to take Sanyas (14).

[Note—¹This restriction is practical in nature. A man with a wife and family has countless obligations to fulfill. It is not possible for him to renounce the world altogether, for even if he does so he would be going against the laws of Dharma which extol a man to lead a life fruitfully, honour all his obligations and fulfill all his commitments dutifully. Making his family members suffer by taking to Sanyas while they are not well provided for is a sin in itself, and Sanyas cannot be successful with any guilt heavy on one's mind.]

15. Those who are wise and erudite understand the futility of this delusory world of material sense objects which is hollow and without any pith. They desire to obtain the real essence and be acquainted with the truth of existence. Thus they accept Sanyas while still unmarried and take refuge in the eclectic way of life marked by exemplary renunciation and dispassion in order to reach their true goal in life (which is finding the 'truth' and liberation from the snare of falsehoods) (15).

16. Desire to do deeds and getting involved in them (and expecting results from doing such deeds) is a sign of one's natural attractions for the world and a desire to remain involved in it (because the material world necessitates the doing of deeds if one were to live in it), while having a natural and inborn virtue of wisdom and enlightenment (which tells the person of the falsehood of this world and the futility of pursuing it by getting involved in doing deeds in order to attain even a rudimentary form of success in this world, and instead inspires him to search for the real 'truth' and seek the path that would lead to his final liberation and deliverance from the vicious cycle of birth and death) is a sign of natural Sanyas (or natural renunciation, dispassion and detachment). [This is because when a man realises the falsehood of this material world and therefore the futility of pursuing it, when he understands that the pleasures and comforts that he gets from this world are temporary and transient by nature, when he realises that the true 'self' of his is not the gross body that remains involved in this world but the pure consciousness that has got nothing to do with this gross body or the equally gross world, and that true liberation and deliverance as well as true happiness and contentedness is to inculcate these virtues internally rather than searching for them in the external material world of sense objects—it is then that he develops sincere renunciation and detachment from all things worldly. When this happens, his commitment to Sanyas would be honest and true. Obviously then, he would be successful in the path of Sanyas.]

So a wise aspirant should aim at acquiring the highest level of Gyan (wisdom, erudition and enlightenment) if he wishes to enter the path of Sanyas (16).

17. [The following verse nos. 17-27 describe who is eligible to take the vows of Sanyas and become a Sanyasi—i.e. these verses outline the requirements needed by one one to successfully take to the auspicious Sanyas way of life, to be successful in keeping the stern vows of Sanyas, and to successfully attain one's spiritual objective for which one takes to the Sanyas way of life.]

When an aspirant has become realised and enlightened in a comprehensive manner about the fundamental essence of the eternal and truthful supreme transcendental Brahm, he should then abandon his Shikha (tuft of hair worn on the top of the head) and Yagyopavit (the sacred thread), and instead accept only one Danda (the ascetic's rod or sceptre or staff) (17).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 79, 80-82. The Shikha and the Yagyopavit are worn by all Hindus who have been formally baptised. But when one takes to Sanyas, he is expected to leave these signs of his earlier life and take up the ascetic's staff. This ascetic's staff/rod has great symbolic importance. For once, it is an indication of his superior authority over all others in the world just like a king is distinguished by his sceptre which is a sign of his authority, and a teacher holds his stick to indicate that he is in charge of his students whom he treats as his wards. Second, it is a constant reminder for him that he has renounced the world and has vowed to firmly hold on to one single 'truth' known as Brahm who accompanies him wherever he goes like his staff or rod that accompanies him everywhere. This helps him to be loyal to the path of Sanyas, and to Brahm whom he treats as the only Lord and the ultimate goal of his spiritual practices.]

18. Only those aspirants who have the greatest of faith and belief in as well as devotion for the supreme Lord, and have no interest or attractions for anything other than the Lord, and an aspirant who is free from all forms of desires (such as desire to have sons—called 'Putreshna', desire for wealth and prosperity—called 'Vitteshna', and desire for fame and enjoyment of the world—called 'Lokeshna')—only such persons are eligible to take Sanyas and become a Bhikshuk (someone who accepts food by begging; it is a term usually used for a Sanyasi, who is a person who has taken the vows of Sanyas, because he has to beg for his food) (18).

19. A person who feels the same sense of happiness and joy when beaten by a stick as enjoyed by ordinary people when they are praised and honoured—verily, only such a person is eligible to become a Bhikshuk (i.e. a Sanyasi who has to depend upon begging for his food) (19).

20. An aspirant who is firmly convinced that he is the eternal and imperishable supreme Brahm, who is also known by the name Vasudeo (which is one of the numerous names of Lord Vishnu), personified—verily, only such a man is eligible to become a Bhikshuk (20).

21. An aspirant who inherently has a preponderance of the eclectic noble virtues of Shanti (peacefulness and tranquillity), Sham (self control), Dam (suppression of evil tendencies), Shaucha (cleanliness and purity), Satya (truthfulness), Santosh (contentedness), Saraltaa (simplicity and humility), and Aparigraha (renunciation and giving away of superfluous wealth; non-accumulation), and who has no deceit and

cunning in his nature—verily, it is he who is eligible to enter ‘Kaivalya Ashram’. That is, he is eligible to take up the vows of Sanyas which is unique and the only one of its kind (‘Kaivalya’) path which leads to final liberation and deliverance of his soul. [Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 10-12.] (21).

[Note—The word Kaivalya means one of its only kind; matchless, unparalleled and unique. It also refers to the state of the mind when it is steady and undistracted. A person who has taken the path of Sanyas is expected to be exemplarily calm, serene, quiet, peaceful, rested and steady. He is to remain concentrated on one entity that is the Absolute Truth in creation, and this means that he focuses his attention on the pure consciousness that is his ‘truthful self’. He has only one aim left in life—and that is to seek this Truth and attain Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance) which is consequent to realisation of this Truth. Therefore, he should be steadfast and unfaltering on his path of Sanyas. In effect, he remains in a perpetual state of Samadhi, a state of existence marked by total detachment from this material world and all that is happening around the aspirant’s gross body. In fact, such a man is not even aware of his own body and what it does or how it suffers. This is tantamount to be meditative and contemplative on a permanent basis.]

22. A person who keeps no ill-feeling or harbours no evil thoughts for anyone, who does not speak or utter anything that harms others or cause them pain in any way, and who never does anything or takes any action with ulterior motives of causing harm to others in any form—verily, only such a man with purity of mind and thought is eligible to become a Bhikshuk (i.e. a Sanyasi) (22).

[Note—Refer Canto 5, verse no. 43, and Canto 6, verse no. 39.]

23. A person who has diligently followed in his life the traditional ten rules of auspicious and righteous living (as laid down in the Smritis and outlined in the next verse no. 24), who has attentively studied the Vedas in the proper way, who has observed the tenets of Brahmacharya (self-control and abstinence from all indulgences) painstakingly in his life, and who has freed himself from the three moral indebtedness or obligations (or has fulfilled his duty as required under these obligations)¹—verily, only such a man with purity of mind and thought is eligible to become a Bhikshuk (i.e. a Sanyasi) (23).

[Note—¹The three moral indebtedness or obligations of a man are the following—(i) the ‘Rishi-rin’ or moral indebtedness or obligations that he has towards senior sages and seers, and this includes the Guru who is the moral preceptor and guide, because in ancient times Vedas and other scriptures were usually taught only by them. This obligation is fulfilled by serving the sage selflessly, obeying him and studying hard to become a brilliant disciple who would carry forward the heritage of learning and knowledge that the concerned sage is so famed for to the next generation, being always submissive towards the sage and repaying him to the best of one’s ability, and taking care of the Guru in his old age; (ii) the ‘Dev-rin’ or moral indebtedness or obligations that one has towards Gods and deities which involves pleasing them with worship and offering of oblations by means of various religious rituals; and (iii) the ‘Pitri-rin’ or moral indebtedness or obligations that one has towards one’s ancestors, and it includes producing sons and bringing up a noble family which carries forward the honourable name and legacy of the ancestor and enhances his glory.]

24. The ten signs or markers or pillars of Dharma (righteousness, auspiciousness and nobility) are the following—Dhairya (patience, resilience and calmness of demeanours under adverse circumstances), Kshama (forgiveness), Daman (self control and suppression of natural instincts; restraint of the mind and the body),

Asteya (non-stealing), Pavitrata (purity of mind, body, thoughts and actions), Indriya Nigraha (control of all the sense organs of the body), Dhi (wisdom; proper, righteous and auspicious thoughts and intellect), Vidya (correct knowledge and its associated wisdom and erudition which helps one to judge and discriminate between the right and the wrong), Satya (truthfulness; non-deceitfulness and honesty), and Akrodh (non-anger; to have a tolerant, forbearing and compassionate temperament)—verily, these are the ten great tenets of Dharma. They act like indicators of whether a man has lived his life according to established principles of Dharma or not, and to what extent. (24).

[Note—Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 10-12 also.]

25. A person who never thinks of (recalls; broods over) the sufferings and pains or enjoyments and pleasures of the past, who never is concerned about them in the present (i.e. is not affected by present sufferings nor exults at pleasures), and is never bothered about them ever affecting him in any time to come in the future—verily, only such a man is eligible to live in the phase of life called the Kaivalya Ashram, i.e. he is fit to become a Sanyasi. [The term Kaivalya Ashram is explained in verse no. 21.] (25).

26. A person who gives no importance to and pays no heed to any of the units consisting his inner self called the Antahakaran¹, and similarly neglects all the external impulses originating from the world of material sense objects²—verily, only such a man is eligible to live in the phase of life called the Kaivalya Ashram, i.e. he is fit to become a Sanyasi (26).

[Note—¹The ingredients that affect the inner self of a person are the constituent parts of his Antahakaran. The Antahakaran with five dimensions or aspects is described in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6, and in Paingalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, and in Canto 2, verse no. 3—both of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The five components of Antahakaran are—(i) Mana (mind), (ii) Buddhi (intellect), (iii) Chitta (the faculty of concentration and memory; knowledge and consciousness), (iv) Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance), and (v) Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature) which decide the basic nature of a person and the way he would react to a given circumstance, the way he would deal, behave and interact with the world, the way he would interpret things, the way he thinks, the things that would appeal to him and the things he would abhor etc.—all depends upon the mental setup tinged with the fundamental character traits that are firmly ingrained in him.

Since the mind, intellect and the sub-conscious are involved in the definition of Antahakaran, it would follow that the following too would be included as the five components of Antahakaran—(i) Pramaan—knowledge that helps to establish the truth; (ii) Viparyaya—ignorance, delusions, illusions such as imagining a snake in a piece of rope; this is erroneous knowledge; (iii) Vikalp—alternatives; that knowledge which is acquired by hearing of it but may not present the correct picture, such as for example a wooden puppet—there seems an apparent difference between plain wood and the puppet, but they are basically the same and defined with the same word 'wood'; this knowledge is neither true nor false for to say that the puppet is different from an ordinary piece of wood because of its distinctive shape and value would be as much true as saying that it is plain wood; (iv) Nidra—meaning sleep; when a man remains oblivious of any truth just like anything gets hidden in darkness though it is very much there, that man is likened to a man sleeping soundly in spite of the goings on around him and therefore remaining unaware of them; and (v) Smriti—literally meaning memory; it refers to that knowledge which is based on experience

and witnessing so that it is etched in memory; such knowledge becomes robust and gets soundly established in mind with the passage of time.

²The body of a creature consists of five organs of perception and five organs of action which help him to receive the world and its inputs in the form of sensory perceptions, and then respond to them accordingly. The five organs with which he receives the sensory inputs from the world and which make the creature aware of the pleasures and sufferings of the world are the following—the eye which is concerned with the function of seeing, the ear which is concerned with the function of hearing, the nose which is concerned with the function of smelling, the tongue which is concerned with the function of tasting, and the skin which is concerned with the function of touching and feeling. These organs are the ones concerned with reception of the world.

The organs which help in response are the following—the hand which helps one to do various deeds and take actions besides receiving and taking anything on behalf of the ‘self’, the leg which takes the creature to his destination as determined by the mind, the mouth which makes him speak and express his desires, the genitals which satisfy his sexual urges, and the excretory which help to eliminate what has been taken in by the mouth in the form of food and drink.

It is vital for a Sanyasi to exercise exemplary control over them. This fact is also endorsed in verse no. 36 below. For instance, if he cannot control his eyes then this organ would prevail upon him and force him to see pleasant sights, and this in turn would silently incite his sub-conscious to long for the objects which present such a charming view. Now, if he forcefully suppresses his desires of obtaining access to the object which had earlier lured the eye then he would be obsessed by it mentally. This obsession with the world would foster frustration because the man would be torn between his desire to look at the charming object and make an effort to acquire it, and the desire to avoid looking at it as it might simply be not possible for him to access it or acquire it at all. This dilemma would consume his energy and time before he forgets about this object in due course of time. But meanwhile the damage has already been done as his peace and natural state of restfulness are severely compromised with. If he does not wisely inculcate the grand thought that this world and its objects have no substance in them and are useless vis-à-vis his spiritual welfare, his sub-conscious mind would be constantly nagging at him to glance surreptitiously at the object. Then he would be suppressing his desires instead of not having any desires at all. Say, how such a mind possessed with desires can ever give true peace to the aspirant?

The gravity of the situation is that there are five such organs of perception and five of action, and one can well imagine the situation of a man who is being pulled in different directions by them at the same time. It’s like a chariot being pulled in different directions by horses who cannot be controlled, or who have not been properly bridled and harnessed. Surely this situation would topple the carriage and gravely injure the passenger as well as the charioteer!]

27. Just like a dead body has no feeling of pain or happiness, a person who remains indifferent and aloof from such feelings while alive—verily, only such a man is eligible to live in the phase of life called the Kaivalya Ashram, i.e. he is fit to become a Sanyasi (27).

[Note—Refer Canto 4, verse no. 36.]

28. A Paramhans Sanyasi (one of the various categories of renunciates) is not supposed to possess more than two Kopins (the piece of cloth to cover the private parts), one Kantha (which is a roughly sewn coarse over-garment made of old, torn and padded pieces of clothes picked up at random), and one Danda (an ascetic’s staff or rod) (28).

29. If he violates this edict and gathers more objects then he is condemned to go to a great hell called 'Rairav', and has a low birth by being re-born in the lower rung of the creation as a bird or insect (29).

30. A Sanyasi (a noun used for a person who has taken the stern vows of Sanyas or renunciation and detachment from anything related with this world) should stitch an over-garment or shawl-like covering from tattered and worn out clothes to protect himself from cold and heat, but it should be clean. He should go out of populated areas of a village, and prefer to live in un-inhabited and secluded areas outside it. He should wear ochre clothes (30).

31. A Sanyasi should wear only one cloth or remain without it. [The one-piece cloth is wrapped around his body, and if he prefers to discard it then he should only wear the loin cloth. Refer Canto 4, verse no. 17, stanza no. 1.]

He should not have a fickle sight and instead maintain poise and concentration of mind. He should remain unconcerned with or distanced from any of the objects of the world which can be distracting for his calm mind and affect his concentration. [Refer verse no. 26.]

He should roam alone without any company. He should spend the four months of rest, called the 'Chaturmaas', in one place. [This is usually the rainy season as it's impractical to move in rains. This is the time which helps him to give rest to his body and rejuvenate it. Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 14-16.] (31).

32. A Sanyasi should completely discard any thoughts or memory of his relatives, sons and family as well as the Vedas and their branches, the various obligatory fire sacrifices, and even the sacred thread. [Refer also to Canto 4, verse no. 1, and Canto 5, verse no. 26. This edict is not meant to demean the Vedas or the fire sacrifice or the sacred thread at all, but this is a practical advice sanctioned by the Upanishads because a roaming mendicant is not expected to stay at one place so he can study the Vedas and perform fire sacrifices. Further, he is already advanced in age and so it is not practical for him to read and study any longer while on the move. Again, he has no need for them now that he has taken to the auspicious and spiritually uplifting path of Sanyas, as being enlightened about the basic tenets of the Vedas is a pre-requisite criterion for being initiated into this divine and holy path of Sanyas in the first place, and so any further reading of the scriptures would be not required as it would be superfluous. Doing of fire sacrifices is also not possible for him while roaming from place to place. Once he has accepted the Danda as a sign of his symbolic holding on to the Absolute Truth known as Brahm and having a firm grip on it, the sacred thread also becomes unnecessary, redundant and obsolete. Besides this, the sacred thread is merely a symbol to remind him that he has been baptised into the religious fold and therefore he must be very careful to diligently obey the laws of Dharma, i.e. the proper codes of conduct that are part and parcel of a righteous way of life expected of him. But once he has taken Sanyas, he does not need this external symbol to remind him of his moral duties and to act as a constant bridle on his mind because now it is deemed that the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, nobility and propriety are an integral part of his character and personality; they are ingrained in his inner-self. It is like a student who would heap books on his study table during his college days, but once he becomes a professional well-versed in his profession he would no longer need them in his day-to-day life.]

On the contrary, a Sanyasi should live and roam anonymously and incognito. [This is to ensure his privacy and avoiding undue attraction of attention and praise. This also prevents his erst-while disciples, relatives and friends from trailing him and creating unnecessary mental tension for him.] (32).

33. A Sanyasi should abandon such negative emotions and traits as having Kaam (lust and desires), Krodh (anger and vehemence), Lobh (greed, avarice), Moha (attractions and attachments), Ahankar (ego, false pride, vanity and their attendant arrogance and haughtiness) etc. (33).

34. A Sanyasi should be completely indifferent to all attachments and attractions for anything or anyone in this world, and instead he should treat a ball of earth as well as a piece of stone or gold equally, without distinguishing between them. [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 17, stanza no. 3.]

He should keep away from violence of all kinds (mental, physical, emotional; actual or implied), inculcate the noble virtues of equanimity and fortitude, and become absolutely neutral, dispassionate and detached (34).

35. A Sanyasi who is far from or free from the negative traits such as Dambha (deceit, conceit, falsehood and pretensions), Ahankar (ego, false pride etc.), Hinsa (violence), Paishunya (animal-like qualities, always criticising others) etc., and on the other hand is endowed with the auspicious virtues of wisdom, self-realisation and enlightenment is the one who is eligible to obtain Mukti or liberation and deliverance (35).

36. If the sense organs of the body get attracted and hooked to their respective objects in this world, it is certain that a man becomes corrupted and mired with bad traits (as he is tempted by the alluring charms of the objects of the sense organs in this world which are very ensnaring by nature, and once one falls into their trap they exert a vice-like grip on him and devour him mercilessly).

On the other hand if he can exercise control over them, it is natural that they would not be able to lead him astray, they would not have any influence upon him and his mind, and consequentially he can obtain success in his spiritual goal of obtaining Mukti or liberation and deliverance (36).

[Note—This concept has been explained earlier in verse no. 26 of this Canto above. The primary form of the creature is his Atma, the immaculate Consciousness. It is only when this Atma comes in contact with the tainted but most fascinating mirage-like charms of the world with which it comes in contact and becomes aware of through the various sense organs of perception such as the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin that it gets mired in corruptions and impure thoughts. Therefore, if the intermediary sense organs are removed from the field and stopped from interfering with the Atma's natural inclinations of seeking the good, the holy, the divine and the pure, it is obvious that the creature would be free from these taints and remain pure himself. This world and its illusive charms and temptations are like fetters that keep the creature shackled forever should he be careless enough to allow himself to be lured by them. It is just like the case of a fish that gets caught in the hook because it is tempted by the bait. It is also like the case of a free-flying bird which is trapped in the net of the bird-catcher because it cannot resist its urge to eat the grains spread to catch it.]

37. It is not possible to calm down or eliminate the innate desire to enjoy the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects of this material world as long one continues to do

so. On the other hand, they are further enhanced and stoked just like a fire into which butter is poured. [That is, so long as the creature continues to remain involved in the material world, it would be impossible for him to break free this fetter and become liberated. It is only when he determines firmly that he would shake off his burden represented by attachments for this material world and its sense objects that this burden is actually dispensed with. It needs a strong will and a firm determination besides full conviction that all desires have to be done away with if one is to find his true spiritual peace and bliss, if one is to find Mukti and Moksha—which means liberation and deliverance as well as emancipation and salvation respectively.] (37).

38. A person who is endowed with the glorious and eclectic virtue of having equanimity and evenness of mind, who treats everything and every situation with exemplary stoicism, neutrality, dispassion and an indifferent attitude, such as neither feeling happy and exulted on hearing praises and good words nor feeling sorrowful and pained at being insulted or upon hearing harsh words, who treats both tasty food as well as bland and tasteless food alike, who is unmoved by either the attractions of charming sights or the repulsive feeling of repugnant sights, and for whom both the pleasant sweet smells (such as those of fragrances and perfumes) and reprehensible odour and stinks (such as from decaying or rotten things) make no difference—verily, only such a man is regarded as one who has actually practiced exemplary self-control over his sense organs (38).

39. A person who is completely pure in the mind and thoughts, a person who is free from any of the impurities and corruptions that taint the mind and thought of ordinary people—verily, only such a man is able to get the reward of hearing the Vedas and Vedanta (Upanishads) (39).

40. A Brahmin (i.e. a learned and self-realised person) should treat praises and honours disdainfully as if they were poison, and accept criticism and harsh words as if they were nectar (40).

[Note—Refer Canto 5, verse no. 30.

This is intended first to inculcate and then to test continuously if the noble and auspicious virtues of indifference, neutrality, detachment, equanimity, self-control over the mind and thoughts, stoicism, non-anger, calmness of demeanours etc. expected of a Sanyasi as outlined in the previous verses are firmly established in the inner-being of the spiritual aspirant or not.]

41. A person who calmly and silently accepts being humiliated, insulted, rebuked or admonished, if he humbly and politely hears words without retaliating, and instead remains poised and serene all the while, it is then that he is able to maintain his true peace and tranquillity. Such a man is able to sleeping comfortably and soundly, or roaming around in this world fearlessly while awake. [He will have no burden on his conscience, and would neither fret nor fume at not being able to retort and pay his tormentor in the same coin by using harsh words or abusive language against him. He would not feel frustrated or have an inferior complex that he could not retaliate at being humiliated. So he would have a good night's sleep. Since he has not answered back even to his adversary, he would have no enemy, and so he will have no cause of fear from anyone.]

On the other hand, a person who uses harsh words ruins himself and destroys his own peace and tranquillity (41).

[Note—Anger is one's most dangerous enemy and it has a negative effect on the mind, behaviour and personality of the person. It gives him a bad name; it snatches the peace of the mind; it keeps the man unnerved for a very long time, keeps him agitated and restless, and prevents him from working normally and rationally. This situation stresses him out excessively and acts a drain on his nerves and his energy. On the other hand, a man who remains calm and does not indulge in verbal duals is able not only to maintain his own peace but even bring the bitter moment to an end quickly because the abuser would be fed up, lose steam and fall silent himself. The abuser would be ashamed at his own behaviour and impertinence. If an angry man is answered back his anger is further stoked, and this goes on aggravating the situation instead of quickly bringing it to an end. The abuser or the arrogant opponent of the Sanyasi will regret himself once the anger is over. He would be frustrated that his tantrums have had no affect on the Sanyasi, rather the latter's calmness would make the tormentor bury his face in self-guilt. Instead of provoking the Sanyasi, he himself feels provoked by the former's silence and smile. The tormentor's inner voice coming out from his Atma would take him to task, though he would not acknowledge it in public out of shame at his behaviour. He would feel dejected and defeated and worn-out by his own intemperate behaviour; the Sanyasi meanwhile would emerge all the more emotionally stronger as well as the winner.]

42. A wise aspirant on the path of Sanyas should diligently practice to tolerate, with great forbearance, equanimity, neutrality and poise, harsh and intemperate words uttered by others. He should not insult others under any circumstance, nor retort at or harbour any ill-will for their rude behaviour. He should never allow anger to taint his inner-being by being vengeful against or frustrated with his tormentors.

He should never have animosity or ill-will with others just for the sake of this mortal and perishable gross body being subjected to insult or humiliation. [This is because he knows well that this body is perishable, gross and worth of contempt nevertheless, and secondly that this body is not his 'true self' which is being subjected to ridicule. So, there is really no point at getting annoyed with someone who insults the body—for the offender is totally ignorant; he is surely not wise enough like the Sanyasi, and it is deemed to foolish to get angry with those who have no intellect worth the name in them. A wise Sanyasi understands the fact that 'he' is not being insulted as his truthful 'self' is pure consciousness that is an exalted entity that cannot be demeaned or humiliated at all, and what is being insulted is the gross body which is not his 'self'. So what is he to bother about? How does it matter to 'him' if someone casts aspersions on his mortal gross body in the misplaced notion that he is admonishing the Sanyasi himself?] (42).

43. A wise spiritual aspirant (i.e. a Sanyasi) should not be angry towards anyone, or harbour any feeling of revenge, retaliation or malice for someone who has been angry at him, has insulted him, or has used any harsh or uncouth language for him. He should never seek retribution; he should never be vengeful. On the other hand, he should use pleasant words for his abuser and tormentor. [Refer Canto 6, verse no. 5. The effect of this attitude would be that the abuser and tormentor would himself feel guilty and ashamed at his own impertinent, intemperate and uncivilised behaviour.]

The tongue that is associated with the seven doors of the body (the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and one mouth) should never be used to speak lies or falsehoods. [That is, one should never use the tongue to tell a lie in relation to what one knows. The knowledge comes from these sense organs—viz. the eyes helps one to see and have a visual knowledge of things, the ears makes him hear about them, the nose tells him how the thing smells, and the mouth helps to taste and eat things worth

eating. However, it is the tongue that expresses the way the world is perceived by these individual sense organs by ‘speaking about them’, for none of these organs can express their views in words. So when one uses the tongue to speak, he must be truthful and honest in what he says because he is merely a neutral messenger who is merely conveying the message of these sense organs. In other words, no personal interpretations or ideas should be allowed to interfere with what the tongue has to say about what the sense organs make out of this world. In essence it means that the wise man always speaks the truth no matter how bitter and uncomfortable it might be for others.] (43).

44. A person desirous of peace and happiness should concentrate his mind and heart on spiritual matters, and pull his attention away from worldly issues. He should remain calm and quiet; he should be unmoved and unruffled by any circumstance. He should not expect anything from anyone; he should abandon all desires, hopes and expectations. He should help himself (i.e. he should be independent and self-reliant) while roaming fearlessly and freely in this world (44).

45. A wise spiritual aspirant (i.e. a Sanyasi) should keep his sense organs under tight control. He should eliminate attachments or animosities. He should not harm or cause any sort of violence (mentally, physically and emotionally; actually or implied) to anyone.

By following these tenets a person is able to obtain Mukti (freedom from all fears, freedom from all fetters that tie the soul to the gross body as well as the equally gross world of material sense objects) (45).

46. [Verse nos. 46-51 outline the despicable nature of the creature’s gross body. Refer also to Canto 4, verse nos. 25-29 in this context.]

This body is a treasury of diseases, pains, sufferings of various sorts, and torments of all imaginable kinds. It has pillars represented by the bones, tying ropes representing the nerves, veins and arteries etc., it is plastered by using a mixture of blood and flesh, and it is enclosed in a shell of the skin. It is always full of urine and stool, and is therefore inherently stinking with a foul odour (46).

47. This body is a cause of perpetual anxiety and miseries arising from the fear or dread of old age and various diseases that afflict it.

Since the gross physical body is created by the union of the male sperm called the ‘Virya’ and the dark fluids called ‘Raja’ present in the female reproductive organs, it (the body of the creature) is named ‘Raja-swal’—i.e. an entity which is predominantly dark or gross in nature, or an entity which is inherently unclean, or an entity which has a preponderance of ‘Raja Guna’ in it which makes it inherently and naturally attracted towards the charms, pleasures and comforts of this material world and its sense objects.

This gross body is mortal and perishable; no one can say for certain when it would come to an abrupt end (47).

48. The body is occupied by the five Bhuts (i.e. the five primary elements of Nature such as earth, water, fire, air and sky). [In other words, this body is made up of entities which are inert, non-living and non-conscious themselves par-se, and therefore the body cannot be active, conscious or alive on its own. In fact, this body is

like any other normal dwelling such as a brick-and-concrete house in which a man lives. The resident of this body is the Atma which is pure consciousness and the truthful identity of the man/creature having this body.]

Hence, one should not have an attachment with this body (and use it merely as a temporary habitat for the Atma till the time it finds its liberation and deliverance after having fulfilled all its obligations).

If a man is stupid enough to love this body made up of blood, fluids, flesh, marrow, bones, urine, stool and a network of nerves and blood vessels, then surely he would also love the greatest of hells (because this body is as miserable and tormenting to the Atma is an actual hell) (48).

49. To have a sense of ego, pride and possessiveness vis-à-vis the body is the cause that takes a man to the hell called Kaal-sutra. [The word 'Kaal' means death or destiny, and 'Sutra' means a string, a formula or a principal cause. Therefore, to be attached with the body would act as a string that would prevent the soul from finding its final liberation and deliverance, for the soul would be attached with the body like a kite is to a string. Attachments with or attractions for the body is the cause that forces the Atma to remain trapped in its snare, and, through it, with the world. This is because the body lives in the world with which it is closely associated as they share common grossness and are needed for each other. The world has significance only till the time there are living beings doing various things in this world, for no one would be interested in a world with dead creatures. The body has significance because it is the medium by which the creature interacts with the world and enjoys its material sense objects. They have a symbiotic relationship. Since the body is inherently decayable and the world also has a limited life-span—this is because both have a certain time of their births, and anything that is born must come to an end, they are very different from the Atma which is an imperishable and eternal entity that is never born and therefore never dies. The Atma takes a new birth because it is deluded and falsely attracted to this body and the world. It is its desire to enjoy the world that it needs the body. Once the desire for the world is done away with, the need for the body would also vanish. Earlier, verse nos. 34, 36-37 also stress this point. When the Atma forces upon its self the need to take a birth, it enters a body and consequentially goes through a hell of its own making. So, what is the way out, how can the Atma get freedom from the endless cycle of birth and death, and the constant fear of sufferings associated with them? Obviously, it is by detaching and distancing itself from the gross, perishable and despicable body.]

Similarly, this attachment with and longing for the body is the cause of a man going to the hell called 'Kaal-vichi' as well as to the hell called 'Asipatra-van' which is like a dense forest with cobweb-like undergrowth of entangled creepers etc. which trap the soul for eternity and prevents its freedom (49).

50. To have a sense of ego and pride vis-à-vis the body is as reprehensible and condemnable as eating dog-meat. So a wise man should make an all-out effort to forsake it and completely eliminate such ill-conceived and ill-fated notions. [That is, one should not be boastful of the body. One should not have any sense of ego vis-à-vis the body. One should not be proud about the body's beauty, strength and abilities. Like the body, they too are transient and perishable.] (50).

51. An aspirant desirous of his own spiritual welfare must ensure that this sense of ego and pride pertaining to the body does not even touch (i.e. affect or influence) his

mind under any circumstance, even if everything is ruined as a result of this humble attitude. [For instance, a truly realised man would have no hesitation at remaining calm when his adversary abuses him or insults him or taunts him. He would also not retaliate if he is beaten—refer verse no. 19. He would willingly and cheerfully serve others without bothering for his exalted position in society. All these behaviours might make him appear ridiculous, inferior or menally retarded in the eyes of ordinary people who have a sense of false pride, vanity and chauvinism, but actually he has risen above these narrow-minded considerations, and instead has attained a high stature and maturity as a highly self-realised, wise and enlightened person.]

He should see only auspicious virtues in people and treat such virtues as personifications of his dear ones with whom he wishes to have contact or relationship, and on the other hand see inauspicious and evil qualities as personifications of those with whom he does not wish to have any contact or relationship.

Such an aspirant is able to attain the truthful and eternal Brahman with the help of Dhyana Yoga—or he is able to reach his spiritual destination with the aid of proper thinking and proper means. He remains calm and poised, and by keeping good company he inculcates nobler virtues which would provide the required impetus for his spiritual and mental well-being and upliftment in the long run.] (51).

52. By following these grand tenets, a wise Sanyasi is able to gradually overcome, in due course of time, all his worldly attractions and attachments, and ultimately reach the supreme goal of Brahman-realisation (52).

53. An aspirant desirous of attaining success in his spiritual quest should always roam freely and humbly, without having any pretensions or encumbrances (because they would act as a spiritual drag for him and shackle him down).

A Sanyasi does not feel jealous when he sees others who have attained success and possess some kind of Siddhis (mystical powers). He does not abandon his own chosen path of total neutrality, detachment and renunciation just to compete with the other person out of jealousy and because he feels inferior to him for not possessing certain Siddhis. In fact, such resolute pursuit of his own path of Sanyas does give him Siddhis as well. [This Siddhi, or attainment and achievement, is of a high spiritual denomination as it provides the Sanyasi direct access to the eternal fount of blessedness and blissfulness which the other ordinary mystical powers that bestow the practitioner with magical abilities that are more of a worldly nature cannot provide.] (53).

54. To have a scooped-out pot (made from wood or coconut shell) for drinking water, to take rest under the shade of a tree very close to the base of its trunk, to use tattered pieces of cloth to cover the body, to have a habit of living alone and avoiding company, and to treat all living beings equally—verily, all these are the signs of an aspirant who is deemed to have attained Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance (54).

55. A Sanyasi should be helpful to all and think about the good and welfare of all creatures; he should be a well-wisher of all living beings.

He should always remain calm and poised. He should constantly carry the ascetic's staff called the Tridand as well as the water-pot called the Kamandalu with him.

He should constantly and consistently remain engrossed and submerged in the thoughts of the pure consciousness known as the Atma; he should be perpetually in a state of meditation and contemplation, concentrating upon the Atma to the exclusion of all other things. [Refer Canto 6, verse no. 40.]

He should roam about alone, and enter a village (or populated areas) only when he has to beg for food (55).

56. In the scriptures, only a person who always remains alone and also goes out alone for begging for food (i.e. he never keeps company and never begs with a group of other mendicants) is called a true Bikshuk (i.e. a person who sustains himself by begging for food). This is because a company of even one person is regarded as deemed 'Mithun', or having an intercourse (relationship; interaction) with another person. Company of another person forms 'a couple', and in such a situation inter-relationships of some sort are bound to precipitate. This situation creates a chain of consequences which are detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the Sanyasi.

A company of more than two people, such as a group of three persons, would be like a miniature village, while a group of more than three persons would be symbolically like a small town. [So it is best avoided by a Sanyasi. Therefore, he must always remain alone. Refer also to Canto 4, verse nos. 14-16, 19, and to Canto 7, verse no. 1] (56).

57-58. A wise and erudite Sanyasi should therefore not give another person a chance to come near him so that a situation similar to having Mithun (intercourse), being in a village or a small town does not arise. If he allows himself to fall into this trap of having a company of one or the other kind then he would have fallen from his chosen path and violated the rules of Dharma as applicable to a Sanyasi.

When more than one person assembles at a place, it is natural that there would be gossip, some kind of idle talk or some discussion on a variety of subjects. There would be discussion about the king or rich people, and other topics such as where and what type of alms and charities are available. Such talks would lead to either agreements or disagreements, creating in their wake likings, attractions or attachments for certain things or people on the one hand, and repulsions and dislike for others on the other hand. Dissensions, back-biting and finding fault with others, or undue praises and bias for someone else, would crop in unnoticed. These things are unavoidable when people have nothing worth to talk about; it is a part of human nature. There is no doubt about it (57-58).

59. That is why the scriptures have ordained that the Sanyasi should always stay alone without having any kind of attachments or links with anybody or anything else. He should not talk with others unnecessarily. If someone talks with him or bows before him to show respect, then he must respond with the words 'Narayan'¹ (59).

[Note—¹*Narayan* is one of the divine names of Lord Vishnu, the senior-most of all the Gods and regarded as a personification of the supreme transcendental Brahm himself. The use of this word in daily life is just like we say 'hello' in English—that is, the word 'Narayan' is employed as a means of respectful address for someone; it's a word of greeting. It is also used to acknowledge someone's else's greetings. From the metaphysical perspective this word indicates that the person using it is highly enlightened and wise because he knows that the Supreme Being known by the name of Narayan is present before him in the person of the man standing in front. He is not addressing the physical gross body of the man, but the Atma resident inside this body, the Atma which is a personification of Brahm, the Supreme Being. In fact, the man

using the term 'Narayan' to reply someone is actually addressing the Lord in the physical form of the other person, and not the gross body of the person as is recognised by the world to be the identity of the concerned person. In the present context, the use of 'Narayan' shows that the Sanyasi sees Lord Vishnu everywhere, in each living being. So he replies to the greeting, or acknowledges the greeting, just because he knows that the Lord himself is calling out to him, and not replying would be tantamount to causing insult to the supreme Lord. Otherwise he would have preferred to remain silent. This observation would be in consonance with the edict that a Sanyasi is expected not to have any company, and avoid talking with anyone whatsoever. Here, he is not responding to some mortal man, but to the Lord himself in a personified form.]

60. A Sanyasi should live alone in a secluded and an un-inhabited place, and always remain submerged in meditating upon only one divine entity known as Brahm. He should concentrate upon Brahm and devote all the efforts of his mind, speech, body and actions or deeds in this direction to the exclusion of all other things. [That is, he should think of nothing else other than Brahm, and devote all his energy and time in meditating and contemplating upon Brahm. He must speak only about Brahm; he must talk only about Brahm and nothing else. He must think of Brahm, and nothing but Brahm. He must devote all the actions of his body in serving the Lord and endeavouring to reach his spiritual goal without getting deflected from it even for a moment.]

He should never adore life or long to live, nor should he ever fear or dread of death or loathe it (60).

61. He should patiently and stoically wait for the time when death comes naturally. A Sanyasi is not expected to either long for a long life or die before due time¹.

He should be like a paid employee of a Lord who waits quietly for instructions of his master before doing anything—i.e. a Sanyasi should wait patiently for the time when his Lord decides that he must leave his mortal body and find eternal freedom (61).

[Note—¹A wise person is one who understands and interprets the advice given in the scriptures correctly and with proper wisdom. This stanza means that he should not find an excuse for avoiding Sanyas because of its harsh conditions, as they would speed up the decay of the body and cause death sooner than it would normally have been due—because 'dying before its due' is not the correct thing to do. 'Not longing for a long life' also does not mean that he can commit suicide, or willingly cause harm to the body so as to cut short his life-span. Not dying before its due implies that he avoids undue suffering to the body, eats properly and generally takes good care of its physical health. This does not mean pampering the body—for 'not longing for a long life' takes care of this, but it means avoiding a harsh treatment to the body which it cannot tolerate—for this would comply with the requirement of 'not dying before its due'. It ought to be noted here that on the one hand this Upanishad derides the body and says that it is worthy of contempt, and on the other hand it advises its proper upkeep.

Well, it must not be forgotten that this body is the abode of the holy Atma which is a personification of the supreme Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. This body is like a shrine for this Atma representing the Supreme Being. Hence, like the shrine, it must also be properly taken care of. Otherwise, it would be tantamount to desecration of the shrine which houses the deity known as the Atma. But this does not mean that one should be indulgent in the gross physical body, and forget that it is worth only because of the resident Atma in it. So, both things go hand-in-hand. One should respect the body as it is the abode of the Atma, but, at the same time, be wary of its

gross and entrapping nature that prevents this same Atma from finding its freedom. A delicate balance is to be struck between the two by a wise, erudite and enlightened Sanyasi.]

62. [Verse nos. 62-68 outlines the qualities that make a man eligible to take Sanyas.]

A mendicant who lives like a person who has no taste for delicious food (i.e. whose tongue has lost its sense of taste due to some reason such as upon catching cold or some other diseases of the stomach), a person who is impotent, a person who is physically handicapped such as being lame, a person who is blind and deaf, and a person who seems so stupid that he remains in a constant state of stupor, a seemingly dull-witted man with a very low intelligent quotient so much so that he does not appear to know even the basic things of life and what happens around him—verily, only a Sanyasi who has these six eclectic virtues is eligible to obtain Mukti (or liberation and deliverance, salvation and emancipation) (62).

[Note—Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 21 and 35 also. This attitude and behaviour is willingly adopted by him as a means to avoid company and lead a life of solitude. He wishes to remain aloof from all attractions of the world and the body, hence has developed a natural sense of neutrality towards them which is interpreted by others, who are not aware of his evolved spiritual stature and high level of enlightenment, as his physical deformity or intellectual shortcoming. Actually it is not so. He is very wise instead of being a fool as he pretends to be.]

63. A Sanyasi who accepts food without paying attention to its appetising taste or its blandness¹, and one who speaks prudently, pleasantly and truthfully words of wisdom and good advice without favour or fear²—such a wise, erudite and enlightened Sanyasi is one who is symbolically regarded as being indifferent to taste¹ and as the one who has controlled his tongue² (63).

[Note—¹Anyone who does not have control over his taste buds would find it too difficult to eat food that is not tasty. Such a man is a serf of his organ of taste, and therefore he can't claim to have practiced full control over his sense organs. Desire for tasty food would compel him to compromise on the principles of Sanyas in as much as he would prefer to accept food from those households which offer him food of his liking. His mind would be pre-occupied with searching for tasty food. Such a person is deemed to be serf of his sense organs. Besides this, it is also a practical advice given for a wandering Sanyasi. It is expected of him that he accepts food from a new household every day, and not visiting any one house twice. It is obvious that no two households would offer the same type of food. Therefore it is essential for him to exercise self-control over the taste buds. This also ensures that no one can entice him with the offer of good and tasty food, and this frees him from falling prey to any bonds and personal relations.

²Speaking the truth always is a hard thing to observe in a world accustomed to hearing things which it wants to hear. It is a form of Tapa or observation of severe penance and vow to always to speak the truth even under duress and the risk of personal harm. Often such plain speaking makes a man unwanted in and unacceptable by the society. But it is also mentioned in this stanza that he gives good advice and speaks pleasantly. Of course, anyone who gives good advice and speaks affably is welcome and endeared by others. But of course his advice should be honest and neutral, without any bias and favour for one, or against another.]

64. A Sanyasi who treats a new-born girl child, a young woman of sixteen years of age, and an aged woman who is nearly a hundred years old as being alike, without having any sense of either attraction or aversion for them, without liking one and

disliking the other—such a wise Sanyasi is one who is symbolically likened to an impotent man. [As is obvious here, he is completely dispassionate, has overcome the natural instinct of a man to be attracted towards a young woman, and has inculcated the noble virtue of exemplary equanimity and non-distinction. Refer also to Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.] (64).

65. A Sanyasi who goes out only to beg for food, who goes out only to attend to the calls of Nature such as to evacuate his urinary bladder or his stools, and who does not venture out for more than one Yojan (i.e. for not more than 8 miles) during his begging rounds—such a wise Sanyasi is one who is symbolically likened to the man who is lame and physically handicapped. [He spends the rest of his time and energy peacefully in meditation and contemplation. He does not aimlessly waste his time wandering here and there.] (65).

66. A Sanyasi who sees not further than a distance of four Yugs (i.e. a distance of not more than roughly ten feet), either when sitting or when standing—such a wise Sanyasi is one who is symbolically likened to the man who is blind (66).

[Note—In effect this means that he does not allow his eyes to wander around in the world. This helps him to prevent the mind from being distracted by so many sights of the world, both the pleasant as well as the unpleasant. While the pleasant sights might charm his mind to such an extent that he forgets that he is to remain un-involved in the delusory world and its temptations and instead spend his time on matters of the Spirit and his spiritual well-being, doing meditation and contemplation, the unpleasant sights would irritate him and snatch his peace of mind. Both interfere in his calm demeanours and observance of the principles of strict neutrality, equanimity and dispassion. His mind gets involved directly or indirectly. So, it is important for him to turn a 'blind eye' to every kind of distraction.

His not seeing more than a distance of ten feet is simply a figure of speech to emphasise the need to observe strict control over the tendency of the mind to see and observe things in this material world, and then allow itself to get involved in the sights it sees, to think over them and get hooked to them inspite of it being taught continuously and repeatedly by the scriptures that this world is like a mirage seen in a desert, that it has no substance and pith in it, that it is as delusory as the colourful sky seen at sunset after the monsoon rains, and that it is like a bird-catcher's trap for the creature.

It ought to be noted here that it is possible for a man to exercise control over all the rest of the five organs of perception, such as the nose which smells, the skin that touches, the tongue which tastes, and the ears that hears, because none of them have as long a reach as the eye. We can see things far away in the atmosphere of the earth and even in the far depths of the universe by using binoculars and telescope, but of course we can't touch them, hear them, smell them and taste them. It is the eye that enables the man to learn things from far and wide, it is the eye with which he closely and directly observe the world. If the eye is shut, the world is as good as dead. That is why we have the phrase 'turn a blind eye' inspite of being aware of anything or any development—which means to neglect it willingly. So, it becomes very easy for the Sanyasi to neglect the world and keep himself aloof from its temptations if he should be able to control his eyes.

In the context of the previous verse no. 64 this verse becomes all the more clear. One can distinguish between a girl, a young lady or an old woman only when one sees them, and the negative tendency of getting passionate towards a voluptuous woman is also directly related to the eye.

Not seeing more than ten feet is also a metaphoric way of saying that a Sanyasi should not overly worry about the future, and instead concentrate his attention on the

present. He should remain withdrawn from the world like a tortoise ensconced in its shell. So when a Sanyasi does not allow his mind to wander into the sights of the world, he is able to maintain his peace and serenity.

Refer also to Canto 4, verse no. 18.]

67. A Sanyasi who pays no attention to, or bothers to hear, any word pertaining to his personal welfare or harm, and similarly has no ear for words describing sufferings or happiness of any kind in this world—such a wise Sanyasi is one who is symbolically likened to the man who is deaf (67).

[Note—This is a step ahead in the process of attaining tranquillity and calmness of the mind that non-seeing and non-tasting, as described in verse nos. 66 and 63, have already initiated. Previously, verse nos. 40-43 have already stressed the need to remain stoic and not to retort in spite of the gravest of insults and provocation from adversaries. This can only happen when one turns a ‘deaf ear’ to them.

Verse nos. 43-45 sum-up the need to exercise control over the body and its sense organs in order to attain success in any spiritual endeavours by the aspirant.]

68. A Sanyasi who is not attracted towards any of the sense objects of the material world and remains indifferent to all of them is like a sleeping man in spite of him being near to such temptations, his body being able to acquire them, and his organs being healthy and potent enough to enjoy them if he so wishes—such a wise Sanyasi is one who is symbolically likened to the man who is very innocent, naïve and like if he was in a state of stupor (68).

[Note—This is again a step forward in the path of Sanyas. Refer also to verse no. 62 above. He is actually a man who has attained the exalted stature of Turiya, which is the fourth state of consciousness and is equivalent to attaining Samadhi. Such a man would appear to be doing something externally, but internally he is aloof and detached from everything so much so that his mind is virtually asleep—for his mind does not perceive any sensory perceptions originating from this material world, nor does it respond to them like a sleeping man.

This state of being like a sleeping man indicates that his external gross body and its sense organs have been completely brought under control. This ensures that the mind is left to meditate and contemplate without any disturbances.]

69. A Sanyasi should not even glance at the following six entities—his relatives and compatriots of earlier life when he was a householder, performances by dancers, actors and acrobats etc., gambling and other lowly means of passing time, a young woman, delicious eatables, and a menstruating woman (69).

70. A Sanyasi should never have animosity, ill-will or malice towards others (Dwesh), nor should he have attachments or endearments towards or show favour to his kith and kin (Raag). [That is, he should practice exemplary neutrality, dispassion, detachment, equanimity and fortitude.]

He should keep a safe distance from such faults as Moha (attractions, attachments and longings), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy), Maya (delusions, attachments to illusionary charms of this material world), and Raag-Dwesh (having endearment and attachment or animosity and ill-will respectively for and against anyone).

He must not let such emotions and thoughts ever taint his mind and intellect (70).

71. For a Sanyasi the following six faults are like grave sins, and therefore he should avoid them at all costs—to occupy a dais or a high seat (i.e. to accept honour and praise, or even otherwise to sit on a high pedestal of respect, because that stokes his ego and the false sense of pride and superiority complex), to wear or accept white clothes (i.e. to accept any ceremonial garment as it gives him some special status that would attract attention of the society and give him some sort of honour and prestige which he is expected to avoid), to indulge in talks or gossiping about women (because that is tantamount to mental intercourse), to yearn for pleasure and comforts of the sense organs (such as the desire to see pleasant sights, hear sweet words or melodious music, eat tasty food, to touch things that titillate, smell sweet fragrances, to grab beautiful things with the hand, to go to pleasant places, to eat delicacies with the mouth, and to enjoy sex with the genital organs, because all of them mean indulgences and self-gratification), to sleep during the day (as it makes him lazy and indolent; he would be wasting precious time that he is expected to spend on meditation and contemplation), and to ride a carriage to move from one place to another (as he is expected to move on foot, because riding a vehicle is tantamount to giving comfort to the legs and pampering the body) (71).

72. It is advisable for a Sanyasi desirous of self realisation and meditation upon the Atma (the pure consciousness) that he does not go to far away places. Instead, he should spend his time and energy on concentrating on the study of the Upanishads which give him the knowledge that would help him find spiritual peace as well as liberation and deliverance from this world for which he has taken to Sanyas in the first place (72).

73. It is not advisable for a Sanyasi to spend an extended period of time in a pilgrim place¹, or observe excessive and prolonged fasting². He should also not develop the habit of too much reading and teaching of the too many and too varied scriptures (i.e. scriptures other than the Upanishads)³. He should abstain from giving lectures or discourses in assemblies and congregations⁴.

He should not behave in a sinful, pervert or wicked manner in a general way (73).

[Note—¹All the restrictions and prohibitions imposed on a Sanyasi are meant for his spiritual welfare and general well-being, and not intended to impose unnecessary hardship on him or torture him or punish him. It is incredulous to even think in these terms. To be frank and honest, pilgrim places are riddled and infested with corruptions, pretensions, deceit and falsehood, along with commercialisation of religion and its holy practices, reducing them to nothing but farce. They are more vexing and entangling for the Spirit than providing it with spiritual liberation and deliverance. A wise Sanyasi is advised to avoid living for a long time in these places because there are great chances of his being trapped in the temptations of easy life where food is easily available and other creature comforts are also as easily available. There are huge crowds, countless rituals, meaningless discussions and debates, and numerous other distractions for the mind which a Sanyasi is expected to shun.

If he stays long in a pilgrim place, all the negativity of these places are bound to have an impact on his psyche and influence his sub-conscious which would lose its pristine innocence and spiritual beauty to become mired with the same corruptions that have eclipsed others who are not fortunate enough to have had the same level of wisdom and enlightenment that had inspired the Sanyasi to take the vows of Sanyas in the beginning.

Verse nos. 56-60 of the present Canto 3, and verse nos. 14-16 of Canto 4 also say that company of all kinds is to be avoided by the Sanyasi under all circumstance, and

staying in a pilgrim place would go against this edict. Such prolonged stay would be no different from staying in one's own village or house. Verse nos. 61-69 of the present Canto 3 are also very relevant here.

²Verse no. 61 of this Canto 3 asserts that he must not do anything that can be construed as causing the body pre-mature death. Prolonged fasting causes the body to become weak and susceptible to diseases. It also creates an yearning for tasty food, something he should also avoid—there are umpteen numbers of verses to highlight this fact, viz. Canto 3, verse nos. 14, 38, 62-63, 90, 92, and Canto 4, verse no. 30 amongst others.

³In old age, eye sight becomes weak. A Sanyasi must not carry possessions, so he cannot carry voluminous scriptures. He is expected to be roaming, so he cannot sit down to read and study scriptures. He is not expected to stay at one given place, avoid company and discussions, which again precludes his living at a place near libraries, or attending discourses and discussing metaphysical principles with others. Besides these compulsions and restrictions, he is already advanced in age and therefore has very little time and energy left to pore over scriptural texts—this he must have already done in his younger days as a Brahmachari when he had studied the scriptures under the guidance of a Guru (a teacher). In fact, now is the time for him to meditate and contemplate more than doing anything else.

It ought to be noted in this context that verse no. 72 allows him to study the Upanishads, but the present verse no. 73 talks about him not reading too much and too many scriptures. The reason is that while the Upanishads talk in unison about one and only one Truth that would be easy to follow, and create no confusion, perplexity, doubt, schism or dichotomy in the mind of the Sanyasi, which in its turn make it easy for him to follow their tenets in leading a spiritual life and tread on a single path to his final emancipation and salvation, reading of many and varied scriptures, discussing them and trying to search the Truth by delving in their voluminous texts would be like searching a hair in a hay-stack. Such endeavours only lead to confusions and perplexities instead of removing them. A man has taken to the path of Sanyas not to become a scholar, something he had intended to do when he had studied the scriptures early on in life as a Brahmachari student under the guidance of a teacher, but to find the ultimate peace and rest for his soul. He also has very limited time at his disposal to fritter it away in debates and discussions or reading varied many scriptures.

Therefore, it is most prudent and wise for him to shun many scriptures and concentrate his time and energy in self-study of the Upanishads. Since his aim as a Sanyasi is to find final Mukti and Moksha, which means final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, in the least possible time and by the easiest method, he should desist from such situations that would cause doubts and confusions, such as by reading or studying so many scriptural literatures. On the other hand, Upanishads are to the point and brief, they teach him the truthful path in precise and succinct manner.

Further, in old age he deserves physical and mental rest which also necessitates his abstaining from spending time on reading and studying voluminous treatises of diverse nature, content, philosophy and path. The extent of the variation of the scriptures is got when one reads the Sita Upanishad, verse nos. 21-31 which lists the scriptures that evolved from one single primary body of knowledge. This Upanishad is Chapter 9 of the current volume. Besides them, there are the eighteen Purans and an equal number of sub-Purans, and the Itihasas (Hindu mythological histories). Even a cursory glance would show that it is impossible for someone to read them fully in the limited time available to him during one lifetime. That is why only the study of the Upanishads is prescribed and lauded as the only scripture that are of any real value and importance for a spiritual aspirant.

So we find that though on the face of it there appears to be a contradiction in what verse nos. 72 and 73 say, but actually it is not so. Their intention is clear if we read into these verses intelligently and with wisdom. If a Sanyasi is able bodied and

has the inclination to read and study, if he stays in a monastery where the facility for reading books and self-study is available, then he is welcome to do so. It is after all a good thing to study and deduce things for one's own self. It is a good way to spend time instead of, say, idle it away in gossip or just plain lazing in the sun. But of course this good fortune to be able to study the scriptures is not easily available to all the Sanyasis as more often than not they may be illiterate or not able to understand the hidden meaning of these highly esoteric texts of metaphysical philosophy, because in the latter case it would be counter-productive as wrong interpretation may be more harmful than not reading the scriptures at all. Then there are the many circumstantial compulsions which are an integral part of a Sanyasi's life—such as for example the lack of basic facilities, old age, the need to beg for food, the requirement that he should be on the move, that he should not carry any possessions except the ascetic's rod, a water-pot, a body-wrapping garment etc. How can one expect someone to devote his mind and energy to study scriptures in these situations?

The idea is that even if a Sanyasi is not able to study the scriptures though he had eagerly wished to do so earlier—because while he was younger and in the earlier phase of life as a householder, he had postponed such study, due to his busy life, for the time when he would become a Sanyasi and had hoped that then he would be freed from his obligations and responsibilities to find time to devote to the study of the scriptures, but as it turned out eventually, he finds this option of study impractical and impossible due to harsh realities—he must not lament or feel remorseful or regret at his inability to study the scriptures. He must not feel guilty that he has missed on some sacrosanct requirement for attaining spiritual enlightenment, liberation and deliverance just because he missed reading and studying the scriptures. He must understand that the essence of the scriptures is very simple, and it comes to him when he becomes privy to the quintessence of these scriptures in the form of the study of the Upanishads which has been specifically prescribed in verse no. 72. The study of the Upanishads would tell him that the essential teaching of all the scriptures is to become self-realised and aware of the Atma residing in his body, that this Atma is the pure consciousness and his truthful 'self', that this Atma is eternal and imperishable, that nothing in this world is true except this Atma, that Mukti or liberation and deliverance is when one understands the 'truth' and frees himself from the fetters of ignorance and its accompanying delusions, and so on and so forth. If this is not achieved, then merely reading or studying the scriptures is a waste of time and energy.

So he must be rest assured that inspite of his inability to read and study the scriptures, his emancipation and salvation, his liberation and deliverance is certain if he has understood the truth espoused by the Upanishads. He must understand that the scriptures are merely tools that help one to be made aware of and led towards the 'truth', and they are not to be regarded as one's spiritual destination. What is more relevant and important for a Sanyasi is inculcating high moral values and wisdom in order to succeed in his spiritual practice.

⁴Discourses, debates, discussions, lectures etc. draw on his already depleted energy and strength of the body as it has become old and comparatively weak because of his having to abandon the comforts of a home. Besides this, such things bring in their wake either praises or criticism, both of which are deemed to be vexing for the Spirit, for while praise stokes ego and a sense of pride in the Sanyasi, criticism evokes negative emotions which would need efforts on his part to overcome. Both agitate his mind and make it restless. Praises for his oratory, knowledge and wisdom are a natural accompaniment of giving discourses and lectures, while he is bound to ruffle some egos and offend some sentiments by his frank views on many assorted subjects, thereby evoking criticism from others. Both are to be avoided equally by him. The Upanishads prohibit a Sanyasi's involvement in such things—refer verse no. 18, 40-43, 56-60 and 71 of this Canto 3 in this context.]

74. Just like a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell to retire, the wise Sanyasi should withdraw his senses of perception from their respective objects in this world and establish them in his inner self.

He should control the working of the mind and eliminate its natural inclination to think of this world and make efforts to please the latter (74).

75. Abandoning all desires and wishes for anything as well as the inclination to seek and accumulate them (refer verse nos. 36-37), a wise Sanyasi should become calmed down and rested. He should be freed from having any worries, and remain immune to either sorrows or happiness (refer verse no. 38).

He should even discard bowing before Gods as well as offering oblations and libations to the spirits of dead ancestors (because his Lord is now the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being) (75).

76. A Sanyasi should become immune to having longing and attachment for anything or anyone dear to him, as well as be free from having the taint of ego, pride and vanity of any kind whatsoever. [Refer verse nos. 40-42, 49-50.]

He should always live alone with having any company. [Refer verse nos. 56-60.]

If he lives an exemplary life as narrated above, he is surely able to free himself from the fetters that had been shackling him till now to this world (76).

77. The vows of Sanyas (renunciation) can be taken by any person—whether he is a Brahmachari (a student still studying under a teacher; the first phase of life), a Grihastha (a householder; the second phase of life) or a Vaanprastha (a wandering pilgrim or a man living in a secluded place away from the house; the third phase of life)—if a sincere and deep-rooted sense of Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion and detachment) sprouts in his inner being at any time in life, if he diligently and with great care contemplates upon the Atma, the pure consciousness that is the real and truthful ‘self’, along with having an overwhelming desire to abandon the illusory and transient world and instead seek the ‘Absolute Truth’ which is the essence that would provide eternity and spiritual bliss to him. [Refer verse nos. 9-10, 12-13 of the present Canto 3, and verse no. 37 of Canto 4. This is called ‘Aatur Sanyas’. It means that a person can take the vows of Sanyas if he is very eager to do so, but this eagerness should be sincere and honest, and not due to certain compulsions or circumstances. For taking Sanyas, an Aatur (eager) person need not wait till his old days to take the vows of Sanyas, for such vows can be accepted if true renunciation and detachment sprouts in his heart.]

If Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion and detachment) is not deep-seated and naturally-born then he must not hurry but follow the due process of passing through and completing the three earlier phases of life, such as Brahmacharya, Grihastha and Vaanprastha, before taking to the path of Sanyas¹.

On the other hand, if the sense of Vairagya becomes profound, deep-seated, strong and steady early on in life to such an extent that nothing would ever be able to sway the aspirant from the path of Sanyas once he takes to it then he can take the vows of Sanyas directly after the first phase of Brahmacharya.

Likewise, if profound Vairagya sprouts in the inner being of a person any time later in life when he is either passing through the second phase of life as Grihastha (householder phase), or the third phase as a Vaanprastha (a forest-dweller or one who

has left the house and wanders as a pilgrim), then he can take to Sanyas without waiting for the completion of the full term living in that particular phase.

The only overriding criterion for taking to and being successful in the path of Sanyas is overwhelming, sincere, deep-rooted and steady sense of Vairagya. Therefore, whether a person is Brahmachari or not, whether he is educated or not, whether he does fire sacrifices or not—as soon as sincere Vairagya sprouts in his inner being he can accept the vows of Sanyas. [Refer verse nos. 10, 12-13 of the present Canto 3, and verse no. 37 of Canto 4.]

Though it is prescribed that the formality of doing the ‘Prajapatya Ishti ritual’ (as described in Canto 3, verse no. 10-11) should be done at the time of initiation into the fold of Sanyas, but if Vairagya is profound and robust then the observation of this formality can be dispensed with. Or, one can offer oblation to any fire to suffice for this ritual. This is because Agni (fire) is equivalent to Pran (the primary life-forces in creation), and with offering oblations to the Agni the spiritual aspirant is actually nourishing his own Pran (essential factors of life-consciousness that are present inside his own ‘self’ in the subtle form of the Atma which is pure consciousness).

Another option is to do the ritual of ‘Traidhaatvi’ (which is related to the worship of the three elements called Dhatus). There are basically only three elements called Dhatus in creation, and they are the fundamental Gunas or qualities known as Sata, Raja and Tama². So, the spiritual aspirant can complete the formality of the ‘Ishti ritual’ by offering these three Gunas to the sacred fire in a symbolic manner. [Verse no. 79 of the present Canto 3 gives details of these two concepts of Traidhaatvi and Ishti rituals, and how they are observed. Meanwhile, offering of these three Gunas to the sacred fire means that the Sanyasi overcomes all sense of his individuality, his false sense of ego and pride, and thereby becomes emotionally purified. He gets rid of the tainting influences of these three Gunas which determine his overall personality, thought process and behaviour, and negates all the negative influences of any of these qualities for the rest of his life. He is able to neutralise the effect of these three qualities on his personality, mind and temperament, and becomes as immune to their influences as a piece of rock is to its surroundings.] (77).

[Note—¹This is because if he is wise, intelligent and discriminating enough, he would be closely observing each passing day of his life, and he would have realised the harsh realities of the world and the body—that they are equally gross, painful, entrapping and delusory, and none of them can give true and real happiness to him inspite of his best of efforts and spending the entire life in serving them both. In fact, both the body and the world are utterly selfish by nature, for as long as the person continues to serve them and devote himself to them, they are interested in him, and as soon he is unable to live up to their expectations he is shunned by them.

So, by the time he enters the last phase of life to become a Sanyasi, the bitter lessons of life mentally prepares him to accept Sanyas voluntarily, sincerely, truthfully and honestly. He stops gratifying the body and longing for the material comforts and sense pleasures obtainable from this world—because he now knows of their deceptive, transient and selfish nature. His renunciation and detachment for the world and its sense objects, and his non-attachment with the gross body would therefore be self-inspired, sincere, honest and natural, coming out of his personal experiences of life rather than being forced and artificially imposed.

Hence, it would be easier for him to adhere to the principles of Sanyas and seek his Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance) without falling prey to worldly and bodily temptations. He would have been fed-up with whatever he had observed and experienced in life—back-biting, undue criticism, lack of loyalty, all-round betrayals and selfishness of others, pains and sufferings, death and decay, frustrations and

perplexities, diseases and deformities—all of them in their true colour and in full-blown form. So, by the time he reaches the phase of *Sanyas*, his bitter experiences kindle sincere renunciation, dispassion and detachment in him. Since he has had a first-hand experience of the bitter world, his conviction and faith in the futility of pursuing the world and the truthfulness of following the path of *Sanyas* as a means of finding true spiritual solace and succour would be unflinching, unwavering, convincing, abiding and robust.

On the other hand, if he takes to *Sanyas* due to some tragedy or circumstantial compulsions or events in life, such as death of some dear one, loss of property and trade, disease and deformity, natural calamities such as famines, droughts and earthquakes and such other unfortunate events, then his renunciation and detachment would be momentary and transient—for sooner rather than later he would forget his misfortunes and revert to his old habits and start regretting his decision of taking to *Sanyas*. He would yearn for the things and the people that he had left behind, the comforts and pleasures he was accustomed to, and he would harbour a secret desire to get them back once his heart and mind are able to overcome the initial shock of the misfortune or the circumstance which had made him take *Sanyas* in the first place. He would be tempted by their sight and thoughts, and swerve towards them at the first opportunity. In short, his *Sanyas* is short-lived and as fickle as a bubble of water. Such imposed and artificial form of *Sanyas* is not sincere and convincing, it is repressive, suppressive and regressive for the soul instead of being uplifting, enhancing, empowering and encouraging for it.

²The *Sata*, *Raja* and *Tama* are the three virtues or qualities in creation which determine the nature and temperament of all creatures. The character of all the living beings in the entire creation is dependent upon these three primary qualities called the *Gunas*.

(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of *Sata Guna* are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This *Sata Guna* is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The *Vasanas* that have the *Sata Guna* or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the *Satwic* desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The *Raja Guna* is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the *Satwic* qualities, then

they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.]

78. After having properly done the Ishti ritual, the aspirant should smell the fire and say the Mantra ‘Ayam Te Yoniha’ (78).

79. The meaning of this Mantra is as follows—‘Oh the Fire God! The entity that is all-pervading and the universal inspirer of everything is the cause of your origin. It is due to this reason that you are adorned with a radiant splendour, the glory, the magnificence and the majesty like your creator. [The entity alluded here is ‘Brahm’, the cosmic Consciousness that is at the root of everything coming into being in this creation.] By becoming aware of your origin, please be established in the Pran. Being thus established in my Pran, you should enhance my wisdom, erudition and knowledge which are like assets for me.’ [Usually the word ‘Pran’ is used to indicate the vital winds or airs that sustain life in this creation. But in the present context, ‘Pran’ has a wider import and it refers to the vital life-consciousness in this creation, the factor that injects both ‘life’ and ‘consciousness’ into the otherwise inane and gross world at large and the body of the creature at the individual level. The Pran is the ‘vital spark of life’ present in the creature. Fire is also the vital ‘spark of life’ and it is therefore synonymous with Pran. This is proved by the fact that a creature whose body has become cold, from which warmth and heat are gone, dies—which means ‘life’ or ‘Pran’ has left his body. When a man dies, his body becomes cold, but while he is alive it is warm, meaning that he is ‘alive’, inspite of certain medical conditions such as coma and being brain-dead when he is physically regarded as being as good as dead. But since ‘fire’ is present inside his body to keep it warm, he is not technically ‘dead’. No one buries a man till his body is warm and he continues to breathe. But it must be noted that if one were to treat ‘Pran’ as merely being the vital winds or airs, then it would be doing injustice to the institution of ‘Pran’ because the vital winds are not entirely able to inject life in this creation had it not been for the ‘fire’ to lend its heat, warmth, energy and dynamism to it. Hence, the mysterious entity that gives both the fire and the vital winds/airs their ability to infuse ‘Pran’, or life and consciousness, in this creation is the ‘Brahm’ implied in this stanza.]

Indeed, the Pran (here meaning the vital winds or airs) is the progenitor of the Agni (fire). [That is, the air is a necessary condition for the fire to light up and remain

lighted. No fire can be started or sustained without air. This fact is very easy to verify. If the air is removed, even the fiercest of raging fires would be suffocated to death and get extinguished. After all, this is the principle of physics that is used to bring fire under control during blazes and infernos—by firmly wrapping or covering the fire with some chemical so that all supply of air to it is eliminated. If the fire does not get its Pran, i.e. if the fire is prevented from ‘breathing air’, it would die. When smouldering charcoal is puffed into, the hidden fire in it springs back to life—a fact employed to re-kindle the fire-pit of the sacrifice after a day’s rest.]

Hence, this Mantra establishes oneness or non-duality between the Pran and Agni. That is, we conclude that Pran and Agni are equally important and synonymous with each other.

To perform the above ritual of Ishti, one should take some fire from the main Ahawaniya Agni (which is the formal fire lit to invoke the deities during fire sacrifices), and symbolically accept that fire by smelling it with the Mantra narrated above. [This ritual symbolically establishes the sacred fire inside the inner being of the person who is about to take the vows of Sanyas. There are two benefits—one, he would no longer need to do external fire sacrifices as the fire is established in his own being in the Pran or the vital winds and consciousness that pulsate in his body, and two, this consecrated fire would give him the required energy, vitality and stamina to go through the tough life of Sanyas.]

If due to some reason or circumstances fire is not available to perform the initiation rituals then the aspirant can use plain water also for this purpose. The aspirant should have the following thought—‘Indeed, all the deities (Gods) are an image of the water element. Therefore, I am offering oblations to them in the water and request them to accept it (like they would have readily accepted these offerings if I had made them to the sacred fire element).’ [In other words, he has realised that the water and fire are the same supreme Brahm having two forms just like the same Brahm is also known by different names that are assigned to different Gods, who in turn symbolise the different forces of Nature. Water as well as the fire are equally important as far as sustenance of creation is concerned; both are equally necessary for this creation to come into being. Indeed, scientists search for water as well as warmth when they search for life anywhere in the universe. Mere presence of water is not sufficient for fostering life anywhere—this is evident in frozen places on earth such as glaciers which are nothing but water in a condensed form, but they lack vibrant life because there is no fire and its accompanying warmth and heat present there.]

After that, some water in which the offerings were made should be taken and sipped. [This would be symbolically like smelling the fire as described earlier.] This water in which the offering of clarified butter (called Ghee) was made previously is a symbolic provider of good health and deliverance from the fetters that tie down the aspirant (just like the fire element does because of its purifying properties that symbolically burn all the fetters of the person who does the fire sacrifice).

Once this is finished, the aspirant should also shave off the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the scalp worn by all baptised Hindus) and discard the Yogyopavit (the sacred thread) for all times to come. He should also abandon forever any contact with the members of his family—such as his father, his son, his wife etc. He should also distance himself from all the worldly responsibilities that compel him to get involved in doing all sorts of deeds, getting engaged in either teaching or learning, and all other formalities and rituals including the recitation of Mantras and formal forms of worship.

Indeed, only such an enlightened person who has realised the profundity of the Atma and its overriding spiritual importance is eligible to become a Parivrajak or accept the vows of Sanyas. [That is, only an aspirant who is wise, enlightened and self-realised, who treats his pure conscious Atma as the only truthful entity with which to interact and to have anything to do with at all in this world is the candidate most suited to accept Sanyas.]

One should endeavour to become enlightened about the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Absolute Truth, with the aid of the 'Traidhaatavi Mantras'. [The different Mantras employed for initiation into Sanyas are narrated in Canto 4, verse no. 37, and the great Mahavakyas or the sacrosanct sayings of the Vedas are referred to in Canto 4, verse no. 38. Becoming enlightened and realised is made possible because when one has overcome his ego and pride, when he has become absolutely neutral and dispassionate, when having the grand virtues of equanimity and evenness is a way of life, it is only then that he would have developed a broad perspective of life and its manifold meaning. He would see the all-pervading nature of the universal Truth as it unfolds its secrets in all the facets of life in this world. Then no one would be an enemy and no one would be friend; all sorrows and pains would be no different from joys and happiness. One would become absolutely calm, poised and serene. This would lead to a great sense of peace and bliss which are signs of being Brahm-realised.]

The divine entity that is a personification of the excellent and most sublime virtues of absolute truthfulness, enlightenment, wisdom and knowledge—verily, it is known as Brahm. It is this Brahm that is worthy of being worshipped and pursued. Indeed, it is exactly in the way narrated here. [That is, a sincere Sanyasi should worship and meditate upon Brahm who has the eclectic virtues as enumerated in this Upanishad.] (79).

80-82. The holy sage Narad asked Prajapati Brahma further—'Oh Brahmin! How can a man who does not wear the Yagyopavit (the sacred thread)¹ still be called a Brahmin (or someone who occupies a high stature, both moral and spiritual, in this world, is deemed to be wise, learned and well-versed in the tenets of the scriptures, is regarded as holy and honourable, and is given great respect by other people)?'

Prajapati explained—'Oh Narad! A truly wise, learned and enlightened man is he who abandons all external signs of being exalted or of a high birth as a Brahmin² by shaving off all hairs on the head, including the tuft on the top of the head called the Shikha, along with the sacred thread worn across the chest, called the Yagyopavit. Instead, he should sufficiently be erudite and enlightened enough to understand that the supreme transcendental sublime Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is the only eternal and absolute Truth in creation that pervades uniformly in each unit of creation without exception, and therefore it is not proper and wise to confine this all-pervading and all-inclusive cosmic divine entity to some specific signs such as the hair or the sacred thread to imply that these are more representative of Brahm, or are more closer to Brahm, or are more empowered, purifying and spiritually uplifting than any other entity in creation.

Anything that gives the basic knowledge or information about other things, anything that acts as a key that can unlock the enigmatic secrets of unknown things, anything by knowing which one can come to know all other things, is called a 'Sutra'. [The word Sutra means a formula or basic knowledge or key that can help one to unravel the great secrets which are still unknown to him. For instance, if one knows the fundamental theories in science and really understands the basics of mathematics

then he can apply this knowledge to not only solve the most complex of theoretical problems appearing in his examination papers but also knows how to apply the great truths of science and mathematics in practice in life. These theories and formulas are universally applicable and can benefit the learner only if he can apply them to the practical problems of life as and when they appear.]

Hence, a person who has come to grips with the profound secrets of Brahm, a person who has deeply understood the reality and truthful nature of Brahm, is indeed the one who has truly and really understood the essence of the Vedas and other scriptures (80-82).

[Note—¹The concept of the *Yagyopavit* or the ‘sacred thread’ have been described in a number of Upanishads, viz. (i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 4-15. (ii) Atharva Veda = Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 14-19, 27; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 3-20.

The Yagyopavit is given to a Hindu child as part of his baptism rituals. It is a constant reminder to him as he grows up into an adult that he has certain moral obligations to live up to and certain basic standards that he must observe at all costs. He must be constantly on the vigil not to do anything that would undermine the authority and sanctity of this thread which acts as virtual string binding him to the vows of righteousness, auspiciousness and nobility in thought and action. It is his ‘sacred’ duty to uphold this path as laid down in the scriptures to which he had promised to adhere to at the time of his initiation or baptism. If he does not obey these rules and violates them in his life then what is the use of his wearing the Yagyopavit in the first place? It would be deceitful and cheating one’s self. This is precisely the point here. The sacred thread is only an external sign indicating that the wearer occupies a noble stature amongst men, but if he does not live up to the expectations from a man who wears this insignia of holiness and purity then he is only committing a grave sin as he is defiling the very principles upon which the institution of the sacred thread is based.

The Yagyopavit consists of three interwoven threads, and it is therefore known as the *Trisutra*. It is worn around the neck or slung diagonally across the chest, from the left shoulder to the right side of the hip bone. The word *Sutra* in this term has great metaphysical meaning.

These three threads also stand for the three Gunas or qualities that Brahm possesses. These are the following—‘Sata Guna’, the ‘Raja Guna’ and the ‘Tama Guna’. They have been described in brief as note of verse no. 77 above.

The sacred thread actually consists of *nine fine threads* (Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 27) which are intertwined into three strands, each strand having three fine interlocked threads, that are once again knitted together to make up the Yagyopavit or the sacred thread (Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5).

The sacred thread symbolizes all the subtle aspects of creation, called the Tattwas. These Tattwas are variously said to number ninety-six, twenty-seven, nine etc., and the sacred thread encompasses all of them. It is, in fact, a representative of Brahm in entirety. These facts are explained in detail in the Atharva Veda’s Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5, and Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 14-15.

The *Par Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse nos. 3-20 are entirely dedicated to the metaphysical importance of the symbol of the sacred thread and its spiritual value. The sacred thread is a symbol that stands at once for (i) Brahm represented by Pranav, the cosmic vibration or ethereal sound encapsulated in the word OM, (ii) for the Atma that is also known as Hans, the divine Swan, (iii) for the Fire, and (iv) for Gyan or truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment about the Truth of the self and Brahm. Refer: Atharva Veda = Pashupata Brahm

Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 14-19, 27; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 3-14, 16-17.]

83. [The term ‘Sutra’ is being further defined now, and its metaphysical importance and significance outlined.]

Just like the beads of a garland or a rosary are threaded together and held in place by the string running through them, the entire creation is bound and held in place with all its individual units interlocked to form a complex grid-lock or matrix by the hidden ‘truth’ running imperceptibly through them, and this ‘Truth’ is the ‘Sutra’ which is eternal and truthful essence of existence and the creation. [In other words, the subtle and esoteric but the most eclectic Absolute Truth—which is irrefutable and incontrovertible, which is eternal, infinite, imperishable, universal and uniform—in this creation is the entity that gives credence to this creation and makes its existence possible. In metaphysics this Absolute Truth is known as Brahm. It is this Brahm which is responsible for shaping this world and keeping its texture sustained. Brahm gives the world its meaning and shape. Without Brahm this world would fall apart and scatter haphazardly into non-entity and non-existence just like the garland or the rosary losing its meaning and existence if the string binding the flowers or the beads together is cut and the latter scatter around. The ‘Sutra’ is responsible for creation having any meaning. Otherwise, the numerous individual units of this creation would have remained scattered units having no meaning and importance. It is this Sutra symbolising Brahm or the universal consciousness running invisibly through the length and breadth of creation that not only binds the countless units together but also gives them their life and identity. So if one wishes to know the secret of this world as it exists in its present shape one must know about Brahm which is the hidden force that has given the world or the creation its meaning, shape and existence just like the case that if one were to recognise an assortment of flowers as a garland or a collection of beads as a rosary one must understand that it is the string running through them that has held together these individual flowers or beads so that they come to be known or recognised as a garland or a rosary. Therefore, the very existence of this creation hinges around the Sutra symbolising Brahm.]

A wise and erudite ascetic is one who realises what this eclectic and most divine and holy Sutra representing the essential secret of existence is (which of course is Brahm, the Absolute Truth, and the cosmic Consciousness). He then enshrines it in his heart, in his inner being, with this understanding, with this wisdom, thereby giving the Sutra (representing Brahm) its due importance, honour, reverence and dignity. [That is, once having known and understood that it is the supreme transcendental Brahm which is the Absolute Truth in creation, a wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant should concentrate his attention on this Truth, and not allow himself to be buffeted (i.e. made restless by being deluded, misled or confused) by numerous ideas and notions, countless theories and doctrines, innemurable philosophies and schools of thoughts which only lead to utter vexation, confusion and perplexity. By concentrating upon one single path or goal it becomes very easy for him to reach it within the limited time span of this short life, and if he does not do so he would be like a man who keeps changing boats every now and then and ultimately sinks mid-stream before he reaches the other shore.] (83).

84. A truly wise and learned man should discard the external form of the ‘Sutra’ (i.e. the gross form of the sacred thread or Yagyopavit, which is also called a Sutra, consisting of mere threads woven together into a sling put across the shoulder and the

chest), and instead accept the divine principle that this ‘Sutra’ represents—as it is a symbolic form of Brahm, the divine and holy entity that is truthful, all-pervading, all-inclusive, eternal, infinite, supreme and transcendental. This is the true and real meaning of ‘Sutra’ that the spiritual aspirant should wear. It is the essence, the truth, the fundamental aspect and the primary form of the sacred thread, and it is the only form that would be on any spiritual benefit for the aspirant instead of merely wearing it just for the sake of doing so. [Whereas the Sutra made from ordinary thread is just that—‘ordinary’, the symbolism of acceptance of Brahm as the supreme Sutra makes one as glorious, divine and holy as Brahm himself—i.e. the aspirant becomes ‘extraordinary’. He becomes a personified form of Brahm if he is enlightened enough to inculcate all the good virtues that Brahm stands for. By wearing the Sutra on his body, the aspirant is openly declaring this fact that he has established Brahm on his gross body, and therefore as long as the Sutra is on his body he is obliged to honour its sanctity and act with consonant dignity so that the holy nature of the Sutra is not compromised with and its divinity is not demoted by any of his actions, deeds, words, thoughts, behaviours etc. He has to be extra cautious about being righteous and noble because of the presence of the Sutra on his body.]

Such a Parivrajak (i.e. a Sanyasi) never becomes impure and defiled; he never gets demoted or falls from his exalted stature. [The wearing of the Yagyopavit is a visible sign that the wearer is of a high birth such as a Brahmin or some learned, holy and religious man. It is believed that as long as he wears this Yagyopavit, he is pure, holy and un-corrupt. But since this Yagyopavita is made from ordinary thread, it is subject to all the grossness, impurities, faults, shortcomings and impermanence that are associated with everything that is gross in this transient, faulty, mortal and perishable world. In short, the purity and holiness that the gross form of the Yagyopavita bestows upon the wearer is not permanent in nature because the former itself is not permanent. On the other hand, Brahm is an eternal, infinite, imperishable, truthful and divine entity, and therefore if one is wise enough to accept the Yagyopavit for his spiritual well-being then he must wear it with proper wisdom and understanding as to its symbolic meaning and its subtle import. It is only then that this Yagyopavit would be of any benefit for him and it would bestow holiness and purity to the wearer. Once this actually happens, the wearer becomes a living embodiment of Brahm.] (84).

85. A wise, erudite and enlightened Parivrajak (a Sanyasi) who has accepted the secret Truth and eclectic knowledge of the divine Brahm as the metaphoric Yagyopavit which he devotedly enshrines in his heart or wears it in his inner being is indeed the one who has understood the reality and the truth of this world as well as worn the Yagyopavit in the correct sense (85).

86. A Parivrajak (Sanyasi) is one who wears or accepts Gyan (truthful and correct knowledge; wisdom, erudition and enlightenment about the Absolute Truth and the supreme transcendental Brahm; self and Brahm realisation) as a metaphoric Shikha or tuft of hair on his head (instead of the conventional hairs), who wears or accepts Gyan as the metaphoric Yagyopavit or the sacred thread worn on the body, and who remains established in the enlightenment, wisdom, awareness, holiness and purity that the auspicious attribute of Gyan provides him. [That is, instead of relying on the external signs of the Shikha and the Yagyopavit as marks and constant reminder of his acceptance of the path of Brahm, i.e. the path of truthfulness, righteousness, auspiciousness and nobility of thought and action, he accepts the fundamental essence

of this knowledge and imbibes its basic values internally, integrating them with his inner being and his thought textures so that his entire life and his entire being become an image of the glorious virtues that Brahm stands for. Holiness and divinity, purity and righteousness, auspiciousness and truthfulness become an integral, inseparable, effortless and natural part of his life and existence, and not something that is done with some bit of conscious and physical effort as is required when one has to keep his Shikha properly trimmed and the Yagyopavit properly cleaned.]

For such wise and enlightened aspirants, acquisition of Gyan is the best effort made in the direction of spiritual upliftment and attaining one's real goal in life. It is considered as the most purifying, dynamic, electrifying and empowering entity. [True and correct knowledge is the Sutra or key to the removal of darkness of ignorance and delusions. With Gyan it is easy for one to unravel the secrets of the enigmatic cosmic Brahm just like it is easy to unlock the treasury with the correct key to its lock. Gyan is a dynamic and powerful force which empowers the spiritual aspirant to see the reality and truth hidden from view under a thick cover of delusions leading to numerous misconceptions, misrepresentations, misinterpretations and misinformations. Thus, it is hard and almost impossible to become truly self-realised and Brahm-realised in the absence of this vital key or Sutra called Gyan. Gyan is an important and indispensable aid or tool to self-realisation and Brahm-realisation.] (86).

[Note—Refer Canto 4, verse no. 32.]

87. Just like the Shikha (the tip of a lighted flame) is inseparable from the flame of a lighted candle and marks the tip or the highest point of the latter, a Parivrajak who has accepted Gyan as his symbolic Shikha (to the tuft of hair worn by an ascetic on his head), who has accepted the virtues of wisdom, self-realisation, enlightenment, erudition and knowledge as his main defining virtue and glorious characteristic, is indeed the one who can be said to have actually sported or worn this 'Shikha' in an honest and truthful sense. All the rest are simply called 'ordinary and perfunctory wearers of Shikha' (because they have not understood the profundity and the real meaning, significance and import of the Shikha and wearing it) (87).

[Note—The word *Shikha* has two meanings—one refers to the tip of the wick of a lighted candle which burns to produce the flame and its attendant light, and the second refers to the tuft of hair on the top of the ascetic's head which is also the highest point of his body and its apex.

In this instance, the aspirant's body is likened to a candle, and the knowledge that the aspirant has is like the light of this candle. What good is a candle if it does not show its light? Similarly, what good is the body if its mind is not soaked in knowledge? When the candle burns and gives out light, its physical body slowly melts away into nothingness; the body of the candle ultimately vanishes altogether when its wax is exhausted. The 'light' that the candle gives out also does not depend upon the length or thickness of the candle. Likewise, the light of Gyan or knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment and self-realisation that effuses from the ascetic does not depend the grossness of his physical body, its age, its physical fitness, its colour, birth, caste and race, and other such worldly considerations.

Just like the candle having any value and importance because of its ability to give light, the ascetic is known, respected and valued for the light of Gyan that he has. Otherwise, he is no better than a candle which is unable to give any light for a variety of reasons, such as it being wet. The physical body of the candle is of no significance, and it is sought after only because the light emanating from the wick removes darkness. Similarly, the ascetic, or for that matter any man, is honoured, revered and remembered for the Gyan that he possesses, Gyan that not only removes the darkness

within his own gross body but also of those around him. Here, the word ‘darkness’ refers to ignorance and delusions that mire the creature and prevents him from knowing the ‘truth and reality’.

This light of Gyan, or the light of knowledge and enlightenment, has its focal point in the head where the mind, the intellect, the faculty of discrimination, and the sub-conscious are located. In Yoga Upanishads it has been stressed that the ascetic experiences the eclectic feeling of ecstasy and bliss that comes with self-realisation when his Prans (vital winds) reach the forehead and the tip of the head by various meditating techniques. It is this tip of the head where the Shikha or the tuft of hair sported by the Sanyasi is located. This Shikha is therefore only a symbol or a mark to indicate that the person has the potential to light the world with his Gyan just like the wick of the candle lights up the surrounding when it is lighted. What good is the wick if it does not produce the flame that gives light? Similarly, what good is there in wearing the Shikha if the wearer does not have any Gyan in him, and he cannot benefit the society with knowledge and wisdom?

The light of knowledge or ‘Gyan’ that a wise Sanyasi possesses is his metaphoric Shikha because this virtue has its seat in the head, just as the light of the flame of the candle is present around its wick that is also located on the tip of the body of the candle.

A man without Gyan is a burden and worthless being just like a candle that cannot be lighted. Gyan is the high seat which distinguishes one man from another. It is Gyan which makes one a realised being and shine in this world as compared to others who lack Gyan and remain mired in the grave darkness of ignorance just like reptiles and other lowly animals who prefer living under crevices and inside caves. It is Gyan that acts as a catalyst for his spiritual well-being, his spiritual upliftment, his spiritual liberation and deliverance. The importance of Gyan vis-à-vis the Sanyasi is especially emphasised in Canto 4, verse no. 32.

Hence, a true Sanyasi or Parivrajak is one who has Gyan as an integral and inseparable part of his being just like the Shikha is of the body. This Gyan is the only element that makes him exalted, honourable, revered and distinguished from other human beings. Those who are not enlightened, those who are not aware of the ‘Truth’, those who are not self-realised, but still wear the Shikha just because they are supposed to wear it are therefore regarded as fools who do things just because others are doing it, and they cannot expect to derive any spiritual rewards by sporting the Shikha.

Refer verse no. 17 of this Canto 3 in this context.]

88. For those who engage in performance of formal Vedic rites and other religious rituals are required to wear the Yagyopavit (the sacred thread) as it is a necessary purifying accoutrement of such formal exercises. [But for a Sanyasi who is not required to engage himself in such formalities in the first place, there is no need and compulsion of wearing the sacred thread for him. His ‘Yagyopavit’ is his high state of being Brahm and self realised because this sacred thread stand for Brahm, it is symbol of Brahm and nothing else.] (88).

[Note—Just like a Sanyasi sporting the Shikha without having Gyan is merely cheating himself and deceiving others, for he gains nothing more by sporting the single tuft of hair on his head than either having a thick lock of hairs on the head or shaving the hair completely, a Sanyasi does not need to wear the sacred thread because he is deemed to have become self and Brahm realised.

As had been noted elsewhere, he establishes the sacred fires inside his own body, and therefore performs the fire sacrifice internally instead of doing it externally. Since wearing of the sacred thread is necessary for doing the sacrifice externally, therefore it is not necessary for the Sanyasi who has already established the sacred fire inside his own self. This fact is endorsed in Canto 4, verse no. 37 of the present Upanishad.

Refer verse nos. 17, 90 and 91 of this present Canto 3 in this context.]

89. Those who are Brahm-realised aver that only a Parivrajak (a Sanyasi) who has accepted Brahm as his symbolic Shikha and Yagyopavit is indeed the enlightened and wise one who is fully infused with and completely soaked in the essence of Brahm. Indeed, he is a personification of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Divinity in creation in the form of the Absolute Truth and irrefutable Reality (89).

90. [Verse nos. 90-92 have an uncanny resemblance to verse nos. 28-76 of this present Canto 3. They are a sort of recapitulation to summarise the things already said previously. This phenomenon is a constant feature of this Upanishad where many things have been repeated often.]

A Brahmin (i.e. a wise and learned person), after having acquainted himself of all the codes and tenets of Sanyas, its detailed rules and regulations, should make a firm resolve to take the vows of Sanyas, and leave his home.

He should henceforth wear only one piece of cloth to cover his body, shave off the hair from his head, and should not attempt or desire to accumulate any thing or any material of any kind whatsoever.

If it is not possible for him to cope with physical discomfort beyond a certain limit then it is permitted for him to keep wearing the piece of cloth that covers the lower part of his body. If he can, it is best advised that as a Sanyasi (a noun used for a person who has taken the stern vows of Sanyas or renunciation and detachment from anything related with this world) he should even discard this piece of cloth and instead remain completely naked. This is the proper system for the Sanyas or a renunciation way of life. [For such an enlightened man, the sky or the firmament is the all-covering garment. Refer also to verse no. 91 of the present Canto 3.]

He must snap all relations with everyone such as his friends, companions, son, wife, elders and other kith and kin. [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 32, 70; and Canto 4, verse no. 2). Instead, he should wander alone like a friar or mendicant. [Refer Canto 2, verse no. 1; Canto 3, verse nos. 31, 54-56, 59-60, 76. This shows that wandering alone or staying alone is very necessary for the Sanyasi. This helps him to avoid all sorts of restlessness and vexations that come to the Spirit when one keeps company of any kind.]

Excepting the study of the scriptures as convenient and observing the duties as prescribed in the Vedas, he is expected to distance himself from all other obligations of this mortal world, become absolutely non-involved with this material world at large, and snap all his links with it.

The only things he can keep with himself are the Kopin (loin-cloth), the Danda (an ascetic's staff), and the piece of cloth to cover the upper part of his body or which is used to protect him against cold and heat.

He must observe exemplary tolerance and fortitude, treating everything and everyone equally with the greatest of equanimity and evenness of mind. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 34.]

He must calmly bear all sorts of provocations, mental agitations and physical discomfort with the greatest of stoicism, and remain unruffled and poised under the greatest of adversities. He shouldn't be bothered by either heat or cold. He shouldn't ever desire comfort and pleasures, nor should he be bothered by any kind of restlessness, both mental and physical. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 37-39.]

He should not even pay attention to sleep. [That is, if he cannot sleep due to some reason, then he is not expected to feel restless and worn out. Similarly, if he

wishes to sleep as a natural urge of the body, then he should not be overly worried about the timing, and allow his body rest by sleeping till it wants. But this does not mean that he should develop the habit of being lazy, as this would interfere with the need for him to spend the most of his time on meditation and contemplation.]

He should treat honour and dishonour, praise and insult with stoicity and equanimity. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 40-43.]

He must never be affected by the six Urmis. [Refer also Canto 7, verse no. 1. According to Mudgalo-panishad, 4/7 of the Rig Veda tradition, the six delusions, called 'Urmi', that create fear, sorrows, agonies, sufferings and pains to a creature are the following:--(1) hunger, (2) thirst, (3) grief, (4) Moha (worldly attachments, illusions, entrapments), (5) horrors of old age, and (6) death.]

He should discard all Vikaars (or impurities, shortcomings or faults) that taint a creature's inner self and affect his basic immaculate nature. These faults are the following—Ninda (finding faults with others and criticism), Matsarya (jealously, envy, anger, wrath), Ahankar (pride, ego), Garva (vanity, self-praise, haughtiness, arrogance), Dambha (deceit, conceit, impersonation, falsehood), Irshya (jealousy, malice, ill-will and intolerance of the other person's successes and achievements), Suya (finding unnecessary faults with others), Ichha (having desire, wishes and aspirations), Dwesh (having ill-will and keeping malice), Sukh-Dukh (the feeling or notion of having happiness, comfort and pleasure on the one hand, or having pain, sorrow, grief and agony on the other hand), Kaam (lust, passion), Krodh (anger, wrathfulness and vengeance), Lobh (greed, rapacity), Moha (attachment, longing, endearment) etc. [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 33, 35; Canto 4, verse nos. 5-6; Canto 7, verse no. 1]

He should treat his physical gross body as being good as dead (i.e. he must not pay any attention about the comfort or discomfort of the body), and should accept only the Atma (the pure consciousness residing inside the body) as the only entity worth accepting and thinking about. [That is, instead of worrying about the fate of his body and being pre-occupied with its demands, a wise Sanyasi should instead be concerned about his spiritual welfare and how to ensure that his Atma finds peace and tranquillity that it deserves. The focus of his mind should be the Atma and not the body. The lowly nature of the body is emphasised in verse nos. 46-48 of Canto 3, and verse nos. 25-27 of Canto 4.]

Since he accepts only the Atma, the pure consciousness, as the supreme entity in this world, he should not bow before anyone else. Similarly, he should not get involved in formal rites and rituals such as doing religious sacrifices or offering oblations to the spirits of dead ancestors.

He should neither submit before anyone else (except the Atma), and therefore should not make any humble requests for anything to anyone nor become annoyed if denied anything by anyone. Hence, he should not speak ill of anyone nor should he praise anyone.

He must roam around freely alone, without encountering any kind of encumbrances. [He must not keep any company, and never get involved in any relationships; he must not accumulate any material things.]

He must be satisfied with whatever food is made available as a will of the Lord. [That is, he must learn to control his hunger and taste, and instead be contented whatever comes his way. Refer also to verse nos. 38, 62-63 and 92 of the present Canto 3.]

He must never keep (or hoard) any kind of gems or jewellery or golden ornaments with him. [That is, he must not have anything to do with material wealth.]

He should be completely neutral and dispassionate, having exemplary equanimity and highest degree of evenness in his approach. Hence, he should neither invite anyone nor tell anyone to go; he should neither use any of the Mantras nor abandon them. He must not even do any specific forms of worship such as Dhyana and Upasana—or meditating upon any deity or worshipping it.

He should have no specific aim or goal, and neither should he be aimless and without any target in life. [Having no aim or goal would make him mentally and physically free from the overbearing burden of having to strive hard to reach that goal or achieve that aim. On the other hand, it does not mean that he is absolutely aimless and drifting along like a worthless vagrant or a vagabond in life. Indeed his single noble aim and divine goal in life is to seek Mukti and Moksha, or liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for his self; it is to attain the ultimate source of eternity, bliss, felicity and beatitude in the form of Brahman. Having no other worldly aims or aspirations, such an aspirant can preserve his energy and divert it to attain this single and eclectic goal in life.]

He should develop such a high degree of aloofness, neutrality and dispassion that it does not matter to him whether anyone stays with him or accompanies him, or whether he remains alone or has some company. In fact, he is oblivious to such things.

Similarly, he should not ask to be allowed to stay at any one place, nor should he request to be allowed to go somewhere else. [That is, he must not adhere to any fixed place or protocol, and can stay anywhere he wishes and as long as he wants to. When he wants to move out and go somewhere else, he need not observe formalities of requesting permission to move, but just move out on his own free will. That is, he should be totally and completely independent and freed from the obligation of having to adhere to any formalities and niceties of formal behaviour in this world.]

Such a wise Sanyasi should not have any hermitage or dwelling of his own.

His mind and intellect must always be steady and under strict control.

For shelter, he can stay in an abandoned house, the base of a large tree (i.e. under its shade), a temple or shrine, a thatched hut, a potter's place, a spot in the south-east corner of a place where fire sacrifice is done, a place which is either close to the banks of a river or some low lying piece of land near it, a hole in a mound of earth or a cave in a mountain, a platform near a waterfall or some worship altar or pit where some sort of sacrifice was offered, and in a forest.

Some of the exalted and highly realised Sanyasis who were counted as one of the greatest of sages of all times never accepted and wore any external signs of Sanayas, and neither did they reveal their exalted stature and mystical authority and powers to anyone, but were nevertheless highly realised, enlightening, wise and spiritually liberated souls, and are the following—Ribhu, Shwetketu, Nidagha, Rishabha, Samvartak, Durvasa, Dattatreya and Raivatak. [Refer Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 7, verse no. 3. This Upanishad is included as Chapter 6 of the present volume. A brief life-sketch of these sages is also appended to the said verse.]

An exalted Sanyasi should behave like an innocent child or like someone possessed by a spirit. In spite of being highly realised, wise, enlightened, poised, stable in his mind and thoughts, and enabled with stupendous mystical powers and authority, he should however behave in an erratic, unpredictable, irrational and idiotic manner. [This behaviour ensures that people avoid him and he is left alone in peace. This gives him the much desired tranquillity, peace and serenity that would be impossible to achieve should the world become aware of his inherent mystical powers and spiritual

achievements, for then the Sanyasi would be hounded by favour-seekers and surrounded by those who would plead with them to alleviate their worldly problems.]

When he reaches a higher level of Sanyas and Brahm realisation, he should discard even the bare necessities of life that he had with him till now, such as the Tridand (the stick or staff), the plate for food, the sling bag, the water pot, the waist band and the loin cloth. This is done by saying 'Bhu Swaha' and discarding them in some water body nearby. [The Mantra 'Bhu Swaha' means that I am offering all these possessions of mine to the Earth. The term 'Swaha' is used while making offerings to the sacred fire during formal fire sacrifices. So, when the Sanyasi offers his possessions to water by saying Swaha, it becomes equivalent to offering them to the sacred fire during formal fire sacrifice and acquires the same sanctity. Refer verse no. 79, last stanza.] (90).

91. A Parivrajak should discard all external signs of Sanyas such as the waist-band, the loin-cloth, the staff, the single piece of cloth which he uses to wrap his body, and the water-pot by respectfully immersing them in any water body (such as a river or lake or pond). Thereafter, he should roam around naked in the way he was originally born and which is the truthful form of his body sans all external paraphernalia (with the eclectic notion that he is wearing the sky as his garment) [Refer verse no. 90 of Canto 3.] (91).

92. He should constantly, consistently and persistently meditate and contemplate upon his Atma which is pure conscious and his true 'self' (with the eclectic notion that this Atma is the supreme Brahm residing in his inner being).

Remaining without any clothes or coverings, he must steadfastly bear with all sorts of restlessness and resist all temptations; he should not at all be affected by any of them. He must not accumulate anything of any kind. Instead, he should be firmly established in the path of Gyan (truthful knowledge) which enlightens a man about the Atma that is his pure consciousness as well as the supreme transcendental Brahm that is the universal cosmic Consciousness.

He must keep his mind absolutely free from all corruptions and impurities.

In order to protect his Pran (vital life factors present inside the body), he should accept the bare necessary and whatever food that comes his way without specifically asking anybody for it (i.e. without specifying the type of food that he would prefer, or that he needs it at all). It is also necessary to accept food at a fixed time (as this helps to maintain a steady regime and promotes good health by regulating hunger and digestion as compared to eating haphazardly and at random times). He must accept food in the cupped palms of his hands and eat directly from it (treating them as a natural pot). He may also use some other pot (such as a clay pot) that is easily available at the time.

Treating Laabh (gain) and Haani (loss) alike, he should disassociate himself from all Mamta (attachments and longings).

He should only meditate and contemplate upon the truthful and eternal supreme Brahm at all times.

He should constantly, consistently and persistently concentrate his mind on matters pertaining to the Atma, and think of nothing else.

Adjudicating and discriminating between what is good and auspicious and what is not, he must always strive for the upliftment of his Atma (i.e. his pure and truthful 'self') and abandon everything else. He must abandon all material things and sense objects of this world.

Having been soaked in the eclectic and sublime thoughts of Brahm which is the only blissful, supreme and transcendental divine entity in creation, when he has witnessed the subtle presence of this Brahm in his inner self and has realised the truth of the axiomatic maxim 'I am Brahm', he becomes firmly established in this eclectic Truth (i.e. he is convinced about the truth of Brahm, and his Atma being this Brahm personified). Like the insect that is always thinking about the large black bee because of the latter's constant humming over the former, a realised spiritual aspirant should always think of Brahm revealed in the cosmic sound called OM that resonates through his being. [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 22 and 66 also. The black bee captures an insect or a worm and constantly hums over it for long time. The resonating hum emanating from the buzzing bee so much overwhelms the humble and captive insect or worm that the latter forgets about its own nature and turns mentally into a black bee! The poor creature begins to think of nothing else but the buzz of the bee. It is mentally metamorphosed into a bee, and loses its own individuality as an insect or a worm. Likewise, when the spiritual aspirant constantly thinks of Brahm, when he constantly meditates upon Brahm using the Mantra OM as a medium for such meditation, a method prescribed in all the Upanishads dealing with Yoga, a deep resonance is heard in his mind, and this is the cosmic sound of OM that begins to reverberate in his nerves and veins so much so that his entire inner-self is submerged in the resonance created by the sound of OM. This OM is a sound manifestation of the cosmic Consciousness, and so when the meditating person begins to hear this cosmic sound of OM in his nerves and veins, he is said to experience the titillation and ecstasy that comes with witnessing the cosmic Consciousness flowing inside his own body through his nerves and veins. This gives him the experience that comes with Brahm-realisation because the cosmic Consciousness represented by the vibrations created by the sound of OM is another name of Brahm. Refer also to Canto 4, verse no. 38, and Canto 5, verse no. 66.]

A Parivrajak is expected to completely abandon all sense of pride or ego as well as attachment with the three aspects of his body (which are the gross, subtle and causal bodies)¹ along with all other possessions he has, whether tangible or intangible, before he leaves his body in physical terms (i.e. before he dies). [This complete detachment and highest degree of renunciation ensures his final salvation and deliverance. His Atma would no longer yearn to take another birth so as to enjoy the sense organs of the body.]

A Sanyasi (Parivrajak) who adopts all the aforesaid methods and principles of Sanyas (renunciation) becomes fulfilled and truly liberated. Verily, this is what this great Upanishad affirms (92).

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 4

[This Canto is an extension of the previous Canto 3 as it continues with the narration in detail of the importance and the due process of accepting the vows of Sanyas. Canto 5 would further elaborate what is being said in the present Canto.]

1. An Yati (ascetic or Sanyasi or Parivrajak) who abandons all contacts with this world, abandons even the Vedas (i.e. their ritualistic practices, but it does not mean to demean them in any way or restrict their study), pays no attentions to enjoyment of the pleasures of the sense objects, and has broken free from being dependent upon the

sense organs of the body and the need for their gratification, and instead remains focussed only on the spiritual upliftment of his Atma (soul; the true 'self')—only such an Yati attains the most exalted spiritual stature or the supreme destination of the soul called 'Param Gati'. [The word 'Param' means supreme, the most exalted, the highest, and the best, while the word 'Gati' means goal, destination or fate of a creature; result of an effort or deed, whether that result is favourable when it is defined as a reward or a 'good Gati', or unfavourable when it is regarded as a punishment or a 'bad Gati'.] (1).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse no. 32, and Canto 5, verse no. 26.]

2. An exalted and realised Sanyasi should never disclose anything about himself such as his name, clan or caste, his country of origin or region to where he belongs, his age, his scriptural knowledge, his general condition (such as whether he is sick or healthy, aged or young, rich or poor, of low or high birth, a professional or layman etc.), the codes of conduct he prefers to follow, the vows of abstinence and fasting that he observes, and how humble he is. [If he does so it would be tantamount to advertising himself, and it would not only stoke his ego or the pains of his past life, but also defeat the very purpose for which he had taken to Sanyas in the first place.] (2).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 33-34 of the present Canto 4.]

3. He should never talk with any woman under any circumstance. He should never think of or remember about any woman with whom he has had any contact or acquaintance in his earlier phase of life, and neither should he keep their pictures with him nor allow himself to talk about them (3).

4. To talk with any woman, to remember any woman, to have any discussion about any woman, and to view any picture of any woman—certainly a man who does these four things out of Moha (which is to have attachment with and longing for something) is bound to develop some or the other kind of Vikars (impurity, corruption, taint) in his mind and sub-conscious, and they would definitely prove to be his undoing and destroy his elevated stature as a Sanyasi (4).

[Note—In this context of what has been said in verse nos. 3-4, refer also to verse nos. 25-29 of the present Canto 4, as well as to verse no. 64 of Canto 3, and verse nos. 35-36 of Canto 6.]

5-6. For a Sanyasi, all the following are prohibited—Trishna (to have desire and yearning for something), Krodh (anger, wrath and vengeance), Jhutha (falsehood, conceit, deceit), Maya (delusory effects of the world), Moha (longing, desire, attachment), Lobh (greed, avarice, rapacity), Priya-Apriya (to treat something or someone as loving and dear, and the other as being the opposite), Shilpkala (craftsmanship), Vyakhyan-Yog (to give discourse or lecture to others), Kaam (to have desires, lust, yearnings, passions etc.), Raag (to have mental desire or affection for anything), Parigraha (accumulation of anything such as material objects), Ahankar (self pride, ego), Mamamatva (to be emotionally and mentally attached with something and love for it), Chikitsa (giving medical advise such as on use of herbs), Dharma-Saahas (to show valour in the name of religion), Prayaschit (to do any kind of repentance, penance or atonement for some misdeed), Pravaas (to stay at any one place), the use of Mantra (i.e. to use any other Mantra except the all-inclusive and universally divine Mantra known as OM to aid in one's spiritual progress), to give

Visha (poison anyone or do something that harms him severally), and to bless others employing the mystical powers that the Sanyasi possesses (5-6).

[Note—It would be observed that all these things have a negative impact on the mind and are related to this material world, and if one indulges in them then he cannot be categorised as a holy man a Sanyasi is expected to be. Any taints or impurities on his character would make him fall from his highly elevated spiritual stature; it would be demeaning for him and detrimental to his spiritual progress. Even a man who is still living as a householder is advised by the scriptures to avoid these negative traits, so naturally they are forbidden for a true Sanyasi who has renounced this world and all its characterising features.

Refer Canto 3, verse no. 90.]

7. A wise and enlightened Sanyasi who is always striving to attain Moksha (i.e. seeking final emancipation and salvation for himself) should not invite or welcome even his well-wisher, and neither should he tell him to go away. He should not tell him 'come, you're welcome' or 'go please'. [That is, he should be absolutely indifferent, stoic, neutral, detached and dispassionate. If anyone comes to him he shows no special attention to the guest, and similarly if he wants to go away the Sanyasi must not ask him to stay even for a second.] (7).

8. He should not accept any donation of material things given to him even in his dreams. ['In his dreams' is a figure of speech to mean 'never, under any circumstance'.]

He should not tell the donor to give it to someone else instead of him or on his behalf, and neither should he force anyone to give donation or accept it such donation (8).

9. He should never be mentally and emotionally moved or get distracted from his chosen spiritual path of Sanyas upon hearing any good or bad news about any person, either a female or a male, who was very dear to him in his early life, such as his kith and kin. Likewise, he should never be affected by a feeling of happiness on seeing them happy and prosperous, nor get emotionally upset by seeing their miserable condition.

He must abandon all emotions or feelings, such as that of happiness or gladness on the one hand, and of grief and sorrows on the other hand, for all times to come (9).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 25, 44.]

10-12. The following are the best principles to be followed by a wise and enlightened Sanyasi—Ahinsa (non-violence in all aspects, physical, mental and emotional), Satya (truthfulness), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (observance of strict self-control, abstinence), Aparigraha (giving away of assets or possessions; non-accumulation; renunciation of the highest degree) [10], to become calmed, rested and peaceful, and stop being arrogant, rude, reckless or impertinent, not to become too humble to the extent of showing subservience or lowliness in the front of anyone no matter how senior he is, to remain always cheerful and happy (and never regret at becoming a Sanyasi or lament at inconveniences that are encountered), to be steady and unwavering in his chosen path, to have simplicity of demeanours, not to have any sort of affection for or attachment with anyone, to selflessly serve the Guru (the moral preceptor), to have the virtues of Shradha (steady faith and firm conviction), Kshama (forgiveness), Dam and Sham (self-restraint of the sense organs as well as the mind),

Upeksha (to treat with neglect all relationships; to be non-attached, non-involved and exemplarily dispassionate), Dhairya (to have patience, forbearance and resilience), Madhurya (to have sweetness of demeanours and speech), Titiksha (to have forbearance, tolerance, fortitude), Karuna (to have compassion, mercy, kindness) [11], Lajja (to feel ashamed at doing anything inauspicious and unrighteous and ignoble for a spiritual aspirant), to be diligent in pursuing the correct path and be interested in the pursuit of Gyan and Vigyan (enlightenment, wisdom and truthful knowledge that can be verified by personal experience), eating with restraint, and Dhriti (courage and patience developed by steadiness of mind and thoughts) [12]. (10-12).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 21, 33-35, 70-76 in the context of the present verse nos. 10-12.]

13. A Parivrajak who is free from all sorts of turmoil, restlessness and agitations, who is always sincere, diligent and steadfast in following the principles of Sata Gunas (noble and auspicious virtues), who has fortitude, dispassion and equanimity of approach towards everything in life, and who remains in a perpetual state of Turiya (transcendental state of conscious existence)—indeed, such a Parivrajak is called a Paramhans (a highly evolved state of renunciation which makes a man absolutely pure and incorrupt), and he is a living personification of the supreme Lord Narayan (Vishnu) himself (13).

14. Except the rainy season, a Parivrajak should stay in a small village for one night only, and in a big town or city for five nights only. But during the rainy season he can stay for four months at a place (14).

[Note—In the context of what is being ordained here, one should refer to verse nos. 15-16 and 19-20 of this Canto 4 below, as well as to verse nos. 31, 56-59 of Canto 3 earlier. Refer also to verse no. 1 of Canto 7.]

15. A Parivrajak should not stay in one village for more than one night. If he does stay then it is possible that his inner being might get influenced by certain emotional or mental taints such as developing Raag (getting attracted to anything and beginning to have affection for it) etc. [And this eventuality would be his undoing and detrimental to his spiritual progress. He would lose whatever moral ground he might have covered till then.]

Should any worldly faults ever taint him, he slides down and heads for hell. [Instead of moving steadily upwards towards his final freedom from all faults associated with the body and this material world to find emancipation and salvation for himself, a Sanyasi who allows even a slight speck of corruption to taint his moral fabric which is so scarred by its negative effects and its attendant grossness that he is pulled down by it. As a consequence of the latter, all his earlier austerities and penances go to waste.] (15).

16. He should stay outside a village (or populated areas) in a secluded, peaceful, calm and serene location. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 60.]

He should exercise great control over his mind and sense organs. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 68.]

He must not construct any permanent shelter such as a hut or a monastery for the purpose of his dwelling. Just like creatures of Nature such as insects and worms wander around everywhere on the face of the earth without getting attached to any one fixed place, he too must roam around for eight months of a year. He can stay at a

single place only for four months during the rainy season. [Refer verse no. 14 and 19 also of the present Canto 4.] (16).

17. A Parivrajak should wear only a single piece of cloth over his body, or remain naked. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 31, stanza no. 1.]

His sight or view should not be fickle and jump from object to object, but instead it should be fixed on one target or goal that he has chosen in his life as a Sanyasi. [That is, he must remain focused on his spiritual goal and not allow himself to be distracted by so many charms of this fascinating but entrapping world. Having restless eyes show that his mind is fickle. Spiritual success is not at all possible with an unsteady mind. Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 31, 65-68.]

He must never get hooked or attracted towards enjoyment of sensual pleasures and objects of this material world; he must never do anything that would tarnish the holy and eclectic path shown by his predecessors. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 36. By becoming a Sanyasi and avowing his faith in this holy institution, if he does anything that is not expected from such people, it would have a catastrophic cascading effect on the institution of Sanyas and society would begin to look down upon all Sanyasis because of the misdemeanours of this single person. People would treat with disdain the entire community of ascetics, monks, mendicants and friars because they have had a bitter experience of this single individual.]

So, keeping guard and remaining on constant vigil, he must roam around on the face of the earth freely, always thinking only of the Supreme Being. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 53.] (17).

18. Constantly remaining steadfast on his spiritual path and being vigilant in strictly observing the principles of Sanyas, he must always live in a clean place.

A Yogi (an ascetic) should always keep his eyes low and see only the ground ahead of him (instead of looking up at things or persons that might distract him) during his wanderings. [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 65-66.] (18).

19. He should not move out here and there during the night, at noon time, at dawn and at dusk. He should also not venture into such places as are completely un-inhabited, or terrains that are harsh, rough and inhospitable, and which cause unpredictable and endless miseries for any creature that happens to inadvertently venture into them. [It should be noted here that the scriptures do not mean to inflict torture upon Yogis or Sanyasis when they prescribe stern rules of conduct for them, as is clear that they tell him not to go to such places that cause physical harm or unnecessary discomfort. Strict codes of conduct and moral discipline are necessary if one has to succeed in such arduous and difficult a path as Yoga and Sanyas. Any negligence would spoil the whole game and would be detrimental for one's own welfare.]

A Parivrajak can stay in a small village for one night, in a bigger village for two nights, in a small town for three nights, and in a large town or city for five nights. [Refer verse nos. 14 and 16 also. When we read verse no. 16 which advises him to stay outside a village we conclude that he is not to stay inside the populated areas but on the outskirts of such villages or cities, or in some temple located within their territorial limits. Staying in a temple or shrine is sanctioned by Canto 3, verse no. 90. The idea is that he should be generally on the move except under certain circumstances. Constant wondering is also endorsed in Canto 7, verse no. 1.] (19).

20. During the rainy season, he should find a place that is surrounded by clean water to stay. [That is, the place should have a clean source of water readily available, such as being near a large pond, a lake or a river.] (20).

21. Treating all the living beings as being similar to his own 'self', having no sense of discrimination between any of them and his own self, he must wander freely like a blind man, a stupid man, a deaf man, a lunatic or mentally deranged man, or a dumb man. [That is, his demeanours should be innocent like a child. He should not see anything like a blind man, not get involved in intellectual exercises like a stupid man, not hear anything like a deaf man, not get mentally attached to anything like a deranged man, and not speak anything like a dumb man. These forms of avoiding any contact with the deluding and entrapping world helps him not only to maintain his calm, peace, neutrality and poise, but also helps him to control his mind and emotions, and to direct their efforts towards his long term spiritual welfare and help him to move ahead on his spiritual path unhindered and without any fetters attached.] (21).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse no. 62.]

22. For Sanyasis who are called 'Bahudak' and for those who live in a forest it is prescribed that they take a bath three times a day.

For Sanyasis who are categorised as 'Hans' it is stipulated that they should take only one bath each day.

For those Sanyasis who have risen to a higher spiritual stature and are therefore honoured by the title of Param Hans (supremely realised, immaculate, holy and pure) there is no such recommendation. [They are no special rules for them as laid out for other categories of Sanyasis. The reason is that bath and other purification rites are meant for those who are yet not completely clean and holy internally in the true sense, or who are like the pilgrim who has yet not reached his destination. The word 'Param' itself shows that this sort of Sanyasi has reached the pinnacle or the citadel of self-realisation and enlightenment. He has been washed clean of all the taints that mire other junior categories of Sanyasis, and so it makes no sense for him to clean the external body, because this body has no relevance at all.

Therefore, for those who have already reached this exalted stature of being a Param Hans, such exercises of taking a purification bath become superfluous, and hence unnecessary. However, if they do wish to take a bath due to some reason, say an extreme hot environment, then they are not even prohibited from doing so. In fact, they are given a lot of freedom to decide what suits them. Refer verse no. 24 of this Canto 4 below.] (22).

23. For 'Ek-Dandi' Sanyasis (i.e. those ascetics who hold a straight staff made of one single piece of wood) the following rules are prescribed for observance—Maun (silence), Yogasan (the various sitting postures of Yoga), Yoga (meditation leading to the union of the self with the cosmic Self, along with unification of the various Prans or vital winds inside the body), Titiksha (to have forbearance, tolerance, fortitude), Ekanta (to live alone and in a secluded place; not to have company), Nispriya (to remain free from desire and wants; to be contented; to be dispassionate, indifferent and detached), and Samatva (to have equanimity; to treat everything and everyone equally; not to discriminate between any two entities based on any worldly criterion) (23).

24. Since it is not required of a Sanyasi (a Parivrajak) who has reached the higher spiritual stature of being a Param Hans (a superior order of Sanyas) to take a regular purification bath (refer verse no. 22), it is sufficient for him to get rid of the various Vrittis (natural tendencies and inclinations) of his Chitta (sub-conscious mind). [That is, for a Param Hans Sanyasi, the riddance of the mind's natural waywardness, inherent fickleness, and its natural tendency to be attracted towards the sense objects of this material world instead of remaining focussed on spiritual matters is equivalent to taking a purification bath. This is because while bathing in water would only clean the external body, if the mind is not freed from its corruptions and faults then the internal being would remain as polluted and defiled as before, and actual cleansing has not been achieved. Since a Sanyasi is not supposed to act to please the world, it is most important for him to clean his inner being more than the external body, as his 'truthful self' is his inner being and not the external body.] (24).

25. Say, how much difference is there between a man who moves around in a body which is like a bag made of skin that encloses or contains flesh, blood, nerves and veins, fat, marrow and bones, and an insect or worm or germ that lives in filth such as excretory products consisting of stool and urine as well as stinking purulent discharges effusing from rotten mucous surfaces? [That is, there is no difference between the two of them.] (25).

26. On the one hand is the actual form and truthful reality of this body as a big container of reprehensible things such as cough and mucous, and on the other hand is its misleading external façade which appears to have handsome qualities such as beautiful and attractive organs, chiselled features and exceptional charms (26).

27. If a man is stupid enough to have affections for and attractions towards such a reproachable and despicable body consisting of nothing else but blood, flesh, purulent mucous, stool, urine, marrow, nerves, veins and bones, then surely enough he goes to attain hell or a lowly and contemptible stature befitting his low mentality (27).

28. Though there is no fundamental difference between the private organs (i.e. the genitals) of a woman and a rotten tubular duct inside the body such as a diseased and swollen vein or nerve, it is still out of a man's own imaginations based on ignorance and stupidity (as well as lust and passions and other such Vikaars or faults and shortcomings of the mind) that he thinks that there is a difference, and therefore he is inclined to long for one and feel repulsive for the other. [That is, to think of the female organ, which is like a hollow tube full of bodily fluids, as charming, and the festering, maggot-infested wound of some vein or artery in the body as horrible, is indeed a stupid and most ignorant way of treating the reality. For a wise man, they are both alike, and if he must abhor the thoughts of rotten vein than he must also instinctively feel repulsive when thinking of the female organ.] (28).

29. After all, what is the female sex organ? It is nothing but a hole that is covered by a flap of skin that has been ruptured down the centre. What more, even this is stinking due to the whirling and the passage of the Apaana Vayu (the wind that moves in the lower part of the abdomen, and usually goes down the intestines and escapes through the anus).

We bow (in sarcasm) to a man who remains ever engrossed in it and its thoughts. What other great courage can he display! [To be enamoured by a hole that

emits stink due to its proximity to the anus from where the foul Apaan wind passes, and through which the horrible stale odour of the urine emanates, is absolutely incredible and the most reprehensible thing for a man within his right senses to do. But still if he does it, then of course he deserves the greatest of ridicule, contempt and reproach.] (29).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 46-50 in the context of present verse nos. 25-29 which also endorse the view that the gross body of the creature is worthy of contempt.]

30. For a truly wise and enlightened Parivrajak there is no duty left to be completed, deed left to be done or action that is yet to be taken with respect to anything, and neither is there any necessity for him or any obligation on his part to wear any external signs or symbols. [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 80-82, 91.]

He is free from all affections and endearments. He is free from all fears and reservations. He is calm, peaceful and poised. He is free from all turmoil, restlessness and agitations. He is also free from the numerous restrictions and obligatory formalities to be observed by various classes and castes in the society. He is even free from the need of making diligent efforts to acquire food for himself (because he is supposed to accept whatever comes his way as a grace of the Lord without being worried about what it is, or from where his next meal would come) (30).

31. A renunciate hermit (Muni) should wear only the loin-cloth, or else he should remain without clothes (i.e. naked) while he constantly remains engrossed in contemplation and remembrance of the supreme Lord. Such a wise and enlightened ascetic (Yati) is successful in attaining the transcendental state of Brahm realisation (31).

32. Though certain signs and symbols are prescribed for the use of Parivrajaks (Sanyasis), but primarily it is Gyan (truthful knowledge of the esoteric principles of the 'supreme self' and metaphysics) that is the provider of Moksha (final liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to them.

All the external signs and symbols of Sanyas and codes of conduct they follow are useless if one has not inculcated Gyan in its holistic and truthful form (32).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse no. 86.]

33. A true Brahman/Brahmin (i.e. a person who is Brahm-realised) is one about whom no one can determine his true nature, as to whether he is a holy and pious person or not, whether he is a wise, knowledgeable, enlightened and learned man or not, and whether he lives an auspicious and righteous life observing all the tenets of right living, right thoughts and right conduct or not. [That is, a truly realised man prefers to keep quiet and not boast of his spiritual achievements or his knowledge. He has no desire for praise that would automatically come should people come to know of this holiness and exalted stature. It makes no difference to him if people neglect him as one other vagabond going around to beg though he might be possessing exceptional mystical powers that would stun the world should he display them even once. He rather prefers anonymity because this gives him his much desired peace and need for solitude. For otherwise, he would be surrounded by multitudes of eager blessing-seekers, and he would regret this development later on.] (33).

[Note—Refer Canto 4, verse no. 2.]

34. This is why a wise and enlightened Parivrajak should not be too much concerned about the signs or symbols of Sanyas, but instead concentrate upon implementing the best of spiritual doctrines pertaining to the supreme Brahm who is eternal and imperishable. It is this knowledge of Brahm that would be the ultimate tool that gives him Moksha as a Sanyasi. [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 91-92.]

Relying on the most esoteric and holy principles of true Sanyas, he should remain incognito and behave in such a way that no one becomes aware of his real spiritual stature. [Refer verse no. 33.] (34).

35. Remaining an enigmatic mystery for all, he must remain above the various restrictions that are imposed upon a man depending upon the different class or caste or phase of life to which he belongs. [That is, he must not conform to any set rules in his behaviour so that people can determine who he might be or what his mental state is.]

Remaining without any permanent shelter, he should wander on the face of the earth like a man who is blind, stupid or dumb. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 62; Canto 4, verse no. 21; Canto 5, verse no. 50, 53 also.] (35).

36. Even the exalted Gods feel eager to attain the exemplary stature of extreme quietude, contentedness and bliss that is experienced by such an achieved Sanyasi when they watch him.

The eclectic spiritual state of Kaivalya (the only one; the unique state of transcendental bliss and quietude) is obtainable only when one is not aware of the existence of any other entity except his own Atma, the pure conscious self. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 27.]

Verily, this is the divine and holy message pertaining to the eclectic spiritual essence known as Brahm Tattva.’ (36).

37. [This verse is in the form of a running paragraph.]

Sage Narad once again asked the great grandfather of creation Brahma—‘Oh Lord! Please elaborate further on the steps involved and the proper system to be followed while accepting the vows of Sanyas.’ [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 80-92.]

Brahma said ‘Tathastu’ (so it shall be) and began his discourse.

‘When one wishes to accept the vows of strict renunciation (Sanyas) and enter the fourth and final phase of life as a Sanyasi—either directly as a ‘Aatur Sanyasi’ (i.e. one who eagerly accepts Sanyas as the result of profound renunciation, without waiting for old age) or after having systematically passed through the earlier three phases of life as a ‘Kram Sanyasi’ (i.e. one who takes to Sanyas after having lived earlier as a Brahmachari or celibate student, a Grishastha or household, and a Vanprastha or one who leaves the house and wanders around as a preparatory stage for final Sanyas)—he must first undertake certain purifying rites and do penances, such as doing Krichra and other such rituals followed by the ‘Astha Shraadh’ (as would be narrated now), that help one to atone for one’s past sins and cleanse one’s self. [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 5-10, 77.]

The Astha Shraadh are the devotional worship and offerings that one makes by the way of oblations and libations to the following eight entities—Gods, Rishis (sages), Dibya Maanav (Holy Men; or those who have attained super-human stature), Bhuts (the five primary elements), Pitras (spirits of dead ancestors), the Matrikaas (divine Goddesses) and one’s own Atma (the pure conscious soul; one’s true ‘self’). It is most important to satisfy these eight before one takes the vows of Sanyas.

[Now, the details of these eight Shraadh are being narrated.] To start with, for doing Dev Shraadh (offerings meant for the Gods) one should first invoke the Vishwa Devas (the Lords of the world) named Satya and Vasu, followed by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder.

For doing Rishi Shraadh, one should invoke all the great sages and seers—viz. the Dev-Rishis (celestial sages), the Raj-Rishis (those sages who have acquired the stature equivalent to a king amongst their peers), and Manushya-Rishis (sages who live like ordinary humans but are more exalted and enlightened than the latter).

For the purpose of Dibya Shraadh (or offerings made for exalted and divine entities), one should invoke the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudra (the eleven forms of Shiva) and the twelve Adityas (Suns)¹.

For the purpose of doing Dibya Maanav Shraadh (i.e. offering worship and oblations to holy men), one should invoke the great men such as Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatkumar, and Sanatsujat.

For doing Bhut Shraadh (or offerings made to the elements), one should invoke the five primary elements such as the earth, the sky etc. (the other elements being water, fire and air), and their manifestations in the form of the five organs of the body such as the eye etc. (the other being ear, nose, tongue and skin) and the four types of creatures called Jarayuj (those born from an embryo developing inside a mother's womb such as humans), Swadej (those born from sweat such as lice), Andaj (those born from eggs such as birds and insects) and Udbhij (those born from seeds such as plants).

For doing Pitra Shraadh (or libations made for the spirit of dead ancestors, especially those of the male ancestors), one should invoke the spirits of one's father, grandfather and great grandfather.

For the purpose of doing Maatri Shraadh (libations made for the spirit of one's mother etc.), one should invoke the spirit of one's mother, grandmother and great grandmother.

Finally, for doing Atma Shraadh, one should invoke one's own Atma as an entity that is pure consciousness and the true 'self' of the worshipper, as well as the Atma (soul; Spirit) of one's father and one's grandfather. [The worshipper must understand that the Atma is a universal and indistinguishable entity—it is the same in his own self as it was in his ancestors. This is the non-dual philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta, and a true Sanyasi is one who believes in this tenet of non-duality.]

These eight Shraadhs are to be treated as part of one obligatory sacrifice ritual for the purpose of accepting the vows of Sanyas. Since each Shraadh if done separately, would require the aspirant to invite two Brahmins to preside over the rituals, it follows that a total of sixteen Brahmins should be invited when they are done together. These Brahmins should be duly honoured and worshipped. The Mantras employed for this purpose should be according to the branch of the Vedas to which these Brahmins owe their allegiance.

These Shraadhs can be done in one day if they are done together (as mentioned above), or spread over eight days if done separately.

The invited Brahmins should be duly honoured, worshipped and fed as described in the rules prescribed for doing Shraadh. At the end of the rituals, the rite of Pinda Daan (offering of rounded balls of cooked cereals to the deity invoked during the ritual) is to be done with great respect. Then donation or Dakshina should be given to the Brahmins along with some mouth fresheners such as betel leaves.

To tonsure the head, the aspirant should leave seven or eight strands of hair on the top of the head and get the rest shaved. The beard, moustache and nails should

also be shaved off. The hair in the arm-pit and around the testicles should never be shaved. After this shaving off of bodily hair, the aspirant must take a bath.

Then, he should repeat the Gayatri Mantra one thousand times at dusk after worshipping Brahm during the prayers offered while observing the Sandhya sacrament. [A Hindu is expected to worship three times of the day when two phases of time meet, such as dawn, noon and dusk. This is called doing Sandhya.]

Next, the aspirant should establish the sacred fire independently to do the special fire sacrifice dedicated to Brahm, called the 'Brahm Yagya'. [Normally when a fire sacrifice is done, the fire in the sacrificial pit is lit from a spark brought from some earlier sacrifice done in a householder's place. But an aspirant Sanyasi should light his own fire independently.]

The Yagya (fire sacrifice) should be done properly by offering melted butter till the offerings of Aajyabhaag is complete according to the way prescribed for the branch of the Vedas one ascribes to. [The 'Aajyabhaag' is the name given to the two libations of Aajya or melted butter that is offered to the Soma (the Moon God) and Agni (the Fire God) preceding the principal oblation to the Darsha sacrifice. The Darsha Yagya is the fire sacrifice that is done on the Amavasya day, the last day of the dark fortnight of the lunar month.]

After completing the fire sacrifice, the worshipper should take a few mouthfuls of Sattu (roasted gram that has been ground to a coarse powder and kneaded into dough with water). Thereafter, he should sip some water to clean the mouth and place some firewood on the fire to save it from extinguishing. Then he should sit on a dark deer skin to the north of the fire pit and spend the night remaining awake and hearing ancient stories as narrated in the Purans etc.

In the fourth quarter of the night (i.e. early morning before sun rise), he should take a bath and cook some sweet porridge in the fire of the previous night. Then he should offer sixteen oblations of this porridge to the sacred fire of the previous night (and in which this porridge was cooked) using the sixteen Mantras of the Purush Sukta (a hymn of the Vedas dedicated to the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading cosmic Supreme Being), saying one Mantra with one offering.

After having worshipped the Supreme Being with this sacrifice he should clean his mouth by sipping some water and make charities by giving away clothes, ornaments, gold, cows, vessels and other material objects that he has in his possession. [That is, he should not keep anything with him when he takes the vows of Sanyas.] This would complete all the prescribed rites and rituals necessary for systematically accepting the order of Sanyas.

Then after having dismissed the Brahmins representing Brahma, he must say the following two Mantras and symbolically establish the Adhi-daivak form (i.e. the divine celestial form) of the sacred fire inside his own being for the future. [That is, now onwards he need not worship the fire formally in any external ritual involving elaborate Mantras and other formalities, but worship it internally in his own 'self'.]

The two Mantras for this purpose are—

(i) 'Sam Ma Sinchantu Marut Samindra Sam Brishaspati; Sam Mayamagni Sinchatwayush Cha Dhanen Cha Balen Chanushmantam Karotu Ma'. (saṃ mā siñcantu marutaḥ samindraḥ saṃbr̥haspatiḥ / saṃmāyamagniḥ siñcatvāyusa ca dhanena ca balena cāyusmantāḥ karotu mā)

[The brief meaning of this Mantra is 'Oh the divine Gods such as Maruts (the Wind Gods), Indra (the king of Gods), Brihaspati (the moral preceptor of Gods) and Agni (the Fire God)—shower me or bless me with welfare and auspiciousness.

Oh Fire God! Bless me with a long life (i.e. a disease-free life), with assets in the form of Gyan (knowledge), and with all necessary abilities and resources (that would help me achieve success in my new life as a Sanyasi).’]

(ii) The second Mantra is ‘Ya Te Agne Yagyiya Tanustyeeyhaya-rohatmatmanam; Acha Vasuni Krinvannasme Naryaa Puruni; Yagyo Bhutva Yagyamaasid Swaam Yonim Jatvedo Bhuva Aajaayamaanha Sa Kshaya Ehi’. (yā te agne yajñīyā tanūstayehyārohātmātmānam / acchā vasūni kṛṇvannasme naryā purūṇi / yajño bhūtvā yajñamāsīda svām yoniṁ jātavedo bhuva ājāyamānaḥ sa kṣaya edhī)

[The brief meaning of this Mantra is ‘Oh Agni (Fire God)! Please reveal yourself here in the holy form that you assume during the sacred fire sacrifices, and while blessing us with all the material things that are needed by all human beings for their welfare and normal comfort in this material world, you must also especially establish yourself perpetually in my inner self called the Atma (my soul). Becoming the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice, establish yourself in your primary holy form. Oh Jatveda Fire—reveal yourself from the earth and get established in my body like it were your abode.’ This is because the body has the earth element as its dominant ingredient.]

After having completed the fire sacrifice as described above, the aspirant should circumambulate the consecrated fire, bow before it reverentially, and give it rest.

Then he should do the Sandhya prayers that are done at dusk and dawn by repeating the holy Gayatri Mantra² one thousand times.

Getting up, he should proceed in the direction of the sun (i.e. towards the west at dusk, and towards the east at dawn) and enter any water body (such as a river or a lake). He should sit down in the water in such a way that the water reaches his navel region, and then offer libations to the eight Dikpals³. [The Gayatri Mantra is principally offered to the Sun God. So, after offering the prayers by facing the Sun God who is in the east at dawn and in the west at sunset, the worshipper moves in the respective direction for the next step to be undertaken now.]

The divine Goddess Savitri (representing the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being and made vivid by the dazzling rays of the Sun God in a symbolic manner) is invoked and requested to establish her divine presence in the Vyahritis⁴. The Mantras to be used for this purpose are the following four—

(i) ‘Aham Vrikchaya Reriv; Kirti Prishtham Gireriv; Urdhvapavitro Vajinivaswamritmasmi; Dravinam Me Sarwachasam Sumedha Amritokchitaha; Iti Trishankorvedanuvachanam.’ (aḥaṁ vṛkṣasya reriva / kīrtiḥ pṛṣṭhaṁ gireriva / ūrdhvapavitro vājīnīvasvamṛtamasmi / draviṇaṁ me savarcasaṁ sumedhā amṛtokṣitaḥ / iti trīśaṅkorvedānuvacanam /)

[The meaning of this Mantra in brief is ‘I am the conqueror of the world that is like a huge tree. My fame is as high as the lofty summit of a mountain. Like the Amrit or nectar that produces food and stored in the sun, I too am a treasury of the most holy and divine nectar of purity. I am glorious and full of understanding and intelligence. I am anointed by the nectar called Amrit. Verily, this is the enlightened words of the great Trishanku.’]

(ii) ‘Yaschandasāmrīṣabho Viśvarūpaḥ; Chandobhyo-adhyamritaatsambavhuv; Sa Me Indro Medhaya Sprinotu; Amritasya Devdharanao Bhuyasam.’
(yaśchandasāmrīṣabho viśvarūpaḥ / chandobhyodhyamṛtātsambabhūva /
sa mendo medhayā sprinotu / amṛtasya devadhāraṇo bhūyāsam /)

[The meaning of this Mantra in brief is ‘He who is lauded by the Vedas and who is manifested in all the forms in existence; he who is specially revealed by the Vedas—let that Indra (the chief amongst the Gods) bless me with intelligence and understanding. Oh Lord (Indra)! Let me be the one who is competent enough as well as the fortunate one who can establish the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma (the supreme Atma or the supreme Consciousness representing the supreme Brahm), who is an embodiment of Amrit (the nectar that gives eternity, bliss and beatitude), in my own self.’ That is, let me be blessed and enlightened enough to accept the august presence of the cosmic Consciousness representing the Parmatma in the form of my own Atma that resides in my inner being as my truthful conscious ‘self’.]

(iii) ‘Sharirum Me Vicharshanam; Jivhaha Me Madhumattama; Karnavhyam Bhuri Visravam; Brahmanha Koshoasi Medhayapihitha; Srutam Me Gopaya.’ (śarīraṃ me vicarṣaṇam / jihvā me madhumattamā / karṇābhyāṃ bhūri viśravam / brahmaṇaḥ kośo’si medhayāpihitaḥ / śrutam me gopāya /)

[The meaning of this Mantra in brief is ‘Let my body be agile, nimble and active. Let my tongue be sweet and pleasant in what it says (i.e. let my speech be nice and sweet; let me be able to talk pleasantly and truthfully). Let my ears hear only the best of words that are spoken (i.e. prevent me from having to hear idle talk, deceitful words or any other kind of falsehoods). You (Savitri) are endowed by the glorious and grand virtues that are like those possessed by Brahma, the creator. Let me not forget the great words that I hear (i.e. give me a good memory).’]

(iv) ‘Dareshanyascha Vitteshanyascha Lokeshanayascha Vyuthitho-aham OM Bhu Sanyastam Mayaa. Om Bhuvha Sanyastam Mayaa. Om Svaha Sanyastam Mayaa. OM Bhurbhuva Svaha Sanyastam Mayeti Mandra-madhya-mataal-jadhya-nibhirmanasaa’ (dāreṣaṇāyāśca vitteṣaṇāyāśca lokeṣaṇāyāśca vyutthito’haṃ om bhūḥ saṃnyastaṃ mayā om bhuvāḥ saṃnyastaṃ mayā om suvaḥ saṃnyastaṃ mayā om bhūrbhuvāḥsuvaḥ saṃnyastaṃ mayeti mandramadhyamatāladhvanibhirmanasā)

[The meaning of this Mantra in brief is ‘I have risen above (i.e. have abandoned) such worldly desires as those related to one’s wife, material prosperity and well-being, as well as all other forms of worldly entanglements such as the desire for worldly glory, grandeur, fame and majesty. I have completely renounced the material world. Indeed, I have fully and completely renounced all glories and majesties that are associated with any of the three worlds such as Bhu (earth), Bhuvaha (the lower heaven) and Swaha (the upper heaven). I don’t long for anything; I do not yearn for anything whatsoever. I have no fears of any kind in my mind ’]

These Mantras are to be said either mentally (i.e. silently), or uttered/muttered with a low voice in a whisper, or can even be said loudly so that others can hear them being said. (manasā vācoccāryābhayaṃ).

Then the aspirant should say the Mantra ‘Abhayam Sarvabhutebhyo Mattha Sarvam Pravartate Swaha’ and sip some water to clean the mouth. (abhayaṃ sarvabhūtebhyo mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate svahe).

[The brief meaning of this Mantra is ‘All the creatures are hereby given fearlessness as far as I am concerned; they no longer have anything to fear from me. All are dear to me. All treat me kindly (and I also reciprocate their gesture by being loving, kind and gracious towards all).’]

The two palms of the hand should be made into a cup and filled with water. This water is thrown in the eastern direction with the Mantra ‘OM Swaha’. After that, all the remaining hairs on the head are to be shaved off.

Now, the Yogyopavit (sacred thread) is to be dispensed with. This is done by saying the Mantra ‘Yagyopavitam Param Pavitram Prajapateriyatsajam Purastaata; Ayushmagryam Pratimuncha Shubhram Yagyopavitam Balamastu Tejaha; Yogyopavit Bahirna Nivasettwamantaha Pravischya Madhye Hyajasttram Paramam Pavitram Yasho Balam Gyan-vairagyam Medham Prayacheti.’ (yajñopavītaṁ paramaṁ pavitraṁ prajāpateryatsahajaṁ purastāt / āyusyamagryaṁ pratimuñcya śubhraṁ yajñopavītaṁ balamastu tejaḥ / yajñopavīta bahirna nivasettwamantaḥ praviśya madhye hyajasraṁ paramaṁ pavitraṁ yaśo balaṁ jñānavairāgyaṁ medhāṁ prayacchati)

[The brief meaning of this Mantra is ‘The Yagyopavit (thread worn by a Hindu across his chest) is sanctified, very holy and pure. It came into existence simultaneously with the creator Brahma. It is the best thing to wear, and is an enhancer of age (i.e. it helps to keep the ill effects of malignant stars that cause diseases and other problems for the body that make the body weak and fragile prematurely at bay so that the age is prolonged). The Yagyopavit should not be kept aside (i.e. it should not be removed from the body and kept elsewhere). Oh the sacred thread that represents the fire sacrifice! Now onwards, please establish your divine presence in a symbolic manner in my Atma and become one with it. (That is, from today onwards, I would assume that you have established your august presence in my Atma in a subtle and symbolic form as I am not going to wear your external gross form on my equally gross body any longer). You are most pure and holy. Bless me with the inner strength that would enable me to wear you or accept you as a symbol of the eternal fire element that represents the sacred fire of the sacrifice, and is the eternal purifier of the soul, in my inner self as the vital spark of life that resides in my gross body. This would enable me with the necessary energy, strength, vitality and stamina that would help me to move ahead on my spiritual path without losing vigour and drive.’]

When the above Mantra is complete, the sacred thread is to be torn (cut or removed) from the body and placed in the cupped palms of the hand which has been dipped in water so that it is already full of it. Then this water, along with the torn sacred thread, is to be reverentially offered to the water body (i.e. the river on the banks of which the ritual is being performed) by saying the Mantra ‘OM Bhu Samudram Gacha Swaha’. (oṃ bhūḥ samudraṁ gaccha svāhe)

[The Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I offer this sacred thread to the earth. Let it be taken to the ocean or the sea in due course of time.’ The sacred thread is actually offered to the river, and when the water of this river would eventually reach the ocean, the thread would find its final resting place there. Since it is not practically feasible for the Sanyasi to go to the ocean or the sea personally to offer the thread there, this medium is adopted by him.]

Then the aspirant should say the following three Mantras, and sip some sanctified water each time the Mantra is said—

- (i) ‘OM Bhu Sanyastam Mayaa’ (oṃ bhūḥ saṃnyastaṃ mayā);
- (ii) ‘OM Bhuvaha Sanyastam Mayaa’ (oṃ bhuvah saṃnyastaṃ mayā); and
- (iii) ‘OM Swaha Sanyastam Mayaa’ (oṃ suvah saṃnyastaṃ mayeti).

[The meaning is simple. It means ‘OM salutations! I renounce everything on the earth’; ‘everything in the lower heavens’; and ‘everything in the upper heavens’ respectively.]

Thereafter, the aspirant should say the Mantra ‘OM Bhu Swaha’ (oṃ bhūḥ svāhetyapsu) and offer the clothes that he has been wearing, along with the waist band, to the water body (vastraṃ kaṭisūtramapi visrjya). [The Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I am offering them to the earth’.]

Thus, having discarded all his possessions and becoming naked, he must think that he has renounced all his worldly obligations and has disassociated himself from all the worldly deeds (sarvakarmanirvartako’hamiti).

Contemplating upon his Atma (his pure conscious ‘self’) as being his true identity (smṛtvā jātārūpadharo bhūtvā svarūpānusandhānapūrvaka), he should raise both his hands sky wards (to indicate that he has nothing to conceal now, that he has no possessions now, that he is finally bidding farewell to this world, that he has surrendered himself to the Supreme Being, and to tell the Lord ‘here I come!’) and head in the northern direction (mūrdhva bāhurudīcīṃ gacchet)⁵ (37).

[Note—¹The eight Vasus—The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhaash.

The eleven Rudras—(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugrareta, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following— Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparajaet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.

The twelve Adityas— According to mythology, there are said to be *twelve Adityas* which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following— Dhata, Arayma, Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta, and Vishnu.

²The Gayatri Mantra is ‘OM BHURBHUVAHA SVAHA¹, TSAVIURVARENYAM², BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAH³, DHIYO YO NAH PRACODAYAT⁴’. It means ‘OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahm. He is the lord of creation of the terrestrial, the celestial and heavenly worlds. I offer my oblations to you. That Brahm is luminous like the sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move

on the righteous and noble path'. The four phrases of the Gayatri Mantra are clearly marked by small numerals in this Mantra. This Mantra appears in the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).

³The eight Dikpals—are the custodians or protectors of the eight directions. Indra (the king of Gods) takes care of the east, Yama (the God of death) takes care of the south, Varun (Water God) takes care of the west, Kuber (the Gods' treasurer) takes care of the north, Agni (the Fire God) takes care of the south-east, Surya (the Sun God) takes care of the south-west, Vayu (the Wind God) takes care of the north-west, and Ishan (Shiva) takes care of the north-east.

⁴The *Vyahritis* are the primary root words pronounced by the creator Brahma at the time of the beginning of creation and from which formed the nucleus around which the seven worlds formed. In other words, the rest of the creation was revealed from these primary sounds created by Brahma.

The seven 'Vyahritis' are the words—(1) Bhu, (2) Bhuvaha, (3) Swaha, (4) Maha, (5) Janaha, (6) Tapaha, and (7) Satyam. 'Bhu' was the nucleus for earth, 'Bhuvaha' for the sky above the earth, 'Swaha' for the space beyond the earth's atmosphere and is generally meant for the heavens, 'Maha' stands for the greater heavens beyond the solar system, called the Maha-Loka where enlightened sages and seers are supposed to dwell (as opposed to earth where ordinary creatures including subterranean creatures would finally take up residence), 'Tapaha' was the place where exalted ascetics would do penances and austerities, and 'Satyam' was the truthful and ultimate abode where the ultimate and irrefutable supreme truthful entity which is the only Authority in creation resides.

According to Sankhya Shastra and the Purans, Brahma, who is known as 'Swayambhu' (self-created and self-begotten in the sense that he had no father or ancestor from whom he descended) created seven elements called 'Vyahriti', viz. Bhuh, Bhuvaha, Swaha, Mahaha, Janaha, Tapaha and Satyam respectively which constitute the fundamental elements which formed the gross body of the creation as its core building blocks at the macro level. Encircling this core is the rounded globe called 'earth' which is surrounded by concentric circles constituting of 'water', 'energy' called 'Tej', 'wind or air', 'sky or space', the notions that are described as 'pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity' collectively called 'Ahankar', and the notions of 'importance, majesty, grandeur, magnificence and lordliness' called collectively as 'Mahattatva'. Each of them was ten times larger than its preceding layer or circle.

The seven Vyahritis and the worlds they represent are the following—(a) 'Bhu' represents this world (earth), fire, Rig Veda and Pran (life giving breath); (b) 'Bhuvaha' represents the sky called Antariksha, wind or air, Sam Vedas and Apaana wind (i.e. the wind which passes down the intestines and helps digestion and excretion); (c) 'Swaha' represents Dukoka (the heavens), Aditya (the celestial sun), Yajur Veda and Vyan (the wind that prevails throughout the body); (d) 'Maha' represents Aditya (the Sun God), Chandrama (the Moon God), Brahm (the supreme transcendental Being who has no specific attributes) and Anna (food which sustains life in this creation); (e) 'Janaha' represents the world inhabited by mortal creatures such as the life on earth; (f) 'Tapaha' represents the world where great ascetics and hermits live to do severe penances and austerities, and therefore it is most auspicious and holy and marked by an effulgence of divine energy and splendour; and (g) 'Satyam' representing that truthful abode where the supreme transcendental Brahm lives; it is the ultimate destination of all spiritual pursuits, and is marked by eternal beatitude and felicity.

⁵In the context of the Indian sub-continent where the Upanishads were first conceived and composed, going in the 'northern' direction refers to heading for the lofty heights of the Himalayan mountain range. It is here that great ascetics, sages, seers, hermits and mendicants used to live in early times. It has a dense population of enlightened and self-realised souls. This factor injected an aura of divinity and

positivity to the northern direction. Further, the northern direction where the mountains and verdant pristine forests were located had the quality of being tranquil, lonely, serene, calm and peaceful that was very helpful for spiritual pursuits, such as doing Tapa (austerity and penance), Dhyan (contemplation) and Yoga (meditation). This is the reason why the green, cool and pleasant surroundings of the mountains and their forests were chosen by ancient sages and ascetics as their preferred habitat. This place was far away from the hustle and bustle and the restlessness of ordinary mundane life of the world, and was untouched by corruptions and worldly taints. It gave these holy people absolute peace and quietude that is so necessary for spiritual pursuit, mental peace and emotional solace.

The term 'northern' therefore symbolically represented the upward mobility of the soul when it sought to rise above the humdrum of worldly life, break free from all worldly shackles and entanglements, and seek its liberation and deliverance from the gross body as well as the gross world. It represented the quest for higher spiritual way of existence, a life of higher consciousness, awakening, realisation, wisdom, enlightenment etc. It represented a state of existence free from all moral and spiritual encumbrances represented by numerous taints, faults, corruptions and blemishes that are associated with life in this world. It would be a utopian and pristine pure form of enlightened existence much like the crystal clean and pristine environment of the mountains and its forests themselves.

The dimension, the intensity and the density of positive energy emanating from the pure consciousness is more in the northern direction as compared to other directions because of a greater population of self-realised and enlightened sages who lived in this particular region of the earth. The lofty peaks of the mountains are metaphors of high peaks of pure consciousness, or high intensity waves of consciousness that have peaked, and its accompanying high level of spiritual energy and positivity, while the valleys, depressions and gorges present elsewhere on earth symbolise just the opposite—low level of consciousness and its accompanying low level of spiritual energy.

The world below the northern direction, i.e. everywhere else other than the northern direction, is literally like a slum-ghetto in spiritual metaphor—it is riddled with all sorts of factors that tie down the creature to this deluding world and its entanglements; it keeps the soul trapped in shackles; it impedes growth and development; it breeds moral and spiritual corruption and degeneration. Indeed, it is so gross that it needs quite an effort on the part of the aspirant to break free from its fetters and rise above to his final freedom.

We can look at these two directions from another angle. As compared to the northern direction where the high mountains are located, the opposite direction of the south is where the 'ocean' (the great Indian Ocean) is present. Whereas the mountain represents 'high' ground to which a man rushes for his life out of fear of being drowned during floods and deluges, the ocean is the one that does the opposite—it submerges and drowns everything; everything sinks in its fathomless waters. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the northern direction provides the high moral ground for the creature, and moving towards this direction means spiritual progress whereby the soul is lifted from the bowls of low forms of gross life, and endeavours to reach for the higher form of existence symbolised by the lofty peaks of the mountains. On the other hand, the southern direction is a metaphor for a lowly and gross form of existence that virtually drowns the creature in the quagmire of worldly delusions and its attendant problems just like the ocean sinks everything put in it.

The southern direction is a metaphor for spiritual downfall, degradation, degeneration and depletion of spiritual energy. The low-bound soul gets stuck in this marsh, gets dirty and corrupted, and thereby loses the pristine cleanliness and shine that it inherently possesses. The southern direction representing the gross and deluding world is entrapping for the soul, it's an impediment for the soul's liberation and deliverance, while the northern direction where high land and mountains are

present represent the state of existence when the soul lives in a high moral ground, free from all taints and blemishes, and is equivalent to the soul's progress towards its ultimate aim of finding liberation and emancipation.

This being so, those enlightened souls who lived in the northern direction were deemed to be like 'radiant Gods' because of the high level of energy of the consciousness emanating from them and forming a bright halo around them. As compared to these enlightened souls, those who lived down in the pit of ignorance and delusions that was characteristic of this material world lacked this glow of divine energy, and hence were regarded as 'dark-complexioned'.

The other two directions, such as the east and the west, are dominated by plains and comparatively flat land in nature as compared to the mountains in the north and the ocean in the south. So they were represented by those who were ordinary humans, neither as brilliant as the ones who lived in the northern direction, nor as dark as the ones who lived in the southern direction.]

38. If the aspirant for Sanyas is already enlightened and learned then it is deemed that he must have accepted the Mantra OM and the Mahavakyas (the great sayings) of the Vedas from his learned Guru (moral preceptor) before he has taken the vows of Sanyas. As a result, it is expected of him that he becomes firmly established in the truth that there is an eternal and unambiguous uniformity in this creation so much so that there is nothing which is separate from his own 'self' (i.e. that everything in this existence is one or the other form of one universal Consciousness), and with this conviction firmly engrained in his mind he should roam gladly and carefree in this world.

For food he must rely on leaves, flowers, fruits and water. While wandering, he can take shelter in mountains, forests or shrines.

If he has discarded all clothes after taking the vows of Sanyas and prefers to remain a Digambar (naked), then it is expected of him that he would be overwhelmed by the eclectic realisation and constant experience of the presence of the ever-blissful Atma, which is his pure conscious 'self', inside his own lotus-like heart, that he would believe in the tenet that it is best for him to keep a safe distance from all involvement in deeds, that he would be regularly practicing Pranayam (breath control through certain Yoga exercises to preserve and strengthen his vital life forces), keep alive (active) his vital life forces by surviving on juices and skins of fruits and flowers, as well as on leaves, roots, tubers and water, and that the only desire he would have is to seek Moksha (emancipation and salvation) for which purpose he would live alone in mountain caves, always and consistently doing Japa (repetition) of the Tarak Mantra¹ (a special Mantra that gives deliverance to the soul) as well as contemplating and meditating upon the supreme Brahm till the time he leaves the mortal body (38).

[Note—¹The *Tarak Mantra* is the divine formula that provides liberation and deliverance to the creature's soul or his Atma. It, in other words, provides the spiritual aspirant Mukti. In relation to Brahm, this Mantra is 'OM'.

Refer Canto 7, verse no. 11 as well as Canto 8 full of this Narad Parivrajak Upanishad. Refer also to Atharva Veda's *Atharvashir Upanishad*, Kandika 4.]

39. If he has taken to the path of Sanyas with the desire of obtaining enlightenment (without prior initiation from a Guru as narrated in verse no. 38), then, after he has proceeded for about one hundred steps and is addressed by his Guru or some other wise man such as a Brahmin who calls after him and says—'Oh the lucky one! Stop; stop. Accept the Brahm Danda (an ascetic's staff representing his one support and one belief in Brahm, the Supreme Being), the mendicant's ochre clothes, and the

Kamandalu (water pot). You must come to the Guru to accept the great Mantras of OM and the Mahavakyas before you proceed ahead as a Sanyasi'—he must turn back and heed their advice.

When he comes back to his elders and the Guru, he should accept the signs of formal Sanyas when they are given to him by them. These signs are the Danda (rod or staff), the Katisutra (the thread worn around the waist), the Kaupin (the loin-cloth), the Shaati (the single piece of unstitched cloth covering the upper body), and the Kamandalu (water pot). [In other words, the formal process of accepting the vows of Sanyas involves obtaining permission from one's elders and Guru. Merely walking away as a Sanyasi is not the prescribed method, though it is not strictly prohibited as it is allowed for the Aatur Sanyasi and for those who take Sanyas at the end of the Vaanprastha phase—see verse no. 37. As it would be clear by reading the present verse, the man who is taking Sanyas is doing so directly either when he is still a Brahmachari or a Grihastha and has yet not entered the Vaanprastha phase because as soon as he has entered this stage he is deemed to have snapped all his ties with the world of the earlier phase of a householder's life, including all his family members, compatriots and even his moral preceptor or spiritual teacher, the Guru.]

The Danda is to be made of bamboo only, and its length should not be more than the height of the Sanyasi's body as measured from the feet to his head. It should be flawless, without any scratches or roughness, should be smooth, should not have any holes, or in any other way damaged by insects. Its colour should not be black or dark.

The aspirant should fulfill all formalities of purification such as sipping some water to clean the mouth etc. before accepting the Danda as a unique symbol of Sanyas and an exemplary renunciate and ascetic's way of life. Then he should say the prescribed Mantra before actually accepting and holding the Danda formally. The Mantra is 'Sakhā Ma Gaupayaujha Sakshayosindrasya Vajroasi Vatragna Sharm Me Bhav Yatpaapam Tanniyaraye'. (sakhā mā gopāyaujaḥ sakhāyo'sindrasya vajro'si vātragnaḥ śarma me bhava yatpāpaṃ tannivārayeti danḍaṃ parigrahe).

[The brief meaning is 'Oh Danda! Protect my friend known as the Pran or the vital life that is present inside my body. You too are my best friend, and it is you who is held by Indra, the king of Gods, as his Vajra (which is his invincible weapon). It was you, in your form as the Vajra, who had killed the demon Vrittasur. Please become my protector and a provider of welfare. Whatever sins that might be still lingering inside me, please destroy them.']

To accept the Kamandalu (kamaṇḍaluṃ parigrahya), the Sanyasi should say OM and the prescribed Mantra (praṇavapūrvakaṃ) which is 'Jaggajivanam Jivanaadhaarbhutam Mate Ma Mantrayasva Sarvadaa Sarvasaumyati'. (jgagajjīvanam jīvanādhārabhūtaṃ mā te mā mantrayasva sarvadā sarvasaumyati).

[You are the bearer of life and the support of life in all its forms as you carry water, which is the undisputed nectar of life. I offer this Mantra to you. Please always be benevolent upon me and never let me suffer for want of the soothing nectar of life known as water.]

The Katisutra (the waist band) should be accepted by the Mantra 'Kaupinadharam Katisutramom'. (kaupīnādhāraṃ kaṭisūtramomiti)

[I am accepting the Katisutra which is basis of my accepting the loin-cloth or the Kaupin, which I would always wear.]

The Kaupin (the loin-cloth) is accepted by the Mantra ‘Guhyachadakaṃ Kaupinmom’. (guhyācchādakaṃ kaupīnamomīti)

[The Kaupin covers my private parts like a canopy or a veil, and I accept it voluntarily.]

The cloth on the upper part of the body is accepted after the following Mantra is said ‘Shitvatoshna Trankaram Daiha Rakshanmom’. (śītavātoṣṇatrāṇakaram dehaikarakṣaṇamomīti)

[The cloth would protect me against cold and heat. It would afford protection to my body.]

Sipping a little water once again, he must feel fully fulfilled and spiritually contented as if he has been duly anointed and sanctified in accordance to his own wishes as well as the edicts of the scriptures. (kaṭisūtrakaupīnavastramācamanapūrvakaṃ yogapaṭṭābhīkṛto bhūtvā kṛtārtho’hamīti)

Thereafter, after this formal initiation into the fold of Sanyas, he must strive to obey its tenets most sincerely and very diligently. (matvā svāśramācāraparo)

Verily, this is what this Upanishad teaches (bhavedityupaniṣat) (39).

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 5

[This Canto narrates the different types of Sanyas and Sanyasis (a person who has taken the vows of Sanyas), as well as the laws that govern them, and the importance of obeying these laws.]

1. The celestial sage Narad asked the great grandfather of creation, Brahma, ‘Oh Lord! You have said that the Sanyas Ashram is when all deeds are dispensed with. And then you say that a follower of this holy way of life should obey its doctrines by carefully doing things and acting in a manner that is specially prescribed for this phase of life. These appear to be contradictory, so please clarify the position.’

Brahma replied, ‘Oh Narad! A living being having a physical gross body has four states of existence of its consciousness. They are Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, Sushupta or deep sleep state, and Turiya or transcendental state which goes beyond the third Sushupta state¹. All creatures live in one of these states, and these states are therefore the base upon which all their activities depend. These states inspire or instigate the creature to do deeds, acquire Gyan (truthful knowledge; enlightenment), or develop Vairagya (renunciation, detachment and dispassion depending upon the preponderance of various factors associated with a particular stage of existence).

Since all the creatures live in one or the other of these four states of existence of consciousness, they therefore behave and act according to the characteristic qualities and features of the particular state in which their consciousness exists at any given moment.

The four Ashrams² (phases of life of a man) that are prescribed by the Srutis and Smritis (ancient scriptures such as the Vedas and Purans), such as Brahmacharya (the first phase of celibacy and student-hood), Grihastha (the second phase as a householder), Vaanprastha (the third phase when a man leaves the house and heads for pilgrimage or for the forest), and Sanyas (the fourth and final phase of complete renunciation of all things worldly), are also like these four states of existence of consciousness. Just like a man is forced to behave in accordance to the state in which his consciousness exists in a given point of time, and all such acts of his are deemed to be normal and natural while he is in that phase but would look very odd and out of place in other states of existence, a Sanyasi is also expected to follow the rules of conduct that are prescribed for this phase of life by the scriptures without being perturbed about them or thinking guilty at observing these laws—because this is a normal way of behaviour that is prescribed for and expected from a person who lives the life of a Sanyasi.’

Hearing this, Narad asked, ‘Oh Lord! Now please tell me how many types of Sanyas are there, and about the subtle differences between the processes adopted for being initiated into each one of them.’ (1).

[Note—¹The four states of existence: Refer also to verse nos. 24-25 of the present Canto 5.

There are a number of Upanishads that describe this concept in great detail, such as (a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Subalo-panishad, Canto 4 full as well as Canto 9, verse no. 1-7; Paingalo-panishad, 2/11-15; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4-2/5; (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 59-64, 72; Canto 4, verse no. 11-20; Brahmo-panisha, verse no. 1, 20-21; Kaivalyo-panishad, verse no. 12-14; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15; Sarvasaaro-panishad, verse no. 4; Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 14. (c) Atharva Veda tradition—Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Atharvashikha; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4-7.

²The four Ashrams—Refer Chapter 6, Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 5, verse no. 8, note no. 1.

³A little bit of explanation would clarify the meaning here. A man in, say, the dreaming state of existence lies physically inactive because his external body is asleep, but his mind and sub-conscious are very much active, and he is living an active life in the imaginary world of his dreams. So, if he does anything in this dreaming state while appearing to be inactive physically, and then claim to have done it when he wakes up to reality, then no matter how incongruous and untruthful he might appear to be in his claims but he is actually speaking the truth.

He might not do, or simply cannot do, certain things while in the waking state of existence, but he can certainly do them in his dreams. For instance, he cannot actually jump across a tall building or fly in the air while awake, and it is absolutely absurd and incredulous even to suggest such a thing, but of course he can do so in his dreams, and then it becomes not only possible but believable too. Since any action or activity necessarily needs the involvement of the mind, it follows that the mind is active in both the waking state called the Jagrat state as well as in the dreaming state called the Swapna state of existence. But in the deep sleep state of conscious called the Sushupta state of existence the mind is defunct, and the man does not remember anything of the moment while the consciousness was in this third state. So, he might get up and perform a certain act while the mind is actually in the third state of deep sleep, and then when he actually wakes up in the sense that his mind is active in the conventional state of wakefulness, then he would not remember anything that he had done himself a while ago when his mind was in the deep sleep state.

Similarly, the same set of deeds that a man does assume different meanings depending upon which of the four Ashrams he belongs to. For instance, as a

Brahmachari he studies the Vedas to acquire knowledge that would prepare him to face life and its problems with confidence. As a Grihastha he keeps in touch with the Vedas and studies them as a means of finding ways to enhance his family's welfare and his own renown and fortunes as a learned man who believes in religious tenets, as well as to seek answers for his spiritual problems and seek guidance in the scriptures to solve the predicaments that he faces in practical life in this world. As a Vaanprastha he studies them to find ways for getting rid of his sins that he might have committed willingly or unwillingly in the course of his life and their consequences along with finding answers for the numerous spiritual problems that had been confounding him till now. And as a Sanyasi he studies them to find final solution in the form of the emancipation and salvation of his soul, the quick path to his liberation and deliverance, as well as to understand the truth about Brahm and his own Atma. During the phase of Sanyas, his main endeavour is to find final peace and rest for his soul, and to ensure that he does not have to take another birth to undergo the same series of horrors that he had to endure in the present birth.

Another example is this—as a student he eats to give sufficient and proper nourishment to his body and mind during their developmental stage, as a householder he eats to enjoy the taste of the food and build a strong and handsome body, as a Vaanprastha he eats to keep up his energy levels to help him in his wanderings, while as a Sanyasi he eats just enough to sustain his Pran or vital life factors till the time the Pran leaves the body effortlessly and painlessly when the due time comes for discarding the gross body. As a Sanyasi he does not eat to fatten his body or pamper his taste buds and tongue; he does not eat to satisfy his desire for tasty food or fill his stomach, but just to sustain the Pran inside the body till the proper time comes for the Pran to leave it.]

2. Explaining the various categories of Sanyasis and their subtle differences, Brahma elaborated—‘Oh Narad! How the type of Sanyas affects the behaviour of a practitioner of Sanyas would now be explained by me. Listen carefully.

In truth, Sanyas is essentially of one universal type (because basically it means exemplary renunciation of everything that is non-truth while accepting only one eternal Truth called the Atma which is pure cosmic universal Consciousness). But it is either due to ignorance and worldly delusions, or the inability of the mind to grasp its sublime and esoteric nuances that this august and holy institution of Sanyas has been classified into four categories¹.

Hence, Sanyas is said to be of four principle types as follows—Vairagya-Sanyas, Gyan-Sanyas, Gyan-Vairagya-Sanyas, and Karma-Sanyas² (2).

[Note—¹This classification is just a creation of the mind; it is not real. Therefore, all the Sanyasis are to be equally treated, and none of them is either junior or senior to the other. Actually, the classification of Sanyas into various categories is done to mark the different paths by which a man can become a Sanaysi. There are many circumstances and processes, but all lead to one single goal. It is like reaching the same destination by different people who have taken different routes and means to do so.

It also refers to the different levels of mental development, intellectual reach, enlightenment, wisdom, erudition and self-realisation in different people who have become a Sanyasi. In other words, though each of them has become a Sanyasi, and once they do so they stand on the same footing, but the path and the method they adopted, the basic reason for their choosing the life of Sanyas, the way they had seen this world and got the inspiration to become a Sanyasi—all differ from one individual to another. And this is indicated by the category of Sanyas they belong to.

The classification of Sanyasis into different categories is also to indicate the different stages through which a spiritual aspirant passes before his obtaining final emancipation and salvation, or his final liberation and deliverance. Just like a student

who has to pass many stages in his quest for knowledge, the path of Sanyas too has to pass many milestones. Each successive stage of Sanyas marks one higher stage of spiritual enlightenment and attainment. This step-by-step process is the routine method of attaining full maturity as a Sanyasi, but it does not mean that there cannot be persons who reach this stage with the minimum of effort and time because of the divine spark of enlightenment lighting inside their inner-self early than expected. For instance, even in modern system of education and professional life, there are people who reach the top of the ladder quicker than the others, in a much younger age than the rest. But of course such people are rare.

²Refer Sanyas Upanishad of Sam Veda tradition, verse nos. 18-22.

The present Narad Parivrajak Upanishad also lists other categories of Sanyasis in its verse nos. 12-21 of the present Canto 5, and verse no. 2-11 of Canto 7.]

3. A person who has no worldly taints and corruptions affecting his mind and inner self, who is naturally not inclined to have any sort of attractions or yearnings whatsoever for any of the material sense objects of the world as an auspicious good affect of his past life, and who has developed profound sense of sincere and deep renunciation, detachment and dispassion as another good affect of these auspicious virtues—if such a man accepts the vows of Sanyas (exemplary and truthful renunciation, detachment and dispassion), then it is called ‘Vairagya-Sanyas’—i.e. a Sanyas dominated by the glorious virtue of Vairagya—sincere and truthful renunciation for all things of this material world of sense objects (3).

4. A person who has developed natural dispassion towards this world and its material sense objects as a result of Gyan or truthful knowledge acquired by various avenues such as by studying of the scriptures, or by realising the worthlessness and falsehood of the world as a result of personal experience, or by tasting both the good and the bad effects of deeds leading to constant state of uneasiness and flux.

His intellect and wise mind tells him about the corrupt world and its tainted nature, a world that is full of such negative traits as having, inter alia, Krodh (anger), Irshya (jealousy and ill-will), Asuya (finding faults with others while being full of faults himself), Ahankar (false sense of pride and ego), and Abhiman (pride, vanity, arrogance and hypocrisy) as its integral part. He strives to keep his mind aloof from such a tarnished world.

He abandons all desires that relate to a woman, wealth and fame which symbolise a person’s three natural Vasanas (passions) called Daihik Vasana (passions and desires that relate to his sense organs and their natural wish for gratification), Shastra Vasana (desire to get mastery over the scriptures) and Loka Vasana (desire to acquire name, fame, wealth and material prosperity in this world). Just like an ordinary man treats vomited food with disgust and repugnance, he treats these Vasanas with equal disdain.

Instead, he arms himself with the four holy Saadhans¹ or means for spiritual enhancement, and thus empowered, he accepts the august vows of Sanyas. Acceptance of Sanyas by such a man is called ‘Gyan Sanyas’—i.e. a Sanyas which is marked by the dominance of Gyan—truthful knowledge, enlightenment, erudition and wisdom—as a factor which inspires a man to take to the life of Sanyas (4).

[Note--¹The four *Saadhans* are called ‘Saadhan Chatushtya’, and the term refers to the four fold spiritual disciplines in the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. They are the following—(1) Vivek (wisdom and discrimination; intelligent interpretation of given set of information to arrive at the optimum solution; the best use of the faculty of thinking and contemplation to separate the grain from the chaff. (2) Vairagya (total renunciation and dispassion; a sense of complete detachment and non-involvement.

(3) Samaadhistak (the group of six spiritual disciplines having six steps such as Saam or tranquility and calmness, Dama or self restraint or self control, Uparati or the ability of the external sense organs to refrain from involvement in and pursuit of the sense objects in this material world, Titiksha or forbearance and tolerance, Shradha or unwavering faith, conviction and belief in one's spiritual path, and Samaadhaan or concentration and finding of solutions to vexing spiritual problems by focusing of the faculty of mind and intellect to remove doubts and confusions). And, (4) Mumuksha (desire for liberation and deliverance of the soul; seeking the soul's emancipation and salvation).]

5. A person who has gone through the ups and downs of life, who has experienced all the aspects of life, both the pleasant as well as the unpleasant, in all its hues by passing through all the three phases of life (such as the Brahmacharya or life as a celibate student, a Grishastha or as a householder, and a Vaanprastha who is a person who leaves the house and embarks upon pilgrimage or heads for a lonely life away from the hustle and bustle of the world), and in the process has gathered valuable information about the true nature of the world as well as the 'self' by being analytical and intelligent in interpreting each of his experiences—such a person is filled with an overwhelming sense of renunciation and dispassion towards the false and deluding world and its objects. Instead, he learns the sublime truth about his own 'self' which is pure and truthful consciousness that is an eternal and imperishable entity. He would rather remain submerged in the thoughts of this blissful 'self' which gives him stable peace and tranquillity than remain agitated and restless by thinking about the selfish world which is nevertheless unstable.

In other words, being discriminating, wise and intelligent, he would develop a natural sense of renunciation, dislike and dispassion towards this false material world of sense objects and their equally false charms of which he has had a first-hand experience, and instead develop an affinity for his truthful 'self' which gives him eternal peace, happiness, contentedness and bliss.

Since he remains aloof from the world and does not get involved in its ensnaring quagmire, he remains as innocent and incorrupt as a little child or a newborn infant who is yet un-tarnished, un-affected and un-influenced by the myriad spiritual corruptions, countless faults and numerous negative forces of the world in which he lives.

Indeed, this eclectic and sublime mental state of renunciation and dispassion obtained by a combination of knowledge about the reality and truth of existence, and a first-hand experience of life with all its bitter realities, is called 'Gyan-Vairagya-Sanyas'—because both the eclectic virtues of Gyan and Vairagya have played a stellar role in equal proportion that have inspired him to take to the life of Sanyas (5).

6. A person who lives through all the three phases of life, such as a Brahmachari, a Grihastha and a Vaanprastha, in a systematic manner, and then takes to the life of Sanyas simply because this is the ancient tradition that has sanction of the scriptures, though he might not have actually developed renunciation and dispassion towards the world, its attractions and his responsibilities, then this is called 'Karma Sanyas'.

In other words, he becomes a Sanyasi because it is part of his religious obligations, it is his duty to follow tradition, and it is expected of him that he takes the vows of Sanyas as an upholder of auspicious and righteous way of living that is ordained by the scriptures, and if he does not do so he would be subject to ignominy and accused of violating traditional norms and prescriptions of the scriptures, though the most important criterion for Sanyas, which is inculcation of a deep sense of

sincere renunciation, profound dispassion and total detachment towards the world and its material objects, might not be present in him. Such a man is called a Karma Sanyasi, and the form of Sanyas is called 'Karma Sanyas' (6).

[Note—A Karma Sanyasi takes to the path of Sanyas as his moral duty and religious obligation rather than an internal desire to renounce the world out of enlightenment and realisation of its falsehood, as well as a sincere desire for obtaining spiritual liberation and deliverance along with attaining true peace of mind and bliss for the soul. Truthfully speaking, Gyan and Vairagya lack in such people, hence this type of Sanyas is no match for that which is marked by these two eclectic virtues.]

7. A person who is so overwhelmed by a deep-rooted sense of renunciation, detachment and dispassion that he yearns to renounce the world even while he is still in the first phase of life as a Brahmachari (a celibate student), and accepts the life of Sanyas without entering the second phase of Grihastha (householder), becomes as innocent and holy as a little child or a new-born infant who is yet not influenced by the corruptions and taints of the world. Indeed, this is called 'Vairagya-Sanyas'.

In other words, when Sanyas is accepted by being driven by an inborn urge for renunciation and dispassion even while the person is still in the earlier phase of life as a student, when this world fails to attract the aspirant's mind by its charms and temptations, then this sort of Sanyas is called Vairagya Sanyas. In this sort of Sanyas, natural sense of renunciation, detachment and dispassion are so overwhelming, profound and robust besides being natural, and not imposed or pretentious, that no amount of enticements and cajoling would ever tempt his mind to swerve towards the charms of the material world. Hence, this sort of Sanyas is self-sustaining and self-enhancing.

An enlightened Sanyasi who is predominantly intelligent, wise, learned, erudite and analytical in his approach is called a 'Gyan-Sanyasi' because 'Gyan' or knowledge is what has made him take to the path of renunciation of falsehood and acceptance of truth; it is Gyan that is the driving force for his conscious decision to take to Sanyas, rather than any other considerations or compulsions.

On the other hand, a Sanyasi who has taken this vow of Sanyas because this is the correct direction in which a righteous and religious person is supposed to go during the final years of his life, is called a 'Karma-Sanyasi'. He is simply following tradition and has taken Sanyas because this is the ordained and prescribed way which he must follow or obey, without questioning its utility for him, or whether he fits in the bill or not (7).

8-10. Karma Sanyas is of two types—first is called 'Nimitta-Sanyas', and the second is called 'A-nimitta Sanyas'. [The word 'Nimitta' means factor, motive, cause, inducement, account, reason. The word 'A-nimitta' is the opposite of Nimitta.]

Aatur Sanyas comes under the category of Nimitta Sanyas. [In other words, when the spiritual aspirant takes the vows of Sanyas because he is very Aatur or eager to renounce the world and seek his spiritual liberation and deliverance, then it is called 'Nimitta Sanyas' as this eagerness on his part is the motivating factor, the cause and the driving force that has impelled him, that has inspired him to become a Sanyasi.]

On the other hand, pure Karma Sanyas comes under the category of 'A-nimitta Sanyas'. [When a man becomes a Sanyasi because he must do so as this is the established tradition, and he should not violate ancient laws, then renunciation is not the 'Nimitta' or causative factor for his taking to the life of Sanyas. He has, in fact, taken to Sanyas as a religious duty and a process ordained by the scriptures as well as

by tradition instead of being inspired by internal Vairagya or Gyan. Hence, it is ‘A-nimitta’ Sanyas—i.e. renunciation not due to some inborn virtue of dispassion or enlightenment, but undertaken as part of established tradition.]

When a person becomes sick and is unable to do his routine worldly deeds, he prefers to die and get rid of his agonies and torments. Physical incompetence or inability to perform deeds and take actions in this world also leads one to accept a virtual life of Sanyas as he is unable to do anything, fulfill his obligations, live up to his expectations, and generally unable to enjoy the world and its sense objects. So, when one takes the vows of Sanyas as a result of diseases that are bodily crippling for him, then this is called Nimitta Sanyas as well as Aatur Sanyas. [The first sort of Sanyas is called ‘Nimitta’ because the diseases and physical infirmities have been the cause of his decision to take Sanyas—they become a ‘Nimitta’ or causative and motivating factor. It is also called ‘Aatur’ because he is very eager to get rid of this miserable body and a wretched life that has become a constant burden for him, and instead seek liberation and deliverance from it by taking to the path of Sanyas.]

A wise and erudite person who has a healthy and strong body but still takes to the life of Sanyas as a result of sprouting of enlightenment and profound wisdom that makes him firmly convinced of the fact that this world, along with all the material things and sense objects, as well as the body which one is so proud of and which is so handsome and strong, are false, transient and perishable, that therefore they cannot ever give eternity, peace and bliss to the man—verily, such a man is like the Hans (the divine Swan) which is immaculate and the wisest amongst all the birds that have their habitat in the sky. He is like the Vasu (i.e. the Sun God) that moves majestically across the sky. He is like the Hota (the priest who offers oblations to the sacred fire during fire sacrifices) as well as the Fire God who is honoured at the altar of the same fire sacrifice. He is also the honoured guest who is always welcome and shown the greatest of respect in the house of noble and righteous householders. He is the most exalted and highly respected amongst humans. He is deemed to be as honourable and revered as the best of things in this world. He is deemed to be a living embodiment of the eternal Truth that is universal and uniform. It is he who is symbolised by the subtle ‘truth’ of the sky element (i.e. he possesses all the grand virtues of the sky element, such as being universal, infinite, fathomless, incorrupt, all-pervading, all-encompassing etc.). It is he who emerges from the water element (i.e. he is like Lord Hiranyagarbha (Vishnu and Brahma) who has emerged from the primordial cosmic fluid, and from whom the rest of the creation evolved; he is like the ‘lotus’ that emerges from the middle of the water in a pond). It is he who is revealed in the form of all living beings who speak and are represented by those who are born from a cow or are born on earth, as well as all forms of knowledge that is revealed by Vaani or speech. It is he who is born or revealed from Truth. It is he who is born from mountains but is immensely different from the latter, being the only and absolute Truth in creation. [This probably refers to the statues that are carved out of stones extracted from mountains and worshipped as some deity. It means that far from being a gross and lifeless entity like the statue carved from a mountain stone, he is consciousness personified.] (8-10).

11. A spiritual aspirant who takes the eclectic path of Sanyas with the firm conviction that the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is the only Absolute Truth in this creation, and that anything other than Brahm is imperishable and non-truth—then this sort of Sanyas is known as ‘A-nimitta Sanyas’. His Sanyas is without any cause or motivation. It is a natural phenomenon for him to discard that

which is non-truth and false, and accept that which is the truth and reality. [That is, a wise and enlightened aspirant who has no worldly reason for becoming a Sanyasi except the fact that he finds everything other than the Consciousness as false and non-truth, and decides to abandon this falsehood and non-truth and pursue truth and eternity instead, is said to have become a Sanyasi without any 'Nimitta' or worldly cause or motivation. Some of the causes have already been listed in the previous verses—for instance one's diseases or physical inabilities which make life a burden for him and which prevent him from enjoying the comforts and pleasures of this world and its material objects. He becomes a Sanyasi in order to hide his inadequacies and incompetence behind the façade of Sanyas-hood. Had he been healthy and had had access to this material world, probably he wouldn't have imagined of Sanyas even in his dreams! Another reason is the compulsion for following tradition which requires a man to take Sanyas in old age. No such factor is applicable here.] (11).

12. A Sanyasi is again classified into six categories as follows—Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit, and Avadhut (12).

[Note—Refer Sanyas Upanishad of Sam Veda tradition, verse nos. 23-30. Refer also the present Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse nos. 2-11.]

13. [In the context of verse nos. 13-21, refer also to Canto 7, verse nos. 2-11 of this Upanishad.]

A Kutichak Sanyasi sports (wears) the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the head) and the Sutra (the sacred thread, also called the Yagyopavit). He also carries the ascetic's staff or rod called the Danda, the water-pot called the Kamandalu, the loin-cloth called the Kaupin, and an over-garment made of a coarse single piece of cloth or old pieces of torn clothes stitched together in a rough manner, called a Kantha.

He always remains involved in selflessly serving his parents and Guru (moral preceptor and teacher).

He also keeps a pot for collecting food, called a Paatra, a tool for digging earth, called the Khanti (which is like a pointed iron spike), and a sling bag, called a Jholi, with him. He always remains engrossed in meditation and repetition of Mantras. He takes food obtained from one single place (instead of eating it first and going to another place to get more food to satisfy his urge for eating more, or because his taste buds have got the better of him).

He wears the vertical mark of 'Shwet Pundra' on his forehead (i.e. he has the holy lines marked by white chalk-powder made into a past by mixing with water that is worn on the forehead by all initiated Hindus).

He is expected to always carry the Tridand in his hands. [The 'Tridand' is the ascetic's staff made of three pieces of wood—hence called 'Tri' or three + 'Danda' or rod. It basically consists of three staffs or sticks tied together, each made up of bamboo. There is a main shaft, and the two smaller pieces used as a handle measure about four fingers width in length. This is done for easy carrying. The word 'Danda' stands for self control, and therefore these three staffs stand for a combined control of the mind, called the Mana Dand, control over the speech, called the Vaak Dand, and control over the body, called Kaya Dand. This Danda is like a scepter held by a king; it is a symbol of his spiritual kingship and distinguishes him from the rest of the people; it is his symbol of moral and spiritual authority.]

A Bahudak Sanyasi, like the Kutichak, also wears the tuft on the head, the sacred thread across his chest, the loin-cloth across the waist, the roughly sewn over-garment on the upper part of his body, and carries the staff and the water-pot in his

hands. He too sports the Tripundra (the line marked on the forehead) like the Kutichak Sanyasi.

He has exemplary sense of equanimity and evenness, and treats everyone in the same way without any sense of discrimination.

He survives on food obtained by begging from different houses, and eats only eight mouthfuls at one meal. [The difference between Kutichak and Bahudak is obvious here—whereas a Kutichak eats food obtained from one place, a Bahudak collects food from more than one household. Again, a Bahudak is expected to eat only eight mouthfuls, but no such restrictions have been explicitly put on a Kutichak.] (13).

14. A Hans Sanyasi wears a lock of matted hairs on his head, wears the vertical lines of the Tripundra¹ (literally the three lines) on his forehead, brings food by begging from any house visited at random, wears a small piece of loin-cloth around his private parts, and carries a Tumbi (a hollowed-out and dried shell of the pumpkin or gourd which acts as a water-pot) (14).

[Note—¹The word *Tripundra* has been defined in note no. 2 of verse no. 3 of Canto 7 of the present Upanishad.]

15. A Param-hans Sanyasi does not sport a tuft of hair on the head or the sacred thread across the chest. He collects or accepts food from five houses, and eats once a day at night. He never stores food for the next day, and never visits the same house twice for food.

He keeps with him only a loin-cloth, a piece of cloth to cover his body (upper part), and an ordinary staff made of bamboo. He either covers his body with this single body-wrapping cloth, or simply smears ash of the fire sacrifice to cover it.

A Param-hans Sanyasi is highly non-possessive, and is supposed to have completely renounced everything in this world (15).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 28-29, 30-31; Canto 6, verse nos. 25-26.]

16. A Turiyatit Sanyasi is like a cow that survives on whatever that is made available to him as a grace of the Lord. He eats like a cow—i.e. he collects food in the cupped palms of his hands and eats directly from it like a cow, using his tongue and mouth to lick and pick up morsels of food. [That is, he does not use any pot to keep the food and then use his fingers to serve as a spoon to eat. Refer also to verse no. 38 of the present Canto 5.]

He never asks anyone for anything whatsoever. He usually eats only fruits, and if he eats cereals etc., then he collects food from three houses only. [Compare with the Bahudak and the Param-hans.]

As personal belongings, he has nothing but his own body as his only possession.

He remains naked (refer Canto 3, verse no. 31), and strives to make his sense organs irrelevant and inactive as if they were non-existent for all practical purposes, or part of a dead body (refer Canto 3, verse no. 27, 48, 50-51, 90) (16).

17. An Avadhut Sanyasi knows of no bondages, fetters, compulsions, obligations or formalities. [That is, he believes in none of these things, because he is eternally free and liberated spiritually.]

He snaps all contacts with corrupt, unscrupulous and tainted people, and with those who have fallen from their chosen paths.

Living like a python, he accepts whatever food is available to him for survival, without discriminating between the Varnas (class or caste) of the people from whose household he accepts food. [That is, he does not bother himself whether the householder who gives him food belongs to an upper class or a lower class. The only thing that he keeps in mind while accepting food is that the giver should not be corrupt and sinful, as any food from such people would have an adverse effect on his own mind and spirit.]

He remains ever engrossed in contemplation and thoughts of the true nature and form of his truthful Atma which is pure consciousness (17).

18. If a man who is eager to accept the vows of Sanyas (and renounce this world of falsehood and material sense objects which are illusive and entrapping by their inherent nature, and instead opt for the path of spiritual liberation and deliverance) wishes to have a long life then he must live through all the other three phases of life (as a Brahmachari, a Grihastha, and a Vaanprastha) before he takes the vows of Sanyas at the end of this sequence (as ordained by the scriptures and tradition)¹. Such a Sanyas is called 'Kram Sanyas' as it involves passing through all the prescribed phases in life in an orderly manner, step-by-step, before one actually accepts the hallowed life of a Sanyasi. [The word 'Kram' means a sequence; a proper series, an order or chain of events; a step-by-step approach to anything; a method or systematic way of doing anything; a route or proper way of reaching one's destination. Hence, 'Kram Sanyas' refers to the step-by-step approach to this holy way of life no matter how eager a man is to become a Sanyasi and renounce the world.] (18).

[Note—¹This systemic and orderly way helps him to experience all the pros and cons of life and see the truth of the world. This only helps to reinforce his commitment to the life of Sanyas. Otherwise it might happen that he becomes disillusioned midway when he faces the harsh reality of a Sanyas way of life and regret his decision of becoming a Sanyasi. This would be more harmful to him than not taking Sanyas at all. The bitter experience that he has had of the world while he lived in it as a Brahmachari, as a Grihastha, and as a Vaanprastha, the bitter truth that he has learnt about the world not giving him peace, rest, happiness, comfort and fulfilment in the true sense inspite of his best of efforts and also inspite of his devoting his entire life serving this world and its inhabitants—and such other factors, when properly thought of and analysed, create a sincere renunciation for this world, and when Sanyas is taken with this bitter experience then it is more sustainable and sincere.]

19. For a Kutichak, Bahudak and Hansa Sanyasi it is prescribed that they should enter this fourth phase of life of Sanyas only after having lived through the earlier three phases of life as a Brahmachari, a Grihastha and a Vaanprastha in this order (19).

20. There is no compulsion for a Param-hans, a Turiyatit and a Avadhut Sanyasi to wear the waist-band, a loin-cloth or any other sort of body-covering cloth, or even to carry an ascetic's staff and a water-pot. [They are optional for him.]

They can adopt the appearance of an infant child who remains naked and is unconcerned about it (i.e. assume a 'Jaatroop' form which means the naked form in which a child is born in this world). They are free to beg for food and accept it from all kinds of households belonging to any caste or class in the society. [This is to indicate the fact that these categories of Sanyasis are so holy and pure that food taken even from a low-caste household would not be able to affect or undermine their high ethical, moral, mental and spiritual stature. Nothing can pollute or defile them. Food for them is like an offering to the sacred fire burning inside their body that sustains

their Pran and Atma, their life and conscious 'self' respectively; it is a fire which is so pure, holy, powerful and divine that it can purify everything that is put into it rather than getting polluted by it no matter how bad or tainted or corrupt that offering is.]

Until the time an aspirant is firmly convinced at the time of accepting the vows of Sanyas that whatever he has studied is enough for him, he ought to continue with his pursuit of knowledge and learning. When he is completely satisfied with what he has learnt, when truthful wisdom and enlightenment sprouts in his bosom, when he feels fulfilled and realises that he needs no more knowledge, it is then that he should discard the loin-cloth and the waist-band etc. and immerse them in the water.

If he prefers to remain naked (Digambar) then he must not keep any type of cloth, even the patched over-garment, to cover his body. Besides this, he must abstain from reading and teaching, giving discourses, attending discussions, lectures or debates, or hear narrations of scriptures and rendering of formal prayers.

There is no need for him to study logic, or learn the art of debate and public speaking. [This is because he is not expected to attend debates and discussions or give discourses and lectures. Rather, he must lead a serene and quiet life of a reclusive hermit who spends his precious time in meditation and contemplation, thinking of the supreme Truth and experiencing the drip of bliss that accompanies the higher stages of self-realisation rather than bothering about exhibiting his scholarship and showcasing his oratory skills in public forums to gain name, honour, titles and goodwill as well as a followership of disciples. Refer also to Canto 3, verse nos. 56-60, 71; Canto 4, verse nos. 14-16, 19; and Canto 7, verse no. 1.]

He must only do constant Japa (constant repetition) with the divine Mantra of OM that pertains to Pranav, the supreme transcendental Brahm (rather than wasting his time and energy by entering in debates, giving discourses and lectures, or even teaching and reading the scriptures, for, one, he has not much time left for these as death is fast approaching, and two, it is deemed that he has already become sufficiently wise and enlightened to have realised the truth and the essence of the teaching of the scriptures by the time he has reached the stage of Sanyas, and therefore there is no real need for him to waste any time and energy on its discovery). [Refer Canto 7, verse no. 11.]

It is prohibited for him to waste the energy of speech in worthless things. It is also prohibited for him to talk in any sign language. [This is because, for one, it is more tiring than actual speaking as it requires special mental skills and exertion to express one's wishes correctly in sign language and make the other person understand one's real intentions, and second, it is subject to more wrong interpretations than the actual spoken word, leading to more confusions and perplexities which is absolutely not expected from a Sanyasi.]

He must take extra precaution of not talking to any Shudra (a low-caste man), a woman or a fallen man. He must not talk with a menstruating woman at any cost. It is equally prohibited for him to participate in religious or other festivals, events, formal forms of rituals and worship, to go on pilgrimages and visit pilgrim sites, to worship and offer prayers to Gods and other deities (including idols and other symbols)¹ (20).

[Note—¹Refer also the following Upanishads—(i) Sam Veda tradition—Maitreyu-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 21, 26; Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 50-59; and Sanyaso-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74-75, 97. (ii) Atharva Veda tradition—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 20.

External forms of worship have been prohibited in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Pran Agnihotra Upanishad; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 69, 74; Canto 3, verse no. 26, 29-30; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse

nos. 21-24. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda's Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse nos. 5, 10, 13. (c) Atharva Veda's Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 20.

The fact that the same divinity known as the supreme Brahm resides in all the pilgrim sites is affirmed in Atharva Veda's Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika (Canto) 4. This assertion implies that a wise man is one who should not roam around in different pilgrim sites in search of the Truth, seeking the Lord here and there in this mortal world, but attempt to find that Brahm in his own inner 'self' as his Atma which is immortal.

The Advai-tarak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 5, 10, 13, stresses that real Mukti or spiritual liberation is obtained when the aspirant turns inwards and searches eternal peace and bliss inside his own self rather somewhere outside.

The Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 6, verse nos. 21-24 clearly stresses that all forms of ritualistic worship or symbol worship do not in any way help the spiritual aspirant to realise Brahm and reach his spiritual goal of liberation and salvation.]

21. Once again, some special rules and tenets of the life of Sanyas are being narrated.

For a Kutichak Sanyasi it is ordained that he must accept food by begging from only one place.

A Bahudak Sanyasi is to beg for food from houses selected at random.

A Hans Sanyasi is to beg from only eight households and accept eight mouthfuls of food in all. [That is, one mouthful of food from one household.]

A Param-hans Sanyasi should accept food from five households. He accepts food in the cupped-palms of his hand (and not in a food pot), and therefore he is also called a 'Karpatri'. [The word 'Kar' means hand, and 'Patra' means a pot. Hence, a man for whom his hands are the food-pot is called a Karpatri.]

A Turiyatit should accept food like a cow, i.e. he must eat whatever is available and directly with his mouth (without first collecting food in a pot and then using his fingers to eat—refer verse no. 16 and 38). He eats only fruits or things that do not need cooking, such as cereals and pulses which must be cooked before consumption.

An Avadhut Sanyasi can accept food from any household without distinguishing between them based on any kind of caste, creed or race. He accepts food like a python. [That is, he does not like to go out begging, but whatever is made available to him where he currently stays is acceptable to him.]

An Yati (an ascetic; a hermit; a wandering monk or friar) should not stay in a householder's place even for a single night. He should not bow before or offer prayers to show his humility to any person.

Between a Turiyatit and an Avadhut Sanyasi, no one is senior and no one is junior depending upon his age or his seniority according to the time he has spent as a Sanyasi. In fact, if a person is not aware of his actual truthful form, his true nature and his truthful 'self', if he has not become self-realised and enlightened, then even if he is senior in age or in the hierarchy of Sanyas he would still be deemed to be junior and premature as compared to a man who has achieved the exalted spiritual stature of 'realisation and enlightenment'.

A Sanyasi should never cross a river by swimming across it. [That is, he should take a ride on a boat instead.] He should also not climb trees. He should not take a ride on a vehicle. [That is, he must walk when going from place to place instead of accepting the easy way of riding a vehicle.]

He must not involve himself in any dealings or commerce or trade involving selling and purchasing anything. He must not barter anything, or exchange one for the other. [For instance, he must not exchange his water-pot or his over-garment with some other Sanyasi. This would be tantamount to trading.]

He must never be boastful, egoistic, arrogant, proud and haughty as well as deceitful, liar or an impostor.

He is not under any compulsion to do anything. The only thing that is expected of them and which they should be careful in doing is to do meditation and remain engrossed in deep thinking and contemplation (21).

22. [This verse describes the destination of various categories of Sanyasis.]

The Aatur and Kutichak Sanyasis attain Prithivi Loka and Bhuvaha Loka. [That is, they find their abode on this earth amongst living beings on earth, or in the lower heavens where junior Gods and Spirits live.]

The Bahudak Sanyasi finds his abode in the Swaha Loka. [That is, he goes to the upper heavens.]

The Hans Sanyasi attains the Tapa Loka. [This is the abode where those who do deep penances and austerities live.]

The Param-Hans Sanyasi goes to the Satya Loka. [This is the abode of the 'truth' or where the Supreme Being lives.]

The Turiyatit and Avadhut Sanyasis find their final destination in their own pure conscious 'self', which is the eternal Atma. This is called the 'Kaivalya'¹ destination as it symbolises the 'only one Truth that is eternal and universal'—'Kaivalya'—that exists in this creation. Just like a worm or insect (the Keet) that begins to think like a black bee (the Bhramar) and mentally becomes one like it because the black bee constantly buzzes over the former, leaving a profound psychological effect on the worm or the insect so much so that it loses its original personality and becomes a de-facto black bee², the Turiyatit and Avadhut Sanyasis too become soaked in the glory, the radiance, the magnificence and the divinity of their Atma which is immaculate and pure consciousness personified when they persistently and constantly meditate and contemplate upon it. They become indistinguishable from the nature and the subtle form of the Atma; they get coloured in the hue of the Atma. They lose awareness of everything external and superficial, and instead they reflect the glory, the divinity, the magnificence and the majesty of the Atma in its entirety. They become a glorified living personification of the eternal and divine Atma. [In fact, this is the highest state of self and truth realisation which teaches the spiritual aspirant that the only thing that is true, the only heaven that exists where he can ever expect to find eternal peace and bliss is no where in the distant sky known as the 'heaven' but well within his own bosom as his 'true self' known as the 'pure consciousness' or the Atma that resides in the subtle space of his own heart. If he does not realise this truth then all other heavens would never give him his eternal rest. In other words, one should endeavour to find peace within his own self rather than seek it in the outside world—this is the essence of this statement.] (22).

[Note—¹Kaivalya—refer Canto 3, verse no. 21, and Canto 7, verse no. 11.

The word *Kaivalya* means the 'only one' or the non-dual state. It is the supreme stature of existence which is the one of its kind and the most exalted state of existence when nothing but the non-dual consciousness is discernible everywhere in the world by the enlightened creature. There is non-duality and uniformity everywhere. It is a state of existence which is similar to the state of Samadhi in which the man goes about his daily life doing his chores in a routine way without getting emotionally involved in them and even remaining totally oblivious of what he is doing. He remains

totally submerged in his inner self and thoughts. He appears in a virtual trance-like state of existence usually observed in realised ascetics and great philosophers. People regard such men as absent minded, but they are so much absorbed in themselves that they are not concerned with others think of them. For them, the external world ceases to exist though they physically live in it and interact with it. This Kaivalya form of existence is tantamount to having emancipation while a man still has a body, because in this state he is free from all worries, sufferings and sorrows as well as all forms of attachments, entanglements and involvements with the artificial and deluding world that are the usual features of a worldly man submerged in world's entrapping charm. This state is comparable to liberation of the soul upon death when it is physically liberated from the bondages of the limitations imposed by the gross body; the only difference being that in the former case the man is alive and enjoys the body, while in the latter case he sheds the burden of the body. The Kaivalya state is considered superior because such a man lives a life of happiness and contentedness; he never suffers from any worldly miseries and worries, he treats the world around him as of no consequence, and remains indifferent to its deluding effects and their entanglements. On the other hand, the ordinary man might find emancipation upon death, but his life is a burden while he is still alive in it. Such a man has not truly understood the teachings of the scriptures; he has not understood the spirit of spiritualism, for their main aim is to give peace and tranquility to the tormented soul and help in its liberation from the deluding effects of the body and the world. This concept has been elaborately described in *Muktiko-panishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The concept has been described in many Upanishads, such as (i) Shukla Yajur Veda's *Muktiko-panishad*; *Subalo-panishad*, Canto 13, verse no. 1; *Mandal Brahmin Upanishad*, Brahman 2, section 3, verse no. 1. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's *Sarva Saar Upanishad* and *Yogattava Upanishad*, verse nos. 12-17 ½ of Krishna Yajur Veda.

²The *black bee*—The metaphor of the *Bhramar* or the black bee and the *Keet* or the insect has been cited at a number of places in this Upanishad. Refer Canto 3, verse no. 92, and Canto 5, verse no. 66. The instance of the *Bhramar* and the *Keet* has been used often in the Upanishads to indicate how constant remembrance of a thing transforms a man or any creature for that matter.

The *Bhramar* catches hold of a *Keet* and confines it to its hole. It then constantly buzzes over its captive *Keet* and a time is reached that the poor insect or worm forgets who it is due to the constant humming by the bee that has a profound psychological effect on the former. It loses its individuality and begins to think that it is also a bee. It becomes a de-facto bee for all practical purposes.

Likewise, a *Sanyasi* who constantly thinks of the supreme *Brahm* and remains mentally absorbed in this eclectic thought undergoes a personality change. This is accordance with the wisdom that a man becomes what he thinks and what company he keeps. As time passes, the ascetic forgets about everything else except the thoughts of *Brahm*. Since *Brahm* is the divine entity that is blissful and eternal, the ascetic too transforms into a living example of divinity that is blissful and eternal. Being freed from all worldly fetters that ordinarily tie down a man in strong shackles, he is deemed to be freed from all worldly bondages.]

23. A person obtains a destiny, a destination and a new body according to what his thoughts were and what he had been wishing at the time of his death¹. This is not mere hearsay but affirmed and endorsed by the scriptures (23).

[Note—¹The dependence of destiny of a man upon his thought texture and pattern at the time of death has been explained in other Upanishads as well. Refer— The concept of *death* and *what happens after that*, the *destiny* of the creature, has been succinctly described, inter alia, in the following Upanishads—

(a) Rig Veda = Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1.

(b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 4/3/33, 35-38, 4/4/1-14, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2, 14-16, etc.; Subalo-panishad, Canto 11.

(d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Taittiriyo-panishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20; Canto 1, Valli 2, verse no. 1-6; Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 6-8; Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 4-17; Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 24.

(e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 10; Mundak 3, section 2, verse nos. 1-2.]

24. Hence, a truly wise, self-realised and enlightened Sanyasi should understand that it is expected of him to think of nothing else and involve himself in doing nothing other than contemplating upon his pure conscious Atma known as the 'self', which in turn is a microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic 'Self' that is known as the eternal transcendental Brahm. He should remain submerged in deeply thinking about it and striving to experience its true, real, eclectic and divine form, and spending his precious energy and time by meditating upon it. This is the only established code of conduct and precept prescribed for a Sanyasi. This is how he is expected to spend his time.

If one follows different precepts and schools of thoughts, it only diverts his attention from the main goal of Sanyas and leads the aspirant to different destinations in accordance to the path he follows and the codes of conduct he adopts. [This is clearly stated in verse no. 22-23 above which outline the different destinations for different categories of Sanyasis. It's like a situation when a fickle minded man who is uncertain of himself and the goal he has to achieve jumps from one subject to another, changes course too often, seeks as many opinions from as many advisors as he possibly can—leading to vexations, confusions and perplexities. This dithering and lack of confidence only adds to his dilemmas and frustrations instead of removing them. He becomes aimless and never reaches his destination. It's also like jumping boats midstream in the hope that the other boat is better and would take one to the other side more quickly. The result is that he sinks somewhere before reaching the goal.]

A Gyan-Vairagya Sanyasi, i.e. a spiritual aspirant in whom 'Gyan' or truthful knowledge, enlightenment and wisdom as well as 'Vairagya' or truthful and sincere renunciation, detachment and dispassion are the dominant factors, obtains Mukti or Moksha (i.e. spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) by realising his 'true and real self'. He need not seek Mukti or Moksha anywhere outside, but he finds the eternal source of bliss, contentedness and peace within his own self as his pure conscious Atma which is a microcosmic form of the macrocosmic, all-pervading, supreme transcendental Consciousness that is the only Absolute Truth and Blissful Reality in creation. [And this 'truth' is called Brahm, and such a Sanyasi is therefore called both self-realised as well as Brahm-realised.]

Not to be involved in anything else other than contemplation and meditation upon the truthful 'self' or the pure conscious Atma, not to follow any other precept or doctrine except this, is the special feature of a truly enlightened and realised Sanyasi who has reached the highest pinnacle of Sanyas-hood.

He remains uniform and unchanging in all the three states of consciousness, viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, and the Sushupta or deep sleep state¹. [That is, for him everything becomes irrelevant; he remains totally

oblivious of his surroundings and even of his own gross body. Whether he is awake or asleep, his demeanours and thought processes remain constantly focused on his ultimate goal of life which is to reach the 'truth' in the form of self and Brahm realisation and break free from the endless cycle of birth and death. So he is unconcerned with anything else like an innocent child who is not bothered about things that are causing so much agitation and restlessness to its parents, other family members and neighbours. The child never even knows the difference between happiness and misery that creates restlessness to its parents because for it everything is the same as long as its need for toys and food are satisfied. The child accepts new toys and the food that is offered to it, and then it forgets about its old toys and the earlier food that it had liked so much. The same situation is applicable to the Sanyasi—he never bothers about his past, but lives in the present; he does not know what causes so much misery and turmoil in the world as he remains ever contented and stable in his present condition. He lives in a perpetual state of Samadhi—which is like being in a trans-like state of unawareness of the surrounding world.]

The same eclectic divine entity called the pure consciousness which is the 'truthful self' of the aspirant is known as Vishwa during the Jagrat state, as Taijas during the Swapna state, and as Pragya during the Sushupta state². Depending upon these three states of existence in which the consciousness lives at a particular moment, the same entity is given different names and exhibits different characteristics. Though the person is the same, he is known by different names and given different titles depending upon his different roles in life. [For instance, a man is a father for his son, a husband for his wife, a lord and master for his servant, a teacher for his student, a caring king for his subjects, and enemy for other kings, and so on and so forth.]

One can come to learn about the state of one's mind, thoughts and level of his spiritual existence by carefully examining the actions or deeds that are being done by him at any given moment. [For instance, if a man is mentally upset the way he handles any situation would be different as compared to his behaviour when his mind is composed. If a man gets mentally involved in the affairs of this material world and remains deeply involved in it, he is bound to be restless and in a state of constant flux. This would indicate his 'Vishwa' state of spiritual existence. On the other hand, if he physically remains involved in doing something, but does it merely in a mechanical manner while his mind is thinking of something else—as is the case with some students in a classroom who cannot concentrate on the subject taught in the class because though they might be physically present there but their mind is focused somewhere else—then it is the typical case of Taijas, the state of existence which is like a dream when a man does not live in the reality of the existing world, and instead lives in an imaginary world which has no relevance to the present. Finally, there is a state when a man is so focused on the job at hand that no external inputs or stimuli of the world can ever disturb or affect the composure of his mind and its ability to concentrate though he is very much awake and conscious of what he is doing, and not day-dreaming. This state of existence is called the Pragya state when pure wisdom, erudition, learning and enlightenment are the dominant factors, the key players.]

All the fourteen units (components; factors) of a creature's body that prevail upon the consciousness (Atma) that is inherently steady, composed, calm and uniform to make it outwardly extrovert, ever-changing, restless and active have only one primary instigator, and it is the creature's inherent 'Virttis'. This Vritti is a factor that determines his thoughts, behaviour and actions as well as the latent desires and wishes he has hidden inside his bosom. [The term 'Vritti' refer to a creature's basic tendencies, temperaments, inclinations and habits that are an integral part of his nature

and personality. The fourteen units instruments referred to here are the following—5 organs of perception such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin + 5 organs of action such as hand, leg, mouth, excretory and reproductive + 4 Anthakarans = 14 units.]

It is said that there are four Vrittis inherent in a man—and they are Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankar (ego, false sense of pride)³. One's behavioural and thought patterns are governed by the various permutations and combinations of these four factors (24).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 5, verse no. 1 and Canto 6, verse no. 4 along with their accompanying notes in this context.

² Briefly, when a man is awake he interacts with the physical gross world through his sense organs of perception and action, and the world is known as 'Vishwa'. When he is dreaming, the physical world ceases to exist and the dynamism of the mind and its energy to visualise is transferred to his sub-conscious which creates a dynamic world of its own, called the world of dreams—this is 'Taijas'. Finally, when the man is fast asleep and even stops to dream, all aspects of his mind are defunct, and in this state the only entity that remains is his true form called the Atma which is eternally enlightened and wise—hence he is called 'Pragya', the state of subtle consciousness that is marked by spiritual awakening and knowledge, the state when one's true form and nature come to the fore, though of course for a short while only. This state of 'knowing one's true self' is a completely blissful state of existence.

³Refer also to Canto 6, verse nos. 2-3 of the present Upanishad in this context.

The *Shaarirak Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 4 describes these four components of the Anthakaran.]

25. The Jagrat or waking state of existence of consciousness, and its lord or ruler or governor called the Vishwa, is located in the eye. [This is because it is through the eye that a man sees this world; he becomes aware of the physical world because he can actually see it.]

The Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness, and its lord or ruler or governor called the Taijas, is located in the throat. [This is because when a man is dreaming he cannot speak aloud using his mouth and tongue like he could do when he was awake, though he wishes to do so when interacting with other people during the dream. It is often observed that when a man sees a frightening dream or some very exciting dream, he would give out a guttural sound which appears like choked words. During a man's Jagrat state or waking state, he expresses his emotions and ideas aloud, but during the Swapna state or the dreaming state he cannot do so. Now, his expressions remains confined to his throat because the organ responsible for speaking aloud, i.e. the mouth and the tongue, are inactive while he sleeps. So, though his sub-conscious mind makes him express his views, it is not aloud but remains confined to the throat. This is manifested as guttural sound often emanating from a man who is lost in some restless dream while his physical body seems to be resting in deep sleep. Snoring is another manifestation of this phenomenon.]

The Sushupta or deep sleep state of existence of consciousness, and its lord or ruler or governor called the Pragya, is located in the heart. [This is because during sound sleep the mind has become defunct along with the gross external body, and the only organ which shows activity that can be physically verified is the heart that continues to beat rhythmically. It is in the subtle space of the heart that the Atma lives. This Atma is glorious and divine; it is 'consciousness' personified. Since the word 'Pragya' means knowledge and awareness, it means that as long as the heart beats inside the body, the latter is regarded as 'alive' because the consciousness is still

there inside the body. But as soon as the heart stops to beat, the body is 'dead' because the consciousness has abandoned its seat in the heart.]

The Turiya or the post-Sushupta transcendental state of existence of consciousness, and its lord or ruler or governor called the Parmatma, is located in the Brahm-randhra. [The Brahm-randhra is the hair like slit present on the top of the skull. It is described in the Upanishads that at the time of creation, the supreme Brahm had entered the body of the man through this slit and took up his seat in the head symbolising the higher echelons of intellect, erudition, knowledge, enlightenment and wisdom. An ascetic endeavours to concentrate his Pran or vital winds here by various Yoga techniques so that he can experience the eternal nectar of bliss and happiness that drips from this spot. An ascetic's final emancipation and deliverance or the Kaivalya Mukti is when his Pran and his Atma leave his gross physical body by escaping through this Brahm-randhra. The process to achieve this has been described elaborately in the Upanishads dealing with the concept of Yoga.] (25).

[Note—Refer Canto 6, verse no. 4 in the context of this verse.]

26. A wise, erudite and enlightened spiritual aspirant who has reached a permanent state of transcendental existence called the Turiya state when the only thing he is aware of is Brahm, and when his entire conscious existence revolves around this singular awareness, he is filled with the eclectic thought that 'the eternal, imperishable, supreme and transcendental essence of existence that prevails in the Turiya state is none other but me in my truthful form; it is me'. He realises that it is this supreme stature of existence of Brahm-realisation that really matters for him in any of the three states of Jagrat, Swapna or Sushupta in which he might be living in this world. [The word 'me' here refers to the pure consciousness known as the 'self'. This 'me' representing the 'consciousness' is the truthful identity of the creature.]

Having this eclectic awareness, he lives in a virtual state of Sushupta or deep sleep even while being physically wide awake in this world as during the Jagrat state of ordinary people. For him, whatever he sees and whatever he hears appear to be unknown, unseen and unheard by him. Even though he might be seeing and hearing something routinely on a daily basis, but his mind is asleep so much so that he remembers nothing and hence recollects nothing. [In other words, though he might have to attend to the chores of daily life and go out begging etc. for instance, he remains in a state of deep trance as if lost in some remote thoughts. He does things mechanically as and when they have to be done, but never allows his mind to stick to them even for a fleeting moment. With the mind de-linked from this world, he is literally asleep to the happenings around him; he remembers nothing and therefore his sub-conscious is free from the varied influences of the material world. He is not aware of either pain or comfort.]

When a man does not think about anything related to this material world, his mind does not store any memory of the latter, and sub-sequentially he would not dream of anything because dreams are based on the memory stored in one's sub-conscious mind about the world, along with a man's various desires and expectations from this world. Hence, such a man stays neutral and indifferent even in the second state of existence called Swapna or dreaming state; he never gets attracted or disturbed or influenced by anything that he sees in his dreams.

Such a person is indeed truly Jivan Mukta—i.e. he has found liberation and deliverance from all bondages and fetters even while he lives in this world. All the scriptures unanimously declare that he finds Mukti—i.e. spiritual liberation and deliverance.

A true renunciate monk is one who has no desire, hidden or apparent, of any kind, neither of anything pertaining to this world nor of anything related to the world hereafter. For, if he has any vestiges of desire of any kind left in him, he is bound to go to that place or take a re-birth in accordance to these desires. [Refer verse no. 23.]

Abandoning the search of the eternal Truth residing in his own bosom as his pure conscious 'self', and instead delving in voluminous scriptures in its search is as irrelevant an exercise as a camel on whose back saffron is loaded. [The camel does not know that the smell of saffron is coming from the load on its back because it is very light for him to take any notice. Instead of realising that the smell of the saffron is coming from its own load, the camel keeps on running thinking that the smell is coming from somewhere else. Similarly, an ignorant man does not know that the eternal Truth known as the Consciousness is a resident of his own bosom, and foolishly goes searching for it in the study of the scriptures.]

Such a self-realised ascetic should not have any further interest in the science of Yoga (meditation). [This is because the main purpose and aim of meditation is to help the ascetic realise the bliss of self-realisation and to enable him to obtain Mukti by diverting his 'Pran Shakti' (i.e. the dynamic energy of the vital winds that his consciousness exhibits inside the body) towards the Brahm-randhra from where it finally escapes into the cosmic space outside the limited confines of the gross body. When this objective is achieved in the way narrated above, there is obviously no need for doing Yoga and its exercises such as Pranayam (breath control), Aasans and Mudras (body postures) and Bandhas (closure of apertures in the body).]

Likewise, it is not proper for him to practice the philosophy of Sankhya Shastra or the use of various systems of Mantras and Tantras (i.e. use of Mantras in achieving one's goal according to esoteric occult system of worship and spiritual practices).

In fact, if a Sanyasi has any interest in any of the scriptures or schools of philosophy and thought other than what is mentioned as the correct path for him in this Upanishad then it is like a dead body wearing ornaments. [He might gain knowledge by the study of scriptures and hearing discussions and discourses, but they are useless for him just like it is useless to decorate a corpse with costly jewellery.]

He ought to remain away not only from all other members of the society just like a cobbler but also keep a safe distance from all involvement with deeds, formalities and acquisition of fresh knowledge. [A cobbler usually lives away from a village or mainstream of the society as his vocation is considered to be lowly.]

He must abstain from chanting the Mantra OM aloud—because a man is bound to enjoy or suffer from everything that he does. [In the present context it means that when he chants OM loudly, people will treat him as a holy man and begin to gather around him, showering him with praises and material gifts. This would prevent him from remaining aloof from everyone and lead a lonely life of total renunciation and serenity. With company of one or the other sort he is bound to be sucked in the vortex of emotions, sentiments, relationships, formalities and other such worldly things that would invariably affect his mind and cause perplexity and mental restlessness. A true Sanyasi is not supposed to allow himself any company and praises.]

Hence, a true Sanyasi should discard all things and all people as being without any meaning and substance just like the foam or froth that forms on the surface of the castor oil has no value and it is removed from the surface by the user of the oil. [The foam or froth increases the external volume of the oil and makes it appear fresh and genuine, but it is only air bubble with no oil worth its name in it. Likewise, a wise

Sanyasi treats the exuberant charms and boisterous presence of the world as of no real pith and substance.]

Instead, he must remain perpetually engrossed in the thoughts of the Supreme Being. He should observe the life and times of a Digambar (naked) Sanyasi for whom the control of the mind is the symbolic form of the ascetic's Danda (rod or staff), and the open palms of the hand are the symbolic Patra (pot) for accepting food, and treat him as his role model while he roams around carefree everywhere.

Remaining like a child, a lunatic or a possessed man, he should not desire either life or death. [That is, he is not bothered whether he lives or dies; whether anything that he does could cause him harm, or ponder about the options of whether he must do it or not. Refer also to verse nos. 50 and 53 of this Canto.]

Like an obedient servant he must behave and act patiently, remaining unperturbed about the result of actions or deeds that he should do as and when they are required to be done by him, and generally bidding for his time of emancipation and salvation (26).

27. A Sanyasi who manages to keep his gross body alive by subsisting on begged food without inculcating in himself such auspicious and noble virtues such as Titiksha (tolerance and forbearance), Gyan (truthful knowledge and enlightenment), Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion and detachment), as well as Sham and Dam (self-restraint of the sense organs as well as the mind)—verily, he is deemed to be a person who insults, demeans and causes harm to the auspiciousness, the dignity and the sanctity of the august institution of Sanyas. [Even an unfortunate pauper survives on charity and alms, but he has no spiritual standing, and is only living out a miserable and wretched life of hell while he is alive. Say, if a Sanyasi lives the same life, what difference would be there between him and the wretched pauper?] (27).

28. Mukti or Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) are not attainable by mere external show of holiness and posing like a realised and pious man by sporting external signs of holding an ascetic's rod or staff, by tonsuring the head, by attiring in various costumes, or in any other external show-offs (28).

29. An 'Ekdandi' Sanyasi (i.e. one who holds on to only 'one' rod) is he who holds on to the eternally robust and sturdy staff represented by the virtue of having true knowledge and sincere enlightenment.

On the other hand, a so-called Sanyasi who holds a wooden staff but is devoid of knowledge and enlightenment, and whose mind and heart are full of various desires, yearnings and expectations, is an impostor who would go to the gravest of hells known as 'Maha Raurav Narka' (29).

30. Great sages and learned men have likened a Sanyasi's 'Pratistha' (worldly fame, grandeur, majesty, respect and honours that establish a man as highly renowned and acclaimed) to the stool of a female pig. [That is, Pratistha is to be abhorred by a Sanyasi at all costs because it is like the filthy faecal matter. Refer Canto 2, verse no. 40 also.]

Hence, a wise Sanyasi should neglect Pratistha, and wander here and there like free-flying insects and bondless worms which have no attachments to any particular place, and instead wander uninhibited, going to any place where they want, without any pre-planning. [Refer verse nos. 34 and 46 of this Canto 5.] (30).

31. A true Digambar (naked) Sanyasi is one who would accept food that is voluntarily made available to him without his actually desiring it or asking for it. Similarly, he would cover his body with clothes that are made available to him without actually needing them or even desiring them. [It should be noted that the word 'Digambar' literally means one who wears the directions of the sky, the firmament, as his covering garment. For him, the sky is the cover as it wraps his body from all directions. The idea here is that he must be completely neutral, and mentally and emotionally detached from everything, liking none and loathing none. For a truly realised ascetic, it really does not matter whether he is physically naked or covered by reams of clothes. In fact, he is not even aware that he is 'naked' in the physical sense the word is understood to mean, because his 'self' is the Atma and it is already wearing the gross body with its covering of the skin as its garment or covering. So truly he is not at all naked.]

He has no wishes, aspirations or desires of his own. He wears clothes or covers his body with them if it so desired or wished by others, and he even takes a bath if it so desired or wished by others (31).

32. A Sanyasi who is as alert and vigilant to avoid sinful thoughts and deeds while he is dreaming as he would be in his waking state is deemed to be of a high stature amongst those who are expert in the eclectic knowledge pertaining to the supreme Brahm ('Brahm-Vaadin') (32).

33. He should have no regrets if he fails to get anything during begging to feed himself, nor should he exult at having got anything that is to his liking.

He should accept sufficient food that is enough to protect his life (and not to satisfy his taste buds or appease his appetite for food, and neither to hoarde for the next time) (33).

34. He ought to treat honours and respects with disdain and disgust. A Sanyasi who accepts honours and respects will be bound in fetters inspite of being free from all obligations of this world (34).

[Note—Refer verse no. 30 of this present Canto 5, and verse no. 20 of Canto 6.]

35. A wise and learned Sanyasi should approach the house of a noble and upright householder to beg for food when the cooking is over and all the members of the household have had their meals. [Refer Canto 6, verse no. 10.]

The aim of begging for food should be to protect the Pran (life-forces in the body) during its journey in this world while it resides inside the body. [Refer verse no. 33 of the present Canto 5.] (35).

36. A Karpatri Sanyasi who uses the cupped palms of his hands as his only pot should accept food directly into it during his begging rounds, and he should not beg for food repeatedly. He must accept what is voluntarily given to him once, and eat it while still standing or as he continues to move ahead. He must not take (drink) any water while there is still some food in his hands. [Obviously this would be impractical as he is supposed to eat out of his cupped hands.] (36).

37. A Sanyasi should be contained and self-regulated like the ocean. [The ocean is so vast and fathomless as well as powerful that should it so wish it can easily submerge the entire land mass in a blinking moment. But it never does so. The self-restraint of

the ocean is best exemplified by its leaving the sand on its shores and beaches untouched. Can the sand ever stand against the might of the ocean should the latter decide to wash off the sand particles off its sides? An ordinary river washes away towns and villages when it is in spate, but the restrained ocean observes its self-imposed limits. Likewise, the Sanyasi is deemed to have acquired great spiritual and mystical powers that he can do whatever he likes to do, but he must always exercise the greatest of self-discipline.]

These exalted souls have broader mental horizons and higher spiritual aims in life than allowing themselves to be bogged down in such lowly affairs as exhibiting their spiritual and mystical powers to instil fear or get respect in this world.

Similarly, even though they are as brilliant and splendorous as the Sun shining in the sky, they still do not violate the codes of moral and spiritual conduct that behoves of a great soul who is known as a Sanyasi (37).

38. When an ascetic begins to accept food directly in his mouth like a cow does, he develops great equanimity, tolerance and a sense of equality for all the creatures of this world. Such a man becomes eligible to obtain Mukti (liberation and deliverance) (38).

[Note—When the cow is hungry, she just opens her mouth and accepts whatever eatable is offered to her, without discriminating between the types of food as to its quality, taste, origin etc., as well as the person who feeds her, his gender, age, qualification, nature, caste, creed, ethnicity etc., whether the food is offered with due respect with the wisdom that it is being offered to another creature who represents the Lord or is a honoured guest of the householder or just as an excuse to get rid of leftovers in the house which no one wished to eat even later, and so many other considerations. The cow eats just to fill her stomach and sustain herself, and does not hoard food. It does not go out searching for tasty food offered from a particular house, but would gladly accept whatever comes her way.]

The statement that ‘the Sanyasi who eats like a cow stops differentiating between creatures of the world’ is a metaphoric way of depicting his state of mind which has inculcated the grand spiritual quality of being neutral, dispassionate, calm, serene and contentedness, treating every situation alike with stoic indifference and a high degree of equanimity.

Refer verse no. 16 of the present Canto 5.]

39. During his rounds begging for food, he should go to a household which is free from any sinful influences and is not subject to public censor, criticism and reproach of any kind. He should avoid those households which are reproachable, sinful and under the influence of evil. [The general environment of the concerned household would be sufficient to give a wise and discriminating Sanyasi an idea whether it is worthy of accepting food from it or not. For instance, a household that is kept neat and clean, where auspicious signs such as some kind of religious symbol or mark is marked on the door or the external wall, where sound of prayers being said, hymns being sung, scriptures being read or pleasant words being said are generally audible instead of pop music, heated arguments or harsh words being exchanged, where sweet perfume of incense sticks that are usually used during worship and a sweet aroma of auspicious food that is offered to the deity wafts out in the surroundings instead of the smell of stale food or meat being cooked, where guests are welcome and not treated with disdain—and so many like things would be a sure indication for the Sanyasi whether or not to accept food from the house.]

He should enter a house whose gates or doors are open. He should never enter a house whose gates or doors are closed. [A house with open doors is indicative of its welcoming nature as well as the fact that its inhabitants have nothing to hide. A mendicant would be welcomed in such a household. On the contrary, closed doors mean that either there is no one inside, or it is not welcoming for the guest. A closed door indicates just the opposite.] (39).

40. For the purpose of shelter, a Sanyasi should take refuge in such dwellings that are abandoned and covered by dust.

He should discard the notion of likes and dislikes in all matters (40).

41. A Sanyasi should take rest from his wanderings at any place where he finds himself when the sun sets. He must not keep any fire (or inflammable material) with him, nor must he build any dwelling for himself.

He should sustain himself on whatever is available to him as a grace of God.

He should always keep his mind and sense organs under strict control (41).

42. A spiritual aspirant who leaves his house, takes shelter in a forest, keeps his mind and sense organs under control, embarks upon the exercise of acquiring enlightenment and true wisdom, and waits for the proper time for his final salvation while remaining constantly on the move—indeed, such an exalted Sanyasi is regarded as being eligible and competent enough to attain the eclectic state of Brahm-hood (42).

43. An exalted ascetic (Sanyasi) who roams around and blesses everyone with fearlessness would have nothing himself to fear from (43).

[Note—Refer Canto 5, verse no. 22.]

44. A Sanyasi who abandons such negative traits as ego, pride and vanity, who overcomes all confusions and perplexities that mire the mind of ordinary people, is able to free himself from all restlessness and confusions arising out of falsehoods and deceitful conduct.

He never shows anger towards anyone, nor does he harbour ill-will, malice or jealousy towards any person. He never speaks a lie or talks in a deceitful manner (44).

45. An exalted Sanyasi who keeps roaming in holy places that have an auspicious environment, who never harms any living creature, and who survives on food that is available by begging—indeed, only such a Sanyasi is competent and eligible to obtain the eclectic stature of Brahm-realisation (45).

46. A wandering Sanyasi should never keep any contact with either the Grihastha or a Vaanprastha.

He must be careful that his life style is kept a secret and it is not revealed or divulged to other people.

He must never feel exulted or exhilarated at any development or circumstance.

Just like insects and worms continuously move from place to place, he must be constantly on the move on the path shown by the sun. [That is, he must move only during the day time, and rest during night. Refer verse nos. 30 and 41 also.] (46).

47. A Parivrajak (Sanyasi) should not himself do anything related to fulfilment of desires, harming others in any way, or accumulation of material things of this world, and neither should he motivate or inspire or teach others to do so (47).

48. He should never be interested in false scriptures.

He must never involve himself in doing any deeds that help him in generating his livelihood or to sustain himself, for he is expected to beg for the same. [Getting involved in any sort of vocation as a means of livelihood would make him mentally involved in it and its results or consequences, and then what would be the difference between a Sanyasi and a householder who remains engrossed in worldly activities? It would be better if he had not taken the vows of Sanyas in the first place if he attempts to engage in any sort of vocational activity.]

He must not talk without necessity, and abstain from entering into arguments, discussions and debates. He must remain exemplarily neutral, not taking sides with anyone, either those who are in the favour of the subject of discussion or those who are against the motion. [This restriction is of practical value for a Sanyasi, for if he takes side with any one party he is bound to offend the other. This would generate bad blood and create unnecessary and unavoidable problems for him.] (48).

49. A Sanyasi must not gather disciples around him (because this would be tantamount to keeping a household, albeit in the form of a hermitage full of obedient disciples or a fluid population of extended members of the family in the form of followers.)

He must not read or study many scriptures (as this is a waste of his time and energy, besides being impractical for him as he is expected to be always on the move).

He should avoid entering into debates and proving his point by arguments and logics to express what is in his mind. These create vexations and restlessness for the Spirit.

He must not attempt to spread his name and fame by holding various religious festivals and ceremonies (49).

50. A wise Sanyasi should not sport any sign indicative of the Ashram to which he belongs. [That is, he should not exhibit any external signs to show off his high spiritual stature or to indicate what type of Sanyasi he is. He should also not wear any signs that would indicate who he was prior to accepting the vows of Sanyas, or what social stature he had occupied. No one should be able to tell anything about him, and he is expected to remain completely anonymous. Refer also to Canto 6, verse no. 17.]

He should behave foolishly and stupidly like an ignorant child or a mad man in front of others. In spite of being very wise, erudite, learned and enlightened, he must remain silent as if he is dumb and dumb while dealing with other people. [This attitude helps him to avoid company and maintain his serenity and peace of mind. Refer verse nos. 26 and 53 of the present Canto 5.]

He must assume a countenance and act in accordance with the ways of the people with whom he has to interact at a particular moment. [That is, he must adapt himself to circumstances in which he finds himself at a given moment of his life, but this is to be a temporary phase and as soon as the circumstances change he must revert back to his original self. This quick adaptation helps him to avoid curiosity about himself amongst the local populace, besides making him easily acceptable by them. This makes his life easier and trouble free. It's a practical advice.] (50).

51. A Sanyasi must not let either any good or any bad thoughts to enter his mind.

He must wander silently without speaking, and not get involved in any deed whatsoever. He must remain submerged in the thoughts of his Atma, which is his true self and pure consciousness. Being thus lost in his own thoughts, he ought to roam silently and calmly like a man in a trance. He must keep his sense organs under strict control (51).

52. A Sanyasi must abandon all the Vasanas (worldly desires and passions) and roam in this world alone, without keeping any company.

He must treat everyone alike and with great equality. [That is, he must not distinguish between any two creatures. He must not show preference for one who speaks sweetly to him and dislike another person who shows disrespect to him.] (52).

53. He must behave like a child. In spite of being an expert in everything, in spite of being wise and enlightened, he should act stupidly and ignorantly. [Refer verse no. 50 of the present Canto 5, as well as verse no. 34 of Canto 3, and verse no. 21 of Canto 4 also in this context.]

In spite of having full knowledge of all the Vedas, he must keep silent and humble like a cow.

In spite of being highly erudite and learned, he must always talk impertinently and irrelevantly like a stupid and ignorant man, or one who is possessed by evil spirits (53).

54. A Sanyasi should bear with exemplary fortitude, courage and equanimity, maintaining his calm and poise in the face of all sorts of insults, false accusations, insinuations and other such attacks on his character by those who are wicked and evil.

Even if such wicked and sinful persons torment him physically, tie him in shackles, or cause hindrance in his routine life and its chores, then also he must remain calm and unruffled, neglecting their instigations and rudness. [Eventually they would relent and let him go his way. Refer verse no. 55 below.] (54).

55. A Sanyasi must tolerate with stoic calmness the ignominy inflicted upon him by wicked and sinful persons who might spit upon him, defecate or urinate upon him, or torment him in any other way.

When faced with adversities, he must endeavour calmly to extricate himself from this situation without offending the tormentor, and as soon as possible. [For instance, when the tormentor is fed up with him, he would release him, and then instead of fighting back, seeking revenge or hurling abuses and curses at his tormentor a Sanyasi should walk away calmly from the site. This would have such a profound psychological effect on his tormentor that he would be buried in the sense of guilt and shame. Refer verse no. 54 above.] (55).

56. Honours and respects that one gets from others cause hindrance in one's spiritual progress and undermines the good effects of doing Tapa (observation of austerities and penances). [Refer Canto 6, verse no. 20.]

On the other hand, insults and torments inflicted upon a Sanyasi by others, if he bears them with stoic calmness and equanimity of behaviour, would only go to enhance the good effects of Tapa done by him and helps in his early success. [Refer verse nos. 54-55 of this Canto 5.] (56).

57. An excellent ascetic or Sanyasi is one who does not cause any kind of hindrance in or obstructs the religious observances of other people. He never criticises them or their religious beliefs. He must prefer, on the other hand, that people would criticise him and avoid his contact (57).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 44, 53-56 and 58 of the present Canto 5 in this context.]

58. A Sanyasi must pursue the auspicious path of Yoga (meditation and contemplation) and have no ill-will or animosity with any creature, whether it is a Jaraauj (one who develops in the mother's womb) or an Andaj (one who develops outside the mother's womb in an egg).

He must not harbour any malice towards them. His actions or deeds, his mind and its thoughts, his faculty of speech or the words spoken by him, or his physical body and its organs should never be used to harm them or create ill-will towards them.

He must avoid all types of attachments and relationships of whatever kind (58).

59. A Sanyasi should abandon all negative traits such as Kaam (worldly passions), Krodh (anger), Mada (arrogance and haughtiness), Lobh (greed) and Moha (attachments and affections) and thereby become fearless (59).

60. [Verse nos. 60-66 reiterates some of the vows that a Sanyasi or a Parivrajak takes. These verses sort of summarise what have been said till now.]

The Dharma or the auspicious, righteous and sanctioned way of conduct for a Bhikshuk or a monk or ascetic who subsists on begging are the following—to accept food got only by begging, to observe the vows of silence, to remain constantly engrossed or involved in doing Tapa (austerity, penance and sufferance of hardships for some noble cause), to remain absorbed in researching the 'truth' and acquisition of truthful knowledge that is auspicious, righteous, divine, spiritually uplifting and generally conducive to one's spiritual liberation and deliverance, and to have profound sense of renunciation, detachment and dispassion (60).

61. An ascetic should wear ochre clothes and perpetually remain absorbed in meditation and contemplation called 'Dhyan Yoga'.

For shelter, he should stay outside a village (i.e. any populated areas) under the shade of a tree near its roots, or in some shrine dedicated to some God.

He should sustain himself by begging for food on a daily basis. [That is, he is not supposed to store food for the next day.]

He must never accept food from the same household twice, or on two occasions (61).

62. A wise and learned man should lead a self-regulated life and diligently observe all the tenets and codes of conduct that are prescribed by the scriptures and tradition for the way of life he has chosen to lead, which in this case is the life of a Sanyasi. His behaviour and demeanours should be excellent and exemplary, and it should be a daily and natural routine for him. He must continue to live auspiciously and righteously till the time his inner-self does not become completely cleansed and washed of all impurities, imperfections and taints that usually shroud a man and distort his inherently immaculate nature.

When the aspirant has successfully cleaned his inner-self of all impurities and imperfections by observing austerities and penances, he can now move around wherever he wishes without any fear. [Unless the inner-self is totally rid of all worldly corruptions and imperfections, there are good chances that he, as a human being, might fall prey to various temptations. So, this stage of rigorous observance of codes of conduct helps to build up self confidence in him and prepares him to resist the gravest of provocations and the profoundest of temptations in his life as a Sanyasi.] (62).

63. A wise Sanyasi should keep his sight focused on the supreme Lord called 'Janardan' (literally the Lord who is merciful, gracious, benevolent and beneficent towards his devotees or subjects; a reference to Lord Vishnu); he should see this Lord both in the external world as well as inside his own bosom. [That is, a true Sanyasi is one who has reached the stage of realisation when he sees the same Lord everywhere—because he has become enlightened enough to realise the non-dual nature of the Supreme Being. He realises, inter alia, that the same Lord resides in all the aspects of creation, whether it is the world outside seen with the physical eyes of the body, or it is the world of the inner-self seen with the inner eyes of wisdom and spiritual enlightenment.]

He roams around detached, unconcerned and untainted by sins like the wind or the air element that comes in contact with everything that exists on this earth, but remains unaffected or un-influenced by any of them (63).

64. A Sanyasi ought to maintain stoic neutrality and exemplary calmness and mental poise in the face of opposing situations or circumstances, such as when faced with sorrows, grief, misfortunes and distress, or during moments of happiness, pleasures and good fortunes.

He must be ever forgiving and tolerant.

He should accept whatever food that voluntarily comes in his hands. [That is, he should not demand this and that to eat.]

He must not have malice, ill-will or animosity with anyone, and treat a Brahmin, a cow, a horse and a deer alike. [That is, he must treat all living beings equally, not distinguishing between them on any criterions.] (64).

65. A Sanyasi must have the holistic and eclectic thinking that all the creatures are personifications of one Supreme Being who is all-pervading and the supreme Father of creation. He must be convinced, as a consequence, that he himself is a personification of the supreme Brahm who is an eternal fount of bliss, beatitude and felicity (65).

66. A wise and enlightened Sanyasi who has developed these auspicious thoughts in his mind holds on to them like an ascetic holds on to his physical Danda or staff. [The ascetic's rod is a symbol of his moral authority, and constantly reminds him of his special status that prevents him from going astray from the path of Sanyas-hood. A steady mind assumes the same role, and it stands the ascetic in good stead.]

Such an enlightened view point makes the Sanyasi free from all desires, aspirations, hopes and expectations. He is filled with profound renunciation so much so that he discards all clothes that cover him.

He discards the world completely and renounces all his links with it through all the instruments of his body that usually help one to maintain this link—viz. the

Mana (mind), the Vachan (speech), the Karma (deeds) and the Sharir (the physical body). [He never thinks about the world by controlling his Mana, he never speaks or hears about the world by controlling his Vaani and Vachan, he never does anything gross in nature by abstaining from Karma, and he never establishes any physical contact with any material thing of a gross nature in this world by controlling his physical body, the Sharir.]

He turns his face against all worldly affairs leading to confusions and perplexities, all sorts of worldly deceit and corruptions that have their genesis in Maya (i.e. in delusions and deceptions).

Instead, he follows the principle of 'Bhramar and Keet'¹ to remain ever engrossed in the thoughts of Brahm, to remain absorbed in doing meditation and contemplation on this Brahm to finally find Mukti or liberation and deliverance for his soul (66).

[Note—¹Bhramar and Keet—Refer note no. 2 of verse no. 22 of the present Canto 5.]

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 6

[This Canto describes the fourth state of existence called the Turiya state of consciousness in which the Sanyasi lives perpetually, along with narrating the daily life of an enlightened Sanyasi or a Parivrajak. This Canto brilliantly describes the different components of the body, their utility and function for the creature, the various states in which the consciousness exists in the body, and other related matters.]

1. Once again, sage Narad asked the great grandfather of creation, Brahma—'Oh Lord! You have just said that the ascetic attains Mukti when he successfully replicates the principle of Bhramar and Keet in his personal life. [See verse no. 66 of Canto 5 above.] But now please tell me how to actually practice this principle so that one can attain the highest spiritual stature.'

Brahma elaborated—'Oh Narad! One must accept only the 'truth' in life and discard all falsehoods and pretensions. He must take the help of the virtues of Gyan and Vairagya (truthful knowledge and sincere renunciation respectively) to overcome all affections and attachments for this body which is gross, perishable, impure and mortal, and instead become established in that excellent body which is subtle, imperishable, eternal and immaculate. [The former body is the physical body consisting of the sense organs and build up of bones, marrow, skin, blood, mucous, nerves and veins, urine and stools etc. Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 46, 48; and Canto 4, verse nos. 25, 27. The latter body is the subtle body that harbours the mind and intellect as well as the causal body that harbours the pure conscious Atma.] (1).

2. [This verse describes in a symbolic manner the various parts of the subtle body of a creature.]

The aspect of the body that remains after its gross components are eliminated is called the subtle body, and it is represented by Gyan (i.e. mind and intellect, because these are the instruments by which a man acquires Gyan or knowledge to become wise, learned and enlightened).

Vairagya (renunciation) is the soul of this body. [True knowledge instils renunciation in a man for he has now realised the deluding, transient, entrapping and

artificial nature of this material world and its equally illusive charms. He begins to distance himself from it because he had become disillusioned by it. If true Gyan or enlightenment, wisdom and learning cannot inspire Vairagya, or true renunciation and detachment in a man, then he cannot be said to have acquired true Gyan. If he says that he has this virtue of Gyan in him, he is only deceiving himself and others.]

Sham and Dam (self restraint of the mind and body) are its two symbolic eyes. [That is, a wise man sees everything with restraint and with self control of natural urges.]

Its symbolic mouth is a completely cleansed Mana (mind). [A creature accepts things to eat by its mouth, and this food helps to nourish the rest of the body. In the present context, a wise and discriminating mind would accept only noble thoughts and ideas, and exclude everything that is unworthy to be accepted, that is ignoble, unholy, lowly and avoidable. This input would obviously have an all-round positive effect on the creature's well being and overall personality. Positive thoughts are always beneficial because they create positive energy fields. A system nourished by things positively charged would naturally be superior and better placed than those that are sustained by evil and negatively charged energy. Similarly, a creature speaks by its mouth; the mouth is the 'spokesman of the inner thoughts of the creature'. When the mind is holy and cleansed of all impurities, its thoughts would also be concurrently holy and pure. This would be reflected by what a man says, what he thinks, what he does, and how he behaves.]

The Buddhi or intellect is its special Kalaa or exclusive quality or virtue that distinguishes it from others. [Like the case of a man having great practical intelligence, natural wisdom and prudence inspite of him being not formally educated, or even when he is learned in the letters his literal knowledge would be useless unless he is endowed with the gift of prudence, intelligence and wisdom, the subtle body that has a sharp Buddhi (intellect) along with the Mana (mind) that is fine-tuned and wise is indeed distinguished and set apart from others.]

This subtle body has twenty-five components or parts or organs called the Tattwas (elements), and they are the following—the five perceptions (of smell, sight, hearing, taste and touch), the five faculties of action (accepting, going, speaking, sensual or sexual awareness and the desire to excrete or eliminate waste), the five Prans (i.e. the vital winds or airs that sustain life inside the body—Pran or breath, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaana), the five objects of perception (things seen, things heard, things smelt, things tasted and things felt), the four Antahakarans (i.e. the four aspects of the inner self which are Mana or mind, Buddhi or intellect, Chitta or sub-conscious, and Ahankar or ego), and one un-manifest Prakriti (or the latent, hidden but inherent nature and temperament of a creature). [Refer also to Mahopanishad, 1/4 – 69 of Sam Veda tradition.]

The overall gross body of a creature consisting of the five Maha Bhuts (elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth) has five states of existence—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or deep sleep state, the Turiya or post Sushupta state that is bordering on the transcendental and deep sleep state, and Turiyatit or post Turiya state of permanent transcendental existence.

The four symbolic limbs of the body are the following—Karma or deeds done, Bhakti or devotion for one's noble aim in life as well as submission to the Lord, Gyan or truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment, and Vairagya or renunciation, detachment, dispassion and indifference towards all material things and falsehoods of the world.

Another interpretation is that the four states of existence of consciousness, viz, the Jagrat, the Swapna, the Sushupta and Turiya are the four symbolic limbs of the body.

The fourteen organs or instruments of the body (refer verse no. 3 of this Canto 6) by which the creature perceives the external world in which it lives are the following—one Mana or the faculty of the mind, one Buddhi or the faculty of the intellect, one Chitta or the faculty of the memory, the sub-conscious mind, and the power to focus and fix attention, one Ahankar or the sense of pride in the body and its achievements as well as its stupendous abilities (which enables the gross body to become agile and active to prove that it is strong, able, competent, energetic and muscular enough to achieve tough and the most daunting of tasks), five organs of perceptions such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin, and the five organs of action such as the hand, leg, mouth, excretory and reproductive. These organs or instruments are like the pillars that support the creature's existence in this world. It is with the aid of these fourteen components or parts the edifice of the world is accepted and known by the living being.

In this prevailing situation, a wise ascetic is he who acts like an expert boatman who can extricate the boat that has been trapped in a swamp and manoeuvre it to safety. In other words, a wise ascetic should overcome all spiritual obstacles and expertly take the boat representing his life across this endless world of delusions, entrapments, miseries and temptations, a world which is like an ocean, and reach the other shore symbolising emancipation and salvation for his soul. He must act like an expert elephant tamer who can control even a rogue elephant with dexterity, and force it to go along the desired path.

Hence, a wise and enlightened man who is well established in Gyan (or truthful knowledge of the reality of existence) must be convinced that whatever that exists besides his pure consciousness called the Atma is deluding, false and deceptive, and therefore he exclaims 'Aham Brahmasmi' or 'I am Brahm'. [This is because Brahm is the only universal, unequivocal, quintessential and irrefutable 'truth' in creation, and the Atma, being pure consciousness, is an embodiment or a personification of this 'truth'. How can one deny one's own existence? It may be difficult to visualise or think about the concept of 'pain' or 'enjoyment', for instance, when it is felt by someone else, but how can one deny this feeling when he personally feels it, when he experiences it first hand? Likewise, it may be difficult to visualise the abstract concept of the Absolute Truth and Consciousness as being one's truthful form known as the 'self', that the 'Truth' is not the visible gross body but something extremely subtle and sublime, and that this 'Truth' is known as the Atma which is all-pervading, universal and all-encompassing entity in the sense that it is present in equal intensity in all living beings of whatever denomination or in whatever form of the visible gross body they have. The realisation of this 'Truth' provides extreme bliss, contentedness, fulfilment and ecstasy. A person may not be easily convinced of this 'Truth' by merely reading the scriptures, but how can someone neglect it when he witnesses this 'Truth' first hand by meditating and concentrating his faculties on searching it out, and then personally experiencing the sublime quality of bliss obtained by this realisation?]

Having a firm conviction and sound belief that there is nothing worth knowing spiritually other than one's own self called the Atma, he becomes liberated and roams around like a free man. He is called a 'Jivan Mukta'—i.e. he is a person who attains freedom from all fetters of ignorance and delusions vis-à-vis the world and the body

that tie down an ordinary creature to them, and consequentially he is deemed to be free even though he lives in the same gross world and has a physical gross body.

A Parivrajak who lives in the aforesaid manner is fulfilled and accomplished. He must desist from saying that he is not Brahm, because that would be speaking a lie. On the other hand, he must always assert that 'I am Brahm'. [Foolish people would think that he is mad, is an impostor who is boasting about his exalted spiritual stature, but in fact he is honestly and sincerely speaking the truth.]

An acclaimed and successful Sanyasi passes through the three states of existence such as Jagrat (waking), Swapna (dreaming) and Sushupta (deep sleep) to reach the Turiya state which acts as a stepping stone to the final transcendental state of Turiyatit (2).

3. The daytime is equivalent to the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness, the night is equivalent to the Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness, and the midnight is equivalent to the Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness. All these three states of existence are deemed to be included in the fourth state called Turiya, and by the same logic and extension of this phenomenon, these four states are deemed to be included in the last and fifth state of existence called Turiyatit.

[The part of the night post midnight is the period when a man sleeps most soundly and peacefully. It is observed that if one does not sleep during this part of the night, he might not get proper sleep and feels worn out the next day. When a man is fast asleep and totally relaxed, he does not dream. All dreams that a man sees during sleep are bound to create some sort of reaction or response in his sub-conscious mind, though this reaction or response is at the most subtle level as compared to that which is caused in the mind by any event that occurs when the man is awake in this world. The period of sleep implied here is that when the man does not even dream, but is fast and sound asleep. In physical terms also, the period of the night post midnight is most calm and quiet. This period usually lasts for a few hours post midnight, say till the wee hours of early morning. The best and the most relaxing sleep is obtained during this period. Hence, the Turiya state is regarded as being equivalent to this period of sleep in a metaphoric way to indicate the state of the mind which is completely relaxed and totally detached even from the imaginary world of dreams. This is a state which is most rejuvenating for the Spirit of the Sanyasi.

We can take a simple example to understand this phenomenon. A student who is currently doing his post-graduation in, say, history is supposed to have already done his graduation as well as his earlier schooling. It is absurd and incongruous to say that one has reached the level of post-graduation without having passed his school and completing his graduation? Likewise, when a spiritual aspirant has reached the transcendental state of Turiyatit it is deemed that he must have successively passed through the earlier stages of Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya before he has climbed the steps to reach the pinnacle of conscious existence in the transcendental state.]

Now, the functions of the fourteen instruments of the body that work under the overall control and supervision of the four aspects of the Antahakarans (the inner self) that consist of the Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankar (ego, pride) are being described¹.

The main function of the eye is to create in a creature awareness of and attraction for visual things in this world that have a charming countenance or external features. The ear has the function of making sounds audible for the creature and making him aware of the existence of words and all other forms of sound that imply

the presence of life in the surrounding world (because lifeless and inert entities do not emit sound, and dead creatures do not speak). The tongue has the function of tasting and making a creature aware of the various shades of taste that exist in this world. The nose has the function of smell and making the creature aware of different types of smells that exist in this world. The faculty of speech located in the mouth has the function of speaking and enabling the creature to express himself. The hand has the function of accepting or receiving anything, to give it to someone else, or to lift it and take it to some other place. The function of the leg is to walk and carry the creature's body to different places. The anus has the function of eliminating waste from the body. The genitals have the function of recreating and its associated sexual and sensual pleasures. The function of feeling and touching is carried out by the skin. [These are the gross components of the body.]

[Now the subtle components are being discussed.] The function of the Mana (mind) is to accept the sensory inputs fed in by the sense organs of the gross body as outlined above, and then consult the Buddhi (intellect aspect of the brain) so as to intelligently interpret these inputs given by the various gross organs of the body and then make proper and judicious decisions, and give effect to them so that these instruments can carry out their functions in an organised and auspicious way. The Chitta (the sub-conscious, the memory) helps to keep him conscious and internally aware and updated about the happenings, collecting data and storing them for future retrieval and reference, and generally acting as the quick-referral library for the creature. Finally, the component of Ahankar (ego, pride) makes the creature have a sense of individuality, and a feeling of having an independent existence and personality.

When the transcendental element called Consciousness weaves a web consisting of these fourteen threads or parts or components or aspects, the combined effect is the creation of an imaginary body which would naturally consist of these fourteen components. Consequentially, the Consciousness loses its originality and its pristine nature, and instead gets surrounded by this web of its own creation. The latter eventuality results in the creation of the Jiva—i.e. the result is that the eternally immaculate and transcendental Consciousness that has no physical body assumes for its self a body having various gross and subtle components, and a body that lives, interacts and perceives in this world. [That is why, this 'consciousness' or 'Atma' living inside the body of its own creation is called a 'Jiva Atma' or a consciousness that 'lives' (Jiva) in a body as its essence known as the 'soul' or the Atma.]

Just like a man living in a house begins to be known as a 'householder' because he is the proud owner and lord of this house, the Consciousness living in a body comes to be known as a Jiva—i.e. 'the living being'².

Inside the gross body is a subtle heart which is like a lotus having eight petals. The Jiva or the 'true self' of the creature, i.e. his 'pure consciousness or self', resides in this lotus like heart. This Jiva assumes different forms depending upon the perspective with which it is viewed³.

When this Jiva (the Atma or consciousness) living inside this lotus wanders or moves around the eastern petal, it develops a tendency for doing auspicious things. When it turns towards the south-east direction, it develops a tendency of laziness, and feels drowsy and lethargic. When it turns towards the south direction, it develops a tendency of cruelty and lack of compassion. When it turns towards the south-west direction, it develops a tendency for auspicious and correct thinking. When it turns towards the western direction, it develops a tendency of remaining engrossed in sports, plays, actions and other such worldly deeds and activities that need physical

effort. When it turns towards the north-west direction, its intellect begins to swerve towards nobler ideas and higher goals of life. When it turns towards the north direction, it experiences profound calmness and develops peace of mind. When it turns towards the north-east direction, it acquires eclectic wisdom and enlightenment. When it remains established in the center of the lotus in its thalamus, it develops great Vairagya or a tendency for renunciation and detachment. And when it enters the tendril of the lotus, the creature becomes aware of its pure conscious form known as the Atma (i.e. he becomes 'self-realised').

In this above way, when a wise ascetic becomes aware of this shoot (tendril) from which the lotus flower has emerged and which is the root cause of his existence as an individual person, he is said to be enlightened. He would have become aware of the pure consciousness called the Atma or soul that is the very essence and at the root cause of his being. When this profound truthful spiritual knowledge sprouts in his inner being, he is deemed to have attained the Turiyatit state of existence (3).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 6, verse no. 2, and Canto 5, verse no. 24 of the present Upanishad.

²Krishna Yajur Veda's *Saraswati Upanishad*, verse nos. 47-48, and *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad*, verse nos. 41-45 describe how the Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, becomes a Jiva, and in the process outlines who a Jiva actually is.

³The *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 93/1-93/15 also describes this context where the Atma appears to look different when viewed in different perspectives.]

4. The four states in which a Jiva (living being) exists are the following—Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya. The fifth state called the Turiyatit state is beyond these four. [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 24-26; Canto 8, verse nos. 9-11, 20.]

In other words, the same Atma appears to exist in four different forms depending upon these four states of a creature's conscious existence. Hence, the Atma that lives in the Jagrat state is called 'Vishwa', in the Swapna state it is called 'Taijas', in the Sushupta state it is called 'Pragya', and in the Turiya state it is called 'Tathastha' (literally meaning non-involved, indifferent and completely neutral). The Atma or consciousness that exists beyond these four states, the Atma which exists in the transcendental state called Turiyatit, is known as the 'Parmatma'—or the supreme Atma or the transcendental Consciousness. Since it is in 'transcendental' state of existence which goes beyond all the known states of worldly existence, it is natural that it rises above the gross and the mundane, and instead remains free from all the faults and shortcomings that are associated with worldly existence—i.e. the Parmatma is immaculate and devoid of all taints and corruptions that might have shrouded the Atma when it assumes a gross body while it lives in this world. [This is the reason why the Parmatma is compared to the sky because the sky stays above the gross world known as the earth and does not have any of the physical limitations of the earth.]

Again, since the wise ascetic has already realised that his true 'self' is the Atma that lives in the Turiyatit state of existence (refer last paragraph of verse no. 3), it is obvious that he is like this Parmatma. So he exclaims upon this eclectic discovery—'I am Brahm (the Parmatma)!'

A person who lives perpetually in this Turiyatit state is deemed to be free from the limitations imposed by the other four states of existence. It may be argued that this Turiyatit state incorporates all the other four states of existence (as stated in the opening stanzas of verse no. 3), but in actual practice it is perpetually a completely neutral state, and anything that is profoundly and eternally neutral cannot be said to have bias towards any one or the other thing. Since there is no reversal of this state of

Turiyatit, i.e. once a man reaches this transcendental state of existence he would not go back to the other four states of existence, he would not be aware of the gross world and his gross organs as done in the Jagrat state, he would not dream as in the Swapna state, he would not be in the temporary state of rest in the Sushupta state which is a transient state as the creature oscillates between the Sushupta and Swapna states while asleep, and he would not even have any junior level of spiritual evolvement as exemplified by the Turiya state which is higher than the Sushupta state but lower than the Turiyatit state. This is because he has reached the highest point in his spiritual journey and has reached its pinnacle or citadel. There is no existence beyond it; it is the supreme state in which the consciousness can ever expect to exist. Hence, it is honoured by the epithet 'Param'—one that is supreme and beyond which there is nothing.

Since the eternal and truthful Atma (here referring the cosmic transcendental form of the Atma known as Consciousness, rather than the microcosmic form of the Atma that lives inside the body of the individual creature as its Jiva-Atma) is the only conscious and living entity that exists in all of these states of existence, it is deemed to be the only one witness of their presence.

[The gross body ceases to exist in the other states except the Jagrat state. The subtle body consisting of the mind ceases to exist in the Sushupta state. The causal body that harbours the individual's Atma ceases to exist when the creature dies and leaves the gross body. So, none of them are eternal. The Atma itself, though it is eternal and immaculate by nature, becomes mired in the delusions of the world, allows itself to be trapped in the web-like snare created out of its own free will as described earlier in verse no. 3, then remains engrossed in doing so many deeds and suffering from their consequences, has various desires and assumes so many roles voluntarily. Hence, it is also not apparently steady. In other words, the Atma that is called a 'Jiva Atma' is influenced by the environment in which it lives; it is tainted by its surroundings. As compared to this situation, the Parmatma is unaffected by worldly things and is beyond the reach or influence of anything gross and mundane that pertains to this creation, whether it is good or bad. Hence, in this scenario, the only entity that remains constant and unchanging is the Parmatma, the supreme form of the individual Atma which is also known as Brahm. That is also why the latter is called the Absolute Truth—because the latter does not change.

A simple illustration will help to clear the idea. The celestial sun is unmoving and shining brilliantly in a uniform manner. But when seen from earth, it appears to move and even change its brilliance depending upon a number of environmental factors such as the presence of clouds, humidity, dust particles etc. in the atmosphere, etc. The sun also appears to rise and set, is hidden from view behind dark clouds, or even disappears during solar eclipses. But even a high school student knows that none of this is true. Similarly, the disc of the moon appears to have its own light whereas it merely reflects the light of the sun, and it also appears to change its contours every night though this is due to the different angles from which it is viewed from earth every night as a result of its revolution around the earth. The same argument applies to the Parmatma vis-à-vis the Jiva Atma. The Parmatma is like the sun, and the Jiva Atma is like the moon that shines in the light of the sun.]

Since the Parmatma represents that superior aspect of the cosmic Consciousness that is absolutely neutral and detached from everything, including Maya (delusions), it is beyond the purview of the four normal states of conscious existence of a creature. The Atma living in the Turiyatit state is called a Parmatma. In this state, it cannot be called a 'Drasta' of anything, or the one who sees anything,

observes anything, or is a witness to anything—because this is a completely neutral and detached state of existence in which the mind and all the other faculties are defunct, and in which nothing matters for the super-conscious Atma¹.

In such a case, should one regard the Jiva (the living being) as the Drasta? [That is, if the Parmatma is not the Drasta or the one who sees, observes and witnesses anything because of its sublime cosmic existence and neutral character, then can one treat the creature that has a gross existence in a visible world of material sense objects as the seer, observer and witness?]

No, the Jiva (living being) is also not the Drasta in the true sense because his 'true self' is the Atma that is a most subtle and sublime entity which is really not involved in anything related to the gross body as well as the gross world. This Atma is pure consciousness like the Parmatma (which is the 'supreme Atma' or the cosmic Consciousness which is the macrocosmic form of the individual creature's Atma). The Atma possesses all the virtues of the Parmatma in the sense that it is equally neutral, dispassionate, detached etc. from anything gross and untrue. The problem arises only when the creature, under the influence of delusions and ignorance, begins to identify himself with the gross body in which this Atma lives and erroneously begins to treat this body as his 'true self and identity'. This body lives and interacts with the gross material world of sense objects.

So, when the creature begins to identify himself with the body, he becomes a 'Drasta' because then he begins to 'see and perceive' this world through the organs of perception of the body. Now he becomes someone who 'sees', someone who perceives, feels, tastes, touches, smells etc. The world becomes his object of perception or the 'Drisya'. The Drasta (the seer or observer) is affected naturally by the Drisya (the objects or things seen or observed). The sight influences him and creates either a positive or a negative impression on his sub-conscious and psyche. Such a creature cannot remain immune from, unaffected by or indifferent to his surroundings and what he 'sees' simply because his mind and intellect are not attuned to see the 'truth'. Had they been so, the creature would have realised that the body—which actually does the seeing or perceiving of the objects of the world—is not his truthful identity at all in the first place. The fact that he has not realised what his true nature is becomes the breeding ground for illusions of his being a 'Drasta' or the seer. Such a 'Drasta' gets embroiled in the affairs of the gross world because he 'sees' this world as being true—though this perception is absolutely erroneous.

On the other hand is the person who can be regarded as a 'neutral Drasta or a non-Drasta'. This wise man knows that his 'true form' is not the body but the Atma that lives in this body. Such a wise and erudite man would do things in this world like another 'ordinary' man, but with the difference that he does not get involved in anything the body does at the emotional and sub-conscious level. His mind neither gets involved in what his body does, nor does it register or store any information in its memory bank regarding the humdrum affairs of the world.

Therefore it is derived that the same Jiva Atma (a living being) can either be a 'Drasta' or a 'non-Drasta' depending upon the level of its wisdom and intellectual development in the spiritual sphere. That is, everything depends on the level in which a living being's Atma or pure consciousness exists in this world. In other words, at the lower level and grosser level of existence of the consciousness, the Jiva becomes a 'Drasta', while at the higher level of existence he is a 'non-Drasta'. A Drasta is involved in and influenced by the world, while the non-Drasta is uninvolved and neutral.

In other words, if the Atma relates itself to the world—whether at the gross level corresponding to the Jagrat state known as the waking state of consciousness in the physical world, or at the lower subtle level corresponding to the Swapna state known as the dreaming state of consciousness in the world of dreams—then this Atma is known as the ‘Drasta’. But when the same Atma lives in the Turiya state of consciousness that transcends these levels of existence of consciousness—when it is completely detached from the world, the physical body and the subtle mind—then it is known as the ‘non-Drasta’.]

Now suppose it is said that the Jiva’s (living being’s) true nature is not to remain involved in worldly affairs as his ‘true form’ is the Atma which is pure consciousness that is equivalent to the cosmic Consciousness called the Parmatma, then this logic also does not hold its ground of validity. This is because as soon as the Atma assumes a gross body, it is immediately shrouded by the ego and pride of having a body. It is almost impossible to find a living being or a Jiva who would not accept that he has a body. In fact, the very concept of being a ‘Jiva’ rests on the premise that the Atma has a body. Therefore, if this notion of being a possessor of a body is done away with, it is only then that the Jiva becomes equivalent to the Parmatma. [The Atma is proud of the body because this body gives the Atma its form, its identity as an individual; it is by the medium of the gross body that the Atma is able to perform stupendous tasks in this world, achieves success in various fields and acquire name and fame; it is the body which helps the Atma to do deeds that are righteous, noble, auspicious and holy. The Atma is only a Spirit without a form, and to be identified it needs a physical form which the body provides. Hence, the Atma is proud of its association with the body. This stokes the ego and makes the Atma possessive of the body.]

In other words, the difference between a Jiva and the Parmatma is just like the difference between the Ghatakash and the Mahakash. [The Ghatakash is the space present inside a hollow pitcher, and the Mahakash is the vast open sky outside the vessel. The Ghatakash is separated from the Mahakash by the physical body of the pitcher. Actually there is no distinction between the space inside and outside the pitcher, for if the vessel is broken the two spaces coalesce instantly and effortlessly.] The two names of the same thing are given only in an abstract manner for the purpose of study, for in actuality there is no difference. So therefore, a Jiva has a distinct existence only as long as it has the body—or is conscious that it has the body, and as soon as this awareness of the body is removed, the two—the Jiva and the Parmatma—become one.

[Another instance is cited now.] The same breath moves out and in the body as exhalation and inhalation. While doing so, it makes two distinct sounds—‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ respectively. That is, while moving out the sound is equivalent to the letter ‘Ha’ of the Sanskrit language, and when moving in the sound is equivalent to the letter ‘Sa’. This forms the Mantra ‘Hans’, meaning a divine Swan. In other words, the Jiva’s Pran or vital winds also display artificial distinction as being exhaled breath and inhaled breath though the air is the same entity that cannot be distinguished and mutated. A wise, self-realised and enlightened ascetic understands the esoteric message encrypted in this sound of Hans. He realises that the breath is telling him that he is like the divine bird Swan which is regarded as the purest and the wisest amongst the birds². So, a wise ascetic always concentrates upon his pure and enlightened form known as the Atma that has no physical body like this wind or air element which too has no physical body. The Atma then becomes equivalent to the Parmatma.

With this sublime and eclectic spiritual view firmly established in his inner self, the enlightened ascetic discards all sense of ego and pride vis-à-vis the body. And when this happens, he becomes one with the Parmatma (as explained above) (4).

[Note—¹The word 'Drasta' means one who sees, observes something. It is the mind that registers any sight that is seen, or any other perception for that matter, in order to enable the man to actually see or perceive the particular thing. For instance, a man might be gazing at something continuously but he might not be actually seeing it because his mind is lost in some other thoughts. In the present case when we refer to an ascetic in the Turiyatit state of existence we find that he is so much absorbed in meditation and reflection upon the truth of the Atma, his pure consciousness, and remains submerged in its thoughts and the bliss derived from it that he is totally oblivious about the surroundings. So he lives in a perpetual trance, and though he might beg for food or take a bath in the river, actually, at the mental level, he is not doing anything at all. If one asks him anything about his actions, his answer naturally would be in the negative, and in this he would be speaking the actual and sincere truth.

This also explains the difference between the Turiya and the Turiyatit states. The living being who has vestiges of awareness left in him, even of the fact that he is an ascetic or a Sanyasi, or the fact that he is enlightened and wise, may have risen above the rest of the creatures and live in a Turiya state of trance-like existence that resembles Turiyatit state, but he has not achieved truthful success. That comes when he reaches the Turiyatit state of complete unawareness and neutrality—or a state of 'non-knowledge'. Obviously, a man who has no true knowledge of anything would not be able to see or hear or feel or taste or smell anything, simply because he does not know what these things mean or from where they originate or how to perceive them or distinguish between any two of them. This state is the truthful Turiyatit state. The Atma that lives in this eclectic transcendental state is the superior Atma called the 'Parmatma'. It is exemplarily neutral and dispassionate. It does not see and bear witness to any thing or event. It is not concerned with anything. Hence it is called a non-Drasta—one who does not see.

²The concept of Hans and the Mantra 'Hans' has been described in a number of Upanishads. The enlightened and realised person thinks of himself as a Swan and feels exhilarated that he is not an ordinary man bogged down by worldly fetters, but an exalted soul that is like a Swan.

The bird Swan or Hans is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or Pran passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature's inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble. A wise man is expected to pick the truth from amongst the basket of assorted charms present in this creation, and leave aside the non-truths.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hans' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hans' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse no. 63).

References for *Hans*—References for the term 'Hans' (a divine Swan/Mantra)—
(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyān Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hanso-panishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93. (d) Atharva Veda—Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 4, 12-22, 26-27; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 10.]

5. A wise and learned Parivrajak (Sanyasi) is he who is free from all attractions and affections of any kind that might create some sort of emotional or mental attachments or bonds for him with anything.

He must strive to keep anger, wrath and the tendency to be vehement, retributory and vengeful under strict control. [Refer Canto 3, verse nos. 42-43.]

Eating frugally, with restrictions and moderation, he must keep all his sense organs under restraint. [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 33-34.]

Shutting off all the external openings or doorways of these sense organs of the body through which they have a natural tendency to move out into the world, i.e. preventing these sense organs from being extrovert, he should rather turn them inwards, and focus his Mana or mind and its energy to meditate, to reflect upon and research the true nature of his Atma. This is his prime duty.

A spiritual aspirant who has interest in Yoga (meditation and contemplation) must always remain absorbed in his spiritual pursuit, without getting disturbed, distracted or diverted from his main goal (5).

6. He should live alone in a serene, secluded and lonely place, such as a forest or a cave, and remain engrossed and submerged in reflection upon the Atma. [This is because such a place would provide him with the necessary peace of mind where he will not be disturbed or distracted from his spiritual pursuit. Here, he would be able to concentrate his mind and attention on meditation and contemplation.] (6).

7. An ascetic (Sanyasi or Parivrajak) must never participate in any formal rituals and other religious activities such as Aathithya (accepting to be a honoured guest himself,

or welcoming someone else as a guest), doing Shraaddha (offering libations and oblations to the spirit of dead ancestors), performing Yagya (various religious rites and rituals such as formal fire sacrifices or religious ceremonies), Deva worship (worship of deities and its attendant formal rituals), and going on a Yatra (pilgrimage) (7).

[Note—Refer also to verse nos. 37-38 and 42 of the present Canto 6.]

8. In order to avoid any sort of contact with people of the world, he should purposely behave in an unconventional way so that no one wishes to go near him, have any dealings with him, and instead continue to neglect him (8).

9. A true Parivrajak holding the 'Tridand'¹ is one who has exercised his control over the Vaani (speech), the Mana (mind) and the Karma (deeds). An ascetic who holds the Tridand with this understanding and faith is called a true Sanyasi. [To wit, he must understand the significance of this wooden staff, that it is a symbol of his obligations towards his own self for his spiritual elevation and progress. If he holds a Tridand and does not follow the rules associated with this symbol of Sanyas then he is cheating himself and others.] (9).

[Note—¹The ascetic's staff, called a Danda, is an important insignia of a Sanyasi (an itinerant mendicant, a monk, a friar, an ascetic, or a hermit who has renounced the world and taken the religious vows of Sanyas as prescribed in the scriptures). He is expected to always carry it with him wherever he goes. The 'Tridand' basically means three staffs or sticks tied together, each made up of bamboo. This is done for easy carrying. The word 'Danda' stands for self control, and therefore these three strands of the ascetic's staff stand for a combined control of the mind, called the Mana Dand, control over the speech, called the Vaak Dand, and control over the body, called Kaya Dand. This Danda is like a sceptre held by a king; it is a symbol of his spiritual kingship and distinguishes him from the rest of the people; it is his symbol of moral and spiritual authority.]

10. The best type of Sanyasi is he who accepts food by begging from a household in which the cooking is over and the smoke from the fire of the oven in which the cooking is done is extinguished. [That is, he does not accept food while the cooking is still continuing.] (10).

[Note—Refer Canto 5, verse no. 35.]

11. But a Sanyasi who has no true sense of renunciation in his inner self, and only begs for food as a means of survival or livelihood (so that he can easily get cooked food without taking the trouble of cooking it himself or because he is too lazy to make effort for arranging raw materials needed for cooking) is an impostor who is deemed to be of a very low category. [In fact, he is demeaning and insulting the august institution of Sanyas. He has not understood the real meaning and intention of the Sanyas way of life.] (11).

12. He must not go again to the household from where he has got food once. If he does so, it would be tantamount to developing attachment or attraction or affection which is absolutely avoidable for a Sanyasi (12).

13-14. A wise, erudite, learned and enlightened self-realised Sanyasi is one who visualises himself as a personification of Brahm, the supreme Consciousness, the

Supreme Being who is an embodiment of such glorious virtues as Prakash (light and illumination), Vigyan (true knowledge that stands the test of proof, time and logic) and Sukh (spiritual happiness and comfort), who is known as Sarwa-Sakshi (the witness of all), who is different from the body and its organs, who is eternal and imperishable in this creation, and who is beyond the jurisdiction of various Varnas and Ashrams (the different classes in the society and the various phases in the life of a man respectively).

Indeed, when the ascetic has developed this eclectic, holy, divine and sublime view about himself, he becomes one with and indistinguishable from the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm; he becomes a living Brahm. Such a Sanyasi is a true Sanyasi (13-14).

15. An ascetic or Sanyasi who honestly treats himself as the Atma that is truly enlightened and wise, and distances himself from such worldly considerations and artificial classifications as belonging to one or the other Varna and Ashram (i.e. the different classes in the society and the various phases in the life of a man respectively), is indeed a true and sincere Sanyasi (15).

16. An ascetic or Sanyasi who has experienced the eclectic nature of his own Atma first hand, who has realised that his true 'self' is the Atma, the pure consciousness, and not the gross body and its components, and as a consequent development has discarded all formalities such as observance of various codes of conduct related to the different Varnas and Ashrams in life (because they relate to the external gross body and not to the Atma)— actually only such a Sanyasi is regarded as being one who is 'self-realised' and 'enlightened about his true self' in the real sense (16).

17. Such a highly enlightened and self-realised ascetic or Sanyasi (as described in the forgoing verses) has been described as 'Ati-varnaashrami' (one who has transcended the limitations, barriers, compulsions and obligations that are imposed upon a man by the requirements of different Varnas and Ashrams in society) by those who are expert teachers of the philosophy of the Vedas (17).

[Note—Refer Canto 5, verse no. 50, stanza no. 1.]

18. Those who are experts in the philosophy pertaining to the sublime, divine, holy and eclectic nature of the Atma assert that to superimpose the Atma with the characteristics of the gross body is highly stupid, wrong and useless. [That is, to treat the Atma on the same plane as the body, or even to compare it with the body, or transpose the attributes of the body upon the Atma is a wrong thing to do because these two entities have no correlation and similarity of any kind whatsoever.] (18).

19. For an ascetic or Sanyasi who is firmly established in the knowledge of Brahm, who has become Brahm-realised, nothing more is left to be known or researched by him, there are no special rules of conduct that he must follow or avoid. In fact, nothing is worth leaving or discarding by him; there is nothing that he should either accept or reject.

Verily, such an ascetic is freed from all fetters and obligations (19).

20. A true spiritual aspirant must have indifference towards all honours, titles and epithets that can be got as a human being or even as the creator Brahma¹. [That is, he

should not be attracted by praise and lavish honours that one usually yearns for. For him, even the exalted stature like that of the creator Brahma is of no value.]

He must have no affections for or attachments with anything, and that includes even his own son and wealth (20).

[Note—¹Refer verse no. 42 of the present Canto 6, as well as verse nos. 30, 34, 56 of Canto 5 also.]

21. On the contrary, he should have attraction only for the path that would give him eternal freedom and lead to his liberation and deliverance, the path that would provide him with emancipation and salvation.

In order to gain the sublime and eclectic knowledge enshrined in the Upanishads, he must approach a Guru (a wise and learned teacher) with some Samidha (gift) in hand¹ (21).

[Note—¹The word *Samidha*, technically speaking, refers to the firewood used for a fire sacrifice. It also refers to a token gift that an aspirant/seeker of knowledge takes to his learned teacher when he approaches the latter with some spiritual or metaphysical query. When the teacher sees the aspirant approaching him with Samidha held in his hands, he immediately knows that the aspirant is coming to acquire some knowledge which the teacher is bound to give as per tradition; he cannot refuse to give knowledge because the Samidha is a sign of submission and humility as well as sincerity and eagerness on the part of the disciple.

It was a usual practice to approach some wise man with the purpose of enquiry and acquisition of knowledge with some gift, and this gift, known as Samidha, was not material wealth but as an offering to the fire sacrifice because of three reasons. One, a wise man was not supposed to be yearning for some sort of gold or silver gift, for had he been such he wouldn't qualify to be approached with some spiritual and metaphysical query. Second, this token gift indicated that the seeking of knowledge and imparting of such knowledge was just like the performance of some sacred religious fire sacrifice, and had the same spiritual value. So the teacher couldn't refuse to answer the query as this would amount to refusal in participating in a fire sacrifice which would be tantamount to sacrilege and unrighteous deed on the part of the teacher. This obligation ensured that the query was certain to be answered. Hence, all sincere seekers approached their teachers with this Samidha in hand. And finally the third reason is that it showed sincerity and eagerness on the part of the questioner and seeker of knowledge to find out the correct answer to his queries.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8 refers to the *seven* types of Samidhas (fuel for the fire sacrifice; the firewood) and seven types of Yagyas (fire sacrifice). Now let us see which are these seven Samidhas and seven Yagyas. Since the term Homa and Havi are an integral part of the fire sacrifice, they should be understood as well in order to get a comprehensive picture.

The seven types of Samidhas which are the offerings that are made to the sacred fire and help to keep it lit are the wood of seven types of trees which can be used for this purpose. They are—Ashvattha (*Ficus religiosa*), Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*), Chandan (sandal wood), Devdaaru (pine), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Nayagrodha (Indian fig tree), and Palaas (*Butea frondosa*).

The wood from the following trees are not to be used for the purpose of Samidha—Bibhitak (*Terminalia bellerica*), Kapittha (wood apple), and Neem tree.]

22. While living under the guidance of the learned Guru, he must serve him diligently and selflessly in order to keep him pleased. [This ensures that the teacher would teach him everything he knows, to the best of his ability, as he would be satisfied by the disciple's service and feel morally obliged to teach him in the best way he can. The teacher would be inclined to divulge even the greatest secrets of the Upanishads to

him, a thing that he would generally avoid to do because it has been ordained in the Upanishads themselves that its secrets should not be given to all and sundry at random, but only to sincere, devoted, eligible, able and competent aspirant.]

He must also strive to gather as much and as deep knowledge of the Upanishads as he can possibly do by studying them deeply and with full concentration so that he can understand their esoteric secrets and fully grasp the great sayings of these scriptures to such an extent that they become firmly engrained and find deep roots in his sub-conscious as well as the conscious mind (22).

23. An ascetic or Sanyasi must discard Mamta (affections, endearment, and the resultant sense of attraction and attachment for anything or anyone) and Ahankar (ego, pride and vanity) completely. [Refer verse no. 28 below.]

He must also keep a safe distance from all sorts of Aasakti (attractions, attachments, affections, endearment and involvements) relating to anything or anyone in this world.

Instead, he must arm himself with the virtues of Sham and Dam (self-restraint of the sense organs as well as the mind) and remain ever submerged or absorbed in reflection upon the Atma, and experiencing its eclectic presence in his own inner self (23).

24. When one closely observes constant miseries and sufferings associated with birth, death, old age and other such imperfections that are associated with this mortal gross world, a natural sense of disillusionment and detachment with this world sprouts in the heart of an intelligent and thinking man. He wishes to abandon such a faulty world that is perishable and transient, a world which has a preponderance of sufferings instead of happiness, peace and bliss. Hence, a man who has developed truthful detachment from and disillusionment with this world can find it easy to renounce it completely, and therefore such a man can become a true Sanyasi. Only such a man would willingly accept the life of a Sanyasi and be successful in it. There is no doubt about it (24).

25. A Param-hans Sanyasi who aspires to obtain emancipation and salvation must endeavour to acquire the eclectic knowledge of the sublime and supreme Brahm by studying and hearing the teachings of the Upanishads in this connection with due diligence and sincerity. This is the only way that can provide him with spiritual liberation and deliverance (25).

26. A Param-hans Sanyasi must be fully endowed with the grand virtues of Sham and Dam (refer verse no. 23) in order to fully benefit from the teachings of the Upanishads and be enabled to access the knowledge of Brahm (26).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse no. 21.]

27. A wise ascetic or Sanyasi should always remain submerged in the study and learning as well as the implementation of the teachings of the Upanishads.

Armed with the glorious virtues of Sham and Dam (verse no. 23, 26), he must practice strict control over his mind and the sense organs of the body.

He should abandon all fears, reservations and inhibitions.

He should have no attachments with or affections for anything or anyone under any circumstance.

He must live a carefree life without having any kind of worries and confusions.

He must never accumulate and store anything. He should forgo this inclination for all times to come (27).

28. A Sanyasi should tonsure his head. He must use old and used clothes to make a loin-cloth. Besides this piece of covering on his private parts, he must otherwise remain naked, not using any cloth to cover his body.

He must never harbour such traits as Mamta and Moha (affections, attractions, attachments, endearments, longings) as well as Ahankar (ego and pride) in his bosom. [Refer verse no. 23 above in this Canto.] (28).

29. An ascetic or Sanyasi who treats both the enemy and the friend alike, and whose inner self is eternally calm and poised—only such a wise and enlightened person is eligible to obtain Mukti or liberation and deliverance from the fetters of this world and is able to cross this huge and seemingly insurmountable world which is like a vast ocean. A man who does not have this wisdom will not be able to do so (29).

30. A spiritual aspirant eager for knowledge should remain diligent while serving the Guru and keep him fully pleased with his devotion and service. He must stay in the Guru's hermitage for one year. He must never show carelessness or lethargy in observing the laws and by-laws of the Ashram (here meaning both the hermitage of the Guru as well as the celibate life of a Brahmachari that the student leads).

He must show extra care and diligence in constantly observing all the tenets of Yam and Niyam while he spends time in the hermitage¹ (30).

[Note—¹The various Yams and Niyams are briefly the various laws and regulations that a Brahmachari or a student leading the life of a celibate must observe.

Yam and Niyam—The virtues of Yam and Niyam have been described in Skanda Puran in these words:-

सत्यं क्षमाऽऽर्जवं ध्यानमांशस्यमहिंसनम् ॥ दमः प्रसादो माद्युर्यं मृदुतेति यमा दश ।
शौचं स्नानं तपो दानं मौनेज्याध्ययनं व्रतम् ॥ उपोषणोपस्थदण्डौ दशौ ते नियमाः स्मृताः ॥—
(स्कन्दपुराण, ब्रा० ध० मा० ५/१९-२१)

The ten 'Yams' are—truthfulness, forgiveness, simplicity, Dhyan (meditation, concentration of the mind), lack of cruelty (or presence of compassion and mercy), forsaking violence, restraint of mind and sense organs, pleasant demeanors and sweet towards all). The ten 'Niyams' are— cleanliness/ablution, bath (purification of body), Tapa (austerities, penances, sufferings), alms and charities, keeping silence, Yagya (sacrifices, religious rituals), self study, observance of vows, keeping fasts, celibacy. (Skanda Puran, Bra. Dha. Ma. 5/19-21)

The *Varaha Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its canto 5, verse nos. 12 ½ --14 also describes these Yams and Niyams.

The *Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 32-32 describes Yam and Niyam in the following way—"Non-violence, truthfulness, non stealing, celibacy, continence or abstinence from sexual indulgences and other pervert activities of the body and mind, mercy and compassion, simplicity and humility (32), forgiveness, patience and fortitude, restrained eating, and purity of mind, intellect and body—these are regarded as the ten supreme *Yams*. 'Tapa', meaning austerity, penance, sufferance and hardships endured for some noble cause, 'Santosh', meaning contentedness and satiety, to have belief on the doctrines and teachings of the scriptures, to make charities and donations, the remembrance of the supreme Lord known as 'Hari' and devotedly serving him and contemplating upon him¹ (33), hearing Vedanta (the preaching of Upanishads), to have modesty, honour, dignity, self respect and shame, to have wisdom and intelligence, to repeat the holy

Mantras or divine, ethereal words of the Lord, and to keep stern religious vows and observe fasting—these are ten *Niyams*.”

According to *Mandal Brahmin Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Brahman 1, section 1, verse nos. 3-4, the Yam and Niyam are the following—“Verse no. 3 = To overcome the notion of feeling (excessive) heat and cold (and getting agitated about them), to have control over the urge to eat and sleep (more than necessary), to remain ever calm and tranquil (even during the greatest of adversities), to remain unwavering and steady (like a mountain and the flame of a lamp protected from the wind), and to be able to exercise control over the sense organs (of perception and action)—these are categorised as the various ‘Yams’ (3).

“Verse no. 4 =Devotion towards one’s moral preceptor, teacher and guide called a Guru, dedication and diligent pursuit of the path which is righteous, auspicious and noble, contentedness with whatever is available, residence in a secluded and serene place that gives peace, solitude, tranquility and calmness, non-attachment with and indifference towards anything and anyone in this world, diversion of the mind from the sensual pleasures and charming objects of the materialistic world, no expectation of any reward from any deed done or action taken, and a sense of exemplary renunciation—all these are the various ‘Niyams’ to be followed by the seekers of true knowledge of the Atma (4).”]

31. At the end of this period of one year it is expected that he would have proper Gyan or knowledge for which he had come to the Guru.

Thereafter, exercising great self control and observing all the laws of auspicious conduct that are expected from a spiritually elevated man, he should move around on the earth (31).

32. At the end of the period of one year when his education is complete, he should enter the next phase of life (as a householder or a Grihastha) and complete all the three phases as described by tradition and scriptures before he accepts the vows of Sanyas which marks the best phase of his life and indicates his exalted spiritual stature. [The three phases referred to here are Brahmacharya or the life of a celibate student, Grihastha or the life of a householder, and Vaanprastha or when he leaves the house and heads for the forest by renouncing all his attachments with the world. These have been outlined in Canto 1, verse no. 2.] (32).

33. After having served his Guru and gained his blessings, the aspirant can roam on the face of the earth with great respect. He must abandon all company and all forms of anger, eat frugal meals with great moderation, and exercise strict control over all his sense organs (33).

34. A householder who does deeds selflessly without expecting any worldly rewards from them, or does them as they come along without any hopes and expectations of getting any fruits for his labour, or starts to do any deed and take any action without having any kind of worldly desires to motivate such deeds or actions or have a vested interest in doing them, and a Sanyasi who diligently follows the tenets of conduct prescribed for him (as a man who has renounced all connections with this material world and who is expected to lead an exemplary life of total renunciation, dispassion and detachment, preparing himself for spiritual emancipation and salvation as well as realising the great Truth of existence)—both acquire glory and fame, both are respected and shown honour only as long as they adhere to their respective ways of life as sanctioned by tradition and scriptures. If they violate them, if they pretend to be righteous and noble and followers of sanctioned path and way of life while actually

being to the contrary, they only get ignominy and ill-fame, they are reproached and ridiculed in the society (34).

35. A man gets intoxicated by drinking wine, but the mere sight of a beautiful and voluptuous young lady makes him lustful and passionate. Therefore, a Parivrajak Sanyasi must abandon even the sight of a lady—who has the potential of causing a poison-like influence upon the Sanyasi by her mere sight—from a great distance (35).

36. A Sanyasi must guard himself against the urge for talking with a woman, or even thinking about her or sending her messages. He must not participate in dance, singing or such merry-making exercises. Likewise, he must also avoid getting engaged in jokes, jest, fun, merriment and laughter (36).

[Note—In the context of verse nos. 35-36 herein above, refer also to Canto 3, verse no. 64, and Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4, 25-29.]

37. Oh Narad! A Sanyasi is not supposed to observe formal rituals and worship formalities such as purification bath (ablution), worship of deities, Japa (repetition of Mantras, especially those that pertain to these deities and are an inseparable part of ritualistic worship), Yagya (religious ceremonies, specially fire sacrifices) and its related rites and rituals, and other such formal forms of worship (37).

[Note—Refer also to verse no. 7 of the present Canto 6.]

38. For him, even offering libations and oblations to the spirits of dead ancestors (called Pittars) is prohibited. [Refer verse no. 42.]

Similarly, he is forbidden to go on pilgrimage, observe religious fasting and other vows, and generally be obsessed about doing things to conform to the established norms of correct behaviour in this world. Rather, he must keep a safe distance from such things and not be bothered about any formalities and set norms of the world, because he is not only supposed to have broken all his links with this world but also because he has risen much above such mundane considerations and notions of what is holy, auspicious and good to do and what is not, what is religious and what is not, as he has become enlightened and truly aware of the 'truth' of creation that is known as the Atma and Brahm. [That is, he understands that his spiritual liberation and deliverance as well as emancipation and salvation does not depend at all on formal forms of worship and ritualistic practices. He realises that worshipping this or that deity, or offering oblations and libations to this and that spirit, or taking a formal bath to clean himself, or doing fire sacrifices or Japa, or observing the niceties of behaviour and etiquette in this world has no bearing on his spiritual enhancement and progress. This happens when the aspirant has become truly self-realised and Brahm-realised. And this achievement of self and Brahm realisation is the main criterion for a man to become truthful Sanyasi. If this does not happen, then he is an impostor.] (38).

[Note—This prohibition of worship of idols made of material things such as wood, stone, metals and clay etc. or other symbols of worship, or for that matter any kind of external worship such as going to pilgrim sites, rituals, fasting etc. is expressly mentioned in the following Upanishads—

(i) Sam Veda tradition—Maitreyu-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 21, 26; Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 50-59; and Sanyaso-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74-75, 97.

(ii) Atharva Veda tradition—Devi Upanishad, verse nos. 29-30; Narad-Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 75, Canto 5, verse no. 20, Canto 6, verse nos. 7, 37-38, 42, and Canto 7, verse no. 1; Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika (Canto) 4..

- (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Pran Agnihotra Upanishad; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 69, 74; Canto 3, verse no. 26, 29-30; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 21-24.
 (iv) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition—Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse nos. 5, 10, 13.]

39. A true Yogi (ascetic) must discard all formalities and behaviours that are associated with this world. He must divert his mind and effort to spiritualism and achieving the 'truth' in life; he must strive to attain emancipation and salvation; he must endeavour to obtain the best goal in life.

He must not do anything that would harm even the humblest of creatures, whether mobile or immobile, such as worms and insects, and even the plants (because they too have life)¹ (39).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 3, verse no. 22; Canto 5, verse no. 43.]

40. He must always remain focused on his inner self (instead of being extrovert). He must always keep himself clean and untainted, both externally as well as internally, both physically and symbolically.

He must observe absolute internal peace, calmness and poise, and keep his mind and intellect completely soaked in the bliss obtained by realisation of the Atma (pure consciousness) (40).

[Note—Refer Canto 3, verse no. 55.]

41. Oh Narad! You must abandon all sorts and hues of attractions, attachments, endearments, affections and involvements vis-à-vis this world, and then wander in it with no such fetters to shackle you down.

A Sanyasi should not move alone in any such place where there is strife, civil unrest or any other kind of disorder, lawlessness and anarchy (41).

42. A Sanyasi must keep far away from praises and honours as well as being shown respect by others as represented by such gestures as bowing before him. [Refer verse no. 20 of the present Canto 6.]

He must always keep away from doing Shraadhha and Tarpan (offering libations and oblations to the spirit of dead ancestors—refer verse no. 38 of the present Canto 6.).

He should stay in some lonely place, such as abandoned house or the cave of a mountain. [Refer verse no. 6 of the present Canto 6.]

He must roam freely without any fetters of any kind binding him in any manner. [Refer verse no. 41 of the present Canto 6.] (42).

Verily, this is what this great Upanishad says.

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 7

[This Canto continues with the narration of the general rules adjured to be followed by a Sanyasi. New ideas are incorporated and necessary instructions given to him to enable him to succeed in his life of Sanyas as envisioned by the Upanishads. This Canto outlines the way of life that would help the Sanyasi reach his goal of self-

realisation, and provides him the means by which such a self-realised Sanyasi can find deliverance from the cycle of birth and death.]

1. Once again, sage Narad asked the great grandfather of creation, Brahma—‘Oh Lord! What are the rules that are to be followed by a Sanyasi?’

Brahma reflected upon his query and replied—‘Oh Narad! A Sanyasi must renounce all attachments with or attractions for this world. He should stay at one place only during the four months of the rainy season, and spend the rest eight months of the year wandering alone at different places. He must not stay at one place for any length of time, because if he does so there is always the fear of his falling prey to temptations, development attachments and generally getting astray from his chosen path of Sanyas. [Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 14, 16, 19 and 20.]

Like a black bee, he must not stay at any one place for any length of time. [The bee moves from one flower to another in its search for nectar. It never visits any one flower twice. Similarly, a Sanyasi should never visit a particular household twice for food.]

If anyone objects to his going away then he must not pay heed to it and go his way. [For instance, if some devotee or follower is sufficiently influenced by his spiritual achievements that he requests him to stay in some temple or monastery on a permanent basis, a true Sanyasi must not agree and instead move out voluntarily for his wanderings.]

He must not cross a river by swimming. He must not climb a tree. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 21.]

He must not see or attend any festivals associated with the worship of any God. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 20, Canto 6, verse nos. 7, 37-38.]

He must not accept food from a single household often.

He must not worship other Gods and deities except the pure conscious Atma which is the microcosmic counterpart of the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. He must abandon everything except the Atma.

He must accept food by begging only. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 60.]

He should keep his body humble and docile. [That is, he must be overly worried about keeping his body well built, handsome, strong, robust and muscular. Because such an attempt would necessitate its proper care, nourishment with rich and nutritious food, and rest which a Sanyasi can ill afford during his wanderings. But this does not mean that he should completely neglect it because it has also been said in the Upanishad that this body is the residence of the Atma and the Pran, and a Sanyasi must eat enough to sustain it till the time comes for him to leave it in a natural way. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 26.]

He must ensure that he does not become obese. [This is because he has to remain alone and do everything himself. He has even to go out to fetch food for himself and remain constantly on the move. Being obese would be a great practical nuisance to him and cause a hindrance to his nomadic way of life of constant wanderings. A fat man finds it impossible to lead a life of wandering constantly. Besides, being fat would make him lazy and lethargic as well as susceptible to a number of diseases.]

Therefore, he must treat butter as being equivalent to blood, and absolutely abhor it (i.e. he must abstain from all food that are rich in fat, or would make him obese).

He must leave the food that is received repeatedly (more than once) from the same house as being equivalent to meat. [This restriction or prohibition would help

him to guard himself against being attached to or attracted by any particular household and developing even a rudimentary form of bond with it. This is a distinct possibility because the Sanyasi might prefer to reach a certain house at a certain time in the certain hope of finding food without having to take the trouble of going from one house to another in its search. But this type of acceptance of food from one single household is not ‘begging’; it is sort of remaining a householder from a distance! By and by, there is a sure danger of bonds developing between the Sanyasi and the members of the house where he goes regularly for food. This is to be avoided by him at all costs.]

He must also reject perfumes and paste of the sandalwood which is used as a smear on the body, and treat them as being equivalent to stinking urine and foul stool respectively.

He must treat caustic soda (used as an ingredient in washing soaps and powders) as being equivalent to contact with a Chandal (a very low caste man who lives outside villages and generally engaged in burning dead bodies in the cremation ground), and therefore keep himself away from having anything to do with it. [In other words, he must avoid using any soap or other forms of artificial scrubbing and cleaning material to clean his body or wash his clothes.]

He must discard all other things (clothes) except the loin-cloth, called the Kaupin, and the one-piece cloth used to cover his body, called the Kantha, by treating the rest as untouchable things.

Treating massage of the body with oil as being equivalent to an embrace of a woman, he must permanently keep himself away from it. [That is, he must learn to practice stern self-restraint, shun the desire to pamper the body and attend to its wish for gratification. This self-restraint is like a Tapa for him—i.e. it is equivalent to doing severe penances and austerities.]

He must treat company of friends and its associated pleasures and enjoyments as being equivalent to urine, and therefore shun it.

He must treat any desire for obtaining anything that may arise in his heart and mind as being similar to the desire for beef, and hence must absolutely abhor such an idea.

Well known places or those that were frequented by him earlier in life must be regarded as being equivalent to the garden frequented by a Chandal (a low caste man who has the vocation of burning dead bodies in the cremation ground), and hence should be avoided at all costs.

He must abandon gold (or any physical worldly asset) as being equivalent to the horrible poison called Kaalkut, a place where people gather to attend community functions as being like the cremation ground, the capital city (or any large city) as the greatest of hell known as Kumbhipaak, and food got repeatedly from a single place as corresponding to the Pinda (ball of cooked cereals) that is offered to dead ancestors.

He must understand that the Atma, which is the pure consciousness, is separate from the gross body. And therefore he must never allow himself to be trapped in numerous and varied addictions and different inclinations and tendencies of the mind (because they are all related to the body and have nothing to do with the Atma which is his true self).

He should ensure that he leaves his country (native place) and place of normal habitat (such as his village, town, city etc. where he had lived as a householder), and move out to some unknown destination.

Thinking about and experiencing the blissful and happy nature of his primary form (which is his pure conscious Atma) that is endowed with these eclectic divine

qualities, he must feel exhilarated and ecstatic as if he has discovered some precious treasure long forgotten or lost.

Going to a place that arouses ego and pride about one's own self and one's body (i.e. about the achievements and successes that one had accomplished with his body and its abilities, strengths, powers and vitality), as well as a place where people related to the body live (such as one's family members, kith and kin)—a Sanyasi must forget about such a place for good.

He must treat his own body as dead and never have any attachment with or endearment for it.

Even as a convict (such as a thief) released from prison never goes back to his native place out of shame and ridicule by the society, as well as out of the fear of castigation, censor and ignominy, a Parivrajak should leave the place where his family members, his kith and kin or his elders live, and go to some unknown place far away.

He must accept whatever food that is available, without making any special efforts, to sustain himself.

Remaining absorbed in meditation and submerged in hearing of the reverberation of the divine sound OM, which is a reflection of the supreme Brahm, vibrating constantly in his inner self, he must free himself from the need to undertake all other deeds and activities related to this mundane world.

He must burn (destroy or eliminate) all negative traits such as Kaam (worldly passions, lust, desires and yearnings), Krodh (anger and wrath), Lobh (greed, rapacity), Moha (affections, attractions, attachments and endearments), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy), Matsarya (jealously, ill-will, malice) etc., and even go beyond the influence of the three Gunas (which are basic qualities that are inherent in all living beings and which manipulate a man's personality) called Sata, Raja and Tama. [That is, he must clean his inner self of all kinds of traits, whether they are good or bad or mediocre, and instead learn and practice to become totally neutral and dispassionate. Briefly, the Sata Guna is the noblest quality that inclines a man towards doing and thinking noble deeds, the Raja Guna is the medium quality that arouses the desire to create and maintain this world, and the Tama Guna which creates negativity such as sinfulness and perversions. Refer Canto 3, verse no. 90.]

The six types of Urmis such as hunger, thirst etc. should have no affect on the Sanyasi. [Refer also Canto 3, verse no. 90. According to Mudgalo-panishad, 4/7 of the Rig Veda tradition, the six delusions, called 'Urmi', that create fear, sorrows, agonies, sufferings and pains to a creature are the following:--(1) hunger, (2) thirst, (3) grief, (4) Moha (worldly attachments, illusions, entrapments), (5) horrors of old age, and (6) death.]

He must have also no connection with the six Vikaars or faults or imperfections of the mind that are the source of constant worry and consternation for the creature. [The 6 Vikaars or faults or shortcomings or imperfections of the body are the problems associated with this gross world that has a physical origin, takes a birth and ultimately ends or dies. Naturally they are not applicable to the supreme Lord who does not take birth and does not die. These so-called 'Vikars' are the following—(1) problems associated with birth, (2) problems associated with growth, (3) problems associated with consequences of deeds done and actions taken by a creature in this world, (4) problems associated with gradual decay and decline of the body and its functions, (5) problems associated with old age and its attendant horrors, and (6) problems associated with the ultimate destruction and end of everything that relates to the creature. One will observe that the life of a creature is a continuous graph of sorrows, sufferings and pains of one or the other kind. It is only when the creature

realises the truth of existence and who he really is that he begins to disassociate himself from the body and the world, and thus is able to break free from this seemingly interminable cycle of horrors. Refer Canto 3, verse no. 90, and Canto 4, verse nos. 5-6 of the present Upanishad, besides the following—Mudgal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 6-7 of Rig Veda tradition, and Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1 verse nos. 8-9 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. The Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, Lanka Kand, Canto 3, verse no. 29 also asserts similar views.]

He must always speak the truth, remain immaculate and pure by his mind and body, and have no malice or animosity with anyone.

He must not stay in one village for more than one night, in a town for more than five nights, in some religious place (such as a temple or other place where some religious ceremony had taken place) for more than five nights, and in a pilgrim site also for not more than five nights. [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 14-16, 19.]

A Parivrajak Sanyasi must not construct a permanent dwelling for himself at any place. [By extension, he should not stay even in a monastery permanently. Refer Canto 3, verse no. 90.]

The mind must constantly be focused on the thoughts of the Supreme Being.

He must never tell a lie under any situation.

He should make his habitat in the caves of mountains. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 90; Canto 4, verse no. 38.]

He must roam all alone without keeping any company. [Refer Canto 2, verse no. 1; Canto 3, verse nos. 31, 54-56, 59-60, 76, 90; Canto 4, verse nos. 23, 38; Canto 5, verse no. 52; Canto 6, verse nos. 6, 41.]

It is however sanctioned that he might have a company of four people during the four months of the rainy season. To have constant company of three people would be like being in a village, and a company of four people creates an environment symbolic of a town. Hence, a Sanyasi is best advised to remain alone and avoid company of all sorts. [Refer Canto 3, verse no. 56.]

The fourteen components of the body (as outlined in Canto 6, verse no. 3) should not be allowed and given the time to act independently and without restraint. [That is, a Sanyasi must exercise the greatest of vigil on their activities, being aware that they are like horses yoked to a chariot that require being properly harnessed, reined-in and controlled, as otherwise they would wreck the chariot and kill the passenger. The chariot in this case is the man's own body, and the passenger is the 'self'. Since controlling of the body and its sense organs can only be done by the will of the mind and an involvement of the heart, collectively called the Mana, the 'charioteer' in this instance would therefore be the 'Mana'.]

A Sanyasi must be so highly enlightened and self-realised that he would not recognise or give any importance to any entity other than the 'self' which is the pure conscious Atma.

Without giving any credence to any other entity or thing other than his own Atma as being the only 'truth' in existence, he must look at everything in this world in the light of this realisation. That is, he must strive to peek behind the external façade of things and attempt to see the truth hidden behind this façade and inside that thing.

Experiencing the eclectic and blissful nature of his Atma, he must find freedom from all miseries and pain of this world as well as find liberation from all the delusions and their attendant confusions about the truth and reality of existence even while he is still alive. [This spiritual achievement is called 'Jivan Mukti'—to be liberated from all spiritual fetters arising out of ignorance of the 'truth and reality' even while a man still lives in this world and has a physical body, as compared to

finding freedom from this world after he has shed the bondage and limitations of the physical gross body that is possible only upon death.]

Once a Sanyasi has become 'self-realised', i.e. once he has understood the truthful and sublime nature of his Atma, the pure consciousness that lives inside the gross body as the person's truthful identity, he must remain self-contained and self-contented, bidding his time when he would be able to shed his mortal coil (his physical gross body) effortlessly and find eternal freedom from all physical bondages, shackles and limitations that had been inhibiting him through generations of birth and death.

It is a moral obligation on the part of the Parivrajak Sanyasi that he leaves his mortal body while remaining submerged in the eclectic thoughts of the Atma. [This would ensure that he does not feel the pain of death. In this context, refer also to Canto 3, verse nos. 60-61 of the present Upanishad.] (1).

2. [In the context of verse nos. 2-11, the reader should also refer to Canto 5, verse nos. 12-21.]

A Kutichak Sanyasi is ordained to take bath three times a day (at dawn, at noon and at dusk).

A Bahudak Sanyasi should take bath twice a day (at dawn and dusk).

A Hans Sanyasi should take bath only once a day (preferably at dawn).

A Param-hans Sanyasi should take only a symbolic form of bath mentally.

A Turiyatit Sanyasi is prescribed a bath in the form of rubbing or smearing of the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice over his body. This is called 'Bhasma Snan'—bathing with the ash.

An Avadhut Sanyasi is prescribed the 'Vaayabya Snan'—i.e. bathing with air. That is, he must inculcate the eclectic view that the air which touches his body is cleaning the latter like physical contact with water does. This symbolic bathing with air keeps him always clean because bathing with water keeps the body clean only for some limited time but bathing with air keeps it permanently cleaned as the body is in constant contact with air. Therefore, he need not take a bath with water (2).

3. A Kutichak Sanyasi should wear the vertical mark of the Urdhva-pundra¹ on his forehead.

A Bahudak Sanyasi should wear the Tripundra².

A Hans Sanyasi can wear either the Urdhva-pundra or the Tripundra.

A Param-hans Sanyasi should wear only the Bhasma³.

A Turiyatit Sanyasi should wear the mark called Tilak-pundra⁴.

An Avadhut Sanyasi is not prescribed to sport any specific sign (3).

[Note—¹Urdhva-pundra—The word 'Urdhva' means vertical or one that moves upwards. The Urdhva-pundra is a vertical line or mark made on the forehead.

²Tripundra—References: Krishna Yajur Veda's Kagnirudra Upanishad; Atharva Veda's Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman (Canto) 4, verse nos. 9-36, Brahman 5, verse nos. 1-19, and Brahman 7.

The word Tripundra has two parts—'tri' and 'pundra'. Tri means three while the word Pundra refers to the three horizontal lines marked on the body (the forehead, the chest and the shoulders) by Hindus. The Pundra can be horizontal or crosswise lines, in which case it is called the 'Tiryak Pundra', or it can be vertical or upright lines, in which case it is called 'Urdhva Pundra'. The Tiryak Pundra or Tripundra is worn by devotees of Lord Shiva and initiated ascetics and is marked by the paste of the ash obtained from the pit of the fire sacrifice by mixing it with water.

The three lines of the Tripundra have great symbolic significance. They stand for the entire gamut of creation having three aspects or dimensions. It is like a sign depicting a three dimensional picture of this creation. The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 4-5 describes in great detail the spiritual importance of this Tripundra and how to wear it on the body. It represents the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Rudra the concluder (Brahman 4, verse no.10), the three Gunas such as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna, and the three sacred fires such as the Ahawaniya fire, the Grahapatya fire and the Dakshinagni fire (Brahman 4, verse no. 36).

The metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of the Tripundra have been asked by sage Sanatkumar from Lord Kalagni Rudra and explained by the Lord in Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

³Bhasma— The word ‘Bhasma’ means ash, and it refers to the sacred ash left in the pit after the fire sacrifice is completed. The Brihajjabal and Bhasma Jabal Upanishads of the Atharva Veda describe the concept of Bhasma in great detail along with how to prepare it and its astounding mystical powers, metaphysical significance, spiritual authority and importance.

⁴The Tilak is the vertical holy mark made in the center of the forehead similar to the Urdhva-pundra. It is a single line that starts at the on the bridge of the nose and goes straight up to the hair line.]

4. A Kutichak Sanyasi should shave off the hairs on his body every two months.
 A Bahudak Sanyasi should do the same every four months.
 A Hans Sanyasi and a Param-hans Sanyasi can, if they so wish, shave off the hair every six months.
 A Turiyatit Sanyasi and an Avadhut Sanyasi are not required to shave off the hair (4).
5. A Kutichak Sanyasi should accept food from one place (household) only.
 A Bahudak Sanyasi should accept food by begging only.
 For a Hans Sanyasi and a Param-hans Sanyasi the hands are the only pots to accept food. Such Sanayasis are called ‘Karpatri’—those whose hands are like a pot. [That is, they should not accept food in a separate pot but accept it directly in their hands by cupping the palms together.] He must be contented by whatever quantity of food that can be accommodated in their cupped hands.
 A Turiyatit Sanyasi should eat like a cow—i.e. he should open his mouth and the giver puts food, consisting either of cooked meal or fruits, directly into his open mouth.
 An Avadhut Sanyasi is to accept food like a python—i.e. he must not venture out in search of food but accept whatever is made available to him by the grace of God and as desired by others at the place where he stays. He must be fully contented with it (5).
6. A Kutichak Sanyasi should keep two pieces of cloth with him. [Besides the loin-cloth he can keep two pieces of clothes—one to wrap his body with and one to spread on the ground when he rests.]
 A Bahudak Sanyasi should keep only one long piece of cloth to wrap his body with.
 A Hans Sanyasi should keep only one smaller piece of cloth as compared to the one kept by the Bhaudak.
 A Param-hans Sanyasi should wear only the loin-cloth or remain completely naked.

A Turiyatit Sanyasi and an Avadhut Sanyasi are both required to remain naked (6).

7. A Kutichak Sanyasi and a Bahudak Sanyasi can offer physical worship to God (or any deity of their choice), if they so wish¹.

A Hans Sanyasi as well as a Param-hans Sanyasi should worship God mentally and not physically.

A Turiyatit Sanyasi and an Avadhut Sanyasi are required to have the eclectic view about Brahm that makes them firmly believe in the doctrine 'So-aham'. That is, they should realise the truth of the tenet 'That Principal is me', that they are Brahm personified, and therefore they need not worship any other God or deity except their own 'self' in the form of their pure conscious Atma (7).

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that all the Upanishads that deal with the concept of Sanyas, and even our present Naradparivrajak Upanishad have prohibited physical forms of deity worship for a Sanyasi—refer Canto 5, verse no. 20, Canto 6, verse no. 7, 37-38. So does this mean that there is contradiction in these verses? No, not at all. Now let us see why it is so.

A conscientious Hindu is taught to worship deities in a number of ways—as his family deity, as his business deity, as his personal deity, as his village and community deity etc. This he does willingly and as his religiously sanctioned duty while he is a householder. If he does not do so, he feels guilty of offending some God and fears the latter's punishment in so many ways. Perhaps this was designed to build some kind of regulatory mechanism to make a man adhere to certain norms in life and regulate his deeds, action and behaviour, and to make him pursue a righteous and auspicious path as far as possible. But Vedanta or the Upanishad teach of only one deity, of only one God, of only one Truth, and it is the Consciousness known as the Atma at the individual or micro level of creation, and as Brahm at the larger cosmic or the macro level. A wise man, even when conforming to the tradition of worshipping so many deities, understands this basic tenet that he is worshipping only one single Divinity in all the forms he worships. A wise worshipper is he who knows that the same Divinity, the same divine Principal has manifested in myriad of forms and in countless of ways to make itself easily accessible and available to the individual creature depending upon his specific abilities, spiritual needs and mental calibre. In this, Hinduism has a democratic and all-inclusive broad perspective of and approach to religion, worship and Godhood. Every single individual has the liberty to choose and pick his personal deity that suits his emotional and mental setup the most, instead of being forced to follow some abstract deity which is thrust down his unwilling mind. This freedom makes him more committed and devoted to his personal deity of choice as he is inclined to believe in it more sincerely at the emotional level. This situation stands in stark contrast with a community deity with which a man might not be so emotionally attached, and hence his devotion is also diluted. No other religion gives its followers this freedom of choice—the liberty to choose a personal 'God' from a wide variety of choices. But it must be borne in mind that it is the same Hinduism which teaches its followers that no matter what form or shape this 'God' of his takes, the fact is that all of them are the same Divinity known as Brahm in each of their forms. In other words, one can be called a true worshipper of the Lord and a wise one if he worships any form but with this enlightened view.

So, this stanza gives the Kutichak Sanyasi the freedom to follow his line of worship because he would still reach his spiritual goal if he is wise and enlightened enough. But in practice, everyone is not so highly erudite and enlightened to grasp the facts and their fine nuances. And this ignorance leads to one's downfall, which he squarely blames on the scriptures and the inefficacy of their teachings.

When a householder becomes a Sanyasi, he has his old habits, and if he is told to stop worshipping the deities that he is used to honouring he might wrongly interpret it

as being a wrong or un-religious advice. So, in the initial stages of Sanyas such as the Kutichak and Bahudak, he is allowed to carry on with his earlier habit or practice of offering worship in its external form to the Divinity. But as he progresses ahead in his spiritual awakening, he realises the futility of this form of worship, and then when he has graduated to the next level of Hans and Param-hans, he is required to chuck off this superficial form of external or formal forms of worship, and instead honour the Lord internally, which is actually the correct way of honouring the Supreme Being because the Lord does not require any external formalities, rituals, rites, pretensions of being religious and devout, and any other kind of showmanship to be honoured.

In the final stages of one's spiritual evolution, he realises the truth of the great sayings of the Upanishads and the Vedas, and understands that the supreme Truth that is the object of all religious exercises and offering of worship and honour is not to be found somewhere outside but it is hidden in his own bosom as his 'pure conscious self'. And this leads him to exclaim 'I am that universal principle, I am that truthful essence, I am the Atma that is Brahm personified'.]

8. A Kutichak Sanyasi and a Bahudak Sanyasi can do Japa (repetition) with Mantras. [They are supposed to use the OM Mantra for doing Japa.]

A Hans Sanyasi and a Param-hans Sanyasi should do only Dhyān¹ or focus their mind in deep contemplation and meditation.

A Turiyatit Sanyasi and an Avadhut Sanyasi are required to research upon their Atma, which is pure and enlightened consciousness and a fountainhead of bliss, beatitude and felicity, and do nothing else. [In other words, they do meditation and contemplation like the Hans and the Param-hans Sanyasis, but they have advanced to a higher level as compared to their brethrens, the Hans and the Param-Hans Sanyasis. Their focus is on more deep penetration of the numerous layers that shroud the truth about the Atma rather than doing meditation and contemplation as a preparatory ground for self-realisation. In fact, there is not much of a difference between what is prescribed for a Turiyatit and Avadhut Sanyasi on the one hand, and for a Hans and a Param-Hans Sanyasi on the other hand as would be clear by the note appended below. It is actually two ways of saying the same thing. Only the degree and depth of concentration could vary, as can the method employed to carry out Dhyān. But the aim of the exercise in both the cases is to concentrate the faculties of the mind and the intellect to realise the 'ultimate Truth' about the 'self' which is known as the Atma, and which can provide the Sanyasi the way for his spiritual liberation and deliverance, for his spiritual emancipation and salvation.]

The three types of Sanyasis such as the Turiyatit, the Avadhut and the Param-hans are the only ones who have the authority to preach the great sayings or the Mahavakyas² of the scriptures such as 'Tattwamasi' (that essence and principle is you), 'Ayamaatma Brahm' (my Atma is Brahm) etc.

The other three types of Sanyasis such as the Kutichak, the Bahudak and the Hans are not authorised to preach the Mahavakyas (8).

[Note—¹The word *Dhyān* literally means 'to think or to cogitate'. It is profound and abstract meditation that revolves around reflection and thoughts that are focused on the Divinity said to be concealed inside the bosom of all the creatures as their pure consciousness that in turn is the supreme cosmic power in creation known as Brahm. Usually the energy of this cosmic Consciousness is lying latent and unused in the own body of the creature simply because it is in a dormant form and un-ignited much like the fire lying dormant in the firewood or charcoal and needing some prodding to leap back into life with all its glorious potentials and splendour. Dhyān envisages the concentration of the stupendous powers of the faculties of the mind to deeply contemplate and fixedly ponder on the great spiritual truths of creation as envisioned

by the scriptures to unravel their enigmatic secrets. This is done by fixing the powerful forces of the mind which is aided by the physical contribution of the body in this auspicious endeavour in the form of various meditative exercises, onto a spot called the 'Bindu', literally the point source of spiritual energy located in the heart as the 'Atma or soul' of the creature, as also in the centre of the eyebrows as 'awareness and enlightenment', from where the great mystical powers in creation spring out and spread into the outside world. It envisions the use of various Yoga techniques to contemplate and meditate upon the various aspects of spiritualism with the objective of unfolding the magnificent treasure of spiritual enlightenment and unleashing of the astounding mystical powers that are inherently present in the Atma but tacitly concealed hitherto, leading to self and Brahm realisation, to the awakening of the universal powers of the Spirit.

Dhyan means both contemplation as well as meditation. The word also means 'attention; focus'. So this word is generally understood in common parlance to be similar to contemplation and meditation, concentration and focusing of the conscious mind. It covers both the terms in its ambit.

The appropriate word for contemplation in Sanskrit would be 'Manan and Chintan' which will roughly mean 'deep thought, reflection, pondering and application of mind'. The Upanishads stress on this 'Chintan-manan' aspect of the mind-intellect when it talks about 'Dhyan'. Greatest of scientific discoveries were made more by intuition than anything else. That is why intuition is closely related to the so-called 'sixth sense' in a man, i.e. a state when the intuitive man knows what is the correct path to chose from a variety of options, and more often than not, he is correct. We can say that this 'intuition' is the guidance provided by the subtle soul/Atma of the creature. Not everybody is equally intuitive by nature; this is because some persons, by virtue of their past actions and deeds have a thicker layer of Vasanas and Vrittis surrounding their Atma while others have a thinner layer so that the voice coming out of the Atma is easily heard in the latter case while it is muzzled and suppressed in the former case.

The great exponent of Yoga, sage Patanjali, in his magnum opus 'Yogsutra' has described 'Dhyan' as concentration. Dhyan is that state in which the inner mind tries to see the reality behind things. This 'thinking' process links it with contemplation while concentration function links it with meditation. According to Agni Puran, contemplation with a calm mind is Dhyan while Garud Puran has defined it as concentration on the Brahm. Dhyan, therefore, leads to enlightenment. Woodworth, in his book 'Psychology', writes that the mind concentrates on one impulse at a time and neglects others. So, Dhyan in this context means 'to become alert and activated for doing a work or seeing an object exclusively'. Dhyan is momentary in the beginning, but it becomes permanent later on with practice. Sidney Smith defines Dhyan as 'to forget everything else except the main objective'. Charles Dickens views Dhyan as 'useful, harmless, definite and a beneficial process of the mind'. According to Bergansa, 'suppression of external distractions is essential for the deepening expansion of Dhyan'. Edgar Casey says that 'Dhyan brings to the fore the latent powers of creativity in a person. This creativity improves and enriches his physical, mental and spiritual aspects'. John White in his renowned work 'The meeting of science and spirit' has enumerated many benefits of Dhyan— promotion of physical health, reduction of tension, anxiety and aggressiveness, it leads to self realisation and self improvement and development. He further says that the benefit of meditation are the following—feeling of tranquillity, freedom, reduction of tiredness and depression, relief from pains, increase in positive traits such as sympathy and empathy for others, believe in divinity and purity of self etc. Michael Murphy and Steven Donovan, in their research work titled 'The physical and psychological effects of meditation' have mentioned that meditation/Dhyan helps to regulate and control electrical and chemical activity of the brain, the rhythm of the heart, regulates blood pressure, the skin's ability to resist infection and it regulates general metabolism.

The great philosopher sage Sankaracharya has explained that the many Vedic rituals such as sacrifices had been transformed as mental concepts for contemplation and meditation by Chandogya Upanishad because any defect in the performance of a ritual according to the Vedas, however small and inconsequential, could devalue and derail the whole process. Further, elaborate rituals required huge preparation and expenditure. So he prescribed that meditation was far better, safer and surer means of attaining the same benefits that elaborate sacrifices offered. Contemplation and meditation are equally efficient in spiritual pursuit of the aspirant. Nevertheless, the former (contemplation) has intellect and mind as its main focus while the latter (meditation) concentrates on the mind and body to be effective. Sacrifices, as compared to them, are merely physical rituals.

As is evident, the chariot moves in the proper direction when all the horses are controlled simultaneously. So a holistic and an all-inclusive, well synchronised and homogenous approach is needed by a seeker/aspirant to attain success in his endeavour to get liberation and deliverance from the horrible torments agitating him as well as to attain emancipation and salvation for its soul from this world.

The concept of Dhyan has been described in detail in Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, section 6 and 18 of the Sam Veda tradition, and Dhyan Bindu Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which is expressly dedicated to it.

Verse no. 1 of Dhyan Bindu Upanishad refers to the concept of Dhyan Yoga and gives its spiritual importance.

²There are a number of Upanishads that describe the *Mahavakyas*. A brief reference is as follows—

- (i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad.
- (ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi).
- (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-3, 8; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi).
- (iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk Rahasayo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2.
- (v) Atharva Veda— Atma Upanishad; Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 ('So-a-Ham'); Canto 6, paragraph no. 22 ('Twam Brahmasmi'; 'Aham Brahmasmi'; 'Twamewaaham'; 'Ahamev Twam'); Canto 8, paragraph no. 5 ('Brahmaasmi' or I am Brahm; 'Ahamasmi' or Indeed it is I/me; 'Brahmahamasmi' or I am indeed Brahm; 'Yoahamasmi' or That is I/me; 'Brahmaamashmi' or Brahm is I/me; 'Ahamevaaham' or I am indeed I/me.); Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14 (Tat Twam Asi—That Art Thou); Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9-10 (So-a-Ham); Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 8 (Brahmasmi—I am Brahm personified); Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-8 ('Hans So-a-Ham'); verse no. 11 ('So-a-Hamarka'—that essence is me); Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15 ('Tattwamasi'—i.e. that supreme essence or truth is you; the second Maha Vakya is 'Ayamatma'—i.e. that essence known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is my own Atma, my own 'self'; the third Maha Vakya is 'Brahm Aham'—i.e. Brahm is me; the fourth Maha Vakya is 'Aham Brahmasmi'—i.e. I am Brahm).]

9. A Kutichak Sanyasi and a Bahudak Sanyasi are prescribed to do meditation using the OM Mantra in its apparent or clear or audible form. That is, they can repeat the divine Mantra OM symbolising Brahm audibly, and use it openly for the purpose of doing Dhyan (concentration of the mind during meditation) and Japa (repetition of the Mantra).

A Hans Sanyasi and a Param-hans Sanyasi on the other hand should use OM mentally as a means to do Dhyān, Japa and focusing of their attention on the supreme Brahm. That is, their meditation and contemplation is basically mental, done internally and imperceptibly, rather than by exhibiting any external signs of doing Yoga, Japa or Dhyān such as repeating OM aloud.

A Turiyatit Sanyasi and an Avadhut Sanyasi are expected to have become sufficiently enlightened that they directly visualise the supreme Brahm and experience the presence of the supreme transcendental Consciousness when using the Mantra OM, rather than treating it as only a symbol and representative of Brahm. [The difference between the Hans and Param-hans on the one hand, and the Turiyatit and Avadhut on the other hand is clear here. Whereas the former two classes of Sanyasis use the divine Mantra OM as a vehicle to realise Brahm, the latter class of Sanyasis directly view or experience Brahm whenever they hear or say OM.] (9).

[Note—Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 20, 26.]

10. A Kutichak Sanyasi and a Bahudak Sanyasi are authorised to hear discourses on Vedānta to enhance their knowledge in spiritual matters. [This is because they are still in the preparatory and earlier stages of Sanyas. They hear discourses to clear doubts and acquire knowledge. As has been made abundantly clear in this Upanishad, all the categories of Sanyasis are basically advanced in spiritual matters as compared to other classes in society, but they still have a lot to learn, and like any discipline of knowledge or learning, progress in this field too has to be made in a step-by-step manner. No one can jump directly to the highest category of Sanyas, which is Avadhut, from the Vaanprastha stage, though this is not completely ruled out. This is because it has also been said that there may be persons who have realised their true self and the reality of the Atma early on in life, i.e. they have become wise and enlightened without having had to go through the formal prescribed path of having to accept Brahmacharya Ashram first, followed by Grihastha Ashram and then Vaanprastha Ashram before becoming a Sanyasi. For such persons who have developed profound enlightenment and wisdom, who have developed great renunciation for this artificial world, and seek direct Mukti from it and Moksha for their selves—i.e. those who are very eager for spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation—a straight transition to the Avadhut state of Sanyas is allowed. Refer also to Canto 3, verse no. 5, 9, 77, and Canto 5, verse nos. 3-4, 7, 26.]

The main means of realisation and enlightenment for a Hans Sanyasi and a Param-hans Sanyasi is ‘Chintan and Manan’, i.e. to do deep contemplation, to ponder deeply, to think intently, to reflect and do silent research on what has been learnt by the study of the scriptures, and hearing of the discourses during the earlier stages of Sanyas. They hear, think, contemplate, ponder and deduce the ‘truth’ themselves.

The main tool for a Turiyatit Sanyasi and an Avadhut Sanyasi in his spiritual pursuit is ‘Nidhi-dhyasan’, i.e. to repeatedly remember what has been learned and verified by personal experience. This repetition helps to firmly fix the mind and its sub-conscious on the great truths of the Mahavakyas, and changes the aspirant mentally from the inside. When his sub-conscious thinks of nothing else except what he has learnt from the scriptures in the form of the Mahavakyas, it is completely soaked in these thoughts so much so that the overall personality of the Sanyasi undergoes a drastic change, and he no longer remains an ordinary wandering friar or monk but transforms into a personification of Brahm.

The chief spiritual aim of all these exercises is to research and know about the Atma, to realise the truth of the Atma, and to become enlightened about this grand eclectic ‘absolute truth’ of creation (10).

11. In the above described way, all the forms of Sanyasis must constantly, consistently and persistently strive to obtain spiritual liberation and deliverance for themselves, to obtain spiritual emancipation and salvation for their selves at all costs and to the exclusion of all other things.

For this purpose, they should take the help of the Tarak Mantra that can take them across the ocean-like world and give them freedom from it by constantly remaining focused on it, and repeating it consistently and persistently. [The Tarak Mantra is a divine Mantra that has the power and potential to provide the soul with the benefit of emancipation, salvation, liberation and deliverance. In the present case, this Mantra is OM which is a sound manifestation of Brahm and the easiest vehicle for Brahm-realisation. Refer Canto 4, verse no. 38, and full Canto 8.]

By doing this, they are deemed to be liberated from all the fetters that shackle ordinary creatures to this world, and thus they roam about like a free man.

Such an enlightened and exalted Sanyasi must endeavour to obtain the highest form of Mukti which is called Kaivalya. [That is, they must strive to merge their individual soul with the supreme Soul of creation known as Brahm so that, after this merger, they become one with Brahm and consequentially they would not have to take birth again and re-enter this world. This is the ‘only’ or Kaivalya way how a creature can actually get true and real freedom from this world and this body. Refer Canto 5, verse no. 22.]

Verily, this is the great teaching of this Upanishad (11).

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 8

[In this Canto Brahma extensively explains to Narad the divine Mantra OM pertaining to Pranav or Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, when the sage asked him about the Mantra which can help an aspirant to attain final Mukti (liberation and deliverance) from this world. It goes on to describe elaborately the meaning of the numerous terms that are used to indicate the various facets of the same universal divine entity known as Brahm that is supreme and transcendental. Here, almost all the esoteric terms used as adjectives or epithets for Brahm have been explained at a single place, and in this respect this Canto is unique in the pantheon of the Upanishads.]

1. After the above discourse, sage Narad asked the supreme creator Brahma—‘Oh Lord! Which is the Mantra that can help the creature to cross over or find freedom from the endless cycle of birth and death? I have humbly come to seek this knowledge from you, so please be kind to enlighten me on the subject.’ [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 20, 26; Canto 7, verse no. 11.]

Brahma replied—‘So be it. I shall tell you about it. Oh son Narad, this Mantra known as Tarak Mantra is OM. [The word ‘Tarak’ means an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature’s soul, a vehicle that takes across, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pains from which he is suffering in this world. The Tarak Mantra is a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases

having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The Mantra that has this potential is called the Tarak Mantra.]

OM is a personification of Brahm (i.e. it represents the supreme transcendental Divinity in its most subtle and sublime form). Hence, a wise spiritual aspirant must meditate and contemplate upon OM both as a ‘Vyasthi’ as well as a ‘Samasthi’. [Briefly, the word ‘Vyasthi’ means to treat an entity in isolation, individuality, single entity, and the word ‘Samasthi’ means totality, aggregate of things, all-inclusive. Therefore, OM is to be treated as standing for Brahm in all its manifestations—both at the micro level of creation as well as at the macro level of creation. It is to treat OM as an individual Mantra representing Brahm (‘Vyasthi’) as well as the vehicle for realising that universal cosmic Divinity that is all-pervading and all-including (‘Samasthi’). This concept is elaborated below.]

Narad wished to have more elaboration on this eclectic and esoteric subject, so he asked—‘Oh great grandfather! What is meant by the terms ‘Vyasthi’ and ‘Samasthi’? Please be kind to explain.’

Brahma explained—‘Vyasthi and Samashti are the two aspects or limbs of the same Brahm manifested or revealed in the form of Pranav (i.e. as the ethereal sound reverberating as the background sound in the cosmic ether that is conceptualised in the form of the monosyllable word OM).

The same Brahm, also known as Pranav or OM, is said to have three subtle forms—viz. the first is known as ‘Sanhaar Pranav (i.e. the Brahm that is the cause of conclusion; that exists beyond conclusion of creation)’, the second is known as ‘Srishtih Pranav (i.e. the Brahm that is the cause of creation; the one that pre-dates creation; the one from which this creation has come into being)’, and the third aspect is known as ‘Ubhayaatmak Pranav (i.e. the Brahm that displays two characteristics; the Brahm which is both the concluder as well as the creator)’.

The ‘Ubhayaatmak Pranav’ again has two aspects—one is ‘Antaha’ (secret, hidden, internal, esoteric or subtle form of Brahm that is not visible or perceptible externally), and the other is ‘Baahaya’ (the external, visible, manifested and perceptible form of Brahm; the form that is easily known, seen, understood and experienced).

The Antaha Pranav (Brahm) (as enshrined in the Mantra OM) would be described in the next verse no. 2.

The Baahaya Pranav (Brahm) is also known as ‘Vyavahaarik Pranav’, or Brahm that is revealed in the practical world, the usual and customary form of Brahm known by the creature. This is the variant of Brahm that a creature comes in contact with. It is the external form of Brahm in practical life. It is the non-abstract and tangible aspect of Brahm that is otherwise beyond comprehension and too abstract and intangible to be grasped.

The Vyasthi Pranav (Brahm) is also known as Baahaya or Vyavahaarik Pranav. [This is because of one simple reason. The individual creature (‘Vyasthi’) is Brahm personified in the enlightened view of the Upanishads. The reason is that the Atma of the creature, which is his true self and which is pure consciousness, is this Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, residing in the heart of this individual creature. Without this Atma the creature would cease to exist. Since a creature is a verifiable and visible entity, since no one can deny his own existence, this revealed form of Brahm at the individual level—the Vyasthi level—is called ‘Baahya Pranav or Baahya Brahm’, or the form of Brahm that is externally visible, is seen, is tangible, is

on display, is well known and understood. It does not require any grounding in the Upanishads or the Vedas to be convinced about the existence of a living being right in the front of an observer. The Baahya form of Brahm is too evident to arouse any sort of doubt and confusion. The only thing that is needed is a sharpened intelligence and wisdom that are able to analyse and correctly interpret the teaching of the scriptures which say that each individual living being is a manifestation of Brahm, and to understand the reason behind this assertion of the scriptures. In other word, Brahm is revealed in its 'Vyasthi' form as an individual creature in this world. It is in practical life that one can feel and experience the presence of Brahm if one is wise and enlightened enough to realise the basic truth of the tenets of the scriptures that whatever that exists in this creation is nothing but Brahm. No other proof of Brahm's existence is needed than the presence of a living being right in the front of the wise observer.]

Aside of these forms of Brahm, there is another form known as 'Aarsha Pranav'. This form of Pranav or Brahm is also known as the 'Viraat' or the vast, macrocosmic, invisible, all-encompassing and all-pervasive form of Brahm. [The word 'Aarsha' means that about which the ancient sages and seers—or Rishis—had written, anything that is authorised by these Rishis and sanctified by the Vedas. Hence, that form of Brahm which includes everything in the creation, which displays the grand characteristics of being all-inclusive, all-pervading and all-encompassing, who is invisible and macrocosmic in nature and from—i.e. Brahm in its Viraat or vast and colossus form—is known as Aarsha because this form has been established and sanctified by the ancient sages who had meditated deeply and realised the vastness of the cosmic Consciousness that they named as 'Brahm', as well as by the Vedas that are essentially codified form of that esoteric and enigmatic knowledge. The Vedas are in effect the knowledge of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that the ancient sages and seers left for posterity.]

The Sanhaar Pranav is also known as Brahm Pranav because it is in this form of the supreme Consciousness (Brahm or Pranav) that the creator Brahma dwells in a concealed form. [The Sanhaar Pranav is that aspect of the cosmic Consciousness, the 'Viraat Purush', that brings about the conclusion—'Sanhaar'—of creation. The word 'Sanhaar' means to end, kill, slay, annihilate, demolish. But a new phase of creation is hidden in the bosom of the same Viraat in the form of Brahma, the creator of the visible world. When the time is ripe, Brahma rises from the Viraat Purush's navel atop a divine lotus to initiate the new phase of creation. So, while the Viraat concludes this present creation as the Sanhaar Pranav, it is the same Divinity that would be the cause of the next generation of creation in the form of Brahma the creator. In the Purans, this Sanhaar Brahm has been named 'Rudra' which is the angry form of Brahm. Brahm has been depicted in its angry form as 'Rudra' because normally Brahm has a very calm and neutral demeanour in his role of the creator and sustainer of creation. He gets angry only when he decides to wind up the show. Without being angry, he would not be able to demolish the same creation that he has so assiduously nurtured for such a long period of time.]

The ethereal cosmic sound OM has four syllables or letters such as A etc. which symbolise the various aspects of this world such as its gross and other forms. The OM also has a fifth syllable called the 'Ardha Martra'¹ or half-syllable which is a nasal sound. This latter Ardha Matra stands for the un-manifested, invisible and formless Pranav or Brahm. [This is because sound has no physical shape or form.] (1).

[Note—¹The word 'Ardha' means half, and 'Matra' means a part of the whole, a certain syllable in the language that is not complete in itself but is required to

complete the meaning of other letters or words. From the metaphysical perspective the 'Ardha Matra' of OM represents that phase of creation that lies beyond its present conclusion and prior to the beginning of the new creation. It is a sort of bridge between the present gross creation and the subtle aspect of the creation.

When we analyse OM as is done in the forthcoming verses, we observe that it has many components—viz. the letters A, U and M, followed by the Ardha Matra and then by the Naad and Bindu as described in verse no. 2 below. Now, the clear form of the letters A, U and M represent the gross aspect of creation, the Naad and Bindu represent the higher subtle state, and the 'Ardha Matra' is the bridge or link between the two. The 'Ardha Matra' has a meaning only as long as there is a gross aspect and a subtle aspect of existence much like the case when a bridge has any importance only when there are two banks that have to be linked or required to be transited by a traveller.

As has been said in this verse, it represents the invisible or intangible aspect of Brahm as it represents a transitional aspect of Brahm—from the physical aspect of Brahm in this visible creation to the sublime Brahm in its cosmic form that has no physical forms; it indicates a transition from the gross to the subtle.

This basic and simple idea should be borne in mind while proceeding further with the discussion of OM.]

2. Now, the esoteric and secret aspects of OM are being described. This Pranav (the ethereal cosmic sound represented by the word OM) is Brahm. [In other words, OM is a sound manifestation of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm.] This OM is the monosyllabic Mantra (a formula) for Brahm. Hence, OM, Brahm and Pranav are synonyms.

OM has been divided, for the purpose of study and analysis only, into eight components or aspects or sections. [Otherwise, it is an indivisible monosyllabic word.] These eight parts are the letters A, U and M, the half-syllable called Ardha Matra, the Naad and Bindu (the crescent moon-shaped sign with a centrally-located dot dangling right over it at its focal point that is placed on the top of the visual depiction of OM), Kalaa (varying aspects or qualities or virtues of OM) and Shakti (dynamic energy that is latently present and inherent to the word OM).

[According to some versions, there are four letters constituting OM instead of only three—and they are A, O, U and M. In this version, the eight components would be these four letters + the Ardha Matra + the Naad (called the Kalaa) + Bindu (symbolising the Shakti) = 8.]

Further, each of the four letters and syllables (A, O, U and M; or A, U, M and the Ardha Matra) are divided into number of sub-divisions or parts. For instance, merely the letter A has ten thousand subtle forms or aspects or sub-divisions or parts, the letter U has one thousand subtle forms, and the letter M has one hundred subtle forms. Similarly, the Ardha Matra too has uncountable subtle aspects. [It is easy to understand this phenomenon. A motion picture consists of hundreds of thousands of still frames that pass before the eye in rapid succession, so quickly that they give an illusion of motion. Similarly, the monosyllabic OM also consists of millions of tiny bits of sound waves that coalesce with each other at the subtlest level so fast and rapidly that when is heard is one composite and seamless form of sound that is equivalent to the humming of the black bee. It is impossible to separate the individual units of sound that compositely form the word OM, but just for the plain purpose of analysis OM has been divided into distinct sounds as indicated by the letters mentioned herein above.

Ancient sages and seers who could hear the cosmic sound during their meditative and contemplative sessions had such a razor sharp and sensitive mind that

they could not only hear but also analyse the constituent parts of this sound just like we have spectrometers that analyse the constituent of rocks and chemicals based on the colours emitted by them, or the prism that can segregate the different constituent elements of white light into seven colours. Further, each sound was again sub-divided into smaller units just like we have red and infra red, or violet and ultra-violet colours of the spectrum, or such colours as orange which consists of a combination of red and yellow, green which is a combination of yellow and blue, violet which combines blue with red, and grey which results from a combination of white and black.]

The Viraat Pranav (i.e. the cosmic all-encompassing and all-pervading form of Brahm) is also called 'Sagun Brahm'. [The entire visible aspect of creation is a manifestation of Brahm that exists in its cosmic form known as Viraat. The Upanishads describe this Viraat as the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. When the entire creation is taken into consideration, this definition fits into place because everything that exists is one or the other form of the same cosmic form of Brahm. This can be easily understood by a simple example. Clay or earth is used by a potter to shape numerous pots and toys having uncountable varieties of shapes, forms and sizes. He may even colour them differently. But basically they are all clay or earth; it is the same clay or earth that has been used to mould them. Similarly, the entire creation has been moulded from the body of one Viraat. Since this world is visible, this form of Brahm is called 'Sagun'—one that is visible, has attributes and specific features and characters. The 'Sagun' (one with Guna) Brahm has 'Gunas' (certain virtues, attributes or qualities) that are discernible, tangible, quantifiable and definable.]

On the other hand, the Sanhaar Pranav is known as 'Nirguna Brahm'. [The Sanhaar form of Pranav refers to that aspect of Brahm which exists beyond the living world, that aspect of Brahm which is unknown and unseen, and which survives after the known world is concluded, eliminated or ceases to exist ('Sanhaar'). This aspect of Brahm which silently brings about the conclusion of creation and which proceeds death is invisible and imperceptible—hence, called Nirguna, one that has no known attributes and characters. When the creation concludes, no one knows what lies beyond. Hence, Brahm that exists beyond creation is 'unknown' and intangible. Hence, that aspect of Brahm which is concerned with the end of creation, or which is related to the conclusion of this existence, is the 'Nirguna' form of Brahm.]

Finally, the Sristhi Pranav is known by the combined form consisting of both the Saguna Brahm as well as the Nirguna Brahm. [The word 'Sristhi' refers to creation. This creation exists in two apparent forms—one that is visible or which is Saguna, and that is invisible or which is Nirguna. What we see and know is 'Saguna', and what we cannot know or see is 'Nirguna'.]

The Viraat Pranav is said to consist of all the four letters of OM such as A, O, U, M, and it is equivalent to the Samasthi aspect of Brahm. [This is because the Viraat stands for all the aspects of creation—viz. its creation is represented by the letter A, its development by the letter O, its expansion and growth by the letter U, and its conclusion by the letter M. This covers the entire gamut of visible creation, and hence it is called Samasthi—all-inclusive, all-encompassing, comprehensive, and the complete aspect of Brahm.]

The Sanhaar Pranav is represented by the Ardha Matra, and is equivalent to the 'Vyasthi' aspect of Brahm. [As has been explained in a note of verse no. 1 above, the Ardha Matra stands for the conclusion or termination of the sound of OM just like the word Sanhaar which also means conclusion or end of creation. Hence, both are synonymous with each other. When individual units of creation end, they all collapse

into one single mass to become indistinguishable from each other; they become homogenous in nature and texture. Since they all become one and inseparable from one another once the visible creation ends—removing distinctions and specialised features that mark the individuality of each gross visible entity of creation till it existed—so when we deal with that aspect of creation that is related to its post conclusion phase we deal with one single mass, and therefore it is ‘Vyasthi’. The word ‘Vyasthi’ means to treat an entity as a single unit instead of taking its myriad and distinctive forms into consideration. In the context of OM it would mean the stretched or prolonged sound that follows the end of the pronunciation of ‘OM’ which cannot be sub-divided like the earlier sound of OM which was divided into the three letters, viz. A, U and M.

In the context of Brahm, the word ‘Vyasthi’ refers to the only one single non-dual form of cosmic Consciousness that exists after the visible and known—or Saguna—creation, represented by the articulately spoken letters of OM, comes to a conclusion. It is called Vyasthi because it is single, one and isolated. This form of Brahm has no duality in it in as much as it is un-formed and without any attributes. This Vyasthi form of Brahm has no myriad forms or characters; it is like a calm sky that is immutable, uniform, all-encompassing, all-pervading, and aloof from all dichotomies and schisms.] (2).

3. The Viraat Pranav (i.e. the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm that personifies the sum total of all the gross bodies of this creation) consists of, or is endowed with, all the sixteen Matras¹. [The sixteen Matras are enumerated below. In the context of the sound of OM, the sixteen Matras refer to the different vowel and basic consonant sounds of the Sanskrit language.]

This Viraat Pranav is said to transcend and go beyond the thirty-six Tattvas of creation².

The letter ‘A’ is the first Matra of OM, ‘U’ is the second Matra, ‘M’ is the third Matra, the ‘Ardha Matra’, or the half-syllable represented by the long-drawn humming sound made at the end of OM when the mouth closes, is the fourth Matra, the ‘Naad’ (the crescent-shaped moon placed on the top of the symbol of OM) is the fifth Matra, the ‘Bindu’ (the dot placed on the top of the Naad at its focal point) is the sixth Matra, the Kalaa (the various aspects of OM or Brahm) is its seventh Matra, the Kalatit (the transcendental aspect of OM or Brahm) is its eighth Matra, the virtue of Shanti (peace and tranquillity) is its ninth Matra, the Shantitya (the state that goes beyond ordinary peace; the transcendental state of blissfulness) is its tenth Matra, the Unmani (a state of mental non-attachment, detachment, non-involvement and renunciation) is its eleventh Matra, the Manomani (the higher state of Unmani when the sub-conscious too becomes defunct) is its twelfth Matra, the Puri or Vaikhari (i.e. the transcendental state reached by a hermit in the higher stages of spiritual progress; the state when the reverberations of OM are clearly heard as a resonance that submerges the aspirant and when he can distinguish between its various shades of sound—represented by its initial letter ‘A’) is its thirteenth Matra, the Madhyama (the median or middle stage of the sound of OM—represented by its letter ‘U’) is its fourteenth Matra, the Pashyanti (the stage of Naad or the sound of OM when it rises from the Mooladhar Chakra located at the lower end of the body and enters the heart—represented by its letter ‘M’) is its fifteenth Matra, and the Para (the transcendental state when the resonance of OM is heard in the head—represented by its half-syllable called the Ardha Matra) is its sixteenth Matra.

The Pranav Brahm, or the supreme transcendental Consciousness that exists in the form of the ethereal sound OM and its awareness, having the above described sixteen Matras or aspects is distinct and beyond the purview of the Turiyatit state of existence. [That is, to say that Brahm is definable or understandable even by the transcendental state of consciousness known as Turiyateet is a grave mistake.]

The Turiyatit state of existence has four divisions or aspects—viz. Ot, Anugyat, Anugya and Avikalp. [The word ‘Ot’ means comfort, peace, bliss as well as little, frugal; the word ‘Anugyat’ means one that is known by mandate, by the command or orders given by the scriptures; the word ‘Anugya’ means command, order, mandate, permission; and the word ‘Avikalp’ means that which is certain, is doubtless, that which has no alternatives or choices. Hence, Turiyatit state of existence refers to that state in which one can obtain certain bliss that comes with realising one’s true divine nature and form as conscious Atma as narrated or taught by the scriptures. In the context of what is said here, refer also to verse no. 20 of Canto 8 of this Upanishad.]

Now since Brahm having sixteen Matras or Kalaas pervades in all these four states or divisions of Turiyatit, it follows that the total number of Matras or Kalaas of Brahm are sixty-four in all. [The 16 Matras or Kalaas of Brahm as described in stanza 1 and 3 of this verse multiplied by the 4 aspects of Turiyatit as described above = $16 \times 4 = 64$.]

Again, the Pranav Brahm (i.e. the attribute-less and formless cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm) is revealed in two forms—viz. the Purush (the primordial Male) and Prakriti (the primordial Nature). Since Pranav Brahm in its primary form is said to have sixty-four Kalaas or Matras (as discussed above), we conclude that the total number of Matras or Kalaas of Brahm would be one hundred and twenty-eight. [$64 \times 2 = 128$.] Thus, Brahm is said to have one hundred and twenty-eight Matras or Kalaas.

Thus we conclude that the same sublime Brahm, inspite of being one, immutable, indivisible and non-dual, appears to have so many varied forms, depicting so many varied characteristics, attributes and properties, and seemingly having so many existences, all of them depending upon how and from which angle one looks at this divine non-dual entity. This is also the reason why the same Brahm has two basic forms of existence—one is the Saguna or the form which has specific attributes and is visible, and the other is Nirguna or the form which has no attributes and which is invisible (3).

[Note—¹The word *Matra* literally means amount, volume, quantity, magnitude, ingredient, part, section, aspect, facet or dimension of anything. The creation has been divided into sixteen parts or sections. These are also called the sixteen Kalaas of creation. Since Brahm is the sum total of creation, the former is also said to have sixteen Kalaas. The word ‘Kalaa’ literally refers to the special qualities, attributes, virtues, strengths, powers and potentials possessed by an entity. Its other connotations include—(a) shape, form, contours of a thing; (b) special qualities, art, craft, skills, expertise, attributes etc. that one possesses; the shades or aspects of one’s overall personality; (c) a division, portion, fraction, phase or degree of anything.

The word *Pranav* is a synonym for the cosmic sound known as Naad which is the reverberating sound in the cosmic ether that fills the space of the sky. This Naad is regarded as being the closest analogue of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. This sound is homogenous and all-pervading. It is from this Naad that the first signs of life in the form of sound waves having energy were generated. It is from this Naad that all forms of sounds, having all shades of notes, meters and tunes were created. These primary forms of sound evolved into different phonetic alphabets of so many

different languages and spoken tongue which all have the same set of primary sounds as their base. The language may be intelligible or not, such as those spoken by the modern man and those spoken by the primitive man and the animals respectively, but all of them have one common denominator—and it is the basic sound of OM or Naad having the sixteen Matras as enumerated in this Upanishad. It's almost like music that is played by so many instruments—though each instrument appears to produce different type of sound but basically all of these genres of instruments have one single language, and it is the language of 'music'.

The word 'Matra' also refers to the vowel sounds of the Sanskrit language. Since the entire gamut of creation is said to have its origin in the cosmic vibration that was generated in ether at the initial stage of creation, and these vibrations created sound, it follows that Brahm which symbolically stands for this entire creation would naturally consist of the entire spectrum of sound as represented by the sixteen sounds of the Sanskrit vowels.

In the context of OM, which is the cosmic ethereal sound of space, it refers to the different shades, hues, tones and aspects in which OM is known to exist. In essence it means that the macrocosmic form of Brahm that is also known as the 'Viraat Purush' encompasses all shades of knowledge encrypted in words that are formed out of the basic sound of creation, called the various Matras of OM.

²The thirty-six *Tattvas* of creation— The word *Tattvas* literally means the essence, the reality, the true state and the basic principle of anything. It also implies the principal elements of creation. The *Tattvas* are the primary or fundamental elements or units or dimensions or aspects of creation which act as the building blocks of creation, not only as its brickwork but also to decide its exterior façade and interior character. We have *primary elements* that were formed at the time of creation, and the *secondary elements* that developed later on as the creation evolved, and finally there were the tertiary elements which were the offshoots to the process of creation when the complexities of the latter increased.

A word may have different connotations according to the context in which it is used. For example, we speak of a flower's *Tattva*, i.e. the volatile liquid extracted from the flowers and used as various scents and perfumes. It is called the 'essence' of the flower. Even the nectar is called 'essence' or *Tattva* of the flower. The oil extracted from seeds and herbs are also called their *Tattva* or essential extracts. The common factor in all these is the 'liquid or fluid' nature of the *Tattva*. It is this reason why life is said to have emerged in water, a fluid and elixir of life and vitality, the 'essence' or *Tattva* that sustains and protects life. The primary essence of creation was not some liquid as we understand the term; it was 'ethereal', more like the air or wind element, resembling more closely to the something that fills the outer space above the surface of the earth. It must be understood that though 'air' does not exist outside the atmosphere of the earth, it is not an absolute vacuum, for there is something that lies between any two celestial bodies or planets, separating them and preventing them from colliding with each other. All celestial bodies are dipped in this cosmic liquid which is like a 'volatile essence' drawn from flowers. It is 'volatile' because it is never the same, and that is why we say that the creation is continuously and perpetually changing and evolving. Had it not been so, had that *Tattva* been a solid, everything in creation would have been cast in one fixed mould for eternity.

According to the philosophy of *Tantra Shastra* dedicated to the worship of divinity in the form of Shiva and Shakti, the process of creation took the following initial steps. Before anything came into being, Brahm, the supreme consciousness and the ultimate truth of creation, known as Shiva, was established in his own radiant effulgence or self-illumination symbolising his splendorous glory, majesty and divinity. Hence he was called 'Prakash', literally meaning light. When he decided to deliberate and actually started the process of deliberation in order to start the process of creation, there was a subtle 'spandan' or a slight throb or imperceptible movement which transformed into a vibration. The waves generated by this initial vibration

developed in the cosmic ether and gradually coalesced with each other to give rise to higher waves of higher amplitudes. This produced the cosmic sound called the Naad. Since the creation was conceived in the bowl of the cosmic ether, the energy of the initial sound was focused at a central point, called the focal point or the dot or 'Bindu'. This Bindu contained the combined powers of both the male Shiva and the female Shakti like a dicotyledonous seed which produced the two separate entities called Shiva and Shakti. The union of these two resulted in the unfolding of the rest of the creation. Thus it will be observed that whatever exists in this creation can be traced back to this primeval Naad. Hence, the latter is called 'Shabda Brahm', or the Brahm as sound. Therefore it is very natural to assume that all Mantras dedicated to any divine entity and consisting of the sound element (because Mantra consist of letters and words, and are chanted or repeated to make them effective) has its origin in this Shabda Brahm and gets its powers and energy from this Shabda Brahm. In other words, the Mantra contains in itself the essential meaning, form and spirit of the deity whose Mantra it is, and which is being worshipped and invoked. Constant repetition of the Mantra generates so much energy in due course of time that the deity being worshipped is revealed. This is because the sound has great powers and energy as is evident when reverberation of sound waves and the resonance created by them are so powerful and forceful that they can shatter sheet glass in windows when an explosion occurs near a building.

Primarily there were five basic elements or Tattvas of creation—such as the sky, air or wind, fire or energy, water and earth in increasing order of density or grossness. From them came the secondary elements—they are the various Tattvas of creation. These latter vary according to the level and dynamics of creation one is dealing with in terms of metaphysics. Finally came the tertiary elements—they are the various Anatahakarans, the various Vikaars and Vrittis, the three Gunas etc. that would form the third layer of elements or Tattvas of creation.

These elements can be compared to the elements of material science of the modern world, such as the elements calcium, magnesium, potassium, selenium etc. which are heavier and grosser in nature as compared to other elements such as the gases oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, helium etc. which are lighter and subtler. Then there is carbon which is the base of an entire field of chemistry called organic chemistry, much like we have Atma which in association of different other elements form a vast array of organic chemicals and material products of daily use. If carbon is compared to the basic unit called Atma in metaphysics, then the other elements that combine with it are the various Gunas, Vikaars, Vasanas and Vrittis that surround this Atma to give rise to an uncountable number of creatures of different nature, temperaments, character and personalities.

In this scenario, Brahm would be like the primary Atom which left to itself is neutral and inactive. It is only when certain changes take place in its core, such as the shift in the position of its electron etc. that the chain of reaction starts that would ultimately result in not only producing newer elements but releasing energy or absorbing matter from the surrounding atmosphere. The Atma would be more like the atom of the carbon atom which is at the heart of all organic compounds.

The thirty-six Tattvas are the following—the 25 Tattvas as described in Shankhya philosophy^{1*} + 1 Iswar (of Patanjali's Yoga Darshan) + the 8 Vikaars or faults^{2*} + 1 Vyakta (that which is visible and has attributes, i.e. the Sanguna aspect of Viraat Pranav or Brahm) + 1 Avyakta (that which is not visible, not having any attributes and characteristics, i.e. the Nirguna aspect of the Viraat Pranav or Brahm) = total 36 Tattvas. {^{1*}The 25 Tattvas according to the Sankhya philosophy are the following—Purush (the primary Male), Prakrit (Nature), Mahtattva (the powerful Buddhi or intellect), Ahankar (ego, pride), the five organs of perception (i.e. the eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin), the five organs of action (i.e. the hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genitals), the Mana (mind), the five perceptions (such as the spoken word or speech, sight, smell, touch and taste), the five Bhuts (i.e. the five primary elements, the earth,

water, fire, air and space or sky) = 25. ^{2*}The eight Vikaars according to verse no. 17 of the Shaarirak Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, they are the following—They are the following—one Mana (mind) + one Buddhi (intellect) + one Ahankar (pride and arrogance) + one Akash element + one air element + one fire element + one water element + one earth element = total of eight elements that cast their shadow on the purity of Nature.}}

4. [The ethereal sound OM, also known as Pranav, is said to be the manifestation of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading and is the cause of this creation as well as its conclusion. Now, an attempt is being made to outline the main sublime qualities or virtues of this cosmic Brahm. Those qualities or virtues are not exhaustive but only indicative.]

The supreme cosmic Divinity known as Brahm is the supporting foundation and cause of everything in existence. It is self-illuminated and gloriously brilliant. It is the Lord of all the living beings, and is all-pervading and omnipresent.

Brahm is honoured by the title of ‘Vibhu’—one who is almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, majestic and powerful Lord of all.

All the Gods are nothing but various manifestations of this Brahm to carry out different functions of creation.

The cosmic crucible called Prakriti or Nature in which the entire world characterised by the preponderance of delusions and falsehoods, a world infused and suffused wholly in illusions, deceit and confusions collectively called ‘Maya’, was conceived, is also present in or included as a part of the bowls of this Brahm that is infinite and fathomless (4).

5. The manifestation of Brahm in the form of ‘sound’, i.e. the subtle sound of OM representing the conscious living world that speaks (the ability to speak is an irrefutable and incontrovertible sign of life and consciousness because dead entities do not speak or hear), is revealed in the form of all the letters of the (Sanskrit) language. [This is a metaphoric way of saying that all knowledge is Brahm personified, because knowledge is encrypted in words and it is disseminated through the use of words, and words are based on alphabets which are simply symbol or sign representation of the phonetic sound.]

Brahm personifies the element of Kaal or the eternal factor of ‘time’. [The concept of ‘Kaal’ is a vast, all-inclusive concept even as ‘time’ is an eternal factor that surrounds the entire existence from the outside. Nothing exists beyond the boundary of ‘time’ or Kaal; nothing remains immune to the effects of ‘time’ or Kaal. That is why we say that one is facing ‘bad or good’ time when things do not remain under one’s control. This is because ‘time’ has an overriding and overruling authority over all the activities of the creature in this world. The ‘time’ would outlive this creation and would be there even before the next generation of creation comes into being. It is in the bowls of ‘time’ that the creation exists, it is in the fathomless bowls of ‘time’ that it would vanish when its time is due and up, and it is from this bowl of ‘time’ that it would again emerge when the time comes for its revival. Hence, ‘Kaal’ is treated as being equivalent to Brahm—it both precedes and follows creation.]

Brahm is an embodiment of all forms of speech or words. [That is, all the languages on this planet—mere sounds as made by animals, or the phonetic language as used by the human race—are revelations of the stupendous dynamic ability of Brahm to express himself.]

Brahm is Shiva personified. [That is, Brahm is an embodiment of the grand virtues of auspiciousness, holiness, purity, divinity and truth—virtues that Shiva personifies. These auspicious virtues of Brahm are also known as the ‘Shiva principle’.]

One must research and attempt to learn the truth about this Brahm when one studies the scriptures, as the latter unanimously proclaim the supremacy and truthfulness of this single entity that is the subject matter of all forms of knowledge. In fact, this Brahm is what all the Upanishads talk and preach about (5).

6. This Brahm encompasses all dimensions of time. It is the past, the present and the future, and the world that exists in all these three spheres of time.

Brahm is that eternal, immaculate and imperishable Absolute Truth that exists beyond all known manifestations of creation called the three Bhuvans or worlds. [The three Bhuvans are the terrestrial world, the heavenly world, and the nether world. Brahm literally surrounds these three worlds like a moat surrounds a fort. It is like the citadel of creation where the supreme Emperor lives.]

This Brahm, in its cosmic manifestation that has no attributes and which is eternal and all-pervading, is in the form of the ethereal sound represented by the word OM. Those who are wise and knowledgeable say that this OM is the vehicle or medium that provides the creature with Moksha (emancipation and salvation). That is, when a wise spiritual aspirant comes to realise the truth of Brahm and the significance of OM, he uses the latter as an easy and specific tool to come in direct contact with the Principal (Brahm) that this word (OM) represents (6).

7. The eternal and imperishable Brahm which is implied by the word OM is the divine, sublime entity that is also known as the Atma. [The Atma is the creature’s own ‘self’ which is pure consciousness that resides in his body, in the subtle heart.]

Hence, a wise and erudite aspirant should establish a clear and direct link between his Atma and Brahm through the medium of OM. Since OM represents Brahm, and since Atma is also a representative of Brahm, it follows that by meditating upon OM the spiritual aspirant’s Atma—which is his true self—is able to establish a direct link with Brahm who is eternal and imperishable as well as the only Truth in creation¹.

With this eclectic view, the aspirant is able to obtain access to Amrit, the elixir of bliss and eternity.

He becomes eternal in the sense that he realises that his ‘true self’ known as the Atma is a personification of Brahm, and hence it has the unique virtues of Brahm which include being eternal, infinite and imperishable (7).

[Note—¹Herein lie the importance of using OM as a Mantra to realise Brahm and be enlightened about one’s true ‘self’. It is well established that OM is a sound and verbal representation of Brahm, and that the Atma is a subtle image of the same Brahm. So, when the aspirant meditates using OM as a medium, he is able to establish a direct union between his Atma and Brahm. In effect, OM is the bridge that links the two banks of the river—one bank is the Atma and the other is Brahm. Say, what difference is there between the two banks of even an ordinary river on earth, except that the one where the traveller stands is known as ‘this bank’, and the one where he intends to go as ‘that bank’? Other than that, the two banks are the same; as far as the river is concerned both its banks are the same. They have the same water of the same river touching their sides. The two sides represent the same earth that is separated by the same river. A bridge across this river makes it easier for the traveller to go from either side to the other just as if he was walking on solid ground instead of

having to cross the formidable barrier of liquid water on which it is impossible for any man to walk on foot.

Let us take another example to understand the relation between OM and the spiritual aspirant. Suppose a man is trapped in a dungeon or a prison that is surrounded by a moat. This moat stands as a formidable barrier between his life of imprisonment and his freedom because even if he is freed from the walls of the dungeon he would not be able to go on the other side to enjoy his newly found freedom. Now say, how would he cross the moat to his freedom? Of course, the options open to him for the purpose of crossing the moat are the following—he can either swim across it, or take a boat, or just walk across a bridge on the moat. Obviously, the last choice is hassle free and the easiest way to freedom. So, if one were to treat this gross world as the prison for the soul, the easiest way for him to reach the goal of spiritual liberation and deliverance is to take the aid of OM as this is not only the simplest of Mantras but also the nearest analogue of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness which is like the vast stretch of green land which his Atma, the microcosmic form of the same consciousness that resides in the individual's own gross body as his soul, as his Spirit, wishes to reach after a stifling lifetime living inside the body of the creature. This would be the Atma's liberation just like a prisoner breathing fresh air after spending a lifetime in the dark recesses of a dungeon when he would run hither and thither on the meadow across the moat in extreme ecstasy at finally being able to leave behind the horrific time spent within the confines of the walls of the prison.

In the present context of this Upanishad's teaching, this spiritual 'bridge' is OM. It establishes a permanent link between the Atma and Brahm. The river can be compared to the formidable world which has to be crossed by the spiritual aspirant who wants his Moksha or final emancipation and salvation, or one who wishes Mukti or liberation and deliverance for his trapped soul. Just like a bridge is the most comfortable method to reach the other side of the river, the ethereal Mantra OM is the easiest and the surest medium by which the creature can reach his spiritual goal of realising Brahm.]

8. With this sublime and holistic view of creation along with the realisation that everything is Brahm personified, or that Brahm embodies the entire creation in its universal cosmic form, he must understand that the same Brahm has a gross body that is visible (the Saguna Brahm) as well as a subtle body that is not visible (the Nirguna Brahm).

Similarly, he must be firmly established in the eclectic view that the Atma and the supreme transcendental Brahm are one and the same (8).

9-11. [Verse nos. 9-19 describe the four Paads, literally the legs or the steps but more practically meaning the four aspects or forms in which the Atma exists in this creation. Since the Atma is a microcosmic image of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, it follows that these four aspects relate to the four forms in which Brahm exists in this creation. Again, since everything in creation is a manifestation of Brahm, and there is nothing that is not Brahm, these four Paads therefore describe the four aspects of creation or its four basic forms. Refer also to Canto 5, verse nos. 24-25, and Canto 6, verse nos. 3-4 of this Upanishad in this context.]

Now the different Paads of the supreme Brahm are being enumerated in a step-by-step manner. Since the Atma is a personification of this Brahm, since it is this Atma residing inside the body of the creature that actually perceives this world and enjoys it in its gross, subtle and subtlest forms, and since inspite of all this the Atma retains its

primary form as being eternally blissful and contented, it too has all the different Paads associated with Brahm.

It is said that the Atma has four Paads or steps or aspects or forms similar to that of Brahm.

The Jagrat or waking state of consciousness is the first Paad of the Atma at the micro level of creation, and of Brahm at the macro level of creation.

[Briefly, the Jagrat state of consciousness is that state in which the creature perceives the physical external world through its gross body and its sense organs. In this state, the stimuli from the external world are received by the organs of perception and sent to the brain or mind. The latter then does the actual interpretation job and gives the necessary instructions to the organs of action to act. For more serious matters it consults the intellect. During this waking state, the creature becomes aware of the existence of the physical world, comes to witness it first hand, and gains a hands-on experience of its varied facets. It does have to imagine the existence of this world because the latter is witnessed first hand directly; it's not hearsay. In the entire episode, the sub-conscious mind stores information gathered by the mind and intellect for future reference. Hence, during the Jagrat state, the mind and intellect as well as the gross body consisting of the various sense organs are directly involved. The word 'Jagrat' also has a metaphoric connotation in as much as it implies that whatever the creature comes to learn is when he is wide awake, when he is receptive to information, and can consciously pick and choose what to and what not to learn by way of selecting what to hear, smell, taste, touch and see. It is called 'Viswa' or the world at large because he not only learns about his immediate surroundings but about the world as it exists even in far off places, in the past and the present relying upon what he sees and deduces from the information gathered. Based on this statistical knowledge the creature can even predict the future intelligently.]

In this form, the visible gross world is the body of Brahm in the same way as the gross body of the individual consisting of the organs of perception and action is the visible body of Atma. [This is because Brahm lives in this vast creation just like the Atma lives in the body of the individual creature. Even as the body of the individual has no life and meaning once the Atma or the pure consciousness residing in it leaves, the entire creation would lose its relevance and importance as soon as Brahm is taken out of it.]

Brahm pervades or lives throughout the visible world even as consciousness lives in all parts of the body of a creature. Brahm, being the cosmic Consciousness personified, is all-knowing and omniscient, and it covers the entire gamut of the visible world just like the individual living being who is conscious and wide awake becomes aware and knowledgeable about the world around him. [When a wise and intelligent creature is awake, he becomes aware of all the happenings around him. This is made possible because of the presence of the Atma inside his body. It is this Atma, the pure consciousness, that enables the otherwise inane and lifeless gross body to be alive, and be sensitive and receptive enough to be able to accept and understand the sense impulses received from the external world. Without the Atma the body would not know anything. If the Atma represents one single individual creature, Brahm would stand for the sum-total of all the Atmas in creation, and by implication this Brahm would represent the sum-total all knowledge that exists in this living creation. This is because Brahm is the 'consciousness' that exists at the macro level of creation, while Atma is the same consciousness at the micro level of the same creation. As soon as consciousness retracts itself from this world, the latter ceases to exist from all practical points of view. Therefore, Brahm is the protector of the entire

visible world (because without Brahm or 'Consciousness', this world would be as good as dead) [9-10].

This macrocosmic form of the divine Brahm (cosmic Consciousness), personified as the Supreme Being, has nineteen metaphoric mouths (symbolised by the following—the 5 sense organs such as ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin + 5 organs of action such as hands, legs, mouth, excretory and genitals + 5 Prans or vital airs or winds such as Pran or main breath, Apaana, Vyan, Udaan and Samaana + 4 Anthakarans or inner self such as Mana or mind, Buddhi or intellect, Chitta or sub-conscious and Ahankar or ego and pride = 19), whose limbs are the eight Lokas (consisting of Bhu, Bhurva, Swaha, Maha, Janaha, Tapaha, Satyam and Patal = 8), who is the undisputed supreme Lord ('Prabhu') of the entire world, who is revealed in the four states of existence known as Sthul or gross, Sukshma or subtle, Kaaran or causal, and Sakshi or the one who is a sole witness of everything—verily, the supreme transcendental and all-pervasive macrocosmic Brahm who has revealed himself as this vast and colossus creation is known as 'Vaishwanar Brahm'² or the Viraat Purush. [11]. (9-11).

[Note-- The 4 'Paads', or limbs, legs, aspects, facets or pedestals of Brahm—The four 'Paads' of Brahm are the four legs upon which Brahm stands. These four Paads symbolically establish the greatness and supremacy of Brahm as the all-powerful and all-controlling Authority in this creation. Since Brahm is the supreme Divinity that has revealed itself in the form of this creation, since each and every unit of creation is a manifestation of Brahm and without Brahm nothing exists, nothing has any relevance and truth (refer *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 1), it follows that the entire creation represents Brahm's four cosmic forms or aspects or facets—which are called the four legs or Paads of Brahm. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the supreme Brahm has manifested himself and is made known to this world by the means of these four mediums.

The four Paads of Brahm stand for the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or deep sleep state, and the Turiya or transcendental state. This fact is affirmed in the Atharva Veda's *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraphs 1-3.

Besides the present Upanishad, these four Paads of Brahm have been explained elsewhere in the following Upanishads also—(i) Sam Veda's *Chandogya Upanishad*, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's *Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda's *Mandukya Upanishad*, verse nos. 3-7; *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6; Canto 8, paragraph no. 4; *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8; *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 5.

²*Vaishwanar Brahm*—The word 'Vaishwanar' refers to the all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm. It is that aspect of Brahm which represents the whole 'Vishwa' or world, the visible creation. It is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm and represents the sum total of all gross bodies in existence. It, more practically, refers to the Jagrat or waking aspect of consciousness because it is in this state that the individual becomes aware of the surrounding world; it is during the Jagrat state that the consciousness receives inputs from the world, the 'Vishwa', and establishes a contact with it. So, that aspect of Brahm that relates to the gross aspect of creation at the cosmic level is known as Vaishwanar Brahm.

This aspect is also known as the 'Viraat Purush' as the latter term refers to the all-pervading and all-encompassing form of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. The entire creation is said to be formed from the body of this Viraat Purush. Or, it is

this Viraat Purush who has metamorphosed himself in the form of the entire creation. Hence, one is inseparable from the other just like water and ocean.

Another term used in this context is 'Vaishnavar Purush' which is a combination of the two terms 'Vaishwanar Brahm' and 'Viraat Purush'.

Other reference: (i) Atharva Veda's Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 3; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahma Upanishad, verse no. 21; Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse no. 15.]

12. Verily, the above described form of existence is the first Paad of the supreme transcendental Brahm.

[Now the second Paad is being narrated.]

The second state in which consciousness exists is known as Swapna or the dreaming state. This is the second Paad of the Atma at the microcosmic level of creation, and of Brahm at the macrocosmic level.

[The Swapna or dreaming state, as the name suggests, is when a creature imagines the presence of a world which has no physical existence. In this case, the physical gross body is asleep or inactive, as is the conscious aspect of the mind and intellect. Only the sub-conscious aspect of the mind is active, and the creature draws upon the data-bank of this sub-conscious mind to conjure up a fascinating world of virtuality. All knowledge that the consciousness gathered while in the Swapna state is not physical, and it exists only in the subtle level. This knowledge may be quite divergent from the knowledge of the Jagrat state. And this is the reason why the world of dreams is often very different from the world which exists in the waking state. Whereas the knowledge and the world during the Jagrat state is like the hard copy of anything, the world and knowledge of Swapna is like the soft copy. Whereas one can actually have the feel of the hard copy and its existence can be ascertained and protected, no one can feel the soft copy, and when the latter would vanish due to some software problem is most uncertain to say. But whereas the world during the Jagrat state has its own limits due to a variety of practical and physical factors, no such limitations are imposed in the subtle state and the consciousness can imagine things and create a world much more fascinating and colourful than actually possible in practice in the Jagrat state.]

The Atma (i.e. the creature's true self) that is conscious of existence of the world in its subtle form (as opposed to the gross and physical form) in the creature's dreaming state is the de-facto Lord of this state. [This is because it is the Atma that conjures up a world of dreams. If it so wants, it can exclude this state, and once the creature retires to rest and the body ceases to function, the consciousness can allow the mind to rest too. And when this happens the creature wouldn't dream. In other words, just like any kingdom is headed by a ruling monarch, the world of dreams is also headed by this subtle aspect of the Atma.]

And since Atma and Brahm are synonymous with each other, it is said that this subtle state of existence of consciousness, which is equivalent to the dreaming state of existence, or the Swapna state, is the second Paad or aspect of the cosmic Brahm.

Hence, Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness that exists in the dreaming state of existence and makes the creature aware of the subtle world that exists only virtually in one's dreams is called 'Sukshma Pragya Brahm'—i.e. Brahm that is manifested and known in its subtle form (as opposed to its gross form known as the Vishwa that exists in the Jagrat or waking state).

This Brahm also has the eight limbs or aspects as described earlier for the Vishwa or Viraat Brahm. [Refer verse no. 11.]

Oh the one who has done great Tapa (i.e. has done great austerity and penance; a reference to sage Narad)! This Brahm or consciousness in the form of the Atma is all alone in the Swapna state of existence. [And this is why this consciousness is called 'Prabhu' or Lord of this subtle state of dreams. The same epithet Prabhu was used in verse no. 11 to describe Brahm as the only Lord in the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness.] (12).

13. This subtle and invisible aspect of Brahm or the 'Sukshma Brahm' (i.e. the consciousness that exists in the Swapna or dreaming state of existence) is the one who sustains and experiences the presence of various Tattvas or elements as they exist in their subtle state or form. [The word 'Sukshma' means as small as the atom; minute, microscopic, subtle and so small that it is virtually invisible in creation.]

If this subtle Brahm or subtle consciousness that exists in the Swapna state is taken as having an independent existence, then it can also be said to have the four distinct states of existences as the gross aspect of Brahm did. [This subtle form consciousness in the dreaming state is said to have an independent existence because a world of dreams is an independent world, complete in its self in all respects. While a creature dreams, he behaves just like he would do in the real world—he has relations, he does so many deeds, he cries and laughs, he goes here and there, he loves and hates, he eats and fasts, and so on. Except for the fact that the physical gross body with its natural limitations is not involved, there is not much of a difference between the actual world of the waking state and the world of dreams. These two worlds are like independent worlds having separate existence. For instance, whereas a man may be a pauper in the gross physical world of the Jagrat state, he might be a king in the Swapna world. Therefore, if the consciousness or Brahm or Atma can have four states of existence while in the Jagrat state, it can also have similar or equivalent number of forms in the Swapna state. These four states are symbolically—Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya. One might wonder, for instance, how a creature can be dreaming while already in the dreaming state. Well, since the 'world of dreams' is an independent world of its own, a creature can be awake in it, doing so many things, or he might sleep in this imaginary world just as well as he would have done while living in the physical world when he was actually awake. It must be noted that we are dealing with the analysis of Brahm, an entity that is unknown, most mysterious, enigmatic and esoteric, and like in science or mathematics we have to presume certain things based on known data, available information and experience in order to arrive at a definite conclusion about the unknown.]

The Atma or the individual's consciousness that exists in the Swapna state of existence is known as 'Taijas'. It is because it is magnificent, majestic, glorious and dynamic—virtues implied by the word 'Taijas'. [Why so? It is because whereas in the Jagrat state of existence the Atma was subject to the limitations of the gross body, no such boundaries exist in the Swapna state. The Atma in the Swapna or dreaming state is more dynamic and maverick and powerful, capable of achieving stupendous feats of astounding proportions that would be impossible for it to accomplish while in the Jagrat or waking state because of natural barriers of the physical body and the physical world which are gross in nature and have various sorts of natural limitations built in their texture.]

The consciousness that exists in the individual level of the creature, i.e. in the micro level of creation, is called Taijas as mentioned above, while the same consciousness when it is considered at the macro level of existence is known as

‘Hiranyagarbha’. [The ‘Hiranyagarbha’ is therefore the sum total of all subtle bodies in creation.]

The previous form of cosmic Consciousness which is known as the Viraat or Vaishwanar is the gross aspect of the cosmic Brahm (refer verse nos. 10-11), while the form known as Hiranyagarbha (as described in verse nos. 12-13) is the subtle aspect of the same cosmic Brahm.

This subtle form of the cosmic Consciousness known as Hiranyagarbha is the second Paad of the supreme Brahm (13).

14. [This verse describes the third state of consciousness known as Sushupta. This state of existence corresponds to the third Paad of Brahm.]

The living being in the Sushupta state of existence does not see any dreams and neither does he has any sort of wishes for enjoyment of any sense organs or objects. It is a state of dissolution when nothing exists and matters.

[Briefly, the Sushupta state is the deep sleep state of consciousness when even the sub-conscious mind goes into hibernation. With the mind and body both becoming defunct, the creature is neither awake nor dreaming. It exists in a state of neutrality or dissolution. Thus it experiences nothing of the physical world of the Jagrat state or the subtle world of the Swapna state.]

The cosmic Consciousness that exists in this state of complete dissolution known as Sushupta, is known as the Kaaran or the causal body. It is the sum total of all the causal bodies of creation. [As the word implies, this state of consciousness is the ‘causative factor’—or Kaaran—that gives rise to all other aspects or forms of existence of consciousness. It is from this neutral state that the other forms of conscious existence emerge. Hence, it is the ‘cause’ of coming into being the other states of consciousness such as the Swapna and the Jagrat. Therefore, this neutral and virtually dissolved state of consciousness is called the ‘Kaaran’ or the ‘causative’ aspect of the existence.] (14).

15. In this primary form of Kaaran or causal body, the Consciousness is in a single form (i.e. it is still not revealed in its many connotations or varied aspects). It is unique and magnificent in its self. It is endowed with profound Gyan (knowledge). [This is because any entity that has knowledge can ever hope to be the cause of initiating any sort of action that results in the development of something afresh. An entity that has no knowledge would not be able to achieve anything in any field; mere ability is not enough. Knowledge is the driving force of any kind of activity and development. Since this Kaaran or causal body of the Consciousness is able to give rise to the other states of existence, since it can conjure up a fascinating world in its dreams, and then actually perceive this world in a physical, tangible form in the waking state, it is obvious that it has knowledge! Therefore, the consciousness residing in the causal body is not ignorant and stupid. Its knowledge, erudition, skill and wisdom are so perfect that the creation it creates works like clock-work. For instance, the sun rises and sets at the precise time, the embryo takes a precise time to mature and take a birth, the egg hatches at the precise time. Movements of all celestial bodies are perfectly regulated. In spite of their being present in the vast void of space without any barriers to separate them physically, they do not collide with each other, and neither do they spin out of control and get lost in this void.]

It exists in a happy and eternally blissful state of existence. [This is because it has yet no worries of any kind, as the world—both the physical world of the Jagrat or waking state as well as the subtle world of the Swapna or dreaming state—is shut off.

Since there are yet no perceptions, and since the mind that is the cause of all pain and miseries is still in a dissolved state, the consciousness exists in the blissful state of existence as long as it stays in the Kaaran body. It is only when it starts weaving the web representing this world that it gets restless and entangled just like a spider that trapped in the cobweb of its own creation.]

This consciousness is the one that lives in the inner self or the subtle heart of all living beings as their Atma which is their true and pure self (15).

16. At the macrocosmic level of creation, this state of consciousness is equivalent to the Ishwar or the supreme Lord of creation. This Ishwar is therefore in an eternally blissful state.

The light of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment is the metaphoric mouth of this Ishwar. He is omnipresent and all-pervading. He is eternal, imperishable, steady, constant and irrefutable as well as the absolute Truth of creation.

This supreme Ishwar or Lord of creation is the one who has revealed himself in all the four forms in which consciousness exists in this creation (such as the Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya states)—and it is he who is known as ‘Pragya’ as well. [The Ishwar represents the sum total of all the causal bodies of creation at the cosmic level, while its counterpart at the level of the individual creature is known as Pragya. The word ‘Pragya’ literally implies one that knows, one that has knowledge, is wise, erudite and enlightened. All these are the characteristics of the Atma which is the pure consciousness in its primary form, and nothing else.]

Hence, Ishwar or Pragya stands for the third Paad of Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness) (16).

17. [Verse no. 17 describes some of the eclectic virtues of the supreme Brahm.]

The supreme transcendental Brahm (described in the above verses) is the Lord of the entire creation and its inhabitant creatures, both the moving as well as those that do not move. [The moving creatures are animals, insects, worms, birds and others belonging to the animal kingdom, while the immovable ones are the plants and some categories of living beings of the lower animal kingdom.]

Brahm is all-knowing and omniscient.

In his most subtle and sublime form, Brahm is the pure conscious ‘self’ known as the Atma that lives in the inner being or the subtle heart of all living beings.

Brahm is the cosmic ‘Yoni’ or womb in which the creation was conceived, where it developed, was nourished and from where it was finally produced—or created. Indeed, Brahm is the only cause for the creation, the development and the conclusion of this creation (17).

18. The ‘consciousness’ that is deemed to exist in the three states of existence known as the Jagrat world called the Vishwa, the Swapna world called the Taijas, and the Sushupta world called the Pragya, is basically the same entity that is always one, non-dual and immutable. [This Divinity is known as Brahm at the macro level, and the Atma at the micro level of creation.]

This misconception that the basically non-dual Brahm has three states of existence, or that the pure consciousness exists in three types of worlds (as outlined above) is at the root of all delusions and spiritual perplexities. This misconception is called Maya, and it is a constant hurdle in one’s spiritual elevation and enlightenment. In other words, the worlds created due to Maya cause confusions about the truthful

nature of Brahm or Consciousness. Instead of helping one to realise the ‘truth’ it only causes consternations and perplexities.

Not only this, since delusions create an imaginary situation which is far removed from the truth, it follows that whatever is known and recognised as the world by the creature is actually like a Swapna or dream as far as his true ‘self’ the Atma is concerned (18).

19. Besides the three Paads of Brahm (as narrated in verse nos. 9-16) there is one more Paad which is above or superior to all of them. It is called the transcendental state of consciousness, or Turiya state of existence. This corresponds to the fourth Paad of Brahm as well as the Atma at the macro and the micro levels of existence respectively.

All the states in which the cosmic Consciousness exists are deemed to be incorporated in this Turiya state. The consciousness in the Turiya state is in a non-dual form, and it is from this single entity that all the other three states of existence emerge. [It can be explained by taking the example of a post-graduate student who has completed his MA degree. It is assumed and taken for granted that he must have passed his graduate BA degree and earlier his school leaving exam if he has the MA degree. When he has completed his MA degree, it is assumed that he has the knowledge that is taught at the level of the school as well as at the graduate level. Similarly, the higher and superior transcendental state of consciousness known as Turiya is deemed to have been arrived at by a creature after having crossed the earlier three stages of Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta. A Consciousness that exists in the Turiya state must have had an experience of what are Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta states.] (19).

[Note—Besides this Canto, the four states of existence of consciousness have been explained in a number of Upanishads such as The four states of existence of the consciousness have been described in the following Upanishads amongst others—(a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Trishikhi Brahman Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 149-150; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 2/1/16-20, 4/3/9-38; Subalo-panishad, Canto 4 full as well as Canto 9, verse no. 1-7; Paingalo-panishad, 2/11-16; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4-2/5; Turiyateet Upanishad. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 59-64, 72; Canto 4, verse no. 11-20; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1, 20-21; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 4; Shaarirak Upanishad, verse no. 14; Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11. (c) Atharva Veda tradition—Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 1, 24-26; Canto 6, verse no. 3-4; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-8; Param Hans Upanishad, paragraph no. 6.]

20. The earlier three states of existence of the consciousness that are deemed to be incorporated in the fourth state called Turiya are the following—‘Ot’, ‘Anugyat’ and ‘Anugya’. [Refer verse no. 3 of the present Canto 8 for elaboration.] They help one to analyse and understand the existence of the different aspects of the world and creation. But ultimately all come to a single point—and it is the non-dual nature of the consciousness as it exists in the eternally blissful Turiya state.

Just like the two states of existence (i.e. the Swapna or dreaming state as well as the Jagrat or waking state) being regarded as the delusory effect caused by Maya upon the pure consciousness that exists in the Sushupta state, it follows, by extension, that when the consciousness rises higher to the Turiya state then all the three states

below it (i.e. the Sushupta, Swapna and Jagrat) are also the effect of Maya. [The Atma or pure consciousness of the creature in the Sushupta state is completely neutral. But under delusions it begins to think that it lives in a world of dreams or Swapna, and in the physical world of Jagrat. It oscillates between these three states because it is not certain which is true and which is false—refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-18, 34-35; and in Brahm Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda in its verse nos. 20-21. The Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes the three states of existence of the consciousness as the Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta. It goes on to affirm that ‘any person who is able to transcend these three states of existences, or who has reached the fourth state called the Turiya state of permanent beatitude and felicity, is the one who does not have another birth’. ‘Not having any more birth’ is a metaphoric way of saying that the creature or his ‘true self’, has attained eternity in the form of realisation that it is not an ordinary entity but cosmic Consciousness that exists in the Turiya state. This is a deemed permanent state of spiritual enlightenment where Maya (delusion) has no or little effect. As a result of this, the Consciousness remains free from the influence of delusions that create an imaginary world of dreams in the Swapna state, or the erroneous impression of reality of the world which the creature sees while it is awake in its Jagrat state. When the Atma is not deluded and does not have to live either of the two states—viz. the Swapna state of dreams or the Jagrat state of this illusionary world—it is virtually free from the notion of ‘birth’. This is because to live in either of these two worlds and interact with them the Atma must have a ‘body’, and once these two worlds are dispensed away this need does not arise. The Atma or Consciousness living in the Turiya state is in its primary form that is ‘pure and unadulterated consciousness’ which is all-knowing and free from delusions and ignorance. Refer also to our present Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4.]

Hence, a wise spiritual aspirant must understand and be convinced that there is only one non-dual supreme consciousness known as Brahm. It is most advisable for him to know this fact and overcome all delusions about this world and its existence (if he wishes his spiritual well-being, his spiritual liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation) (20).’

21-23. Brahma reiterated once again— ‘Oh sage (Narad)! It is the declaration of the Vedas that the divine, sublime, holy and eclectic entity which is not the one that neither seems to know about the gross world as well as the subtle world nor is ignorant of them, that is neither highly knowledgeable nor is completely ignorant, that neither has any awareness of the inner subtle world nor of the outer external gross world, that cannot be seen by the eyes (because it has no form and shape), that can never be grasped, held or understood, that can not be brought within the ambit of the physical world of material sense objects, that is beyond the purview of the mind and intellect so much so that it cannot be thought of, imagined and understood, that cannot be brought under any definitions, the only essential form of which is the authority known as the Atma or pure consciousness, in which there is no trace of Prapanch (delusions, deceit, conceit, confusions, falsehoods and illusions—collectively also known as Maya), which is an embodiment of the virtues called Shiva (i.e. one who is pure, truthful, wise, enlightened, dispassionate and holy), which is peaceful and serene, which is the only one of its kind, being unique and non-dual—verily, this divine entity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm has four Paads as narrated

in the foregoing verses. This is what those who are wise, knowledgeable and learned assert and reiterate repeatedly.

This holy, divine and sublime cosmic entity that defies all understanding and definitions is known as Pranav Brahm. It is only this eclectic divine entity, to the exclusion of all other entities in this creation, that is worthy of realising and researching by the spiritual aspirant.

Like the celestial Sun that gives light and protects life in this creation, it is this Brahm that is the benevolent and munificent Lord of all those who seek emancipation and salvation.

The self-illuminated supreme Brahm is like the sky element. That is, Brahm is as vast, fathomless and all-encompassing as the sky. Nothing in existence lives outside the jurisdiction of Brahm just like nothing exists beyond the limits or boundaries of the sky.

Brahm is eternally omnipresent and all-pervading, and that is why it is called 'Param' or the Supreme One.

Verily, this is the great teaching of this Upanishad. It is the secret unravelled by this great Upanishad (21-23).

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Updesh (teaching)/Canto 9

[This Canto outlines the divine form of the supreme transcendental Brahm.]

1. Sage Narad once again asked the great grandfather of creation, Brahma—'Oh Lord! What are the truthful form, nature, identity and appearance of Brahm? Please be kind to elaborate upon this most eclectic but enigmatic divine entity.'

Brahma replied—'Oh son Narad! What or who else is Brahm other than one's own true 'self' known as the Atma, which is pure consciousness. Those who think that Brahm and I are two separate entities are no better than animals. [Here, the pronoun 'I' applies to one's true identity, which is not the gross body but the sublime consciousness that lives in the subtle heart as the Atma.]

Who is an animal (a 'Pashu')? Those people who are mentally like an animal are no different from a creature that is physically born from the womb of an animal (i.e. who has the physical body of an animal). [In other words, those people who live a life being a serf of their urges and instincts, who are dominated by the various Vasanas and Vrittis or natural passions and habits, who have no control over their sense organs, who have a low level of wisdom and intelligence and live only to gratify their bodies and enjoy the creature comforts and pleasures of this material world, who are not bothered about the welfare of their Spirit and think of merry-making while this body lasts, who do not understand that there is a higher state of existence than the one in which they live at present, who do not pay heed to the eclectic teaching of the scriptures thinking that they are imaginary creations of insane minds, whose life has a preponderance of Tama Guna and riddled by various Vikaars or faults and shortcomings enumerated in Canto 3, verse nos. 33, 90, Canto 4, verse nos. 5-6, who lack the eclectic virtues enumerated in Canto 3, verse nos. 21 and 24, as well as in Canto 4, verse nos. 10-12—indeed such people are like animals. There is no difference between them and another creature which we like to call an 'animal'.]

Hence, those wise, learned, erudite and enlightened men who recognise and understand the Brahm as the supreme divine cosmic entity that has revealed itself as

the Atma of all living beings as well as all the physical forms that this Atma assumes in this creation (in the form of myriad creatures)—well, such men are the ones who find freedom from the fear and fetter of death. [This is because they have not to fear from any creature in this creation; because they would have realised that what dies is the physical gross body which is nevertheless perishable and impermanent, and not the Atma which is eternal and imperishable; because they would have understood that their ‘true self’ being the Atma never dies just like Brahm never dies, and therefore there is no cause of any fear from death. Refer also verse no. 11 of this present Canto 9.]

Indeed, it is only the eclectic and divine knowledge of the supreme Authority that is the only Absolute Truth in creation, and which is nothing but pure Consciousness that is all-pervading and all-inclusive, that is capable of providing Mukti (liberation, deliverance) to the enlightened living being (1).

2. One must ponder deeply on the question as to what amongst the following is the cause of this world—whether it is the factor of time and circumstance or the prevailing situation, whether it is the creature’s natural habits, temperaments and traits, whether it is the deeds done with specific aims, objectives or targets to be achieved, whether it is some coincidence, an accidental occurrence or some unpredictable and spur-of-the-moment motivation, whether it is one of the five Bhuts (i.e. the primary elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth) or a combination of more than one of them, whether it is the Jivatma or the living being himself?

Now, when all these possibilities are analysed, the wise ones come to the conclusion that neither the time or circumstance nor the other factors listed above can be the independent cause of this world because all of them are dependent upon and subservient to the Atma, the pure consciousness.

Similarly, the Jivatma or the living being also cannot be the cause of this world because it is dependent upon the affects of the deeds done by it in the past life (or time), which in turn determines the Jivatma’s state of existence or affairs in the current time, causing so many sorrows or joys for it. So the world, and its circumstances of either sorrows or happiness as it exists at present, is not created by the Jivatma on its own in its current life (2).

3. Wandering then about the real cause of this world, the wise and learned sages and seers meditated, and in their mind’s depth they got a divine glimpse or vision of the supreme dynamic power of creation, called the supreme Brahm, that warps and wafts throughout this creation, that is all-pervading and all-encompassing in creation, that is omnipresent and omnipotent in creation. This Brahm covers everything from the minute Atma (the Consciousness that is most subtle and smaller than an atom) to the colossus Kaal (the endless and fathomless Time). Therefore, this Brahm rules over and is the causative factor of all the other factors listed as various options earlier (in verse no. 2) (3).

4. These meditating sages and seers had a divine glimpse of a magnificent cosmic Wheel (representing creation) spinning majestically, and their wisdom and intellect helped them to correctly interpret the meaning and significance of this Wheel¹.

This wheel had one ‘Nemi’ or the rim (circumference of the wheel), three ‘Vrittas’ or fastening circles that surround the central axle and hold the spokes of the wooden wheel in place (or it might also refer to the three tiers of rings or fasteners used in the wheel to tie its spokes and other parts)², sixteen ‘Antas’ or ends or

extremities³, fifty 'Araas' or spokes⁴, twenty 'Praytaars' or counter spokes⁵, six 'Ashtaks' or six sets of eight factors that strengthen it⁶, a single 'Pash' or a leash representing the entire creation which is used as a symbolic belt to tie the entire structure together.

This wheel is driven to its one destination⁷ along three different paths varying from one another, and hence called 'Trimaarga Bheda'⁸. One round of this rotating wheel gives the delusion of two⁹—that is, it is out of delusion that the wheel rotating in one direction appears to be rotating in the opposite direction as well (4).

[Note—The concept of this creation being compared to a *giant wheel* has been cited and explained at other places in the Upanishads, the most similar one to the present verse in its narration being in the Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, 6; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3 of Krishna Yajur Veda. A similar discussion also occurs in the Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; and Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-7; as well as in the Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.

¹The *one rim* stands for the 'Avyakta', i.e. that entity which is un-manifest and beyond comprehension but is at the core and form the cause of the rest of the things to have their basis and existence. It also stands for 'Prakriti' which is also called Avyakta because it is not verifiably, it is un-manifest, invisible and cannot be seen directly but can only be deduced by interpretation and implication.

²The *three tiers or fasteners* are the three Gunas or qualities that form the nature and basic temperament of a man. These are Sata or the best form defined by being righteous, auspicious, noble and proper; Raja which is the medium quality marked by worldly desires, passions and activity; and Tama which is the meanest and lowliest of the three and is characterised by perversions, inertia, ignorance etc.

³The *sixteen ends or extremities* are the eleven organs (five organs of perception—eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin + five organs of action—hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory + one mind) and the five elements (space/sky, air/wind, fire/energy, water and earth).

⁴The *fifty spokes* of this wheel are the five misconceptions, twenty-eight disabilities, nine contentments, and eight accomplishments or Siddhis.

The *five misconceptions* called Viparyayas are the following—(1) 'Tama' which makes one think that the body is the pure self; the mistaken notion that what is non-self is the self. (2) 'Moha' which is the endearment for or infatuation with the sensual material objects of the artificial world. (3) 'Mahamoha' literally the great Moha is the high of delusions when one thinks that the world is real. (4) 'Taamisra' when one gets angry if the desired objects are not obtained. (5) 'Andha Taamisra' is the blindness that comes in the wake of failure at fully enjoying the obtained objects of desire. For example, having to leave a meal midway due to an urgent call from the office; it leaves one frustrated and angry.

The *twenty-eight disabilities* or 'A-shaktis' are the following—eleven are related to the eleven organs as stated above, nine are related internally to the Anthakaran which are nine kinds of discontent as opposed to the nine kinds of contentment described below, and eight disabilities which are related to the inability to achieve the eight Siddhis described below.

The *nine kinds of contentment* or 'Tushti' are to be always satisfied with what one already has and not to yearn for more. They are—contentment from the knowledge of Nature (such as the study of sciences), contentment from material gains, contentment from time (because time is a great healing factor and such people derive consolation that the worst of time would pass one day), contentment from good fortune (because many people believe that good luck is round the corner), contentment from renunciation, dispassion and detachment (which is however the best form of contentment), contentment from desisting from activity not out of renunciation but

because one feels that all activity would bring with it some gain and then it would be difficult to maintain it, so it is better avoided), contentment from being satisfied with whatever one has because one feels that whatever material thing is gained is perishable and would bring in its wake pain and sorrows, contentment from being satisfied with what one has because one thinks that the more one acquires the more the desires go on increasing, and contentment from the thought that no gain is possible without causing even a little harm to others, so it is better not to desire anything at all.

The *eight achievements or accomplishments* or Siddhis are the especial mystical authority and supernatural powers that one possesses. These are—(1) ‘Uha’ or the intuitive knowledge, skills and powers that one is born with. (2) ‘Shabda’ or the power of acquiring knowledge and skill just by listening to words instead of actually reading and mugging up of texts. (3) ‘Adhyayan’ or studying deeply and with concentration to acquire knowledge and skills. (4-6) ‘Dukh-Vighaatam’ or the abilities to eliminate sorrows and sufferings. There are three sorrows that affect a man—viz. (4) sorrows that originate from external and perceivable sources; they are called ‘Adbhautik’, (5) sorrows that come from unknown phenomenal sources such as malignant stars and non-favourable Gods; called ‘Adhidaivak’, and (6) sorrows that have their origin in the body and the mind; called ‘Adhyatmik’. (7) Then comes the seventh Siddhi which is ‘Shurid Prapti’ or receiving the fortunate company of someone who is compatible and like a soul-mate for the person, as opposed to the company of pervert and tormenting people. (8) And finally, ‘Daan’ or ability to give which implies that a person has sufficient for himself; it also implies that the person has an inherent noble nature and a renunciate and compassionate temperament.

So these are the so-called fifty spokes of the wheel representing Brahm.

⁵The *twenty counter-spokes* are the ten organs (five of action and five of perception) and their corresponding objects such as sound (ear), colour and shape (eye), taste (tongue), touch (skin), smell (nose), speech (mouth), walking or moving or going to a place (legs), grasping or accepting anything (hands), droppings (excretory), and enjoying sensual pleasures (genitals).

These literally act as ‘fasteners or belts’ that hold or fix the above fifty spokes in place.

⁶Next comes the *six sets of eight factors called Ashtaks*. These are the following—(1) ‘Prakriti-Ashtakam’ or the eight-fold nature of Prakriti; it consists of the five elements (sky, air, fire, water and earth) + mind + intellect + Ahankar (ego, pride). (2) ‘Dhatu- Ashtakam’ or the eight factors that sustain the outer body—outer skin (charma), inner skin (tvak), blood (rakta), flesh (mangsa), fat (medha), bones (asthi), marrow (majjaa) and semen or mucous (shukra). (3) ‘Astha-Aishwariya’ or the eight majesties and glories that are symbolic of the great mystical powers that a man possesses—‘Anima’ or the power to become as small as an atom; ‘Mahima’ or the capacity to become huge and majestic like a colossus; ‘Garima’ or to become authoritative, dignified, assertive and a heavy-weight; ‘Laghima’ or to have humility and simplicity in spite of being powerful and potent; and ‘Prapti’ or the ability to acquire anything desired. (4) ‘Bhav- Ashtakam’ refers to the various eight states of the mind and the corresponding virtues and vices. These are the following—‘Dharma’ or righteousness, probity, propriety, and nobility of thoughts and conduct, as well as its opposite component called ‘Adharma’; ‘Gyan’ or truthful knowledge and erudition, wisdom and enlightenment as well as its opposite component called ‘Agyan’; ‘Vairagya’ or renunciation, detachment and dispassion as well as its opposite component called ‘Raga or A-vairagya’; ‘Aishwarya’ or having material prosperity, lordship, majesty, magnificence, renown and pelf as well as its opposite component called ‘A-aishwarya or non-aishwarya’ or poverty and lack of renown. It is obvious that each of these virtues affects the mental bearing of different persons in different ways. (5) ‘Deva-Ashtakam’ or the eight kinds of celestial beings. These are the following—Brahma the creator, Prajapati the guardian of the visible creation

created by Brahma, the Gods, the Gandharvas (heavenly musicians), Yakshas (semi-gods; like Kuber the treasurer of the Gods), Rakshas (the demons), Pittars (spirits of dead ancestors), and Pishach (monsters and ghouls). All these entities have supernatural powers. (6) 'Guna-Ashtakam' or the eight qualities. These are Daya or compassion and mercy; Kshma or forgiveness; Anasuya or freedom from jealousy, hatred and ill-will; Shauch or purity and immaculacy; Anaayaasa or freedom from fatigue and indolence; Akirpanya or generosity and magnanimity or lack of miserliness; and Aspriha or lack of craving or yearning for sensual pleasures.

⁷The *one destination* of this wheel is to take the creature to its home called Brahm where its soul would find its eternal resting place. Another interpretation is that the entire wheel representing this world revolves around one thing—and this is 'desire'. This basic desire assumes three forms—viz. Satvic or noble desires, Rajsic or that which pertains to worldly gains, and Tamsic or that which deals with all that is evil and pervert. These desires are called 'Vishwa-rupaika Paasham' because they tie the creature in their 'Paash' or fetters represented by the desires for the enjoyments offered by the world of material sense objects, its pleasures and comforts.

⁸The *three Paths* along which the wheel is driven are represented by—'Dharma' or the path of righteousness and virtuousness, 'A-dharma' or non-Dharma or the path of evil and perversions, and 'Gyan' or the path of knowledge and erudition, of wisdom and enlightenment.

⁹It will be observed in practical life that when a wheel rotates at speed in a clockwise direction for example, it gives an impression that the spokes are turning in an anti-clockwise direction. This is due to optical illusion. In the present example, each *revolution* of the wheel gives rise to *two types of delusions*—such as good and bad, sorrows and happiness, etc. These opposite sets of notions are called 'delusions' because in actual fact the world where they are felt, the mind and the body which feel them are all delusory and have no truthful existence. The real entity that exists is one, and it is the pure consciousness known as the Atma at the micro level of creation, or Brahm at the macro level of creation. The rest is all delusion.]

5. We know of a great river¹ that is fed by five streams²—i.e. there are five streams that pour into it as it moves ahead from its point of origin. This causes turbulence in the river at these five points where the streams join it because the current of waters of different streams clash with each other, thereby bending the normal path of the river at five points³. The five Prans or vital winds form the five types of waves of this river⁴.

This five-faceted river has however one point of origin like all great rivers have, and in this case it is the Buddhi or intellectual mind⁵.

The river has five types of whirlpools⁶ swirling in it and trapping whatever comes within their range. There are five rapids⁷ in this turbulent and tossing river. It has five aspects or branches or tributaries⁸. And it is said to have fifty segments or sectors⁹ along its banks. [The mysterious river referred here is the world which is as turbulent, moving, unstable, unpredictable and trapping as the five-faceted river having five streams pouring into it, along with its whirlpools, waves, branches and rapids.] (5).

[Note—An exact similar narration is found in the Shewtashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 1, verse no. 5.

¹The *Great River* referred here is the world which is as turbulent, as topsy-turvy, as entrapping, as fearsome and as ever-changing as this river.

²The *five streams* represent the five organs of perceptions such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin of the body of the creature. This is because the creature receives the numerous stimuli from the external world through these five organs. These stimuli disturb his normal peace of mind and keep it in constant state of

agitation and flux; the creature cannot find peace as long as the organs of perception continue to receive perceptions from the world and fill the mind with their inputs. This is the reason of the *turbulence* referred in this verse. It must be noted that this world exists and has relevance only till the time the creature is alive and living in it. Hence, the world is synonymous with the creature that is engrossed in it and becomes an inseparable part of it. There is no world if there is no one to inhabit it.

³Further, the pouring in of the five streams into one body of the river and becoming one with it refers to the five primary elements that have independent existence like these five streams but merge with each other to form the body of the creature as well as the world. These five elements are sky, air, fire, water and earth. Each of these five elements has its own characteristic defining qualities, virtues and attributes, so when they mix into one body it is obvious that they would create a great deal of turmoil represented by the turbulence. They would affect the original nature of the creature's 'self' by forcing him to bend himself according to the demands of the body and the world in which the creature lives. The creature with a gross body cannot remain immune to the demands of the body—which is tantamount to bending and twisting the straightforward nature of the creature's 'true self' and giving it a tainted form. This is referred here by the *bending of the river at five points*. These five elements do not allow the Atma of the creature to retain its pristine pure form, but force it to adapt to its new habitat in the gross body made up of these five elements.

The fact that mixing of these five elements would create a lot of agitation for the Atma of the creature is easy to understand when we realise the consequences of mixing opposite forces of Nature. For instance, the water is cool by nature but the fire is hot, so when they mix together it is natural that there would be a lot of noise and fury. This can be easily verified when we pour water in a brightly lit fire—there is a tremendous amount of noise, hissing, spluttering, cracking, as well as a dense cloud of smoke, flying of dry ash, dust, powdered cinder and sparklers.

⁴The *five waves* are the five vital winds present in the body of all living creatures—viz. Pran (breath), Apaan (the wind that controls digestion and excretion), Samaan (wind responsible for circulation and equal distribution of nourishment in the body), Vyan (wind which maintains equilibrium), and Udaan (which helps the body to get up and move about). They are likened to the wave because like the wave which forms an integral part of the turbulent river, this active and agile body is also moved around and kept as such because of the presence of the vital winds inside its body. In the river also, waves rise only when the placid water is pummelled by gusts of strong wind; otherwise the river would flow calmly.

⁵The *one causative factor* which has resulted in the origin of the river is basically a glacier. In the present context in which the metaphor of the river has been cited to represent the world and its inhabitant creature, this one causative factor is the 'intelligent mind' or *Buddhi* because it is the mind that makes the creature aware of the external world and its material attractions, its comforts and pleasures, thereby creating in him a desire to acquire them and get sucked in the vortex of desires and more desires. The creature gets involved in numerous deeds and then expects results from these deeds, thereby getting trapped in the cycle of birth and death. If the mind decides that everything is false then the very cause of all upheavals and turmoil just vanish from existence and this river-like life of the creature would be led along in a tranquil and calm path like the easy flowing, placid and calm water of the river which is not in spate.

⁶The *five whirlpools* are the five sense objects pertaining to the five sense perceptions such as the object that the eyes see, the objects that the ears hear about, the objects that the nose smells, the objects that the tongue tastes, and the objects that the skin touches and feels. These objects create desires and attraction for themselves and keep the creature trapped in their vice-like grip. They are likened to the whirlpool as they keep the creature churned, going round and round in circles, continuously

tossing and turning helplessly under their influence, and gradually sinking in their vortex-like trap. These perceptions encircle the creature like the tentacles of an octopus which suck the creature in, and completely drown it in the water of the river. It means that the creature gets so much hooked to the enticing attractions of the material world and its alluring charms that he just cannot get out of their vice-like grip once he falls in their clasp.

⁷The *five rapids* are the *five types of miseries and sorrows* that afflict all creatures in this world. These are related to the creature staying in the mother's womb which is like a hellish experience, the agonies of birth, various diseases that he has to suffer in life, old age, and death.

⁸The *five aspects or branches* of this symbolic river are Agyan (ignorance), Ahankar (false pride, ego, haughtiness, arrogance and hypocrisy), Raag (attractions, attachments, love and affections for worldly things), Dwesh (ill wills, malice, animosity, enmity, hatred and spite) and Bhaye (fear) of dying or the desire to cling to life. In other words, even as a river appears to have different forms such as turbid, muddy, clear, frothy, milky white or greenish at different places due to a variety of reasons, this world also appears to have these five types of basic characteristics that determine how it looks to the creature. For example, if the element of Ahankar is the dominant factor in a man then he would have a particular take on this world which would be very different as compared to how a humble and selfless man treats the same world.

⁹The *fifty segments or sectors* represent the uncountable variations in the Vrittis of the Antahakaran or the inner self. These Vrittis are the various types of characters, qualities, virtues and attributes that decide what kind of world would be created by the creature around itself. This net result in which the world shapes itself vis-à-vis the creature as well as the basic character and personality of the individual creature itself would be the composite effect of all the above mentioned factors taken together. This is because this world is not an isolated unit but a composite mosaic of so many factors.

In practice also we observe that long rivers have many local names and significance. At places it is a holy river, while at others it is simply a flowing stream. Even as a holy river, some use its water to offer oblations to the Gods while others wash dirty clothes in it and spit in its water. At places it is calm and at others it causes havoc when it is in spate. Somewhere it is like an almost dry thin streak of water, while at other places it inundates large tracts of land. At places it is ankle shallow while at other places it can sink a boat load of passengers. The diversity of the river is starker than the ocean.]”

6. The Jivatma or the living being keeps on revolving trapped in this giant wheel of creation that is called the Brahm Chakra¹ which is rotated by the Supreme Being.

Under the hallucinating and disorienting effect caused by the constant rotation of this giant wheel in which the creature or the Jivatma is trapped, the latter begins to think that ‘he’ (i.e. the Jivatma, or the living being or the creature) and the Parmatma (the Supreme Being, the supreme Atma or the cosmic Soul) are two distinct and separate entities. [When the creature is subjected to constant turning of the wheel of creation, i.e. when he is buffeted and tossed around like a boat in a rough ocean by a never-ending chain of miseries and joys that dog him in each of his births that he has to take as a result of the deeds done by him in the previous life, he loses his bearings, his orientation and a sense of direction. He begins to hallucinate and have a topsy-turvy view of the reality. In the mental upheaval the creature forgets what the scriptures such as the Vedas say about his own individual ‘truthful self’ and the supreme ‘self’ known as Brahm. He forgets that in reality they are the same ‘consciousness’ existing in two planes—as the ‘Jivatma’ at the microcosmic level,

and as the 'Parmatma' at the macrocosmic level of creation respectively. It's like the element 'fire', for instance, that is the same whether it is in the form of the sacred fire of the sacrifice or as the fire of the household hearth. The illusion of duality is likened to the fact that a rapidly turning wheel creates the false impression that its spokes are turning in the opposite direction to the rotation of the wheel. Refer the concluding stanza of verse no. 4 above.]

But once the creature closes his eyes and calms himself down, once he shuts off the revolving world around him, he would be able to stabilise himself and regain his orientation and bearings. [Another instance to illustrate this phenomenon would be the case when a man goes round and round in circles. A short time later, the room around him begins to turn in circles too, and even if he stops to turn the room would continue to rotate around him for quite some time. But is the wall of the room actually moving? Of course not. It takes some time for the room to stop rotating after the man has himself stopped turning. When this analogy as well as of the one of the giant wheel is applied to the creature and his perception of the world it is obvious that as long as the former continues to perceive the latter it is impossible for the creature to eliminate the world and its attendant delusions. Herein comes the importance of meditation and contemplation wherein the creature turns inwards and shuts off the external world. It is like closing the eyes in the example of a turning wheel or a man turning in circles. After some time, the mind stabilises and the deluding affects of the world begins to fade away. It is then that the creature realises the 'truth'. It is like the world stopping from rotating in circles when the wheel stops or the room stopping to move in circles after the man stops turning himself. Hence, a wise and enlightened Jivatma is one who has overcome delusions and misconceptions about the world, about himself, and about the Parmatma.]

Therefore, when all delusions are removed, when the wise creature is able to understand what the hidden almighty dynamic cosmic force that is keeping this wheel of creation moving is, when he has realised that this cosmic force is called 'Consciousness', and that his own Atma is the same 'consciousness' that resides in his body, the creature is said to have obtained access to Amrit, the elixir of eternity, beatitude and felicity, the elixir of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment (6).

[Note—¹The *Brahm Chakra* has been described in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6 of Krishna Yajur Veda, while the same Upanishad describes the *Brahm Chakra* in relation to the cycle of deeds and their effects, called the *Karma Chakra* in its Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3. Briefly the phrase means the wheel of creation that is rotated and kept in motion by Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

7. The Brahm described by the Vedas is the Supreme Being and the only absolutely truthful, eternal and imperishable entity in creation.

It is in this holy and divine Brahm that all the three Lokas (worlds) are incorporated. This is simply because nothing exists outside of Brahm, and it is Brahm that has revealed itself in everything that has come into being. [The three worlds referred to are the terrestrial world, the heavens and the nether world. It also refers to the past, the present and the future, as well as the three states in which the consciousness exists—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming and the Sushupta or deep sleep states.]

Those who are well steeped in the tenets and the philosophy of the Vedas are able to see (realise) that this supreme, sublime, divine and eclectic cosmic Brahm resides in their own subtle heart in the form of the Atma, which is pure consciousness.

So they do not have to search the Lord somewhere outside as he lives in their own bosom as their ‘true self’ known as the Atma.

With this grand and glorious realisation they lose any sense of distinction between their ‘self’ and the supreme Brahm, and consequentially become one with the latter. In other words, all dichotomies and sense of duality are destroyed, and instead a universal and uniform sense of non-duality is established (7).

8. The almighty and only Lord of this world is the one who bears, sustains, protects and regulates the entire world—both the visible as well as the invisible world, both the perishable gross world as well as the imperishable subtle Atma which is the true ‘self’ of the Jivatma.

Since the Jivatma or the living being is the one who is the enjoyer of the material sense objects of the gross world depending upon his individual Prakriti or the Jivatma’s inherent nature such as his natural desires, instincts, temperaments, habits and inclinations, the former becomes bonded to the latter. [That is, since enjoyment of the world is dependent upon the Prakriti or nature of any individual, the latter is symbolically tied down by the former as far as any involvement with the world is concerned.]

On the other hand, when the Jivatma becomes self-realised and enlightened, when he discovers who he actually is and what is his status vis-à-vis the supreme Brahm—that is, when an individual realises that his ‘true self’ is the Atma that is pure consciousness, and that it is the same cosmic Consciousness which is known as Brahm—he becomes free from the bondage created by Prakriti as well as the delusions created by this world (8).

9. There are two states of existence—one that is all-knowing and omniscient, and the other that is ignorant and deluded; one that is omnipotent and almighty, and the other that is the opposite. The former state of existence represents the eternal Atma that is synonymous with Brahm, and the latter represents the Jiva or the creature devoid these qualities.

Besides these two there is third state, and it is known as ‘Prakriti’ (Nature at the macrocosmic level and the creature’s own nature at the individual or microcosmic level). This Prakriti represents the dynamic power or active principal force or ‘Shakti’ of Brahm.

The supreme Brahm has no end, is a personification or an embodiment of all the forms and virtues that exist in this creation, and is free from the ego and pride associated with the ability of doing anything. [That is, though Brahm is the divine entity that has endless powers of accomplishing everything in this creation, including the ability of creating this world, sustaining it and concluding it to recreate it once again, he is never proud of these stupendous capabilities.]

When a wise spiritual aspirant understands the three aspects of Brahm as described herein above (i.e. as the Jiva, as the Parmatma, and as the Prakriti along with the world created by it), he is freed from all the fetters of delusions and ignorance that tie down ordinary creatures (9).

10. The difference between the Prakriti and the Jivatma is the fact that Prakriti and the world created by it are both perishable and gross, while the Jivatma is eternal and imperishable as well as sublime. [This is because the world is an artificial creation depending upon the creature’s individual likings and nature—refer verse no. 8, whereas the Jivatma referred to here is not the gross body but the sublime Atma that is

eternal and imperishable and the truthful conscious ‘self’ of the creature—refer verse no. 8-9.]

The supreme Atma or Brahm keeps these two entities under his strict control.

A wise and erudite aspirant who keeps his mind constantly focused on this supreme Brahm, who thinks of nothing else except this eternal Brahm, is able to ultimately attain the latter. All sorts of Maya (delusions) are done away with. [This is because all his energy and strength and time would be diverted towards achieving this one single goal. He would be so focused on his objective that he would neither have the time nor the inclinations to think about anything else, and thereby eliminating all chances of being ensnared by temptations and other negative factors that might cause delusions and distractions. He would stop perceiving this gross world as having an independent existence that is separate from Brahm, and instead would develop the holistic view that it is Brahm who manifested in the form of this world. If this world is Brahm, say how can there be delusions in it, as Brahm is free from all delusions. Why is it so? It is so because Brahm is ‘Truth’ personified, whereas Maya (delusion), on the contrary, is ‘falsehood’ personified.] (10).

11. When a wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant constantly, consistently and diligently meditates and contemplates upon the supreme Lord (Brahm), when he realises or experiences or witnesses first hand that eternal truthful source of illumination and knowledge, it is then that all his mental and spiritual torments, perplexities, confusions, dilemmas and consternations are eliminated, and when this happens, when the ‘truth’ and the ‘reality’ dawns upon his mental and intellectual horizon, the spiritual aspirant is freed from the fear of birth and death. [This happens because he comes to realise that the supreme Brahm is the cosmic Truth known as Consciousness which is the fundamental cause of everything in existence, and this Consciousness resides in his own bosom as the Atma, his truthful self. So, when he realises Brahm he is actually realising who he actually is. In other words, he has understood the true meaning of the great saying of the scriptures which assert ‘Tattwamasi’ (that essence and principle is you), ‘Ayamatma Brahm’ (my Atma is Brahm) etc.—refer Canto 7, verse no. 8. With this eclectic view of creation and the ‘self’ there is no cause of any fear because the Atma is eternal and imperishable, it is the ‘true self’ of the aspirant, it is separate from the body which is actually the entity that dies, and it is blissful and wise. Refer also to verse no. 1 of this present Canto 9.]

In this way when he has acquired a holistic knowledge of the ‘self’ and Brahm, he becomes self-satisfied and one whose the desires are fulfilled. With no desires left, he does not have to take a birth after shedding the mortal gross body upon his physical death. [This is because unfulfilled desires along with the remainder of the results of deeds done by a creature during his life-time that could not be enjoyed or suffered by him while he was still alive act as the determining factor as to what kind of re-birth he would take, where he would be born and in which form, in the next life. With desires completely eliminated, with not getting involved in any deeds which automatically result in non-accumulation of any results, the wise and enlightened aspirant does not have to take a new birth again. So what happens to him? The undisputed answer is he finds ‘Kaivalya Mukti’—the ‘only kind’ of liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, the ‘unique’ form of freedom from this vicious cycle that is not otherwise available. And, what is the fate then? Well, the Upanishads unequivocally declare that such an enlightened, self and Brahm realised person finds ‘oneness’ with Brahm. That is, his own Atma or soul merges with the cosmic Atma or the eternal Soul known as Brahm. This is possible because both are

the same ‘consciousness’ existing in two planes—one at the individual level of the person, and the other at the cosmic level of creation. It is like the case of ‘light emanating from the fire element’ having an omnipresent existence—it needs a spark to make its presence felt anywhere and at any moment. The same ‘fire’ and its ‘light’ resides latently in a candle as well as in the pit of the fire sacrifice or the household hearth.]

Such a person is so contented that he does not even desire to have anything to do with the comforts and pleasures of the heaven. [For, he has tasted the eternal and the best form of elixir of beatitude and felicity known as Brahm, and when a man has tasted the best of nectar, he would naturally have nothing to do with lesser drinks.] (11).

12. A wise, erudite, knowledgeable, learned and enlightened man is he who knows, who firmly believes, who is steady in his unfaltering conviction that the supreme Lord (Brahm) is honourably ensconced in his own bosom, in his own subtle heart as his Atma which is pure consciousness and his true self.

There is nothing better or superior to this Brahm or pure and truthful Consciousness that is worth paying any attention to, or imagining, even for a fleeting moment. [That is, the only thing worthwhile of paying any attention to, anything worthy of spending one’s time and energy on even for a fraction of a second is Brahm.]

By knowing the truth about the ‘Bhokta’ (i.e. creature or the living being who is the one who physically lives in this world of material sense objects and either enjoys or suffers it), the ‘Bhogya’ (i.e. the things of the world that are enjoyed or suffered from), and ‘Prerak’ (i.e. the supreme Brahm one who inspires, who motivates, who drives the creature, the individual as well as the entire creation, to do anything at all), the wise spiritual aspirant comes to know or learn about everything worth knowing or learning in this world.

The real underlying principle that operates in all these three planes of existence—i.e. as the Bhokta, as the Bhogya and as the Prerak—is the same, and it is known as Brahm¹ (12).

[Note—¹In order to understand what is meant here, let’s take a very simple example from the material sciences. As is well known and established, the atom is the basic building block of everything. If there is anything in existence, if we have any material object, then it is certain there must be an atom at its fundamental core. Without the atom nothing can have any physical existence. Likewise, without the underlying truth known as Brahm nothing can come into existence in this creation. Again, as ordinary eyes cannot see the atom, ordinary persons cannot see Brahm. And again, as any scientist worth his salt knows for certain about the existence of an atom though he cannot see it in physical terms, every wise and enlightened spiritual seeker knows about the truthful existence of Brahm. To disbelievers this concept of Brahm being at the core of everything in this creation seems to be as incomprehensible and abstract and incredulous as the concept of the atom being the fundamental unit of everything in this world appears to ordinary men. Since he cannot see the atom he believes this to be a cock-and-bull story conjured up by modern science; this concept is too abstract for a man too preoccupied with his humdrum life and daily chores.

From the perspective of the Upanishads, it is the Brahm that actually enjoys anything in his manifestation as the Jiva or the living being. This is because the Atma living in the Jiva is Brahm manifested in a subtle form as the Pran or life-infusing consciousness present in the body of the living being.

It is the Brahm that is enjoyed in its form as the material world. This is because the gross world is also a manifestation of Brahm in its gross form known as the Vishwa.

And it is the same Brahm that provides the medium or the inspiration to the Jiva to enjoy this world. This is Brahm in its form as the subtle mind and the heart that inspires the living being to do anything in this world.

So we deduce that all the three aspects of creation—the seer, the seen and the process of seeing are nothing but Brahm operating in them.]

13. The only way to understand about this most enigmatic and esoteric entity known as Brahm, the way to realise or experience the undisputable presence or existence of this universal eclectic entity known as Brahm are 'Atma Vidya' or knowledge of the Atma or the pure conscious soul or the 'true self', and 'Tapa' or austerity, penance, sacrifices and deep concentration. It is this Brahm which is a universal and uniformly non-dual divine cosmic entity that is so much lauded and endorsed by the Upanishads. It is out of ignorance or out of delusions or out of misconceptions of judgement or out of misinterpretations of what the Upanishads say and mean that one thinks or concludes about Brahm being dual or having a triad of existence. [That is, it is out of wrong perception of the universal Truth about Brahm that one thinks that the invisible cosmic power known as Brahm and the visible world driven by this power are two distinct and separate entities. Similarly, it is out of ignorance that one thinks of the three aspects of Brahm as being a Bhokta, a Bhogya and a Prerak as described in verse no. 12. In short, all conceptions and notions and ideas about Brahm other than the latter being an irrefutably non-dual, indivisible, immutable, unchangeable, eternal and imperishable entity is fallacious, erroneous and false. In fact, it is the same Divinity that has all these forms having different contours and shapes.] (13).

14. Where is there any scope for sorrows and grief as well as confusions, perplexities, delusions and consternations of any kind for a wise and self-realised man who has come to understand the truthful nature of his own 'self' as being a personification of the supreme Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that resides in his bosom as his Atma?

He sees the same Brahm everywhere, in all forms, and at all times. The entire world, with its colossus dimensions and endless permutation and combination of forms and attributes, whether it is the world of the past, of the present or the future, are all a revelation of the same eternal Brahm (14).

15. This Brahm is a most enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious entity. It is smaller than the smallest, and bigger or more majestic than the biggest or the most majestic in this creation. This unique and un-definable Brahm lives in the inner chamber of the subtle heart of every creature (as his Atma).

By the grace and benevolence of this great Lord who is the creator and protector of the entire creation, when an aspirant develops the inner sight of wisdom and enlightenment that enables him to have a divine vision of the supreme Lord and realise his stupendous glories and magnificence, he is freed from all agonies, miseries, sorrows and torments that swirl around ordinary creatures in this world (15).

16. That supreme Lord (Brahm) is able to acquire everything though he has no physical hands; he can go anywhere he wishes inspite of having no physical legs; he can see everything without having any physical eyes; and he can hear everything though he has no physical ears.

If fact, he knows about everything worth knowing as he is omniscient and all-knowing. But the mystery is that no one knows anything about this Lord (Brahm), as he is most enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious in the entire creation.

Those who are wise, learned and erudite recognise him as being the most ancient, primal and majestic cosmic Purush (the primordial Male that is a metaphor for the Father) of creation. [He is called a 'male' because Brahm is the Lord who provided the initial spark of life. He was the one who initiated the process of creation by 'wishing' it to get started and symbolically providing the 'sperm' representing this wish in the form of the initial energy and the basic wherewithal that sparked off the process of creation. What were the energy and the wherewithal? The 'Tej' represented the driving force and the dynamic energy of creation, and the 'Panch Bhuts' (i.e. the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and sky) and other 'Tattvas' (such as Ahankar or ego, Gunas such as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna etc.) were the wherewithal needed to start the process of creation.] (16).

17. When a man patiently, after due diligence and deep analysis, and with firmness of conviction based on intelligent interpretation of the teaching of the scriptures and his own experience comes to be acquainted with this all-pervading and omnipresent supreme Lord (Brahm) who lives uniformly and universally in the perishable and mortal gross bodies of all the creatures (as their Atma) inspite of being imperishable and eternal himself, he never gets affected by any kind of worldly miseries, grief and sorrows (17).

18. This cosmic supreme Lord (Brahm) is the sustainer and protector of all living beings in this creation. The astoundingly powerful dynamic energy called the 'Shakti' of this Lord is most mysterious and un-describable. It is this dynamism of Brahm that has brought into existence the entire creation, and it is the one principal factor that is lauded by the scriptures as a special virtue and attribute of the supreme Brahm that is worth honouring and understanding. The dynamic cosmic authority, power and energy of the supreme transcendental Brahm that is known as the Lord's 'Shakti' is to be regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. [It is like the case of a king's authority and powers that are regarded as being equivalent to the king himself. If the king has no authority and powers then what is the use of his being a king? How would he carry out his functions as a ruler of his kingdom if he has no authority and power? A king sans his authority and power is like an ordinary man. In fact, it is the authority and power that is vested in the king which makes an otherwise ordinary man into a king. The 'king' and his 'royal powers' are inseparable from one another. If there is a king then his royal powers accompany him, otherwise he is not a 'king' at all.]

So, the same Lord or his Shakti is the creator of the entire creation on the one hand, and the concluder of it on the other hand (18).

19. That all-knowing, most erudite, wisest and enlightened Supreme Being is ancient and primary Purush or the primordial Male in creation.

He is the best, the most exalted and the highest Authority in creation.

He is the Lord of all lords.

It is he who has revealed himself in the form of all the known Gods, and is the one supreme Lord who is honoured and shown the greatest respect by the Gods.

He has no beginning, no middle and no end. He is imperishable, eternal, infinite, constant and steady.

He is that great mountain that gives rise (birth) to the great Gods of the holy Trinity—i.e. Brahm is the one from whom Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector of creation, Shiva the concluder, and Brahma the creator born atop a divine lotus have emerged (19).

20. It is this supreme transcendental Brahm, the Lord of creation, who embodies all the five 'Bhuts' of creation (i.e. the five primary elements called the Bhuts, such as the earth, water, fire, air or wind, and sky or space, are deemed to be present in the cosmic body of Brahm, and it is from the latter that these Bhuts emerged at the time of creation).

It is Brahm who is inherently established in all five 'Indris' or sense organs of perception and action present in the body of all the living beings. [The five organs of perception are eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. The five organs of action are hands, legs, mouth, excretory and genitals. Brahm lives in them as the consciousness and life-factors that pervades these organs. If consciousness or life leaves these organs, they would fall numb, become lifeless, lose all sensation, and die.]

It is this Brahm who has traditionally established this endless chain of birth and death.

The entire world of astounding diversity and maverism is actually moulded from the five elementary Bhuts or elements (earth, water, fire, air/wind and sky/space) that have been created by Brahm himself, and which symbolically represent Brahm in varying degrees of grossness or subtlety. Since Brahm has used them as the fundamental building bricks to construct the vast edifice of this creation, it follows that the finished structure known as 'creation' has these five elements or Bhuts at its core and as an integral part which is inseparable from the finished product¹. Again, since these Bhuts represent Brahm in different degrees of grossness or subtlety, it follows that Brahm is secretly, but invariably and inherently present in the entire creation as its integral and inseparable part, displaying different characteristics, qualities, virtues and attributes depending upon the ratio of the various Gunas (such as Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas) and other such factors that make each individual so unique that they cannot be generalised, but at the same time they are all united together into a garland known as the 'creation' by a single underlying principle known as Brahm which acts like the thread or string that holds the beads or the flowers of the garland together and give these individual units a definitive shape and name.

In spite of this, Brahm is free from being definable in terms of the characteristics and attributes depicted by these Bhuts. [That is, though the Panch Bhuts or the five elements are incorporated in the body of Brahm in the same way as they are incorporated in the body of this creation, Brahm is not dependent upon any of them, while the creation is. Each of the Bhuts depicts some of the virtues or characteristics of Brahm, but not the Brahm in its entirety. Similarly, the reverse is also true. Brahm has the unique virtues of any one given Bhut, but Brahm cannot be defined in terms of the virtues of this single Bhut alone. In fact, Brahm represents all the Bhuts combined. This is the 'Samasthi' (all-inclusive, comprehensive) view of Brahm, while the individual Bhut is the 'Vyasthi' (isolated, individualistic) view of Brahm. So, when these Bhuts are used by Brahm as the fundamental building blocks or bricks of creation, they carry these unique virtues of Brahm to the creation just like the case of the ingredients in any chemical product lending the finished product their individual chemical properties. So the resultant structure known as the creation bears the finger-prints of Brahm in the form of these elements.]

This Brahm is out of reach and transcendental; he is supreme and most exalted. He is self-illuminated, self-present, self-evident, eternal and truthful (20).

21. A person who has not overcome the tendency to commit sins, wickedness, mischief and unprincipled misconduct, whose sense organs are not under his control and are reckless and wayward, whose sub-conscious mind is not stable and focused on the eclectic goal of life, whose mind and heart are fickle, restless, and not fully contented and calmed down—it is not possible for him to realise the supreme Brahm and acquire the divine knowledge that can enable him to get acquainted with the true nature and sublime form of the Lord. [This is because knowledge that can entitle one to be acquainted with an entity as sublime and divine, as esoteric and enigmatic, as mysterious and mystical as Brahm needs an exceptionally sharp intellect as well as a proper ground and framework to be effective. Just like one cannot expect rice to be grown on desert land or colourful flowers to grow on a cactus plant, no one can hope to know Brahm if the right mental, intellectual and spiritual environment is not there, if the environment is not conducive to realisation of Brahm.] (21).

[Note—¹The terms grossness and subtlety are only relevant in nature—for instance, earth is the grossest of the five elements and sky is the subtlest. When we start counting from below, we ascend from grossest element earth to move up the ladder of decreasing grossness and increasing subtlety to the water element, the fire element, the air or wind element, to finally reach the top rung of the sky or space element which is the subtlest of the lot. All these elements have combined together, in varying proportions, to give rise to an astounding variety of creation. In this, they are aided by other secondary elements, also called the Tattvas, such as the three Gunas—the Sata, the Raja and the Tama.

The entire world that exists is made from these five basic elements called the 'Panch Bhuts' which act as the fundamental building blocks or bricks for this creation. Since these elements are Brahm's representatives in varying degrees of grossness or subtlety, it follows that Brahm permeates throughout this creation as its basic foundation and building block. As no structure of a building can be imagined without the brick, and since the brick is at the heart of all physical structures known as buildings, it follows that Brahm is also at the heart of the edifice of the world at its fundamental called the Bhuts.]

22. That absolutely complete Brahm, the Supreme Being, is such an enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious entity that it presents the greatest paradoxes of creation. Brahm cannot be fully known and comprehended either internally (by turning inwards and doing contemplation or meditation) or externally (by the sense organs of perception that attempt to visualise Brahm in the external features of the world).

Similarly, Brahm is neither gross nor subtle, neither erudite and enlightened nor ignorant and stupid. He is beyond the grasp and reach (comprehension and understanding) of all the creatures, no matter how intelligent, wise and learned they are, and is also not the subject matter of the behavioural world of material sense objects.

He lives inside his own self. [Whereas the Atma, which is pure consciousness, lives inside the gross body of a creature as the latter's true 'self', in the case of the supreme transcendental Brahm there is no such thing as a gross body harbouring an Atma inside it. This is simply because Brahm is an embodiment of 'Consciousness', a synonym for 'Consciousness', or 'Consciousness' personified. There is no entity known as Brahm that is distinct or separate from 'Consciousness', or is 'not Consciousness' itself. Therefore, Consciousness harbouring Consciousness makes no

sense. How can, for instance, fire harbour another fire inside it? Firewood can harbour fire latently inside it, but the pure element known as 'fire' is uniformly the same 'fire' no matter where we examine it. Hence, Brahm is 'Consciousness' from within and without. Brahm is wholesome 'Consciousness'.]

A wise, learned and enlightened man who comes to realise the Supreme Being as outlined above is able to obtain Mukti (liberation and deliverance). Indeed, he attains Mukti. This is what Brahma preached sage Narad (22).

23. A self-realised Parivrajak (Sanyasi) who comes to know about his true self and its eclectic and divine nature roams freely alone. Such an ascetic never hides or remains concealed in a secure place out of any kind of fears like a terrified deer.

He never accepts any conditions being imposed upon his freedom and movement. If anyone objects to his wanderings or tells him to go in a specified direction, a Parivrajak does not pay any heed to it.

Excluding his gross body, he abandons all other possessions and survives on food obtained by begging. [He keeps the body because it is the vehicle used by his Atma, his 'true self' during his journey in this life. He has to beg for food because this body cannot survive without it. He keeps the body only till the time his Atma has to live in this world to complete the remainder of its destined time to live in the gross body, and once the pre-determined time is over, he finds final Moksha (emancipation and salvation) for himself by abandoning this last possession that he has. That is, when all his 'Praarabdha' (destiny determined by his past deeds and desires) is exhausted, when he has done away with all spiritual encumbrances and bondages that might act as drags when he (i.e. his Atma) finally leaves his gross body to fly off to its freedom, the Parivrajak gladly, willingly and without any regrets abandons or sheds this gross body as last possession that he has. When this comes to pass, the Parivrajak is said to be truly freed from all fetters and bondages.]

He remains submerged in the thoughts of his own pure 'self' (i.e. his pure consciousness known as the Atma which is self-illuminated, enlightened and blissful). As a result, he develops a profound sense of equanimity and uniformity vis-à-vis the rest of the creature and the world at large. This is because being self-realised he becomes wise and enlightened enough to understand that the Atma that resides in his own bosom is the same entity that resides in the bosom of all other creatures in this world, and that anything worth paying attention to in this otherwise false and deluding world of material sense objects is this Atma which is the only 'truth and reality' that is hidden inside it, and that it is the magnificent Atma that gives this world its charm, meaning and importance. This eclectic view of the existential world frees him from all effects of delusions and ignorance. In other words, he becomes a free man who is not bound to any fetters of delusions and ignorance.

Such a wise Parivrajak develops a uniformity of view and is firmly established in the doctrine of non-duality. He therefore eliminates distinctions between one entity being a doer and the other being a motivator or an inspirer. [That is, there is no distinction between the creature, the doer, and his Atma, the motivator. Similarly, there is no distinction between the individual creature, the doer, and Brahm, the universal motivator.]

He also does not do deeds with some motivation and cause. [That is, he does not do deeds with an eye on some result to be obtained by doing them. Instead, he does them as and when they come along, without bothering himself about the good or bad results of these deeds. He does the deeds as being the wish of the Lord who wants him to do them, and does not do them with some personal vested interests.]

He also frees himself from all formalities and obligations associated with the tripod of knowledge that consists of (i) the Guru (the teacher; the moral preceptor and teacher who brings the knowledge within the reach of the disciple), (ii) the disciple (the taught; or the person who seeks knowledge of the scriptures by approaching the teacher), and (iii) the scripture (the body of knowledge that is taught by the teacher and learnt by the disciple).

[A Sanyasi or a Parivrajak has no Guru to obey and give respect to because, once realised, he is his own Guru. He need not study and spend time with the scriptures because he has found the truth that these scriptures strive to reveal by their teachings. So, he need not follow any formalities and is under no obligation of anyone.]

Having abandoned this world, he is no more bothered by its miseries and agonies. The world can no more cause any kind of restlessness or agitations to him.

What should be his behaviour and outlook? This question is elaborated further as follows. In spite of having no physical assets or wealth, he is always and eternally happy and contented. Being endowed with the spiritual wealth of Brahm-realisation and self-realisation, he rises above all mundane considerations of this gross material world of sense objects, and becomes immune to being either knowledgeable or being ignorant. He transcends both the concepts of happiness and joys as well as of agonies, sorrows, miseries and pains. [That is, he becomes absolutely neutral and dispassionate.]

He obtains light and illumination from his own self-illuminated Atma. All that is worth knowing becomes known to him. [Here the term 'light' and 'illumination' refer to wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment. He does not need a Guru or a scripture to guide him in his spiritual path, as the realisation of the Atma proves to be the light that illuminates his spiritual path for him. Nothing remains unknown for him; nothing is too secret for him.]

He becomes so exalted and highly empowered that he acquires knowledge of everything and becomes accomplished in every respect. He acquires all Siddhis (mystical powers) and becomes an authority on them so much so that he can bless others with these spiritual powers. In this respect, he becomes equivalent to the great Lord himself, or becomes 'Brahm-like'. This is because he has truly realised who he actually is when he unequivocally affirms and honestly declares 'So-a-ham'—i.e. 'that is me'. Here, the term 'that' refers to the supreme Brahm. [So-a-ham is one of the great sayings of the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is taken for granted here that when the Parivrajak declares 'I am Brahm' he is not lying and being honest in what he says.]

The Parivrajak goes to the eternal, truthful and divine abode of Lord Vishnu. He does not have to come back and take a new birth again. [That is, he finds final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death.]

There is no sun or moon to illuminate this divine abode of Lord Vishnu. [This statement is meant to indicate that the heaven where the spiritual aspirant goes after death is not some physical world where some sun would rise during the day or the moon during the night. It is an eternally illuminated destiny. This is because this destiny of the soul is Brahm which is eternally self-illuminated cosmic Consciousness. It ought to be noted here that one need not get confused by the mention of the name of Lord Vishnu here in the context of Brahm because Vishnu is regarded as being the Viraat Purush or the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and is treated as the Supreme Being in the Purans and other scriptures. It is from Vishnu that Brahma and Shiva were born.]

The great Parivrajak or Sanyasi or a spiritual aspirant who obtains this exalted destiny that is eternal and imperishable becomes one like it, and therefore he does not have to come back to assume another body in this mortal world. Since that divine abode is the only truthful destiny for the Atma or soul, its accomplishment is called ‘Kaivalya’—or the destiny that is unique and one of its kind.

Verily, this is what this Upanishad teaches; this is the preaching of this great Upanishad. Amen! (23).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 9

Sita Upanishad/Sito-panishad

This Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition was revealed as a dialogue between the Gods and Prajapati Brahma, the creator. In it, Sita, who was the divine consort of Lord Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and hence a personification of the supreme transcendental Brahm, has been established as the personification of the eternal cosmic dynamic powers, ability, virtues and authority of Brahm revealed as ‘Shakti’, and is called Mother Nature or the Mool Prakriti at the cosmic level of creation (verse no. 2). This dynamic Shakti of the Supreme Brahm is omnipotent and universal, and it is responsible for creation, sustenance and conclusion of creation. The supreme, transcendental Brahm utilises the services of this cosmic energy and majestic power to exercise his authority in the world.

In other words, Sita represents that aspect of Brahm which is responsible for the edifice of creation coming into being. She is the inseparable other half of Brahm which symbolises the otherwise neutral Brahm’s dynamism and energy. If Brahm is un-manifest form of the cosmic Consciousness, Sita then is the manifest form of the same Consciousness. Sita is the ‘will’ and ‘dynamism’ of Brahm personified.

This Upanishad stresses that that Sita principle is Brahm in its form, and then goes on to describe the esoteric meaning of the word ‘Sita’, her divine, sublime and ethereal un-manifest form as well as her form with a litany of divine attributes. It lists her righteous and noble virtues, the various connotations and forms of ‘Shakti’ (the magnificent cosmic dynamic powers of Brahm) and its embodiment as Sita, and all other such metaphysical and philosophical aspects pertaining to this Shakti that has been personified in the form of a Mother Goddess known as ‘Sita’.

Sita as the ‘Shakti’ of Brahm (verse no. 2) that takes many forms—viz. she is, for instance, a personified form of the Maya Shakti (verse nos. 3, 5, 35), the Ichha Shakti (verse nos. 11-12, 35-36), the Kriya Shakti (verse nos. 11, 20, 33), the Gyan Shakti (verse nos. 11, 21-33), the Mantra Shakti (verse nos. 3-5, 6, 8), the Aishwarya Shakti (verse nos. 8-9, 11, 37), the Pran Shakti (verse nos. 10, 13, 15), the Shakti known as the Mother Goddess having various names (verse nos. 8, 12, 16, 18, 37), the Shakti that manifests itself in the form of the Universe (verse nos. 10, 14, 17, 18, 34), the Aadya Shakti and the Mool Prakriti (verse nos. 2, 8, 19, 33), the Dharma Shakti

(verse nos. 10, 36), and the Shakti that empowers one with various boons and blessings (verse nos. 7, 34, 37).

Besides this, it is the only Upanishad which describes how the primary source of knowledge and wisdom known as the Veda came to be classified into various branches, and goes on to narrate how the different scriptures came into being along with the Vedas as primary sources of knowledge.

Shanti Paath

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
 स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाग्ँसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥
 स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
 स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
 ॐ शान्तिः ! शान्तिः !! शान्तिः !!!

The English of this Shanti Paath is given in appendix no. 1 of this volume.

1. Once the Gods approached Prajapati Brahma and asked him, 'Oh Lord! What is the real form and the fundamental truth about Sita¹? Who she actually is? We are all eager to know about it, so please elucidate the facts for our benefit' (1).

[Note—¹In the mythological histories of the Hindus known as the Purans and the Ithihasas, there is a well-known epic story of the Ramayana. It narrates how Lord Vishnu had manifested as Lord Ram, the king of Ayodhya, to kill the evil 10-headed demon-king known by the name of Ravana who was the king of Lanka. Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, had accompanied the Lord as Sita. Hence, in this epic Sita is the divine consort of Lord Ram.

Sita is believed to have emerged from earth as a girl-child safely ensconced in a mud-pitcher. She was revealed when king Janak had ploughed a field to prepare the ground for a fire sacrifice he was to perform. The tip of the ploughshare got stuck in the pitcher, and so it came out of the ground. Sita got her name precisely due to this event—for the word 'Sita' means the 'tip of a ploughshare'. The king adopted her as her daughter. She was married to Lord Ram. She was abducted by Ravana during Ram's sojourn in the forest, leading to the epic war of Lanka in which Ravana was killed along with the rest of the evil demon race. The whole story of the famous epic Ramayana revolves around Sita in this sense.

The Upanishads go much higher in their interpretation of who Sita is. If Lord Ram is regarded as the Supreme Being known as Brahm himself personified in his person then Sita definitely is the dynamic Shakti of Brahm revealed in her form. Just as Brahm has countless forms and names, Sita too has equivalent number of forms and names because she is a personification of dynamism of Brahm; she is the 'other half of Brahm'. If Brahm is to be treated in entirety, Sita cannot be neglected, because without Shakti, literally meaning energy, power, authority, dynamism, vitality and vigour that the cosmic Consciousness inherently possesses, the concept of Brahm has no meaning.]

2. Prajapati replied, 'Sita is a truthful manifestation of the divine cosmic dynamic energy of the supreme Brahm which is known as 'Shakti'¹. Being the primary cause of creation and its manifestation as Nature, she is called the 'Mool Prakriti', or the root from which this vast tree representing the multifaceted creation has not only

sprouted forth but is also nourished by and empowered to develop into its fascinating, colourful and enthralling form. Since the primary cosmic divinity called Pranav or Brahm, represented by the ethereal monosyllabic Mantra OM, is the basic foundation or seed from which Nature itself has emerged, Sita is also synonymous with this Pranav which, in turn, represents the supreme, transcendental and enigmatic Brahm (2).

[Note—¹The word *Shakti* refers to the eternal cosmic dynamic powers, ability, virtues and authority of Brahm revealed in a personified form. This ‘Shakti’ is therefore the dynamic aspect of Brahm; it is the latter’s energy, powers and authority at play in a vivid form. It is this Shakti that was utilised by the Supreme Being known as Brahm to create, sustain and conclude this creation. This Shakti of Brahm is called Mother Nature or the Mool Prakriti that is subtle and invisible at the cosmic level of creation (verse no. 2), while at the level of the visible creation or the macrocosmic level it is given the name and form of Sita who was the divine consort of Lord Ram on this earth. Lord Ram himself was Brahm personified in his form, as he was the incarnation of the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu who is no one else but Brahm in a cosmic form.

This dynamic Shakti of the supreme Brahm is omnipotent and universal, and it is responsible for creation, sustenance and conclusion of creation. The supreme, transcendental Brahm utilises the services of this cosmic energy and majestic power to exercise his authority in the world, to execute his will, to control and regulate this creation.

In other words, Sita represents that aspect of Brahm which is responsible for the edifice of creation coming into being. She is the inseparable other half of Brahm which symbolises the otherwise neutral Brahm’s dynamism and energy. If Brahm is un-manifest form of the cosmic Consciousness, Sita then is the manifest form of the same Consciousness. Sita is the ‘will’ and ‘dynamism’ of Brahm personified.

According to this Upanishad, Sita as the ‘Shakti’ of Brahm (verse no. 2), takes many forms—viz. she is the Maya Shakti which refers to the unique, magnificent and stupendous power of Brahm to create delusions (verse nos. 3, 5, 35), the Ichha Shakti which refers to power of Brahm to create desires, aspirations, wishes and volitions which had inspired Brahm to do what it did (verse nos. 11-12, 35-36), the Kriya Shakti refers to the ability to perform deeds and take actions, as well as to the results or rewards that accompany each such deed or action (verse nos. 11, 20, 33), the Gyan Shakti refers to the power inherent in knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment (verse nos. 11, 21-33), the Mantra Shakti refers to the powers integral in the various Mantras which are letters, words or phrases that are like formulas or keys that help to unleash the various powerful forces of creation representing different facets or aspects of the dynamism of Brahm (verse nos. 3-5, 6, 8), the Aishwarya Shakti refers to the plethora of powers, authority and majesty that come with various accomplishments, achievements and successes in this world, and they include the acquisition of Siddhis or mystical powers (verse nos. 8-9, 11, 37), the Pran Shakti refers to the mystical powers that the subtle Consciousness has which enables it to inject or infuse life in the otherwise lifeless creation, giving everything in creation its worth and importance (verse nos. 10, 13, 15), the Shakti known as the Mother Goddess having various names (verse nos. 8, 12, 16, 18, 37), the Shakti that manifests itself in the form of the Universe with all its stupendous variations and magnificence (verse nos. 10, 14, 17, 18, 34), the Aadya Shakti and the Mool Prakriti (verse nos. 2, 8, 19, 33), the Dharma Shakti which refers to the inherent powers and strength possessed in the virtues of righteousness, nobility, propriety, probity and auspiciousness (verse nos. 10, 36), and the Shakti that empowers one with various boons and blessings (verse nos. 7, 34, 37). Though not mentioned specifically, the other auspicious form of the Shakti of Brahm without which enlightenment, wisdom,

erudition and acquisition of knowledge is not possible is known as Chitta Shakti (verse no. 26).

The word *Shakti* broadly means strength, powers and potentials that a person possesses. The concept of Shakti in the context of metaphysics refers to the one dynamic cosmic force of Truth known as Brahm expressing itself in three different ways because of the different equipments used for such expressions—viz. the body, the mind and the intellect. The three Shaktis are not actually different from one another but compliment each other because they have one origin and springs forth as the dynamism of the transcendental Truth and the absolute Reality known as Brahm. Knowledge possessed by Brahm is expressed through the equipment of the intellect, the desire to use this knowledge and put it into effect is done by the mind, and the actual action to give effect to the desires is taken by the body. If one component is removed, the entire setup wouldn't function just like it is necessary to have the full system in order to make the computer work.

These cosmic dynamic forces or powers of the supreme transcendental Consciousness that is the universal and ubiquitous Truth are expressed in many forms—some subtle and invisible while others that are visible and grosser in nature. For instance, the astounding powers of the mind and intellect, collectively called the 'Chitta Shakti' as well as the 'Gyan Shakti', which are very powerful and potent but not visible, and the powers and strength of the gross body of the creature to do something, to act and perform deeds, called the 'Kriya Shakti', that can be physically seen and measured.

The dynamic powers of the cosmic Consciousness, known as Brahm, that have been unleashed in this creation assume different forms at different levels of existence. They may be in the form of various Gunas inherent to a creature, the vital winds called Pran that infuse life in this creation, the various Vasanas and Vrittis or inherent passions and temperaments that govern the personality of all living beings, and so on and so forth. They might also be revealed in the form of various Gods and Goddesses which personify the various powerful forces of Nature. They may also take visible forms in the shape of incarnations such as that of Sita in the present case. Sita embodies in her divine form all the different aspects of dynamism of Brahm, the Supreme Being, as expounded and elucidated in this grand and magnificent Upanishad.

According to ancient texts, the divine Shakti or cosmic dynamic powers of the supreme Brahm has assumed three forms called the 'three Divine Shaktis'. These three forms of the cosmic energy refer to the three forms that the supreme Brahm had taken for the purpose of creation. 'Brahmi' is the energy with which Brahma creates, and its relevant subtle counterpart here is the power to wish and aspire for and expect something. 'Rudrani' is the cosmic energy by which Shiva/Rudra ends this creation, or brings to a conclusion the creation which Brahma had made possible. 'Vaishanvi' is the cosmic energy by which Vishnu sustains and nourishes the creation, and its subtle counterpart is taking actions and doing deeds because without actions and deeds, the creation cannot be sustained. For all these activities—creation, sustenance and conclusion, knowledge, wisdom and intelligence are needed because success in any of these requires the requisite expertise and the ability to use and apply it judiciously.

In other words, Brahma makes this creation possible by wishing to do so in his mind. If the creation is righteous and virtuous, it is sustained and nourished by Vishnu, but if it goes wayward and starts committing evil and sins, Rudra takes charge and uses his energy called 'Rudrani' to destroy that evil part of the creation. Extending this logic further, we deduce that when the evil tendencies in the world will almost eclipse or outweigh the good qualities, Rudra would completely annihilate the creation, but the remnants of good elements left behind will help Brahma to re-start the cycle of creation once again.

According to verse no. 12 of this Upanishad, the Iccha Shakti of Brahm has assumed the form of three Goddesses—viz. Sri Devi (the patron Goddess of ‘Sri’—i.e. wealth, prosperity, opulence, majesty, fame, splendour and grandeur), Bhu Devi (representing Mother Earth as well as the patron Goddess of earth, representing the power of Nature to create, sustain and destroy, because it is in the earth that all seeds germinate, all creatures are born, it is from earth that they extract their nourishment, and it is in the earth that they die and perish finally), and Neela Devi (representing the vast and endless sky which is regarded as being the nearest equivalent to Brahm as well as being the patron Goddess of the blue sky representing the entire cosmos and the heaven above the earth).

According to verse no. 16, the three Goddesses are known as ‘Sri’, ‘Laxmi’ and ‘Lakshyamaan’. That is, it is the Sita principle that has been called by various names such as Sri meaning majesty, magnificence, glory and fame, as Laxmi meaning material wealth and prosperity, and as Lakshyaman referring to these two qualities in their manifold forms because the word ‘Lakshya’ means a hundred thousand, and the word ‘maan’ means a measurement.

The Shakti assumes other forms as divine Goddesses—Kali (the black complexioned goddess of war), Tara, and Tripura also known as Tripur Sundari, are also called the Trishaktis, or the divine cosmic energy which has revealed itself in the form of these three divine Goddesses. These Goddesses are the various manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva. Parvati is usually referred to by one single epithet—Shakti—which literally means energy, vitality, strength and powers.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 13 says that the Shakti has assumed the form of the following three Goddesses—Gayatri (the rising Sun), at noon when it is meant for Savitri (the Sun in its full glory and splendour), and at dusk when it is meant for Saraswati (the Goddess of knowledge).

The following are also called Trishakti or the potential powers present in a man—(i) to have influence, impact, affect and sway upon others, (ii) to have enthusiasm, zeal, flourish, drive and courage, and (iii) to have a good advise in this world as well as the support of divine intercession or intervention of Gods who should be benign and favourably inclined towards him. Further, the three Goddesses—Kali (the black complexioned goddess of war), Tara, and Tripura also known as Tripur Sundari, are also called the Trishaktis, or the divine cosmic energy which has revealed itself in the form of these three divine Goddesses. These Goddesses are the various manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva. Parvati is usually referred to by one single epithet—Shakti—which literally means energy, vitality, strength and powers.

Besides the above forms of Shaktis, there are said to be *nine other forms of Shaktis*. These have two connotations. One is the various forms that the divine dynamic power, potential, authority and energy of the Supreme Being has taken in the form of Goddesses, and the other connotation refers to the strengths and powers that a man possesses and which empowers him with divine abilities. These nine divine assets that a man possesses are also called Nidhis or assets of a man. These Nidhis may be spiritual or worldly. In brief they are the following:-

(a) Spiritual assets—according to saint Tulsidas’ epic *Ram Charit Manas*, Aranya Kand, Doha 35-36, they are— (i) communion with saints and pious people where the Lord’s glories are being sung, (ii) serving one’s teacher and elders, (ii) praising the Lord’s glories and doing Kirtan and Bhajan which are community singing of the Lord’s glories, (iv) repeating the divine Mantras or holy words of the Lord, i.e. doing Japa, (v) having such virtues as ‘Dam’ or tolerance, patience, fortitude and resilience, ‘Sheel’ or good and righteous demeanors, ‘Virati’ or being renunciate and detached from deeds and to be dispassionate towards the world, ‘Sam’ or equanimity, looking everything as Brahm, having a non-dual approach of or view of the world, ‘Santosh’ or contentedness, and ‘SaraI’ or simplicity and humility, (vi) having no deceit, conceit and falsehoods, (vii) not finding faults with others and criticising them unnecessarily, (viii) to have firm reliance and faith in the Lord, and (ix) not to feel dejected,

depressed, despaired, inferior, lowly and condemned under any adverse circumstances, because the great and merciful Lord is always with them.

(b) Worldly assets—such as gold, silver, diamond, gems such as ruby, sapphire and emerald etc.; kith and kin such as sons, wife, pets and livestock, homestead and farmland, name, fame and majesty etc. These worldly assets are at the micro level what the Gods possess at the macro level and kept in the custody of Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods.

(c) The larger quantum of these assets symbolised by the following words—Mahapadam (100 Padams), Padam (the quantity 10^{15}), Sankha (10^{18}), Makar, Kaschap, Mukund, Kund, Neel (10^{13}), and Kharva (10^{11}). These words are used to measure quantity or volume of any given entity. Hence, they are employed to indicate the quantum of certain powers that an entity possesses.

(d) The nine Shaktis are the various forms of the divine dynamic power, potential, authority and energy of the Supreme Being that has taken the form of nine Goddesses. These Goddesses are worshipped as Mothers of creation and they complement the Supreme Being. The nine divine Goddesses, also known as the patron Goddesses in Tantra literature dealing with occult forms of divine worship, are the following—‘Maha Tripur Sundari’, ‘Tripur Ambaa’, ‘Tripur Siddhi’, ‘Tripur Malini’, ‘Tripura Sri’, ‘Tripur Vasini’, ‘Tripur Sundari’, ‘Tripur Reshi’, ‘Tripura’.

According to another version, the nine divine Goddesses are the following—Vaamaa (the divine consort of Lord Vamdeo, one of the forms of Lord Shiva), Durga (the Goddess who rides a lion and is considered a manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, and who had slayed the demon named Durg), Gauri (the divine consort of Lord Shiva; another name of Parvati), Bhagwati (another name of Parvati; the divine Mother Nature personified and from whose womb the entire creation has emerged), Parvati (the consort of Shiva; had derived her name because she is said to be the daughter of the king of mountains, called ‘Parvat’ in Sanskrit), Laxmi (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and the patron Goddess of good fortune, prosperity and wealth), Saraswati (the divine consort of Brahma, the creator, and the patron Goddess of knowledge), and Aditi (the mother of all the Gods).

The system of worshipping of the divine Goddess envisages that she is a personification of all the dynamic powers and essential energy of all the Gods rolled into one. The chief Goddess is known as Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva who is regarded as the greatest and most senior amongst the pantheon of Gods, and hence honoured by the epithet ‘Maheshwar’. Parvati is also known as Durga who is worshipped in nine different forms. These nine forms of Durga are called ‘Nav Durgas’ or nine Durgas. They are also called ‘Nav-Shaktis’ or the nine personified forms of the divine dynamic power and energy of the Supreme Being.

Thus, according to the Kavach Stotra of Devi-mahatamya, the nine Shaktis are the following—Shailputri (literally, the daughter of the Lord of Mountains), Brahmchaarini (one who is perpetually a celibate and self-restrained), Chandraghantaa (one who is as beautiful as the moon), Khushmaandaa (one who is always cheerful), Skandamaata (the mother of Skanda, also known as Lord Kartikeya, the son of Shiva and Parvati and a commander of the army of Gods), Kaatyaani (the Goddess who personifies the holy consort of the great ancient sage of the Vedic period, named Var-ruchi Kaatyaan), Kaalraatri (a personification of the night of the doomsday), Mahagauri (the great Goddess known as Gauri, another name of Parvati, the divine consort of Maheshwar or Lord Shiva), and Siddhidaatri (one who gives mystical powers and bestows her devotees or worshipper with success in everything).

According to Brahmaand Puran, the names are the following—Neelkanthi (one whose throat is blue-tinged), Kshemankari (one who takes care of her dependents), Harasiddhi (one who gives all Siddhis—mystical powers), Vanadurga (the patron Goddess of the forest), Rudradurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Lord Rudra),

Agnidurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Agni, the Fire God), Jayadurga (the Goddess who gives victory), Vindhyavaasini (the Goddess who lives in the Vindhya mountain ranges), and Ripumaaridurga (the Goddess who vanquishes enemies).

Then we have *Forty Shaktis*—The forty ‘Shaktis are the following—fourteen organs of the body (internal + external) + fourteen patron Gods of these organs + three ‘Karmas’ or deeds + four ‘Gunas’ or temperaments or inherent qualities of a creature + worldly powers + spiritual powers + three states of consciousness = total forty. The three ‘Karmas’ are classified as (a) excessive, extravagant and enormous—known as ‘Tul’ (तुल), (b) basic and essential—known as ‘Mool’ (मूल), and (c) done out of ignorance and foolishness—known as ‘Avidya’ (अविद्याजन्य). The four ‘Gunas’ are ‘Vikshep’ (विक्षेप) meaning doubts, confusions, uncertainties, perplexities, fickleness, restlessness and agitations etc. in the creature, ‘Mudita’ (मुदिता) meaning cheerfulness and enjoyment, ‘Karuna’ (करुणा) meaning mercy and compassion, and ‘Avaran’ (आवरण) meaning neutrality, ability to show no emotions and remaining indifferent and aloof. The word also means a veil, cloak, mask and sheath. Hence, here it means ‘the ability to protect oneself from all the affects of external stimuli originating in the world which can perturb and confound the mind of the seeker/aspirant causing exasperation and perplexities, and instead, remain calm, peaceful and tranquil. The three states of consciousness are the ‘Jagrat’ or the waking state, the ‘Swapna’ or the dreaming state, and ‘Sushupta’ or the deep sleep state of consciousness.

Para Shakti—*Para Shakti* represents the supernatural transcendental dynamic powers of the pure conscious Atma, and it is revealed in the form of the ability of the man to ‘speak’. This is because the very first sign of creation coming into being is deemed to be the ‘Naad’ or the cosmic sound element that was generated when there was some activity in the calm surface of the cosmic ether. This Naad was envisioned as the first cosmic movement in the otherwise calm and tranquil ether which created a ripple that formed into a wave moving across the surface of ether, causing energy to be generated, which in due course powered the cosmic dynamo at the time of the initial phases of creation at the time of its very beginning. Naad was conceptualised as the word OM, and the whole gamut of spoken language is incorporated in the basic sound created when this OM is pronounced. So, the ‘voice’ or ‘sound’ generated in the throat of a living being is the most evident and irrefutable proof of the supreme Consciousness, which is responsible for the unfolding of this entire creation, being present inside the body of the individual.

The Para Shakti has been described in *Kshuirko-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 15-16 as follows—

“Then the ascetic should diligently move the vital winds in the cluster of Naadis present in the throat. [That is, he should visualise that his consciousness is pulsating in the region of the throat where the energy center called Kantha Chakra is located.] This cluster has one hundred one Naadis. They trap within themselves the most stupendous and magnificent source of divine and supernatural energy called ‘Para Shakti’.

Some of the great Naadis located here are the Sushumna Naadi which remains perpetually submerged in the bliss obtained by realisation of the supreme transcendental Truth (and if the Pran enters this Naadi, it obviously also gets submerged in an everlasting ocean of bliss and contentedness that comes with realisation of the ultimate Truth). The Naadi called Virja is directly linked to the supreme Brahm (i.e. it has direct link with the supreme consciousness residing in the body of the individual creature, and when this Naadi is activated the individual can have direct access to that consciousness). The other two important Naadis here are called Ida which is located to the left side of the throat, and Pingla that is located in the right side of the throat. [These two Naadis move up to the nostrils located in their respective sides.] (15-16).”

Adhar/Aadhaar Shakti—The word *Adhar* or *Aadhaar* literally means support, basis, base, rest, stay, backbone, substratum, principle, foot, pillar, prop, shoulder, shore, dike, and a means of subsistence. It refers to the base or foundation of anything, any structure or any event. For example when any unfortunate event happens, we try to ascertain the cause or the basic reason why it happened. Once it is determined, the rest is easy to follow. The word *Shakti* however means energy, vitality, stamina and strength. It is the energy trapped in the triad of the Sushumna Naadi, the Mooladhar Chakra and the Kundalini that is sought to be harnessed by the ascetic for his spiritual endeavour of Brahm realisation leading to his attaining an eternal state of blessedness marked by extreme ecstasy and bliss as well as in aiding him in his liberation and deliverance from the fetters of this body and the world.

According to the *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse nos. 22-37, the triad consisting of the Sushumna Naadi along with the Mooladhar Chakra and the Kundalini is called the ‘Adhar Shakti’. This is because it plays an all important role in not only keeping the nervous system of the body functioning normally but also is used in the process of Yoga to achieve spiritual high. The subtle dynamic cosmic energy present in the body is located here and the ascetic strives to arouse it and harness its astounding potentials for his own spiritual well being. Since the man’s entire life and all his activities revolve around the consciousness present in the body, as the body without consciousness would be a dead body which is good for none, this apparatus consisting of the Sushumna Naadi, the Mooladhar Chakra and the Kundalini is considered as the pillar, the foundation and the basis of obtaining enlightenment and liberation according to the philosophy of Yoga. Therefore this apparatus is called the Adhar Shakti for the ascetic, the one which empowers the ascetic in his spiritual endeavours and provides him with sufficient energy and vitality to obtain success in it.]

3. [Verse nos. 3-6 describe the esoteric meaning of the four components of the word ‘Sita’, viz. Sa, Ee, Ta and Taa.]

Sita is the virtual ‘soul’ or Atma of the entire gamut of creation having three aspects. Therefore she is called ‘Trivarnaatma’, or the soul of all those things which have three plains, phases, forms, connotations, facets or aspects in creation¹. [The creation has been envisioned as one having three plains of existence. The Atma, the pure consciousness, lives in all these three plains. Without the Atma the creation is as good as dead or non-existent. Sita is ‘Trivarna-Atma’ because she represents this Atma having three forms. She represents the dynamic Shakti of Brahm known as ‘consciousness’ that makes each of the three facets of the diverse creation active and bear life in their individual forms.]

Sita is also, at the same time, a personification of Yog Maya (which refers to the astounding powers of Brahm or the Supreme Being to create delusions). [The concept of Maya has been briefly described in note no. 2 of this verse.]

Lord Vishnu (personified Brahm at the cosmic plane; also known as the Viraat Purush) is the ‘seed’ (i.e. the primary cause) from which the entire world with all its delusions and deceptions, with all its artificiality and ostentations, with all its myriad variations and colourful charms, has been created. The Lord’s ‘Maya²’ (i.e. the delusion-creating maverick powers of the supreme Lord) is represented by the letter ‘Ee’ (॒; as in the word “see”) which is a long vowel sound (pronounced as in the word *keel*; *meet*).

[This long vowel sound of ‘Ee’ is the fourth vowel of the Sanskrit language. It is added as a suffix to the first letter ‘Sa’ of the full word ‘Sita’. Hence, the first letter becomes ‘Sa’ + ‘Ee’ = ‘Si’. The ‘Ee’ component of this holy name Sita represents the Maya aspect of creation, and as such it stands for Vishnu’s dynamic powers of

creating a miraculous world out of nothing just like a magician creates a fascinating world from nowhere.] (3).

[Note :- ¹The word *Trivarnaatma* refers to the three aspects of creation and its myriad variations. Atma refers to the soul of this whole setup. Therefore, Sita is the soul of the so-called 'Triad' of creation. This 'Triad' of creation has many connotations—

(a) Creation, sustenance and conclusion.

(b) The Trinity Gods—Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder.

(c) The three worlds called Triloki—terrestrial, subterranean and celestial; also the Bhu Loka or the earth where we live, the Bhuvha Loka or the sky immediately above the earth where those creatures which fly live, such as the birds, as well as where the spirits live, and Swaha Loka or the far away heaven where the Gods live.

(d) The three Yugs or Eras —Sat Yug or the age when righteousness and virtuousness was at its zenith, Treta Yuga when Lord Ram had made his manifestation, and Dwapar Yuga when Lord Krishna came.

(e) The three chief human pursuits —love, wealth and duty.

(f) The three qualities that a creature possesses and which determine his temperament and behavioural pattern —'Sata' which is the most auspicious noble and righteous of the three qualities, 'Raja' where worldly passion and desire are predominant factors, and 'Tama' where lowly qualities marked by perversion, evil and sins are the dominant feature.

(g) The three chief tribes or classes into which the human race was divided by the ancients —the Brahmins who were the learned class, the Kshatriyas who were the warrior class assigned the task of giving protection to the society, and the Vaishyas who did commerce and took care of the societies material needs.

(h) The three primary colours —black, red and yellow.

(i) The three primary scriptures—the Rig Veda, the Sam Veda, and the Yajur Veda.

(j) The Trivikram— the word 'Tri' is a prefix meaning 'three', and 'Vikram' means 'brave, courageous, bold, heroic, powerful, valorous, valiant, strong, best and excellent'. It also refers to Vishnu because he has all these qualities. According to the Puranic concept, Trivikram refers to Lord Vishnu in his manifestation as the dwarf mendicant called Vaaman who had begged the demon king Baali for land measuring three steps as charity. When Baali had agreed, Vaaman revealed his true identity as Vishnu, who was the Viraat Purush who encompassed the whole creation in his own body. So, in one foot Vishnu measured the whole earth, in the second, the whole sky, and in the third the king's head was measured, symbolically defeating and subjugating him. So, Trivikram refers to the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu from whose navel even the creator Brahma was produced aloft a divine lotus with a long stem, and the holy river Ganges emerged from the toe nails of his divine feet. According to Vedas, this Viraat Purush is a manifestation of the supreme, transcendental, attributeless, all-pervading and all-encompassing authority of the universe, known as Brahm. Rig Veda, 10/90/4, states that this Brahm has three legs (Tri) established in the heavens. The macrocosmic male, called Purush, is its first manifestation; from this Purush came into being this creation consisting of 'those who eat food' (the living creatures of the zoological realm) and 'those who do not eat' (the plants and vegetables of the botanical realm). These three —the Viraat Purush, the living creatures and the non-living things —formed the three legs of Brahm.

(k) The three Divine Shaktis—The term 'Shakti' and its various forms as divine Goddesses have been elaborately described as a note of verse no. 2 of this Upanishad.

(m) The 'Trividya' or the triad of knowledge usually refers to the comprehensive knowledge of the three primary Vedas, i.e. Rig, Sam and Yajur. Refer verse no. 21 of the present Upanishad.

(n) The three legendary rewards obtained by being righteous, noble, holy and good. These rewards are—‘Artha’ or material well being and prosperity, ‘Dharma’ or possessing righteous qualities, being virtuous and noble, and ‘Kaam’ or being successful in fulfilling all desires.

(o) A complete knowledge of the existential world—i.e. its creation, sustenance and annihilation or end or conclusion. It involves the fundamental truths of existence and the mysteries associated with them.

(p) Knowledge of what happened in the past, what is happening anywhere at the present, and what would happen in the future is also called Trividya.

(q) From the metaphysical point of view, the knowledge of what happens to the creature in his three principal states of conscious existence in this world—i.e. the waking state called ‘Jagrat’, the dreaming state called ‘Swapna’, and the deep sleep state of existence called ‘Sushupta’ along with the three bodies that the pure consciousness relates to in these three states, viz. (a) the gross body consisting of the five organs of perception, e.g. eyes, nose, tongue, ears and skin, as well as the five organs of action, e.g. the hand, the leg, the mouth, the anus, and the excretory organs, (b) the subtle body consisting of the mind intellect complex, and (c) the causal body consisting of the pure conscious Atma.

(r) According to the revered sage Adi Shankaracharya’s commentary on *Shwetashwatar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 7, the *three fundamental aspects of the world* which give the latter three distinct characteristic forms are (1) ‘Bhokta’ or the one who enjoys or suffers, or the consumer who finds pleasure in the objects of this material world as well as the one who has to suffer the consequences of his actions, i.e. the living creature, (2) ‘Bhogya’ or that which is enjoyed or suffered from, or consumed in one form or the other, i.e. the material objects of this consumable world, and (3) ‘Niyanta’ or the one who controls and rules over the other two, i.e. the Supreme Being.

To quote the *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 7—“The supreme transcendental Authority of creation whose glories are being sung by the Vedas is known as Brahm. It is a divine entity that is beyond the purview of all worldly deceits and delusions, is most pure, sublime and holy, and is eternal, truthful and imperishable. It is in this Brahm that the entire world having three dimensions, called the ‘Triad of Creation’, is firmly established, or has its basis and foundation.

Those who are well versed in the eclectic knowledge pertaining to Brahm and have a holistic view of this supreme Divinity realise that it is present in their own bosom (heart) itself and nowhere else. This self-realisation takes a firm foothold by deep meditation, resulting in a state of perpetual blessedness. Such self-realised spiritual aspirants remain submerged in the bliss obtained by experiencing the presence of Brahm inside their own self. The affect is that they are able to get rid of the fetters of ignorance and delusions that tie them to this body and the world, and consequentially they find permanent liberation and deliverance from this entrapment (i.e. they attain emancipation and salvation for their ‘self’, for their soul) (7).”

The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 9, verse no. 12 also describes this concept in magnificent terms. This Upanishad is Chapter 8 of this volume.

(s) The Triad of Ishwar or the supreme Lord of all that exists, Jiva or the living being or the creature, and Prakriti or Nature—these also form the apex of the triangle which is called the world. [Refer verse no. 9, canto 1 of *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*.]

(t) The *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 36 mentions the triad of creation as follows—“A person who is aware of the presence of the supreme transcendental Being, the Supreme Being, in all the three places^a, the three paths^b, the three forms of Brahm^c, the three Akchars or letters^d, the three Matras^e, as well as in the ‘Ardha Maatraa’ or the half-syllable—such a person is the one who is deemed to be truthfully wise, erudite and enlightened about the fundamental tenets of the Vedas and the essence of their teachings (in the form of the

great sayings called the Mahavakyas or the great sayings and other maxims and axioms of the scriptures (36).”

Now let us see what these three places, the three paths, the three forms of Brahm, the three Akchars or letters, and the three Maatraas are.

^aThe *three places* where Brahm resides are the three states in which consciousness exists, viz. the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep states of consciousness. The three places also refer to the three worlds called Triloki—viz. the terrestrial world represented by the word ‘Bhu’, the sky above the earth represented by the word ‘Bhuvaha’, and the heavens represented by the word ‘Swaha’. Besides these interpretations, the three places refer to the three planes of time—viz. the past, the present and the future. The word in its broader perspective would involve the ‘triad of the entire creation’ because everything that exists is nothing but a manifestation of on single non-dual cosmic Truth known as Brahm. This is because of the simple fact that the creation ‘does exist; it is seen, witnessed, lived in, and is verifiable and tangible’, and not some hypothetical conjecture based on the figment of imagination.

^bThe *three paths* are the following—the two extreme paths, one that leads to his pomp, reputation, glory and fame, and the other that causes just the opposite to happen, leading to his ill-fame, ignominy and degradation, and the third path is the median one of moderation that is regarded as auspicious and well thought of. It is marked by the virtues of detachment, dispassion and non-involvement. According to some versions, these three paths are represented by the three aspects of the fire sacrifice by which the Supreme Being is worshipped, viz. ‘Dhum’ or the aspect of the fire sacrifice when there is smoke and much sputtering and crackling of the firewood before it catches fire properly, ‘Archi’ or the aspect of the fire sacrifice when the flames are burning brightly and brilliantly, and ‘Agati’ or the concluding part of the sacrifice when some firewood or other offerings remain half-burnt or incompletely burnt, leading to either smoldering pieces of leftover offerings, or the residue of the extinguished fire in the form of still-smouldering pieces of charcoal and ambers. Refer also to verse no. 93/12-93/15 which describes the three paths that the Atma takes from the metaphysical point of view.

^cThe *three forms of Brahm* are the following—the ‘Vishwa’ representing the gross form of the visible world in which the individual creature lives in his waking state of consciousness, the ‘Viraat Purush’ representing the gross form of the invisible cosmic parent body in its cosmic plane of waking state from which all the individual creatures of this world have come into being, and ‘Brahm or Ishwar’ which that entity from which even this Viraat has evolved. Another interpretation of these three forms of Brahm is its manifestation as the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder.

^dThe *three letters* are the three letters of OM, i.e. A, U and M. These three letters cover in their ambit the entire gamut of creation, viz. ‘A’ covers birth, ‘U’ covers growth and development, and ‘M’ indicated death or conclusion.

^eThe *three Matras of Brahm* are represented by the three phases in which this creation has evolved as a fraction of Brahm. These are called ‘Hrasva’ or the small beginning indicating the primary forms of life such as algae and fungi, the ‘Dirgha’ or the most evolved and widespread form such as the higher species of animals and the highest rung occupied by the humans, and ‘Plut’ symbolising the rudimentary forms left after the creation come to the end, or the conclusion of the creation itself. If these are applied to the divine word OM standing for Brahm, then the letter ‘A’ stands for Hrasva, the letter ‘U’ for Dirgha, and the letter ‘M’ for Plut.

(u) The triad of *seer* (the one who sees), the *seen* (the object) and the process of *seeing*—This concept has been explained in *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 20.

(v) The triad of *doer of deeds*, the *object* of deeds done, and the *cause* of deeds done—this concept has been explained in the *Varaaha Upanishad* of the Krishna

Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48, and Canto 4, verse no. 35 describe the relationship between the deed, the doer and the cause.

²*Maya and Yog Maya*—The word ‘Maya’ has two parts, Ma + Ya. The first half means a ‘mother; a progenitor; something that creates’, while the other half refers to the ‘notion of doubt, of either this or that; the notion marked by uncertainty’. The word ‘Ma’ also means ‘to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of’. Therefore, the composite word Maya refers to a situation which harbours or creates uncertainties, where it is uncertain whether what is said or understood or seen or witnessed or experienced is actually the truth or not. It is virtually the ‘mother of all confusions, doubts and perplexities’. It therefore refers to something or some situation which creates or produces perplexities, doubts and confusions, something that is not real; that which is deluding, illusionary, deceptive, mirage-like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define this entire complex phenomenon at once. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance-based, illusionary, imposturing, deceitful, invisible and super-natural in the sense that it defies all logic and understanding; all that which has no reality or substance inspite of appearing to be for real; all that is hollow and lacks gravity though appearing to be solid and dense. It creates hallucinations in a creature’s mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth. It is the deluding and magical powers of the supreme transcendental Lord that hides the reality and creates an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions.

Maya is the deluding power of the supreme Authority in creation known as Brahm that has been used by him to create the sense of duality. The factual position is that everything is one and the same, and the different views of them is simply an illusion just like one sees a mirage in a desert and thinks it to be real whereas everyone knows that it is a physical phenomenon created due to the effect of excessive heat on desert sand, and it is the deluded mind that thinks it to be real though it is well aware that such things do happen in a desert and it is wise advice not to follow this illusion. Likewise, when Brahm decided to initiate the process of creation, he had to create a smokescreen of delusions to enable him to hide the truth, because otherwise everyone would renounce this world of artificiality and become recluses, and the result would be everyone becoming a monk, renouncing the world and the resultant termination of the cycle of birth and death! So under the influence of Maya or delusions, the living creature thinks that it, the Jiva, and Ishwar, the Lord, are two separate entities. The Jiva offers prayers to the Ishwar and looks upon him for his benevolent mercy and intercession in order to survive and prosper in this competitive world; the Ishwar looks upon the Jiva to offer him oblations and worship that would sustain and nourish the former as well as keep him in an exalted and honourable position. There exists a mutual symbiotic relationship between the two. The Jiva lives on the earth, while the Ishwar lives in the heaven. The Jiva watches the exalted stature, glory, fame and powers that the Ishwar possesses, and so the Jiva tries to acquire that stature for himself. Therefore the Jiva does good and auspicious deeds to go up to heaven, but the deeds themselves pull the Jiva down because of their inherent and inbuilt nature to tie down anyone who gets involved in them. So the creature continues to oscillate like a pendulum between being a mortal being living on earth and the immortal being living in the heaven.

This is the theory of ‘duality’. Both are covered in an invisible veil of ignorance-based delusion. From the metaphysical point of view, Ishwar is the sum total of all the causal bodies that exist in creation, while the Jiva is represented by the individual causal body which harbours the pure conscious Atma or soul. This factor of the ‘pure conscious Atma or soul’ is common to both the Ishwar and Jiva, and hence to treat them differently is a stupid proposition caused by deluding effects of the mind. This

is called being sheathed by a veil of Maya, or being under the influence of ignorance that prevents one from realising the truth and reality.

Therefore, Maya is the indescribable and inconceivable cosmic dynamic power that Brahm employs to create delusions.

Mantriko-panishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 3-8, describes Maya in substantial detail. In its verse no. 5 it says that *Maya has three basic colours*—viz. ‘white’, ‘red’ or ‘dark’, and the various shades in between. These three colours represent the three basic qualities, called Gunas, present in all the creatures and are only symbolic of the innumerable variations in which the basic qualities can combine to produce countless number of characteristics and virtues and behaviours that give individuality and specific characteristics to millions and millions of creatures. These are simply metaphors only meant to explain and help visualise certain things, and therefore should not be taken too literally as meaning that dark skinned people are sinful and pervert and worthy of condemnation, or that fair skinned ones are all righteous and noble, for just the opposite is witnessed daily in our lives.

Even as an offspring gets the colour of the skin of the race to which it belongs, the inherent characters of all creatures are inherited from their mother, and this mother is Maya. The white colour stands for the best category of qualities called Sata Guna, the red colour stands for the second and medium quality called Raja, and the dark colour stands for the meanest quality called Tama. The word Tam itself means ‘dark’ and it stands for the worst type of qualities leading to sinful and pervert nature in a man which makes his life hellish; the word ‘red’ is a metaphor for anger, vehemence, vengeance, agitations, restlessness, short temper, strife, hatred, envy, jealousy and the other such negative worldly characteristics in a person; the colour ‘white’ stands for peace, tranquillity, prosperity, happiness and wisdom, all of which are the characters of noble and gentlemanly persons.

Here it should be noted that the three inherent qualities or Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama that characterize all the creatures of this creation are like the *genes* that the offspring carries of its parent. Through these Gunas, the Maya resides in the bosom of all the creatures as their defining ‘nature’ and basic ‘temperament’—called the *Prakriti* of the creature. Even as the supreme Brahm as the Great Lord called Maheshwar used his mystical deluding maverick powers to create this illusion of the world at the cosmic level and made it so perfect that it appears to be perfectly true, the same Brahm while residing in the bosom of the individual creature as its Atma also creates this world by using its delusion creating powers, and uses its man-Friday, the mind, to ensure that it is implemented to perfection.

Since Maya has three basic constituent qualities, the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna, it is called *Trigunmayi* (त्रिगुणमयि), i.e. one which has the three Gunas or qualities. ‘Sata’ is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvement leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. ‘Raja’ is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. ‘Tama’ is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used as a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, ‘Tama’ means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These *three qualities* together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of ‘Sata’ makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of ‘Tama’ which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanours

and mental setup in this world. The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 10, describes these three types of Maya

When a man understands any ‘Truth’ after rigorously examining the ‘truthfulness’ of that truth, when he has established the veracity of facts, he believes in it more firmly and more convincingly. No matter what other people tell him about the truth being not the correct or the whole truth, he would not listen to them, simply because he has verified the facts for himself, he has witnessed the truth himself, he has logically eliminated all falsehoods to deduce that what he knows is the ‘truthful Truth’. His Truth is based on rigid and solid foundation; he is unwavering and steady in it. If he is steadfast and convinced in his knowledge, no matter how much ignorance and delusions (Maya) try to push him away from the absolute ‘Truth’, he will remain steadfast and unwavering in it. There will be no doubts and confusions in his mind.

The basic idea here is that Maya is like a transparent coloured sheet which covers the supreme ‘truth’ in the creation. Since it is transparent, it assumes the attributes of the ‘truth’ that it covers, because for all practical purposes an ordinary man is unable to see that veil because of its transparency. But at the same time, being tinged by different Gunas, the view of the ‘truth’ as seen through the veil of Maya gets tainted or distorted consonantly. This is a simple way of understanding what is called ‘illusion and Maya vis-à-vis the Truth and Reality’. Maya nevertheless hides the truthfulness of the Truth, and instead lends its own attributes and characteristics to that Truth known as the ‘Nirgun Brahm’ by the Upanishads when the latter is observed through this veil, while at the same time assuming the glorious attributes of Brahm itself. So ignorant fools think that the Maya is the real thing, whereas they are actually seeing the ‘veiled truth’ as observed through this covering of Maya, because the actual ‘truth’ is hidden from view by this transparent sheet which has lent it its own colour and hue to it. As a result, that Nirgun appears to have some attributes, and it thereby becomes ‘Sagun’, or the one with attributes and characteristics, by the interference of Maya.

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse nos. 33, 44-45 describe how Maya creates this world.

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse no. 2-3 describes Maya and says that it is the creator, the sustainer and the concluder of creation.

The *Kathrudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 43 describes how Maya was created by the Supreme Being and how it is kept under tight leash by him.

The *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 49 describes why it is important to overcome Maya.

The *Shwetashwatar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 10 describes the relationship between Prakriti, Maya and Gunas in a very succinct manner.

The *Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 47-49, 52-54, 56-57 describe what Maya actually is, how it creates this world and hides the ‘truth’ known as consciousness, and goes on to describe the two important types of Shaktis or dynamic powers of Maya—one called the ‘Vikshep Shakti’ and the other called the ‘Aavaran Shakti’.

Why Maya created this world and its effect on it has been beautifully described in *Paingalo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 12.

Maya has also been described in the *Sarvasaaro-panishad*, verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda; *Adhyatma Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in verse no. 30.

‘Maya’ has three names—viz. (a) *Maha Maya*—or the great powers exhibited by Brahm at the cosmic level. This Maya is the progenitor of all other types of Mayas which keep the individual creature trapped in their net. The Maha Maya is the virtual

mistress of all the delusions and misconceptions and their attendant ignorance that keep all the creatures of this creation enthralled by their deceptive charm. (b) *Yog Maya*—this is the stupendous magical powers created by the union of the supreme authority of creation known as Brahm, and the mystical and esoteric powers that delusions and hallucinations can create for the creature. (c) *Maya Shakti*—this is the ‘shakti’ or power and authority displayed by Maya in association with Brahm from whom it acquires its stupendous energy and powers.

The term *Yog Maya* can now be understood as follows:—It consists of two words, viz. ‘Maya’ and ‘Yoga’. ‘Maya’ means delusions; it refers to the delusion created by the dynamic powers of Brahm at the time of creation. ‘Yoga’ means to bring about a union between any two entities; it means a conjunction or fusion of two entities. Hence, the great delusion which is so powerful that it brings together two impossibilities together and makes them appear to be real is called ‘Maha (great) Yog Maya’.

Yog Maya refers to the fusion of the cosmic energy with the delusion-creating powers of the supreme Brahm when the latter decided to start the process of creation. The illusion created by Brahm removed the distinction between the truth and falsehood so much so that both appeared the same and became interchangeable. That is why, what appears true on the surface is actually false, and vice versa. But to enable this to happen, Brahm had to meditate and focus his attention to ignite that inherent but latent energy that is an integral part of creation. In other words, he had to do *Tapa*, which is another form of *Yoga*. The resultant stupendous forces of Nature that were unleashed by Brahm’s meditation led to the chain of events that culminated in the revelation of the cosmos as it is known today. This magnificent event or the primary force that set this chain in motion has been conceptualized by the Purans as a deity known as ‘Yogmaya’; she has been depicted by them as the female counterpart of the maverick Lord of creation, who has been personified as the Viraat Purush. In the case of Lord Ram, who is that Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu, that Yogmaya is represented by Sita. The other connotation of ‘union’ implies that this Yogmaya establishes a link between the ignorant and deluded creature, and the unadulterated, supreme and ultimate Truth represented by the Lord. The word also refers to the magical and mystical powers displayed by mystics and ascetics, which they have acquired by the virtue of their meditation and contemplation.

This world is not the ‘absolute truth’ because anything that is ‘true’ would remain constant and unchanging. Since the world is changing every moment, it cannot be the absolute truth. Therefore it is false. Truth and False are opposite things just like fire and water; they cannot co-exist. If one thing is true, it cannot be false, and vice versa. But Maha Maya is so powerful that the creature is certain that this world with all its sense objects and charms is true and real. He sees others dying but thinks that he would live forever. Since bringing together of two things is called ‘Yoga’, this bringing together of two impossible things together to make them appear to be true and possible, or making the truth appear as false on the one hand while making false appear to be true on the other hand, is called ‘Maha Yog Maya’.

The concept of the *Maha-Maya* or the great delusion can be understood with a simple illustration. The air element is the same within the earth’s atmosphere, but the density of air near the earth’s surface is obviously more than the highest point of the atmosphere. Even the level of the various gases and other ingredients of air vary at different levels. Hence, as we move up from the surface, the ingredients of the air and the space in which it lives change, their density and properties change, but primarily they will always remain the air and the sky elements, retaining their intrinsic virtues. Likewise, the same Supreme Being known as Brahm exists throughout this creation in all its different levels, and this Brahm exhibits different sets of characteristics at each level. It is only the degree of grossness and subtlety that changes, and not the primary nature of Brahm. The fact that Brahm appears to change and exhibit different

characteristics other than its original attributes at different planes of creation or existence is called 'Maha Maya'—or, the great delusion.

This Maha Yog Maya is so powerful that it creates an illusion of dichotomy and opposition in the various forms of the eternal supreme Brahm who is an embodiment of infinite bliss.

This Maha Yog Maya is like a veil surrounding the truth of Brahm. The magical world created by it is most fascinating and astonishing; it is full of maverick tricks, and is like an ocean of surprises and unexpected events and sights. It is so mysterious that inspite of being illusionary and created out of delusions it still appears to be real, everlasting and an image of happiness.

The *Tripadvibhut Maha-Naryan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 6, paragraph no. 13 describes how a spiritual aspirant sees the Maha Yog Maya in a personified form as he proceeds on his journey towards his final Mukti or Moksha. This Upanishad is Chapter 11 of the present volume.

We can understand this phenomenon of how the Maya of the Lord has created this vast canvas of creation with a simple example. A painter wishes to paint a landscape. He starts with a pure white canvas, and using his imagination and powers to visualise a magnificently beautiful scene, he starts painting with numerous primary colours and then goes on mixing these colours to produce umpteen numbers of colours of varying hues and shades. Besides the colour, he continuously adds a stroke here and a brush there as he tries to reveal on the lifeless canvas the conception of life as he visualises in his mind; he is never satisfied with his work and goes on and on endlessly adding colours and lines to the canvas. The result is most astounding and stupendous to behold. But still the painter is not satisfied; so the net result is that the canvas gets being redone over and over again, and layers after layers of lines that had been made and erased, of paints that had been painted over numerous times, of shapes and figures that had been visualised, rejected and reconceived and placed on the canvas only to make the painter uneasy about them. In short, the basic canvas that was pristine pure at the beginning has been reduced to scrap! The painter then keeps it aside or if totally disgusted with it, he may throw it in the garbage bin.

This all but sums up how the supreme Lord creates, develops and concludes the creation. The clean white canvas represents the Satwic qualities with which the Atma starts out. The painter is the supreme Lord or Brahm, the landscape he imagines is equivalent to Maya because it has no actual existence but is imagined by him, and he is so skilled a painter that once the painting is ready, the scene that is depicted on the canvas appears to be very real and live, creating an illusion of the grandeur of the actual thing; this is a deception because the painter has used his imagination as the subject of the painting, but an ignorant man who is not aware of this fact would believe that the painting has been inspired by some actual landscape that the painter must have seen somewhere. As a matter of fact, it might also happen that the scene does actually exist, but the painter has added touches of his own imagination to add vibrancy and colour to the scene about which the observer is unaware. The scene and the 3-dimensional landscape is equivalent to the creation and the colourful Nature. The paint and the primary colours used by the Lord during the process of creation to make it vibrant and lively are the different Gunas (virtues, qualities and characteristics), the various Vasanas (desires and passions) and Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations of a creature; his nature and temperaments) as well as the Tattwas (elements) which are fundamental to and inseparable from creation. The innumerable varieties of shades of characters, virtues and qualities that are present in the creature represent these myriad colours that the creator uses to paint his creation. Until at last the Lord stands back and is stumped at the Frankenstein Monster that he has unleashed! Then he decides to call it quits, and this is equivalent to annihilation of the creation. But as a painter he cannot sit quiet; and so starts the process once all over again!

Supposing the painter did not add his own name to the painting, or he had added a pseudonym. Then in such a case, there would be conjectures about his identity, leading to so many theories and debates. Then some wise man would look up the archives and dig up some evidence about who he was. This is exactly what happens here in the case of creation—no one knows for sure who that creator is, what is his name, etc. Some wise and enlightened man came to unearth the truth about him, and he tried to tell others in the words he could muster. This is how the great maverick Lord has been known and recognised by us. When his glories are sung, it is actually praising the great painter for his skills and the matchless heritage that he has created for us to cherish and behold.

Maya Shakti—The stupendous powers of Maya have been called its ‘Shakti’. This concept has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 48. This Maya is so powerful that it misleads even the Gods and stuns them as stated in *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 24.

Sage Veda Vyas’ *Adhyatma Ramayan*, in its Lanka Kanda, canto 14, verse no.28-29 describes the relationship between Maya and Brahm, albeit in the context of Lord Ram.

The concept of Maya affecting the Atma has been elaborately dealt with in various Upanishads, especially Maitrayanyu Upanishad, Cantos 2-4 of the Sam Veda tradition.

Brahm, which is one whole, indivisible and immutable entity, assumes or appears to exist in myriad forms, having mind-boggling permutations and combinations of shapes, sizes, colours and contours, depending upon the prevailing circumstances and requirements of existence. The same entity when viewed with different glasses appears to have different colours—as is evident when we observe anything with sunglasses of different colours. It acquires different meanings when viewed from different perspective—as is evident when the same event is interpreted differently by people having different views, different intelligence, different cultures, and different mental bearings. The same things changes in size and colour when observed from different distances—as is very clear when we observe a thing from very close quarters and then view it from a great distance; even the same mountain appears to be blue, green, dark and of other colours when seen at different times of the day and varying distances and through changing atmospheric conditions.

So it would be erroneous to say with certainty that what one has observed is the actual truth, for it might be very misleading and at odds to what others have observed. When, say, five people describe a mountain or scenery, each would narrate what he has observed. All of them are correct, but there is much more to that mountain or scenery than what one gathers from these narrations. Herein lye the importance of ‘self-realisation’, because we may doubt what others say, but we cannot be more convinced when we observe anything first hand for ourselves.

Brahm is like this water molecule; it has revealed itself in the form of this multifarious creation, each unit of the latter is Brahm manifested, but Brahm is not limited to that specific definition. All forms that the molecules of water take are nothing else but ‘water’, undiluted and uncorrupted. Whether we call it moisture, cloud, rain, steam, ice, river or ocean, none of these should deter a wise man from observing ‘water’, or better still ‘two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen’ in all these forms. A learned man would be amused when people fight over these definitions, and he would call them ignorant ones.

So when we observe Brahm with a holistic and all-inclusive view, we find that the entire creation is ‘Brahm manifested’; all the different nomenclatures and definitions pertain to the same entity and therefore all of them are correct. But none of these individual manifestations define Brahm in its entirety, and nor do they become Brahm.

This is Maya, which literally means something which does exist but it is an illusion, a deception and misleading. Water appears in so many forms because of this Maya, and so does Brahm vis-à-vis the world.

Now, there must be something that not only binds two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen together but also injects it with certain qualities that give the resultant product its uniqueness known as water. And this 'uniqueness of water' is not a small matter to be overlooked, because water is the harbinger of life, it is the sustainer of life, and it is the concluder of life. How? Well, it is the first ingredient necessary for initiation of the process of creation; once life starts it sustains it and nourishes it; and the havoc it causes during severe floods, typhoons, tsunamis, cyclonic deluges and oceanic storms when it completely obliterates all traces of life are examples of destruction water can cause. Quite similarly, in different perspectives, Brahm creates, sustains and concludes this creation.

Taken independently, hydrogen and oxygen would not produce water, and neither does their simultaneous existence in a single place automatically means that water would be there, for had it been so then there would be no question of droughts anywhere because both these gases are present everywhere on earth. Therefore, there must be some supernatural force that helps these apparently innocuous looking atoms of these two gases to acquire a special quality known as water. This is called 'Shakti'. What does this Shakti do? It transforms the latent powers and potentials of hydrogen and oxygen into an entity called water that harbours life, sustains and nourishes it, and that even concludes its own creation, none of which functions would these two gases have done left to themselves. But does this Shakti come from outside? No, it is hidden in the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen, and it simply comes to the fore, does its job and collapses in to oblivion, leaving the rest of the process to take care of its self by being controlled or influenced by other forces of Nature.

This allegory or analogy helps to explain how Brahm uses Shakti to create this world, and how the resultant product creates an illusion called Maya about the essential truth. Brahm uses its creative energy, called its *Shakti*, to create this world, both the visible as well as the invisible. Brahm then resides in this creation as its integral and inseparable part even as hydrogen and oxygen are integral to and inseparable from all forms in which water exists. The ignorance about 'who or what' is the basic truth of this existence, or is the essence in this existence, or is the fundamental principle behind what is seen, witnessed or experienced, is called *Maya*. Maya also has its importance in this context of existence, because if Maya or illusion does not exist then this world would also cease to exist as we know it. If the world ceases to exist as we know it, then there would be no question of any interaction or any kind of interdependence and relationship between any given two entities because there would be no distinction between them, and they would be all alike. Taking the example of water, if we do not distinguish between an ocean or river, or say between the water of a gutter and a well, telling ourselves that the essence of all these fluids is two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen, then it would be the height of stupidity for us and create a hilarious situation. So for the purpose of existence these differences have their own importance, but when we wish to learn and get educated about them and not remain ignorant fools then we come face to face with the facts. Even then, as long as we live, we cannot treat the water of the gutter and the water of the well alike for drinking purposes. This is Maya—it creates a piquant situation wherein we know that what we see is not the actual truth but we still cannot do anything about it and continue to treat the falsehood as the real thing.

The *Tejobindu Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 33 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition says that the Atma, the pure conscious self of the creature, remains untainted by the effects of Maya.

The effect of Maya on the creature has been elaborately dealt with in *Mantrikopanishad*, verse nos. 3-8 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and in *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 52-53, 69, 71, 74.

The *Maya Jaal*—The mysterious net of delusions that keeps the creature trapped in its snare is called Maya Jaal. The word ‘Maya’ briefly means delusions and ignorance, and ‘Jaal’ means a net, a web, a snare, a trap, a magical spell’.

The concept of Maya briefly refers to something that is based on delusions and deceit. The magical world created by a magician is a world of Maya. The trap that this charming deception creates for the creature making it believe that what it sees is for real is called the ‘Maya Jaal’ or the net of delusions which entangle the creature like a bird getting caught in a bird catcher’s snare. When one sees a magic show he gets so engrossed in its illusions that for the time being the person forgets that what he thinks is so life-like and real has no substance and pith. He thinks that what he sees is real and true. The same basic concept is applied in metaphysics to explain the concept of delusions vis-à-vis this world. The deluded creature begins to get involved in this magical world, and does so many things as if walking in a dream. But a wise man realises that the truth is above this illusive world and does not allow himself to be misled by any cajoling by the magician; he simply laughs at it and waves away all attempts by the latter to entice him to participate in the show. He just watches the magic show dispassionately and does not get emotionally involved in it. Similarly, a wise man does not allow himself to be involved in this deluding world, and remains a dispassionate observer, not a participant in the activity of the world.

The *Tejobindu Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 5, verse no. 33 describes this Maya Jaal.

The *eight forms that Maya takes*—The eight forms of Maya are the delusion and ignorance creating powers of Brahm without which the creation would neither be conceived nor expanded, because if everyone becomes aware of the reality, if everyone realises that everything is perishable and immaterial, that whatever is seen and enjoyed are like a mirage seen in a desert, then all would renounce the world, there would be no marriages and procreation, there would be no creation of wealth and strife and tension to protect this wealth, there would be no desire to have dominance over others, for all are equal and one in the eyes of Brahm and they have the same Atma which prevails uniformly in the breadth and length of the creation. So Brahm uses Maya as a tool to maintain a veil of ignorance and delusions to carry forward his game plan, until the time he decides that he had had enough of it and then initiates the folding-up process of concluding this creation for good, or for at least that time when he decides to roll the carpet once again.

Now, these eight forms that Maya takes are the following—the five elements forming the basic building blocks of the gross creation (i.e. the elements of earth, water, fire, air and space which form the gross body of all the living creatures) + mind + intellect (together called the subtle body of the creature) + Ahankar (the ego, pride and arrogance that the creature possesses, leading to the notion of ‘I’, ‘me’, or ‘mine’) = eight entities.

Actually, a wise man understands that whatever exists in whatever form is nothing but one or the other form of the same universal entity known as Brahm. To take an example, a scientist knows that water in whatever form and colour and shape consists of the same two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen. Further, he also realises that everything is made of atoms and their basic structure consists of sub-atomic particles such as electron, proton, neutron etc. With this erudition and view point, a wise man sees these basic ingredients in all things that he observes around him, because everything is made up of atoms and molecules. But an ordinary man talks of the water of the ocean, of the well, of the drain and of the river etc. He talks of gold, of silver, of wood or of iron, not realising that all consist of the same building block called the ‘Atom’. Similarly, due to ignorance a man is deluded into thinking that the gross world that he sees is has an independent existence and it is real. He forgets to analyse its fundamental ingredient which is the pure consciousness that is making it alive. The five elements that are used to make up this world are all perishable and gross, and they are the creation of the mind. The mind itself is

perishable because it dies with the body. Then, what is the reason why a man has so much ego and pride in himself and his abilities? It is Maya. It is his ignorance that has held him by his collars, as it were. He forgets that if his true self is imperishable, then how come he dies; if his true self is enlightened and wise, then why he suffers from so much misery and disillusionment; if his true self is eternal, then why does he have to take a birth and then die? A wise man then begins to ponder why does he treat those entities which are transient, mortal and the cause of so much misery and consternations and confusions as true; why does he not realise that the truth is imperishable and eternal and universal? This is due to the influence of delusions and ignorance created by Maya. This is how Maya keeps everyone trapped under its net.

Maya is under the overall control of Ishwar, the Lord of creation—This fact has been emphasized in the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 10. This Upanishad is Chapter no. 11 of the present volume.

How the Maya creates a separation between Brahm (the Supreme Being) and Jiva (creature; living being) has been outlined in the *Annapurna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 33. It is Chapter no. 16 of the present volume.

The 4 forms of Maya—Maya is said to be of three kinds, viz. the one where Sata Guna dominates, called the Satvic Maya, the one where Raja Guna dominates, called the Rajsic Maya, and the one where Tama Guna dominates, called the Tamsic Maya. Beyond these three is the primary form of Maya, known as the Adi Maya. This primary Maya is directly related to Lord Vishnu, hence called the ‘Vaishnavi Maya’. It is sort of the parent of all the other forms of Maya. It is so powerful and strong that no one can ever defeat it; not even Brahma the creator could overcome it.

The *Krishna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse nos. 4-5 describes them in detail.]

4. The Sanskrit alphabet (the consonant) ‘Sa’ (स) [as in the word *sun*; *son*] is a symbol of such virtues as Satya (truth), Amrit (the nectar-like elixir of eternity and bliss), Praapti (successful accomplishment of desired objectives) and Chandra (the Moon symbolising peace, tranquillity and contentedness; it is also a treasure of Amrit). [Hence, the first letter ‘Si’ of the word Sita stands for the combined virtues represented by consonant letter ‘Sa’ and the long vowel sound ‘Ee’.]

The Sanskrit alphabet (the consonant) ‘Ta’ (त) [pronounced as ‘t’ in French] in the letter ‘Taa’ (ता) [i.e. Ta (त) + Aa (आ) = Taa, pronounced as in the word *time*; *tide*] stands for Goddess Laxmi who symbolises the expression of light, dazzle, glory and splendour in the vast realm of creation in order to remove its darkness¹.

The long vowel sound ‘Aa’ [pronounced as in *after*] symbolises expansion and development. Hence, the second letter ‘Taa’ of the word Sita stands for the combined virtues represented by consonant letter ‘Ta’ and the long vowel sound ‘Aa’. (4).

[Note—¹Goddess Laxmi is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and the patron goddess of material wealth and prosperity. She stands for precious metals as well, such as gold and silver, and precious stones, such as gems and jewels. These things have an inherent shine, glitter and dazzle in them, symbolising an entity that has the in-built quality to shine and emanate light.

In other words, Laxmi symbolises those things in creation which have great in-built value and importance for the creature as far as his survival in this world is concerned. This is because the basic needs of the body such as food and comfort are available with the possession of Laxmi. Laxmi is needed for the sustenance and well-being of the world.

Besides this, Laxmi is Vishnu’s Shakti—or the dynamic power of the former with which he carries out his functions of sustaining, nourishing and taking care of the needs of this creation.]

5. Sita, whose esoteric and enigmatic but sublime cosmic form is symbolised by the long vowel sound 'Ee' (ॐ), and who is the great dynamic Shakti called 'Maha Maya'¹ that has no specific form, shape and attribute at the cosmic level of creation, reveals her primarily invisible divine form as the one having a visible shape and form that possesses specific attributes, glorious virtues and magnificent qualities which are equivalent to Amrit (i.e. are as refined and of high quality as nectar). In this revealed form (as the divine consort of Lord Ram), she is adorned by so many splendid ornaments and other decorative paraphernalia that gives a magnificent, charming and a radiant dimension to her divine form (5).

[Note—¹The concept of Maha Maya has been explained in a note of verse no. 3.]

6. Sita has three esoteric, enigmatic and sublime forms—(i) in her primary cosmic form as 'Shabda Brahm' (the eternal 'word' representing the Supreme Being, the cosmic Consciousness and the Truth known as 'Brahm'), she is honoured and remembered when one studies the scriptures and reads or recites them aloud, because the scriptures that attempt to describe Brahm for the benefit of the living being are made up of 'words', the 'Shabda'; (ii) in her incarnation in this mortal world as Sita where she manifested herself when the point of the plough used by king Janak dug up the earth to reveal her as a girl child; and (iii) in the form of the Beej Mantra or the seed or the root word 'Ee' (ॐ) which is used as a Mantra (secret formula) during mystical forms of worship of the Shakti of Brahm, and which also stands for the 'Absolute Truth' (because the Sanskrit vowel 'Ee' (ॐ) symbolically stresses the unequivocal nature of the 'Absolute Truth' of anything as when one says 'yes, it is this; there is *indeed no doubt* about it!').

These three forms of Sita have been revealed by sage Shaunak¹ in his composition called 'Shaunak Tantra'. [This is a text used to worship Sita as a Shakti or divine Goddess using her Beej Mantra in mystical forms of worship.] (6).

[Note—¹ Sage *Shaunak*—He was a wise and learned sage and derived his name after his father sage Shunak. He is regarded as an incarnation of Indra, the king of Gods. He was an expert on the Vedas, especially the Rik/Rig Veda and the majority of his works revolve around this particular Veda. They are known as 'Anukramanika' (indices). His magnum opus is the 'Brihad-devta' which deals with the deities of the Vedas. He had a large following of disciples, the chief being Ashwalyaana. He appears in many ancient scriptures such as Shatpath Brahmin, 13/5/3/5; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 2/5/20; Chandogya Upanishad, 1/9/3; Mundak Upanishad, 1/1/3; Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, 4/7.

The Par Brahm Upanishad, which is the twentieth Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, was revealed to sage Shaunak by sage Pippalaad.]

7. Sita always stays close to Lord Ram, the supreme Brahm manifested in a human form. That is why she is the benevolent and gracious benefactor for the whole world; she provides auspiciousness and well being to it.

She is the one who is responsible for the birth, sustenance and the end of all the living beings. [This is because she is the dynamic power or Shakti of Brahm, the Supreme Being, which is responsible for these functions on the behalf of Brahm.] (7).

8-9. She is a personification of the primordial Nature called Mool Prakriti¹. She is the cosmic Mother called Bhagwati in whose womb the creation was conceived and developed. She possesses the six great majestic qualities called 'Shad-Aishwarya'².

Those who are well-versed in the sublime and eclectic philosophy pertaining to the supreme Brahm, those who are expert in metaphysics and spirituality, assert that she personifies Pranav which stands for the cosmic dynamic powers of Brahm revealed in the form of the primordial ethereal sound of OM³. Since this Pranav is the fundamental cause of creation, since the sublime word OM representing Brahm stands for the entire gamut of creation, right from its conception through its development and growth till its final conclusion, it is asserted by them that Sita stands as a synonym of Prakriti or Mother Nature, because the latter is a revelation of the dynamic powers of Brahm that had enabled the latter to not only reveal this creation but also to later on manage it, sustain and nourish it, and finally at the end of its tenure conclude it. [8]

The term 'Athaato Brahm-Jigyasa' literally means 'this is what one deduces when enquiring about Brahm'; 'this is the conclusion drawn by researching about Brahm'. This authoritative statement relates to Sita's enigmatic, mystical, majestic, cosmic, dynamic and all-powerful form as narrated herein above and elsewhere in this Upanishad. [This phrase implies that if one were to know about Brahm, one should first know about 'Sita'. Sita and Brahm are therefore the two aspects of the same Divinity.] [9] (8-9).

[Note—¹*Prakriti*—The word basically means 'nature' with all its connotations. The Chambers dictionary defines it as the power that creates and regulates the world; the power of growth; the established order of things; the cosmos; the external world especially that untouched by man; the inherent qualities in anything that makes it what it is; the essence; the being; the constitution; a kind or order; naturalness; normal feeling; conformity to truth or reality; the inborn mind; the character, instinct or disposition; the vital power; the course of life; the nakedness of truth; the primitive undomesticated condition; the strength or substance of anything; a deity personifying some force of physical nature.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams, in his encyclopedic Sanskrit-English dictionary describes it thus—'making or placing before or at first'.

The word Prakriti has many connotations, viz. the original or natural or basic form or condition of anything; the original or primary nature, character, condition, constitution, temperament, disposition; the fundamental form or shape or essence or pattern or standard or model, rule; Mother Nature which has the active physical natural forces that are responsible for unfolding the creation, its sustenance and annihilation; something that is inherent, innate, genuine, unaltered, unadulterated, basic, normal, bare, naked, crude, integral and stripped of all pretensions;

The word Prakriti also refers to the powers of the Supreme Being personified as Mother Nature in whose womb the entire creation has revealed itself. It is deified forces of Nature and renowned as different Goddesses. As inherent nature and temperament of a creature, it determines the way the world behaves and thinks. The Prakriti is the primary female aspect of creation and is known as Shakti, while its male aspect is known as the Viraat Purush. The Shakti is the active ingredient or force that creates and regulates everything, while the primary entity or Being whose will this Shakti is implementing is called Brahm who remains passive.

According to the Purans, this Prakriti or Nature has been personified as different Goddesses, while Brahm has been known as Viraat Purush in the terminology of Vedanta or the Upanishads, and Vishnu in the Purans. The Shakti is the female aspect of Purush, and is considered as inseparable from him; in fact they are two halves of the same Brahm. In order to create, Brahm revealed himself in these two primary forces which revealed themselves as the cosmos or Nature. As the different inherent tendencies of a creature, the forces of creation came to be known as Sata, Raja and Tama which determines and regulates the continuous cycle of creation, sustenance and conclusion.

The word Prakriti refers to the following—(a) Mother Nature and (b) the natural habits, temperaments and inclinations of a person. The Purush is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the Prakriti. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks that Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood.

²*Aishwarya* means certain mystical, esoteric, sublime and divine powers and potential that one possesses which bestow him with immense supernatural powers and authority; that which bestows him with great fame, opulence, majesty, supremacy, sway and authority that comes with possession of great and divine abilities and potentials; the divine faculties and powers associated with mysticism. Among these powers are the eight Siddhis or divine accomplishments that empower the person who possesses them to achieve certain things that are not ordinarily possible. These eight Siddhis are the following-- (i) 'Anima' 'अणिमा' means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) 'Mahima' 'महिमा' is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, knowledge and skills; (iii) 'Garima' 'गरिमा' is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance, (iv) 'Laghima' 'लघिमा' is to have simplicity and humility; (v) 'Praapti' 'प्राप्ति' is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired; (vi) 'Prakramya' 'प्राक्रम्य' is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa' 'ईश्वत्वं' is to be able to have lordship or sway over others; and (viii) 'Vashitwa' 'वशित्व' is to be able to control and subdue others.

³The concept of OM: There are umpteen numbers of Upanishads that expound upon this eclectic concept. A brief reference is as follows—(a) Rig Veda—Naad Bindu Upanishad.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli (Canto) 1, Anuvak (sub-canto) 8; Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 2, 4, 24-25, 31-32; Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 2, 9-18 (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation), 37, 102; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 6; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 136-139; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 2-12, 69-71 ½ which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11—1.34, and Canto 5, verse no. 70; Shuk Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 20 describes how OM is used for the purpose of ritualistic worship according to the Tantra philosophy involving Anga Nyas, Shandanga Nyas etc.; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 42-43 ½ describe how the three states of existence (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) and the three types of bodies (gross, subtle and causal) came into existence as manifestations of the three letters A, U and M of the word OM; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 38.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Taarsar Upanishad, Canto 2, and Canto 3, verse nos. 1-7; Hans Upanishad, verse nos. 6-17.

(c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad verse no. 74-81, 85-88; Pranava Panishad which has only 13 verses dedicated to OM.

(d) Atharva Veda—Besides the present Sita Upanishad, the other Upanishads are the following—Ram Tapiniopanishad, canto 3, verse no.5-9; Prashna Upanishad, full Canto 5; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 4,6; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 1, 8-12; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8; Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 5; Canto 4, verse no. 3; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 1-7; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 6, verse

nos. 3-4; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4 (which equates OM with the 'Hans' Mantra).]

10. Sita is a personification of the Vedas as well as all the Gods and their divine qualities.

She pervades uniformly in all the worlds (or aspects of creation) that exist.

She possesses all the auspicious, righteous and noble virtues which make her famous and establishes her majestic glories in this world.

She is an embodiment of 'Dharma', i.e. she symbolises all the grand virtues that are collectively called Dharma, such as the virtues of nobility, righteousness, auspiciousness, propriety, probity, morality, ethical conduct and thought etc.

She is the Atma or soul of all living creatures as well as the essential quality that lends an integral value to all the things that exist in this world. [In other words, she symbolises the inherent worth of all things that exist. Just like a creature devoid of the soul is as good as dead, and anything without having any inherent value is of no importance in this world, Sita is also the only essence that gives this creation its worth, its dynamism, its life and its meaning.]

She is the one who governs the world by controlling the cause of everything as well as the deeds done by the creatures. Since the result of the deeds are dependent upon the deeds themselves, she can control the full cycle consisting of the cause of deeds, the process of doing the deeds, and the result of these deeds.

Depending upon the deeds done by the creature, they assume different forms, and all of these forms—whether they be humans, Gods, Rishis (seers and sages), Gandharvas (a type of junior God), Asurs and Rakshas (non-Gods and demons), Bhut, Pret and Pishach (ghosts, evil spirits and ogres) and all other forms in which the creatures can be imagined to exist in this creation—have Sita as their Atma or soul. In other words, she is the eternal soul or Atma of the entire animate as well as the inanimate world.

In spite of appearing to be different from the supreme Lord of creation known as Brahm, she is actually an integral and inseparable part of the former. [That is, though Brahm and his cosmic dynamic power or force called Shakti represented by Sita appear to be two distinct entities, but essentially they are the same Brahm playing two roles. One is the passive Brahm, and the other is the active Brahm respectively.] (10).

11. That Goddess (Sita) is a visible manifestation of the divine Shakti, the dynamic cosmic forces that control Nature. [The term 'Shakti' has been elaborately described in a note of verse no. 2.]

She has three mystical forms that are the dynamic forces that drive all the creatures and their activities in this world—Ichha Shakti¹ (the power of desire that impels and inspires a creature to do anything), Kriya Shakti² (the powers to perform deeds) and Gyan Shakti³ (the power of knowledge) (11).

[Note—¹The *Ichha Shakti* relates to the power of the mind to have or make wishes, desires, aspirations and the determination to fulfill them. It is longing for anything, wanting to possess it any cost, and then endeavouring to acquire it. It is a precursor to Karma Shakti. It is only when one wishes to do anything and has the determination to do it that he actually goes about doing anything at all, strives hard to get success in it, and then would like to enjoy the fruits of his labour. It is closely related to *Bhakti Yoga* inasmuch as when the *Ichha* (desires) are turned away from the world and hooked onto the search for the Truth and Reality with devotion and sincerity of purpose, it helps the man to turn away from the entrapping world of delusions and

artificial comforts towards the world of truth and reality, i.e. towards his true 'self', the pure consciousness. The word 'Bhakti' means to be sincerely committed and devoted to anything, any cause, any principle, any doctrine or any entity. In this case, the devotion is towards the supreme transcendental Truth and the absolute Reality, whether known as Brahm or as the Atma. Bhakti Yoga therefore means a devoted and committed approach that coordinates the desires and actions in such a way that they are diverted to realisation of the supreme Truth known as Brahm instead of the mortal and perishable world of delusions and entrapments.

Refer also to verse no. 12, 35.

²*Kriya Shakti* which refers to the power of the gross physical body to act as per wishes of the mind and intellect. It is the Kriya Shakti which enables the supreme Authority to carry out its wishes through the organs of the body by taking various actions and doing different deeds. It is the ability of the body to actually do the deeds or take the actions and bring them to fruition. It also represents the ability to enjoy the results of doing such deeds and actions taken by the creature. The word also refers to being active and enterprising and the opposite of being lethargic and indolent. It is the actual ability to carry out his plans to their successful completion, i.e. to do deeds, to take actions and enter into enterprise, because simply sitting and procrastinating endlessly wouldn't give success unless there is assiduous activity and diligent effort, no matter how wise a man is and how determined he might be. The body is prompted into taking action by the desires and aspirations originating in the mind and intellect complex. If these desires are world-centric, then our actions and deeds would be also world-centric and so would be the result. This is because every activity gathers its quality from the texture of the desire that has prompted a particular action or deed. So, when the desire is to enjoy the outside world and its sense objects, the deeds and actions become entrapping and the cause of all world related miseries. On the other hand, if the desires are auspicious and noble, the same deed and action would become an instrument for spiritual upliftment as well as liberation and deliverance. In this context, the term *Karma Yoga* would be to coordinate the effort of the body and the mind not towards fulfilling worldly aspirations that would be ensnaring and enslaving in the long run but to divert them towards the divine goal of spiritual liberation and deliverance. And the tool in this endeavour would be to have auspicious, noble and righteous desires, aspirations and wishes, collectively called the different Vasanas or Ichaas inherent in a man, instead of the worldly ones. Once the desires are purified and chastened, the activities and deeds to fulfill or accomplish those Vasanas or Ichaas are purified and chastened proportionately. At its height, the total renunciation of desires for enjoying anything related to the external world of sense organs and their respective objects is called 'Vairagya'. This Kriya Shakti is more developed in those people who have a predominance of the Raja Guna or the second category of three basic qualities that decide the habits, temperaments and nature of any man. The Raja Guna makes a man more inclined towards enjoying the sense objects of the world and remain engrossed in the activities related to the gross world.

Refer verse nos. 19-20,36.

³The *Gyan Shakti* is related to the stupendous powers and authority possessed by 'knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment', and the instrument that implements this authority and power is the intellect. Gyan is empowerment, because without knowledge the mind and body would work like those of animals. Therefore, Gyan Shakti is the powers, potentials, authority, strength, respect and empowerment obtained as a result of acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, sagacity, scholarship and expertise in any subject. This Shakti represents the dynamic powers and potentials that are a natural accompaniment of these grand qualities. This is called Gyan Shakti simply because merely wish and determination wouldn't suffice if a person does not have the required knowledge and skill, the necessary expertise and level of wisdom required to accomplish his objectives successfully. In this context, *Gyan Yoga* would be to divert the diligence with which a man applies this

knowledge, wisdom, erudition and skills to acquire the objects of this material world and get acclaim and applause for his expertise, knowledge and wisdom to achieving success in uplifting himself and realising the ultimate goal and truth of this life and existence, and freeing himself from the clutches of delusions which have tied him down through numerous lives to find final liberation and deliverance for his soul. Gyan Yoga endeavours to channelise one's knowledge into auspicious avenues and inspire the creature to make efforts relying upon the knowledge and wisdom he possesses to bring about a union between the individual creature's soul and the cosmic Soul and Consciousness known as Brahm so that ultimate emancipation and salvation is obtained and the cycle of delusions, birth and death and their endless horrors are got rid of. Therefore, Gyan Yoga entails diligent study and pursuance of the Truth, turning inwards and upwards instead of outwards and downwards, to separate the non-truth from the truth like separating the grain from the chaff, and finally coming to grasp with the eclectic concept of 'truth and absolute reality' of the 'self and the Atma', of 'Brahm and Moksha (final and ultimate liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation)'.

Refer verse nos. 21-33.

Refer also to the *Ganapati Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 6. It is Chapter 25 of this volume.]

12. The Ichha Shakti reveals itself in three forms—Sri Devi¹ (the patron Goddess of 'Sri'—i.e. wealth, prosperity, opulence, majesty, fame, splendour and grandeur), Bhu Devi² (representing Mother Earth as well as the patron Goddess of earth, representing the power of Nature to create, sustain and destroy, because it is in the earth that all seeds germinate, all creatures are born, it is from earth that they extract their nourishment, and it is in the earth that they finally die and perish), and Neela Devi³ (representing the vast and endless sky which is regarded as being the nearest equivalent to Brahm as well as being the patron Goddess of the blue sky representing the entire cosmos and the heaven above the earth; the sky is the cosmic bowl symbolising Mother Nature's womb because it is in the bowl of the sky that the entire creation was conceived, it developed and grew, lives, is sustained, and would finally find its resting place).

She is honoured by the epithet of 'Bhadraa', which literally means one who is gentle, genteel, civilised, cultured, soft-spoken, well-mannered, having charming demeanours, and all the auspicious and noble virtues and grand characteristics that are expected from a soul having an exalted stature. In other words, Sita possesses and displays all the great characteristics and refined qualities that make her entitled to be honoured by the title of 'Bhadraa'.

She embodies all the auspicious virtues that have a good effect or positive influence on a creature in this world.

She has revealed herself as the Sun, the Moon and the Fire (12).

[Note—¹Refer verse no. 16.

²Refer verse no. 17.

³Refer verse no. 18.]

13. [This verse stresses that the basic dynamic force and active energy present in all kinds of food that nourish and sustain this creation in its entirety is known as the Sita principle.]

As the Moon, she nourishes all the medicinal herbs (which are said to flourish and derive all their invigorating and healing properties under the rays of the moon).

It is she who has revealed herself as the entire vegetable kingdom, including the Kalpa Tree¹, the fruits, the flowers, the creepers and the shrubs, and other medicinal plants.

She grants the Gods with the privilege of drinking 'Soma' (the sanctified drink used during religious fire sacrifices, and is regarded as the drink of eternity and blissfulness that is drunk by the Gods and stored by them in the heavenly pitcher called the Moon).

In the form of basic or staple food such as water (the Amrit, literally meaning the 'nectar of life'), cereals and grass, she provides nourishment and contentedness to the Gods, the humans and the animals respectively. [The food for the Gods is Amrit; for the humans it is cereals and pulses etc. that are derived from the plants; and for the animals such as cow etc. it is the grass that is their staple food.] (13).

[Note—¹*Kalpa Tree*—It is the evergreen tree of the Gods. It is said to possess mystical powers and can bestow all that is desired by an aspirant or seeker. The Botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is *Adansonis Digitta*; it is also called 'Parijat' meaning 'descended from the sea', and 'Harsingar' meaning 'the decoration of the Gods, especially Lord Hari'. The English name of it is Coral Jasmine; in Latin it is called *Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis* (*nyctanthes* means the night flower, while *arbor tristis* means the sad tree). Its flower is said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dyeing silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legends, it was produced during the churning of the ocean for the search of Amrit, or the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, by the Demons and the Gods. The king of the Gods, Indra, took it away and planted it in his capital at Amravati. According to another legend (in Vishnu Puran), a princess named Parijat fell in love with the Sun God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the Sun became disenchanted with her and did not like her overtures any longer. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew up from the ashes at the site of her funeral pyre. The flower of this tree could not bear the sight of the Sun, and therefore it blooms during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.]

14. It is Sita principle that provides light to the Sun as well as the rest of the creation.

All the various fractions of time—such as Nimesh (the time taken for the eyes to blink), Ghari (twenty four minutes), eight Prahars (1 Prahar = 3 hours; the whole day of eight sections), the day and the night, a month, a part or phase (such as the waxing and the waning phases of the moon marking the fortnight fraction of a whole month), the seasons, a half-year period called Ayan, and Samwatsar (one full year)—all of them are completely pervaded by the Sita principle. In other words, there is no time when she is not present in this creation, whether it is in the past, or in the present or in the future.

It is she who enables a man to live up to a hundred years (i.e. she helps the man to lead a healthy and comfortable life; she provides the man with all sorts of nutrients in the form of food, and medicinal herbs that take care of his health problems). She 'lights' his days (i.e. she illuminates the life of a living being; she infuses life and vitality in the creature; she controls the living aspect of creation; she bestows knowledge and wisdom to the living being because the term 'light' is a metaphor for knowledge and enlightenment).

All measurements of time—immediate till the infinite—are the various spokes in the wheel of time, and since she pervades in each fractional second of it, the entire gamut of creation is a manifestation of Sita and the dynamic principles of the supreme Brahm she represents. She lights up or gives meaning to all the fractions of time (14).

15. Residing literally as the ‘fire element’ (heat, energy, dynamism, vitality and stamina) that is inherently present inside all the living creatures and revealed in the form of ‘thirst and hunger’ (for water and food respectively), Sita represents the basic signs of life and its fundamental requirements (of water and food).

As the fire of the sacrifice, she becomes the ‘mouth’ of the Gods (because all the offerings that are put in the sacrificial fire are said to be consumed by this fire, and it is believed that the food offered to this sacrificial fire is deemed to be eaten by the Gods).

For the forests and the countless plants and trees (i.e. the herbs having medicinal as well as nutritional value) that grow inside it, she is the element of warmth and cool that is so necessary for their growth and development¹.

She resides eternally in the wood as its latent fire. This fire element is an intrinsic part of the wood, soaking it from all sides, but is hidden from view till the time the wood is lighted when this fire element reveals itself spontaneously² (15).

[Note—¹‘Warmth’ indicates the presence of life in the form of the fire element, and ‘cool’ indicates the presence of the water element. Both these elements are fundamental to life on earth. In other words, Sita represents those dynamic forces of Nature that enable verdant life to prosper in the dense forests. Without this element, all forms of vegetation would have been non-existent on earth. Since forests are the ‘lungs’ of earth and the habitat of wild life, Sita symbolises that aspect of Nature that not only fosters life in all its colourful splendour in the form of myriad plants and animals that populate the dense forests but also takes care of their growth, survival and nourishment.

²Sita represents the dynamic energy and vitality of Brahm in the form of the ‘fire element’. Sita is that secret but powerful life-giving force of creation that lies hidden behind the external façade of the visible form that this creation has taken, but without which the latter would be worthless. The instance of the firewood is cited here to clarify this concept. The ‘firewood’ has its importance because it is universally employed by the creature to provide him with his requirement of ‘fire and heat’. Otherwise, what is the difference between this and other forms of ordinary wood; why is a particular wood described as ‘firewood’? But the point is that from the outside all wood look alike. No one can say that the scorching fire is present inside a wood that is so harmless and cool on the surface.

Taken in a holistic manner, this instance also means that Sita is the pure consciousness that lives hidden in the body of the creature much like the fire hidden inside the firewood. This ‘consciousness’ is the factor that is of any worth as far as the creature and the living world is concerned just like the fire that makes the ordinary wood worthwhile as ‘fire-wood’. Again, just like the fire not being visible from the surface of the firewood, this consciousness is also not visible from the outside. This consciousness is a microcosmic form of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm just like the fire hidden in a small piece of wood is similar to the raging fire of the blast furnace of a steel factory, or the energy and heat that electricity embodies in itself.]

16. As Sridevi (see verse no. 12), Sita reveals herself as Goddess Laxmi (who is the patron Goddess of material well being, wealth, property, prosperity, majesty, opulence, fame and splendour) in order to provide the basic requirements of sustenance, protection and comfort to the creatures in this world. [It is because all the creatures require a minimum amount of wealth and material comfort to be able to lead a happy, contented, independent, dignified, decent, healthy and comfortable life in this world.]

As such, Sita is known by the names of Sri, Laxmi and Lakshyamaan. [That is, it is the Sita principle that has been called by various names such as Sri meaning majesty, magnificence, glory and fame, as Laxmi meaning material wealth and prosperity, and as Lakshyaman referring to these two qualities in their manifold forms because the word 'Lakshya' means a hundred thousand, and the word 'maan' means a measurement.] (16).

17. As Bhudevi (see verse no. 12), Sita represents the entire earth with all its seven continents and seas as well as the all the fourteen Bhuvans represented by the words 'Bhu' etc.¹

She is the divine authority and the cosmic dynamic force of creation that not only reveals in the form of these worlds that act as bases or foundations for the rest of the creation, but supports and sustains these worlds themselves from within and without.

She is the divine Goddess who has revealed herself as Pranav, the all-pervading ethereal sound that fills the entire cosmos and is represented by the divine word OM which is said to be the root cause for this creation coming into being. The Pranav is also a synonym of Brahm that is the supreme transcendental Consciousness. [In other words, Sita is that principle dynamic force of Nature which not only conceived this world but also nourished it in its cosmic womb once it came into being. She represents the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being, i.e. Brahm, to create, nourish and develop something. Her existential dimensions are measured in cosmic terms as Pranav which stands for the infinite and fathomless bowls of creation filled with ether where the cosmic sound of OM was generated. This is the symbolic womb of creation. And hence, Sita is Mother Nature personified.] (17).

[Note—¹The *fourteen Bhuvans* are the following fourteen Lokas or worlds according to the Padma Puran—(A) The upper worlds called Urdhava Lokas are seven in number— (i) Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha, (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, and (vii) Satyam. (B) The seven nether worlds called Adha Loka— (i) Atal, (ii) Vital, (iii) Satal, (iv) Rasatal, (v) Talatal, (vi) Mahatal, and (vii) Patal. The total number of Lokas is, therefore, fourteen.

According to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP) there are the following lokas-- 'Bhu' (भूः) or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha' (भुवः) or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha' (स्वः) or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha' (महः) or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha' (जनः), so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha' (तपः) or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 million miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam' (सत्यम्) or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 million miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

According to some legends, the distances of various mythological Lokas from the earth or Bhu Loka is as follows—the Bhuvha Loka is situated at a distance of 25 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Swaha Loka is situated at a distance of 50 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Maharloka is situated at a distance of 1 Crore Yojans from earth, the Jana Loka is situated at a distance of 2 Crore Yojans from earth, the Tapa Loka is situated at a distance of 4 Crore Yojans from earth, and the Satya Loka is situated at a distance of 8 Crore Yojans from earth.

1 Yojan = a distance of 4, 8 and 16 miles according to different calculations. It is usually taken to be equivalent to 8 miles.

1 Lakh = one hundred thousand (1,00,000). 1 Crore = ten Lakhs (10 x 1,00,000).]

18. As Neela Devi (see verse no. 12), she reveals herself as the stupendous and powerful forces of cosmic energy manifested occasionally as the blue-tinged dazzling streak of lightening that criss-crosses across the sky¹.

This dynamic energy of creation is the spark that sustains life in all its forms. It is this energy that is surely hidden in a secret and imperceptible form in the countless herbs that give the latter their curative and healing powers (refer verse no. 13, 15) as well as in the body of all creatures in this world that enables their bodies to live and act normally and show all the signs of strength, stamina, vigour and vitality (refer verse no. 15)² (18).

[Note—¹This refers to the streak of 'lightening' that stabs across the sky during thunder-storms. It may also refer to the scintillating display of cosmic light called the 'Northern Lights' that are observed during the night in the north pole of the earth. The word 'Neel' means the colour blue, violet or indigo. Since the sky has this colour in various combinations, the word Neel refers to the cosmic form of Sita as a Devi or Goddess that personifies the dynamic powers, the astounding abilities and the stupendous strength of the 'electric' that is personified as the lightening in the sky. This 'electric' is a vivid and most potent form of the immense force and punch which Brahm possesses. It is dazzlingly blind; its splendour is indefinable and indescribable. Hence, the 'Neel Devi' has manifested her cosmic form as the lightening that streaks across the sky. Therefore, this lightening is nothing but a manifested form of the dynamic and almighty Shakti of Brahm.

²The hidden but magical power of the herbs to cure diseases, rejuvenate the body and inject vigour and stamina to the dilapidated creature is actually the dynamic power of Brahm to nourish and sustain creation on display. This dynamic power of Brahm is called Sita in this Upanishad.

It is the same dynamic and almighty power of Brahm with its stupendous strength and ability that injects life in the otherwise lifeless body of the creature. This power is known as the 'consciousness' that resides in the body as the creature's Atma. This Atma therefore has the same dazzle, the same splendour and the same life-sustaining properties as the electric and the herbs respectively.]

19. Sita has revealed herself as the primordial, the primary, the original and the fundamental dynamic force of creation (Nature) which is called the 'Aadya Shakti'.

This 'Aadya Shakti' sustains life in all spheres of creation, and literally supports life from below by acting as its base, foundation and prop.

Therefore, without this Aadya Shakti the edifice of creation would not have come into being in the first place, and would have collapsed and vanished without its support. The creation would not be in existence.

She therefore is the universal 'Aadya Shakti'—meaning the primordial, the primary and the fundamental energy, vitality, vigour, strength, power, authority and dynamism of creation that represents the universal and mystical life-creating and life-sustaining force and power of Brahm.

It is this magnificent ability and power of Shakti that keeps even a frog that remains submerged in water to remain alive mysteriously.

It is this Shakti that acts as the universal buoy and support of creation in the form of 'water'. [This refers to the fact that water is the quintessential life-supporting factor of creation. This is why water is called the 'Amrit' or nectar of life. No life is imaginable without water.]

It is this water (such as that of the ocean) that helps the land mass of earth to remain afloat inspite of its immense mass and density. [The earth is visualised here as floating on the water of the ocean. Had there been no ocean, the earth would have sunk to the nether world. This depiction of Shakti as the water of the ocean that keeps afloat the earth that harbours all forms of life as a metaphor for the stupendous ability of the powers of the Supreme Being to support the creation is a remarkable imagery of the sage who elucidated this Upanishad.] (19).

[Note—In this verse, the Aadya Shakti or the primordial force of Nature that formed the foundation of creation is shown as being ‘water’. This is a very scientific observation because modern science has also proved that water is the first requirement for life to be tenable anywhere in the universe. Scientists search for traces of water on distant planets as a sure sign of life even in its most primitive form.]

20. The supreme transcendental Lord’s ability to ‘do’ something, and to effectively carry out his mandates successfully to completion, is called the Lord’s ‘Kriya Shakti’. This power of Brahm is manifested in the divine form of Sita. In other words, Sita represents Brahm’s dynamic aspect that translates into action and deeds the wishes of Brahm. Sita represents the Lord’s stupendous ability to act and do anything that he wishes to do. In other words, what Brahm does is actually done by Sita.

When the Lord decided to initiate this creation, his latent dynamic powers, having astounding potentials to create, were first revealed in the form of Naad which was the primary sound that emerged from his mouth. It is from this Naad that Bindu¹ was produced, and from the latter was produced OM which is the ethereal sound that filled the entire cosmos with energetic vibrations. [This can be visualised in a simple manner. When Brahm decided to start creation, he opened his mouth, perhaps to yawn or to express his desire. He probably uttered the first vowel sound of ‘A’ as pronounced in the word *along*, which was prolonged into the long vowel sound of ‘Aa’ as in the word *after*. This is like a man yawning—he wakes up from sleep and yawns to signify the start of another day in life. So, the Supreme Being opened his mouth and produced the first sound to indicate a new beginning or the onset of a new dawn. Just like the first vowel sound of ‘A’ and its elongated partner ‘Aa’ are the basic sounds in the language which evolved gradually with more vowel sounds and consonants coming into being in due course, this instance is used as an analogy to describe what happened next in the process of creation. The first sound produced by the Lord indicated his desire to ‘do’ something—to create. This desire of the Lord expressed in the form of the first sound acted as the seed or the root around which the tree of creation grew. Just like a ripple spreads in waves on the calm surface of the water, this desire revealed its self as the sound grew, developed and spread to all the corners of the cosmic ether. It was like a muffled distant rumble of a train or the thunder of the cloud deep in its bowls that reverberates and echoes. Sound produces energy, and the cosmic sound produced energy of cosmic (i.e. huge, immense and measureless) proportions. This was the sound conceptualised as the word OM. Any sound has a source, a Bindu or point. It is from here that the sound waves radiate in all the directions. The medium for its spread was ether.]

Beyond this OM (i.e. beyond the creation that is filled with the vibrations of ether that produce sound; here meaning the lower heavens where the Gods and Goddesses reside) is the symbolic mountain called Vaikhanaś² which represents/symbolises Lord Ram. That mountain has many branches or peaks symbolically representing Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment)

and Karma (the philosophy of deeds), and many other such metaphysical concepts (20).

[Note—¹There is an Upanishad called 'Naad Bindu' belonging to the Rig Veda tradition which elaborately describes this concepts. It is chapter 3 of this humble author's anthology of the Upanishads of the Rig Veda publishes separately.

²The word *Vaikhanas* means a hermit or a sage who lives in the forest. Such people are deeply contemplative, self-restrained and meditative by nature; they are erudite, sagacious and enlightened as well as renunciate par-excellence. The word implies that the supreme Brahm from whom the whole creation has come forth remains totally aloof and dispassionate towards the creation that is represented by the Pranav or OM. Upanishads that deal with OM explain how OM symbolises the whole gamut of creation—its beginning, its development and its conclusion. The creation that has a 'beginning', that changes because it develops, and which 'ends' is not the eternal Brahm that has neither any beginning, that is ever constant, and that is imperishable and never comes to an end.

Therefore, wise and enlightened ascetics aim for this eternal and imperishable form of Brahm that is stable and unchanging. It is this aspect of Brahm that is regarded as the Absolute Truth of creation, and not that aspect that has a beginning, that changes and that ends.

The reference to the higher heaven is a symbolic way of saying that the Vaikhanas or ascetic lives in a higher sublime state of spiritual existence that is much above the gross and mundane aspect of the mortal world.

This creation is a product of Maya of Brahm—that is, it is the delusion that Brahm has created. The Vaikhanas remains free from such delusions as he has become self and Brahm realised. This state of enlightened existence is a personified form of Gyan; it is attainable only as a result of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment.

In the context of the present verse Lord Ram is cited as the Vaikhanas to stress the point that the person known as Ram who ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya as a king, who married Sita, and who fought the war of Lanka to liberate his wife Sita from the clutches of the demon king Ravana is not the 'Ram' whom the Upanishads are talking about, or the 'Ram' who is Brahm personified. The 'Ram' as a king around whom the story of Ramayana is built is the grosser aspect of the sublime Reality known as Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The 'Ram' that is lauded by the Upanishads and whose name is regarded universally as the 'Tarak Mantra' or the divine formula that can provide the creature with liberation and deliverance from the snare of this deluding material world is a different Ram. He is the supreme Vaikhanas—the Lord who is most enlightened and self-realised, who lives in this world with a sense of heightened renunciation, detachment and dispassion, and who is extremely wise and enlightened as well as self-realised. This Ram is no ordinary king, but Brahm personified.

Therefore, Sita, who was his consort, also was no ordinary queen. She was the Shakti of the Supreme Being personified in her form. It is very important to understand the difference between the gross forms of both Ram and Sita vis-à-vis their sublime and divine forms as Brahm and Shakti respectively.

The allegory of the Vaikhanas Mountain to represent Ram has great symbolism. The 'mountain' has high peaks which represent high level of spiritual energy, enlightened consciousness, and high intensity of auspicious virtues. The 'peak' is a metaphor for the state of existence when knowledge, wisdom, erudition and self-realisation has 'peaked' or touched the highest level possible. The peak of a mountain is like the apex of a triangle representing the triad of creation. At one point of the base of the symbolic triangle is the creature, at the other point is the Maya represented by Sita, and at the apex of the triangle is Brahm.

The Vaikhanas mountain known as 'Ram' is also like the triangle—an imagery to show that Lord Ram encompasses the entire gamut of creation. He is Jiva or the living being, he is Maya, and he is Brahm. There is nothing surprising in this conclusion or absurdity in its imagery—because everything in this creation is a revelation of Brahm. The Jiva is the gross worldly form of the pure cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm; the Maya is the dynamism of Brahm revealed as Sita, and the pure cosmic Consciousness itself is known as Ram.]

21. [Verse nos. 21-33 deal with the 'Gyan' aspect of Brahm.]

On that mountain top (i.e. on the summit of the mountain known as Vaikhanas) is the primary body of knowledge that is holistic and all inclusive in nature. It has taken three forms —Rig, Sam and Yajur Vedas (21).

[Note—This verse implies that only such persons who have reached the highest level of realisation can have access to Gyan or knowledge and wisdom that is represented by the Vedas.]

22. Depending upon the function and usage, that same unitary body of universal knowledge has been divided into four segments, called the Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva respectively (22).

23. All the Vedas are based on 'Yagya' (fire sacrifices), but depending upon their basic structure, they are classified into three—Rig, Sam and Yajur. The fourth, called the Atharva Veda, is basically an extract or essence or juice of all these other three Vedas (23).

[Note—The fundamental truth is always one; there is no duality in it. Knowledge is one composite mass; any classification or division of that one whole body of knowledge is artificial and man-made, but it is done only to facilitate learning, understanding, analysis and usage.

For example 'science' is one whole body of knowledge that describes the regulatory forces of Nature, but it has been divided and classified into umpteen number of branches—viz. zoology, geology, botany, astronomy, astrology, chemistry, physics, geography etc. Each of these branches have been further sub-divided into sub-branches—e.g. in chemistry we have organic, inorganic, physical etc.

Likewise, the vast repository of metaphysical knowledge enshrined in the Vedas was segregated into four distinct volumes by ancient sages to facilitate their learning and usage. Briefly, those hymns which were used as invocational prayers offered to Gods representing the different forces of Nature were collected and collected under the name of the Rig Veda. Those that were in prose form and used during fire sacrifices were culled and collected under the Yajur Veda. Those hymns that needed to be sung melodiously during fire sacrifices were grouped under the Sam Veda. Later on sage Veda Vyas extracted certain hymns from each of these Vedas and grouped them under the Atharva Veda; these were used for other religious rituals as well besides the fire sacrifices, and provided spiritual solace to the people of the world by shunning complicated discourses of the Sam and Yajur Vedas as well as the proliferation of countless Gods of the Rig Veda.]

24-25 Depending upon the type of incantation, the hymns have been further divided into a number of branches—the Rig Veda has twenty one branches [24], the Yajur Veda has one hundred and nine branches, the Sam Veda has one thousands branches, and the Atharva Veda has five branches [25] (24-25).

26. In the Vedas, the philosophy or school of thought that pertains to the Vaikhanas¹ (i.e. that spiritual and metaphysical philosophy that focuses on renunciation of and detachment from Maya-created delusory and artificial world, and instead focus on the supreme Reality that is hidden behind the illusionary façade of ‘false reality’; here Lord Ram is treated as the universal supreme Vaikhanas—see verse no. 20) has been given the first place, and hence erudite and wise sages and seers concentrate their attention and focus their mind on it. It is called the supreme knowledge that is undisputable, irrefutable and beyond doubt as it enlightens an aspirant about the ultimate Absolute Truth of creation. This knowledge comes with intense research and concentration of the mind-intellect complex and its ancillary unit known as the sub-conscious or Chitta.

The power of the mind-intellect and the sub-conscious that enabled the ancient sages and seers who had renounced all aspects of the delusory world and focused their attention on the sublime knowledge pertaining to the cosmic Truth (known as Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness) that is obtained by such intense focusing of the mind and the sub-conscious is known as the ‘Chitta Shakti’. Like any other achievements in this world, this knowledge of the ‘supreme’ was known as ‘enlightenment’, and it was powered by the Chitta Shakti² (26).

[Note—¹*Vaikhanas*—The knowledge that fills the spiritual aspirant with total renunciation of this material world and its deluding charms by teaching him about the falsehood of this artificial world, about his own true self being the pure consciousness that is wise, enlightened, eternal and blissful, and about the supreme Consciousness that is the cause of this creation, along with the true meaning of liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation, is called Vaikhanas knowledge. It is the main thrust of the Vedas to enlighten the creature about the Truth, and this intention of these holy texts is carried out by the Upanishads which are an inseparable part of the Vedas and enshrine their pristine philosophy.

²*Chitta Shakti*—The word *Chitta* refers to the faculty of reasoning and thought of the mind-intellect complex; the ability to pay attention and fix concentration upon a chosen subject which leads to understanding and a sharp memory; the conscious intellect as well as the sub-conscious mind; the powers of discrimination, understanding, paying attention, memorizing, and the ability to recollect and store information that are characteristics of the conscious powers exhibited by the mind and intellect apparatus; the sub-conscious and memory, along with its power to remember anything as depicted when the man involuntarily reacts to any given situation depending upon his memory-bank; the ability to concentrate and focus the mind on anything. (The concept has been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 7, section 5; Sanayso-panishad, canto 2, verse no.42-46).

The word *Shakti* means power and authority, potentials and energy that any entity possesses. Therefore, the combined stupendous powers exhibited by ‘Chitta’ are called Chitta Shakti.

Chitta is an integral *component of the Antahakaran* or the ‘inner self’ of a living being. This has been described in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shaarirako Upanishad of, verse no. 4; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 101-102; (b) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, Canto 2, verse no. 3; Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6; Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 14.]

27-28 The ancient sages have said that the Vedas have six limbs or branches. They are the following—Kalpa (a sacred performance; Vedic rituals), Vyakaran (grammar), Shiksha (education; the fundamental tents and knowledge that the Vedas expound), Nirukta (unspoken knowledge, or implied knowledge contained in the Vedic cannons; exposition of the Vedas; etymological explanation of a word or hymn) Jyotish

(astrology; astronomy, mathematical calculations), and Chanda (style of poetic composition) [27].

They have three supplementary body of knowledge that are complementary to the main text—viz. Ayan (Vedanta; Upanishad), Mimansa (thorough discussion and debate to investigate a particular point of Hindu philosophy), and Nyaya (Vedic law and jurisprudence). Those who are steady and diligent in Dharma (righteousness, ethics and proper way of conduct and thought) regard the study of the Vedas incomplete if it does not include the study of all their branches or limbs and supplementary body of knowledge alongside them [28] (27-28).

29-31 Ancient wise sages and seers had, from time to time, elucidated upon the Vedic tenets and philosophy by composing their own essays and commentaries on them, called 'Nibandh', which were basically detailed exposition explaining the particular aspect of the Veda so that the people can easily understand them and mould their personal lives according to their teaching. Consequentially, the life and behaviour of the society at large became sanctified, auspicious and righteous in a wholesome form when it conformed to the high standards of ethical and righteous behaviour and thought as envisioned in the Vedas.

These wise, erudite and enlightened sages and seers, have, from time to time, and depending upon circumstances and needs of the society, added pristine philosophy and their own views and commentaries to further enrich the scriptures, called the various 'Dharma Shastras', which had come down to them from the hoary past. [The word 'Dharma Shastra' itself means those scriptures that establish Dharma.]

These sages and seers produced or composed the five 'Up-Vedas', or the subsidiary Vedas—viz. Itihas and Purans (mythological histories of the ancients) [29], Vastu Veda (the science of building and construction; architecture and its relevant subjects), Dhanur Veda (archery and the science of warfare), Gandharva Veda (the science of music, singing and dancing as well as the skills needed for theatrical performance), and Ayurveda (the science of medicinal herbs) [30].

Besides these, they created the treatises on subjects such as Danda and Niti (law of punishment according to sin or crime, and the law governing morality and ethics), Varta (the art of conversation, negotiation and debate), Vidya (general knowledge and skills), and the science and art of controlling the Vayu or the vital winds (i.e. Yoga which is the science of controlling the vital winds in the body by means of meditative exercise that helps one to establish oneself in the supreme state of existence, or attain a high pedestal of existence that is much above the humdrum life of the world).

These twenty-one branches or limbs of knowledge are deemed to be self-illuminating in nature; they enrich and enlighten the life of a living being in this world [31] (29-31).

32. In some hoary, ancient past, Lord Vishnu's sweet words revealed themselves as the three Vedas in the heart of one sage named Vaikhanas¹ (32).

[Note—¹Earlier, in verse no. 20 it has been said that Lord Ram is the supreme Vaikhanas or the greatest soul who has the highest virtues of renunciation and detachment from this material world. He remains totally disassociated from this world inspite of having lived as a great ruler of the kingdom of Ayodhya and the slayer of the demon Ravana, and around whom the legendary epic Ramayan has been woven. In fact, Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being who is also known as the Viraat Purush because of his macrocosmic all-pervading and all-

encompassing existence. Vishnu had to come down on earth in order to eliminate evil forces represented by the demons, and to restore law and order as envisioned in the scriptures and to uphold their sanctity.

Now in the present verse a Vaikhanas is mentioned in whose heart the Vedas emerged. It is well established that the Vedas were created by Brahma, the cosmic creator. This Brahma emerged, sitting atop a lotus, from the navel of the Viraat Purush in his manifestation as Vishnu while the latter reclined on the bedstead made of the cosmic serpent known as Sheshnath. Brahma is one of the Gods of the Trinity, the others being Vishnu and Shiva. So, the Vaikhanas referred to here is most probably Brahma, the creator. When anyone speaks of something as thoughtful and having such an immense philosophical dimension as the Vedas, it is his heart that gets directly involved. Anything spoken from the deep recesses of the heart has firmness of conviction and faith. Speaking from the heart is a metaphor for sincerity, honesty, commitment and faith in what is being said. So, what the Vedas say is the truth which Vishnu wished to reveal.

Again, it might be that there was some ancient sage with the name of Vaikhanas. If this is the case then most probably he was sage Kapil. This is because the next verse no. 33 says that this sage named Vaikhanas revealed this great body of knowledge with which he was enlightened by the grace of Lord Vishnu in the form of Sankhya Shastra.]

33. These divine nectar-like words that sprouted in the heart of sage Vaikhanas by the inspiration of Lord Vishnu contained the primary body of knowledge which this sage revealed in the form of Sankhya Shastra (which is one of the six branches of Hindu philosophy)¹.

Listen about it from me (i.e. from Prajapati Brahma who is narrating this Upanishad to the Gods; refer verse no. 1-2).

The power and authority to perform some deed or take any action, the energy and the ability to do this and that, the stamina and strength to act—this dynamic aspect of the supreme Brahm is the latter's 'Shakti'. It is called 'Kriya Shakti' of the supreme Lord because it helps him in carrying out his mandate, in doing something such as the creation of this world and its subsequent regulation. This Kriya Shakti helps the Lord to act independently on his own. It is the stupendous and majestic and dynamic power of the eternal, truthful, supreme, transcendental enigmatic Brahma [In other words, Shakti is literally the Lord's stupendous cosmic energy, authority and power that enable Brahm to do what he wishes to do, to give effect to his wishes, to bring to fruition his desires. Brahm is neutral in his own right, but he utilises the services of his dynamic Shakti to give effect to his wishes. It was this cosmic Shakti that has helped Brahm to create, to sustain and to conclude this creation from time to time.

So the dynamic energy of Brahm revealed in the form of his Shakti is known as Sita according to this Upanishad. It is Sita who carries out the divine wishes of Brahm. When the latter decided to reveal himself as the Viraat Purush, the Shakti of Brahm known as the Sita principle became Prakriti or Mother Nature. When this Viraat Purush was named Vishnu, the same Sita principle became Laxmi. And when Vishnu incarnated as Lord Ram, the same Sita principle manifested itself as Sita, the consort of Ram. In fact, Brahm and his Shakti cannot be separated from one another just like it is not possible to separate fire from firewood, or water from an ocean. While Brahm represents the primary Authority of creation that acts neutrally and remains passive in order to maintain its objectivity and neutrality, Sita is the dynamic principle of the same Authority that is active and energetic in nature. After all, Brahm is the supreme Lord of creation, and if he has to exercise control and maintain

discipline in his creation he must have corresponding power and strength to do so. The latter is Shakti in the form of Sita.] (33).

[Note—¹*Sankhya Shastra*—References—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Varaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 55, and Canto 4, verse no. 35; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 5-6. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahmin 5, verse no. 14; Mantriko-panishad, verse no. 14.

This is one of the six great schools of Indian philosophy. It was first propounded by sage Kapil as 'Sankhya Sutras'. [Refer Bhagwata 3/25-33, and Canto 5-6 of Shwetashwatar Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

Sage Kapil was the celebrated sage who is regarded as the fifth incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Bhagavata, 1/3; 3/24). He is compared to Lord Krishna in Bhagavata (10/26). He was the brother-in-law of sage Vashistha, being the brother of his wife Arundhati, and the only son of sage Kardama and his wife Devahuti. He taught even his mother spiritual wisdom in Bhagavata, and hence this part of this scripture is called 'Kapil Gita' in which the sage has expounded upon the philosophies of Sankhya Shastra, Ashtanga Yoga (the eight-fold path of Yoga) and Bhakti-yoga (the path of devotion for and submission to the Lord) (3/25-33).

Sage Kapil is however renowned for one of the six schools of Indian philosophies known as Sankhya Shastra.

The word *Shastra* means any body of knowledge which has been deeply researched and then systematically codified and made useful in a meaningful way.

The word *Sankhya*, according to some scholars, refers to the 'number' or 'numeral' that it refers to, because it says that there are twenty five elements or 'Tattwas' in creation. However, there are some others who assert that it refers to 'Gyan' or acquisition of truthful knowledge of the reality behind the façade of illusions. It stresses on Gyan or truthful knowledge as the only path leading to liberation and deliverance of the soul from this world, and its attaining final emancipation and salvation riding on the boat of knowledge.

Therefore, the combined word *Sankhya Shastra* refers to the philosophy that endeavours to unravel the great secrets of creation based on sound knowledge and rational logic. It has six chapters and contains five hundred twenty six Sutras or keys or codes that unlock the profound treasure of knowledge pertaining to who the creature actually is, how has he come to be what he is at present, and how he can be freed from this vicious cycle of birth and death. Only when one understands the beginning can he understand the end, because this so-called 'beginning' has its origin in the previous 'end'. That is, only after something ends and carries forward certain baggage with it does a new beginning can start. After all, this is based on the fundamental tenet of Nature that 'nothing can start from nothing; there must be something from which anything starts'. That is why we say that there cannot be smoke without a fire.

Now, if one goes back to the 'very beginning of creation' when there wasn't any prior life from which any new life could be born on the principles of 'deeds and their consequences', i.e. the theory that when a creature does any deed in this life then he would have to take a new birth to suffer the consequences of these deeds because they cannot be wished away, the question arises 'what started this creation then?' The Sankhya Shastra endeavours to answer precisely this question in a very logical and systematic manner.

This secret was revealed, according to the of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition's Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/2, to sage and seer Kapil who was the first person to whom the esoteric secrets of creation were unraveled by the Supreme Being (Brahm) himself. In fact, the whole of Cantos 5 and 6 of this Upanishad are dedicated to this philosophy of Sankhya Shastra.

It was propagated by Kapil's disciple Aasuri and then by the latter's disciple Pankashika.

This philosophy accepts only three basic yardsticks or valid sources of knowledge—viz. ‘Pratakshya’ or direct perception or cognition of anything such as directly seeing a thing for one’s self, ‘Anumaan’ or implied knowledge or deduction of anything entails inference of something based on some other first hand knowledge, and ‘Shabda’ or the word affirming this knowledge which is like a testimony of some witness or any dependable source.

So this philosophy adopts the approach of reaching the unknown from what is known. It has reduced all that can be experienced in this world to two fundamental units of creation—the Purush (the Supreme Being; Brahm; cosmic Self) and Prakriti (Nature; the invisible matrix of all forms of natures and temperaments that characterize this creation). The basic argument of this philosophy is that ‘nothing can be produced from nothing’. In other words, if the creation has come into being, then there must be something that pre-dates this present creation. If this creation is the effect of some past deed, then obviously there must have some occasion when certain deed was done which resulted in the present. It states that ‘Karya (the result) pre-existed (had a truthful existence) in the Kaaran (the cause of the result)’. Suppose we have an earthen lamp. This lamp, made of clay or mud, was inherently present in the un-moulded lump of clay or mud before it was shaped. Had it not been so, the clay or mud could not have been moulded into the shape of the lamp.

When this argument is applied to the experience of the world, one observes that there are three basic qualities exhibited by all things—one that gives pleasure and happiness, the other which is just the opposite, and the third which does not effect us at all, i.e. we remain neutral to it. Sankhya philosophy states that there are three ‘Gunas’ or basic virtues and qualities in creation which determine these three responses as well as the characters of things which evince these responses. These three Gunas are Sata which produce positive responses of happiness and bliss, Raja which create negative response of pain and sufferings, and Tama which generates neither.

In more physical terms, Sata Guna means pure and holy, and it is conducive to knowledge marked by these characteristics. The Raja Guna produces desires and ambitions which create restlessness in their wake. Tama Guna is meanest of them all, for it creates a tendency for resistance and inactivity. A man having the Tama Guna in excess would not do anything himself and neither would he allow others to do their duties.

It should be noted here that there is a situation when all these three Gunas can theatrically exist in perfect balance—this situation is the ideal situation and is synonymous with Prakriti at the cosmic level. This Prakriti, therefore, becomes perfectly ‘neutral’ and self centered; it is the perfect example of grossness because it remains in a state of perpetual coma or paralysis because of this balance. It is when this perfect balance is disturbed that it starts stretching and yawning like a man waking up from a deep slumber.

An example would illustrate. An electrolyte works when there is a difference of potential between the two electrodes—i.e. the cathode and the anode. A neutral solution having the same electrodes dipped in it would not perform the function of electrolysis.

On the other hand, the Purush is the cosmic Consciousness or the Atma or cosmic Soul.

The *evolution of the creation* starts when a union is established between this Purush and Prakriti. There arises a question here. Purush is neutral and absolutely unattached to anything, while Prakriti is gross and lifeless. How is their cooperation possible? Well this is illustrated by the example of physically handicapped intelligent man who has lost the leg and cannot walk and a blind man who cannot see but can walk. The blind can carry the lame on his back, and under the latter’s guidance, can reach the destination.

The process of evolution of creation from this primary Nature or Prakriti is as follows—As the result of the three Gunas mixing with themselves, the first offspring was ‘Mahat’ or Buddhi (the cosmic intellect).

From the Raja Guna part of this Buddhi emerged Ahankar (cosmic pride and vanity, ego and the notion of individualism and selfish arrogance).

From the Sata Guna part of this Buddhi emerged Mana (the cosmic mind), the five organs of perceptions (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin), the five organs of actions (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genital).

From the Tama Guna part of Buddhi emerged the five Tanmatras (the five perceptions of sight, hearing, smell, taste and feeling) and from these further developed the five Bhuts or elements (such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth).

Thus, there would be twenty three such elements + Prakriti + Purush = *twenty five components of creation* in all.

There is another way at looking at this philosophy. It describes the origin of the cosmos from Brahm who created the macrocosmic first Male called Purush and his female counterpart, the Prakriti (Mother Nature), who are the basic cause of this vast and myriad creation. The individual male and female human beings are the microcosmic forms of that macrocosmic Purush and Prakriti. It is their union which resulted in this cosmos. Their offspring were—Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, mind), Ahankar (pride, ego), the mind-heart complex called the ‘Mana’, the five perceptions (of smell, hearing, touch, taste and sight) forming the subtle body of the creature, the five elements (space, wind, fire, water, earth), the ten sense organs (five organs of perception—ear, nose, tongue, eye and skin, and five organs of action—hand, leg, mouth, anus and genitals), which together formed the gross body of the creature, the invisible Atma (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (nature of the individual creature). These are the twenty five basic constituents of creation.

So, according to Sankhya Shastra, there are *twenty-five fundamental Elements or Tattwas* as follows—Purush (the primal cosmic Male; the Viraat Purush), Prakriti (primal Nature), Mahtattva (the powerful Buddhi or intellect), Ahankar (ego, pride), the five organs of perception (i.e. the eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin), the five organs of action (i.e. the hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genitals), the Mana (mind), the five perceptions (such as the spoken word or speech, sight, smell, touch and taste), the five Bhuts (i.e. the five primary elements, the earth, water, fire, air and space or sky) = 25.

It further postulates that Brahm created Nature (cosmos) because it allowed itself to be covered or mired by the three Gunas—‘Sata’ meaning righteousness and virtuousness which are the best and noblest of qualities, ‘Raja’ meaning worldly passions and desires which are the medium or mediocre qualities leading to worldly desires, and ‘Tama’ meaning evils, sins and other mean mentalities leading to perversions and vices. The Purush, though he remains aloof, still gets shackled or attached to Prakriti, the creation, because of these three Gunas which act as ropes or strings that tie him down. This fact has been very stated in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/10-12 and 6/10.

Breaking one’s habits is tantamount to liberation and deliverance from this bondage, and it is called Mukti. The three Gunas are the causes of the myriad temperaments, natures, thought patterns and behaviours of all the creatures, because they have all these three qualities or virtues in them, though they vary in ratio or proportion. These three Gunas are also present in Mother Nature, giving rise to a populace which is so varied and diametrically opposite to each other, even virtually getting at each other’s throat, because of the infinite possibilities created by their mixing in different proportions to mould the innate nature, inclinations and temperaments of a creature.

This school of philosophy says that there are five elementary ‘Bhuts’ in this creation—they are the earth, water, fire, wind and space which, in different permutations and combinations, form all the creatures who have a gross body. A

creature, it says, has eleven organs— five organs of perception (ears, nose, eyes, tongue and skin), five organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, anus and genitals) and one organ called the Mana (mind and heart).

According to Mahopanishad, 1/4 – 69 of Sam Veda tradition, these twenty-five elements or Tattwas are the following—five organs of perception (ear, nose, tongue, eye, skin) + five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, genitals, excretory) + one Mana (mind) + one Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) + one Pran (the vital life-giving breath; the essential vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life) + one Atma (soul) + one Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, discrimination) + five Perceptions (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch) + five Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air, space) = twenty-five elements.

A relevant philosophy is that of the *Sankhya Yoga*. This philosophy is a combination of Sankhya philosophy and Yoga philosophy. In Shwetashwatar Upanishad 6/13 it is stated that the Supreme Being can be known by the means of 'Sankhya Yoga', i.e. by an intelligent fusion of 'Sankhya' and 'Yoga'.

The second chapter of Bhagvata Gita is also called Sankhya Yoga. Now, let us analyse this word. It has two parts—viz. 'Sankhya' meaning learning and knowledge, and 'Yoga' meaning a union, a conjunction, a fusion. Elsewhere, e.g. 5/5, this word has been used to signify 'Gyan' and 'Karma' or a conjunction of knowledge and the philosophy of doing deed. The 'Praanaagni-hotra Upanishad', 1, uses this word to mean 'intense thinking, deep contemplation or deep insight'. It is also, therefore, synonymous with 'Gyan Yoga' or the great concentration and diligent divergence of all energies of the creature to acquire truthful knowledge of the Truth and Reality behind what is apparent but not the whole truth, and what is not apparent at all.

These two paths are not separate, independent and distinct from one another. They are like the two legs by which one walks. The word Yoga also means to bring about a union between two entities, to create a synergy between the mundane and the spiritual. Here it refers to the union between the Atma and the Brahm, or the coordination of various elements of the creature's body so that congenial atmosphere conducive to spiritual upliftment and enlightenment is created for the realisation of the true nature of the 'self', which would mean realisation of the presence of Brahm inside the very own self of the seeker. To bring this about, deep concentration of mind is needed along with the focusing of all the energies of the body in one single pursuit; this is meditation and contemplation.

The word *Sankhya Yoga* therefore means a combination of both the eclectic values of Sankhya philosophy and that of Yoga. Hence, that which brings about a fusion or union between the known and the unknown, that which establishes a coordination between the creature's individual world and the cosmic world of the pure consciousness, that which brings the Atma, the pure 'self' of the creature close to the supreme 'Self' of the cosmos, that which links and ultimately brings about a merger of the single unit with its parent body, and that which helps in the creature's final liberation from the vicious cycle of birth and death, is called Sankhya Yoga.

Now the question arise how is this brought about? The answer is in the following the manifold path of Yoga besides acquisition of knowledge as expounded and espoused in the Upanishads. Yoga has basically two connotations—viz. (1) meditation and contemplation which aim in harnessing all the energy and potentials at the disposal of the creature and diverting them and concentrating them on one single goal chosen by the practitioner of Yoga; and (b) following other methods of achieving this aim as laid down in the scriptures dealing with Yoga.

There are *four paths of Yoga*—(i) Gyan Yoga, (ii) Bhakti Yoga, (iii) Karma Yoga and (iv) Raj Yoga.

(i) Gyan Yoga involves the intellect and mind to determine and delineate the true and the false; it helps to access and understand the reality and falsehood behind the manifested visible world which appears to be 'real' but is actually like a 'shadow of the truth'. This Gyan Yoga helps to establish the mind firmly into seeing unity in

diversity. Those following Gyan Yoga are called 'seers' because they can 'see' beyond the visible, multifarious and bewildering variety of this false world. Gyan Yoga is in the realm of the intellect and discriminating mind of a creature.

(ii) Bhakti Yoga refers to having devotion for a chosen Godhead who is a person's ideal, on whom he showers all his adoration, and on whom he focuses his attention. He is emotionally and sentimentally involved with his deity. Hence, the heart is the realm of Bhakti Yoga; it helps to commune with the divine.

(iii) Karma Yoga expounds on the importance of doing deeds and taking actions, but with a different attitude. It stresses that we must not get 'involved or attached' to those deeds or action in as much as we shouldn't be bothered about the rewards or punishments incumbent on such deeds or actions. We must do them dispassionately and with detachment. The action or deed should be treated as one's offering to the God as well as an offering to the sacred fire sacrifice. This will ensure that the actions or deeds are not unrighteousness, corrupt or evil. On the contrary, whatever is done in which a person's subtle sub-conscious says is not the correct thing to do will be deemed to be unrighteous, unethical and unlawful, and therefore cannot be an offering to either the God or the sacred fire sacrifice.

(iv) Raj Yoga is the psycho-spiritual practice of exercise and breath control; it involves the various steps involved in meditation and contemplation, as is generally understood by the term Yoga. This Yoga lays emphasis on physical training of the body and the mind, and is the subject matter of numerous Upanishads dealing with such exercises (e.g. Yog Chudamani of Sam Veda). It deals with such subjects as Pranayam, purification and activation of Naadis, kindling of Chakras (subtle energy centers in the body) etc.

These four types of Yogas are not mutually exclusive; they coalesce and overlap with each other and their main aim is to help the aspirant seeker in his pursuit of 'self-realisation'.

There is another platform of Yoga as propounded by the greatest exponent of this philosophy, i.e. sage Patanjali. According to him, *Yoga consists of eight-fold path*. These are briefly the following—(1) 'Yam' or self restraint; (2) 'Niyam' or observance of certain sacrosanct rules; (3) 'Asana' or postures for meditation; (4) 'Pranayam' or breath control exercises for purification of the body and mind; (5) 'Pratyahar' or withdrawal of the mind and its control; (6) 'Dharana' or having a firm conviction, faith and belief on the sanctity and truthfulness of the chosen path; (7) 'Dhyana' or contemplation and concentration of the faculties of the mind and intellect; and (8) 'Samadhi' or a perpetual trance-like state in which the aspirant loses all awareness of the external world and even himself, and remains perpetually in meditation. These eight-fold path of Yoga have been listed in Varaha Upanishad, canto 5, verse no. 11—11 ½ of the Krishana Yajur Veda tradition.

The Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes these terms in detail in its Brahman (canto) 1, section 1, verse nos. 3-10.]

34. That supreme primordial dynamic power and energy of the Lord transformed itself into the 'Shakti' (the cosmic Goddess; the primary powers and forces of Nature which manifested themselves as a cosmic Goddess). As soon as the Lord decides to do anything, this Shakti does that for him immediately. It is this Shakti that has revealed itself in the form of this visible world.

[Now the virtues of this personification of the Lord's stupendous and magnificent cosmic powers, known as Shakti, are enumerated in the following verses —] She is an embodiment of grace, benevolence and kindness; of discipline and order, of peace, serenity and tranquillity, of splendour, glory and radiance at their best.

She is the primary cause of all that is visible as well as that which is not visible. She is also the primary cause of everything, whether that cause is evident or hidden.

She is the symbolic 'foot' or pedestal which supports the body representing the entire creation. Or, she represents the base upon which the entire edifice of creation rests.

She is present in all the forms in which this creation exists—incorporating in her form all the myriad faces, colours, classes and segments of society, whether the latter is treated as being classified into different segments or regarded as one composite whole.

This Shakti of the supreme Lord of creation is a constant companion of the latter. Shakti is inseparable from and an integral part of Brahm. She is a personification of the Lord's wishes and the dynamic ability of the Lord to fulfil his wishes. She therefore always obeys the Lord and follows him diligently. She is always eager and vigilant to immediately carry out the orders of the Lord. [Whereas at the cosmic level of creation this term 'supreme Lord' refers to Brahm, at the more local level of creation with relevance to the present world of mortal living beings the term would mean 'Lord Ram' who was an incarnation of Brahm on earth. Therefore, Shakti at the level of Brahm would mean Maya Shakti or Prakriti, and with reference to Ram it would mean Sita, the Lord's divine consort who was the daughter of king Janak—refer verse no. 6.]

Sita representing the Shakti principle of Brahm is as eternal and imperishable as the latter (simply because Shakti and Brahm are inseparable from one another).

While representing the Lord and being an inseparable part of the latter, she is still under the overall command of and subservient to the Lord who is the principal Authority of creation. She cannot and does not supersede the Lord on any count. She depends upon the Lord for her existence.

She assumes those forms that can be described or talked about, as well as those that cannot be so done.

She is present in the immediate point of time, as well as in the remotest point of time, both of the past and of the future.

She is cause and the controller of creation, its sustenance as well as its annihilation.

She showers her magnanimous blessing and gracious benevolence upon the entire creation.

She has all the abilities that enable her to accomplish everything successfully in this creation.

That is why she is lauded and extolled by the scriptures universally as the dynamic, all-powerful, almighty, majestic, magnificent, indescribable and most enigmatic aspect of Nature that is called 'Shakti'¹ (34).

[Note :- ¹Shakti— The concept of Shakti has to be understood in a holistic manner.

It has many connotations. In fact, this entire Upanishad is dedicated to the theme of Shakti of Brahm, albeit in the disguise of Sita. Please refer to note of verse no. 2 of this Upanishad.]

35. She (Sita) is a personification of the supreme Brahm's 'Ichha Shakti'¹ (the powers to accomplish something and fulfil desires).

In the form of 'Yogmaya'² (which is the powerful force of Brahm responsible for both the creation as well as the conclusion of creation, and for bringing about a union between the world which appeared to get separated from Brahm in due course of

time) she rests in a meditative posture symbolised by the mark of the Srivatsa³ present on the right chest of the Lord (here referring to Lord Vishnu because the Srivatsa is marked on his chest) at the time of conclusion of this creation (35).

[Note :- ¹The term 'Ichha Shakti' has been explained as a note of verse no. 11. Refer also to verse nos. 12, 36.

²The word *Yogmaya* has been explained as a note of verse no. 3. Refer also to verse no. 5.

³*Srivatsa*—this is the mark of the foot of sage Bhrigu which he had cast on the chest of Vishnu once when he got annoyed with the Lord. The Lord is so kind and gracious towards his devotees that instead of taking umbrage at this disrespect shown by the sage and punishing him for his misdemeanour, Lord Vishnu had blessed the sage that his footprint would always remain on his chest as one of the jewels worn by the Lord.

Lord Vishnu is the Viraat Purush or the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm from whom the rest of the creation evolved. At the time of conclusion of creation, Vishnu rests on a bedstead made by the coiled body of the celestial serpent called Sheshnath that floats on the surface of Kshirsagar. This reclining posture of the Lord is called Yog-Nidra, literally meaning deep sleep of meditation. Here the Lord closes his eyes and remains contemplative, meditating upon his own self.]

36. She (Sita) personifies the powers to enjoy or suffer that are inherently present in all the creatures of this creation. That is, the consciousness that gives the ability to the creature to enjoy anything in this world, or that makes him feel the pain of suffering, is known as the Sita principle.

Sita is a personification of the dynamic power of creation that enables all the creatures to fulfil their desires and successfully accomplish their goals in life. It therefore represents the virtue of fulfilment of all desires and accomplishment of goals. In other words, she is the eternal power that enables all the creatures to accomplish their desires and reach their goals in life successfully. In this aspect, she is said to personify those entities that are usually regarded as metaphors for successful fulfilment of all desires, such as the evergreen wish-fulfilling tree of Gods called the 'Kalpa Vriksha'¹, the celestial cow called the 'Kaamdhenu cow', the magical gem that removes all worries called the 'Chintaamani gem', the conch, the divine lotus and the mystical 'nine Nidhis' or the nine types of wealth².

Those devotees of the Lord who worship him reverentially daily according to the prescribed traditional way involving Yagya (fire sacrifice), Yam (exercise of self-restraint of passion and desires), Niyam (following of various auspicious rules of conduct and thought), Aasans (sitting postures adopted during worship and meditation or Yoga), Pranayam (breath control exercises done during meditation or Yoga), Pratyahar (restraining of the sense organs) Dhaarna (having conviction, belief and faith), Dhyana (contemplation, meditation, concentration or fixing of attention, deep thought and pondering), Samadhi (a trance-like state of bliss obtained during meditation when the consciousness exists in its 4th state of existence known as Turiya) etc.—all the expressed or unexpressed, articulated or implied, the overt or the covert desires and wishes of such devotees are fulfilled by the divine Goddess. [This is because when the Lord is pleased by the devotion and worship of the devotee, he uses the service of his divine Shakti to reward them.]

It is Sita that is present in the form of all objects used in offering of worship to the Lord—such as flowers, scent, sweets etc., in the form of offering of worship to dead ancestors, in the form of auspicious deeds such as pilgrimage and bathing at the holy

sites at pilgrim centres, and in the form of food and liquid that sustains the life of a living creature.

Verily, in all the myriad and diverse forms, mentioned as well as unmentioned—it is Sita that pervades uniformly everywhere, in all frames of time, and in all units of creation (36).

[Note—¹The Kalpa Tree—This has been described in note of verse no. 13.

²The *nine Nidhis*—These are the special assets that a living being possesses. These nine Nidhis may be spiritual or worldly; they may be tangible or intangible. In brief they are the following:-

Spiritual assets—according to saint Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha 35-36, they are—(i) communion with saints and pious people where the Lord's glories are being sung, (ii) serving one's teacher and elders, (iii) praising the Lord's glories and doing Kirtan and Bhajan which are community singing of the Lord's glories, (iv) repeating the divine Mantras or holy words of the Lord, i.e. doing Japa, (v) having such virtues as 'Dam' or tolerance, patience, fortitude and resilience, 'Sheel' or good and righteous demeanors, 'Virati' or being renunciate and detached from deeds and to be dispassionate towards the world, 'Sam' or equanimity, looking everything as Brahm, having a non-dual approach of or view of the world, 'Santosh' or contentedness, and 'Sara' or simplicity and humility, (vi) having no deceit, conceit and falsehoods, (vii) not finding faults with others and criticising them unnecessarily, (viii) to have firm reliance and faith in the Lord, and (ix) not to feel dejected, depressed, despaired, inferior, lowly and condemned under any adverse circumstances, because the great and merciful Lord is always with them.

Worldly assets—such as gold, silver, diamond, gems such as ruby, sapphire and emerald etc.; kith and kin such as sons, wife, pets and livestock, homestead and farmland, name, fame and majesty etc. These worldly assets are at the micro level what the Gods possess at the macro level and kept in the custody of Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods.

Celestial assets of the Gods—these are represented by the precious gems stored in the treasury of Kuber, the treasurer of Gods. They are known as Mahapadam, Padam, Sankha, Makar, Kaschapa, Mukund, Kund, Neel, and Kharva. Actually these terms are used in ancient mathematics to measure quantity such as units, hundreds, thousands and millions in modern language.

According to another version, the nine Nidhis are the various special virtues or qualities or attributes that one possesses, and which make him special amongst others. They are the following—(i) Buddhi—intelligence and the power to discriminate, to think sharply, quickly, logically, rationally, deeply and analytically. (ii) Bal—strength, vigour and power of the body and of the mind as well as of the spirit. (iii) Yasha—fame, good reputation and name; majesty and renown. (iv) Dhairya—to have courage, fortitude, resilience, ability to hold on in the face of greatest adversity, misfortune and opposition. (v) Nirbhayataa—fearlessness, courage, bravery and an indomitable spirit. (vi) Aarogyataa—to be freed from diseases and illnesses, both mental as well as bodily. (vii) Ajaadyataa—the opposite of Jadataa; to be free from the negative trait of inertia, lethargy, depression, stagnation, lack of drive, initiative and will power. (viii) Vaakya-patutaa—to be an expert orator; speaking skills, eloquence, diplomacy, and wise and intelligent choice of the spoken word. (ix) Bhakti—to have steady and robust devotion, loyalty, dedication and conviction for one's chosen deity and faith. This quality, of course, comes under the category of spiritual assets also.

Other variations include the following qualities in this list of Nidhis because they are like an asset for a man which stand him in good stead in his life— (i) Sham—having self restraint and control; having peace, tranquility, serenity and quietness; being able to suppress desires, yearnings and natural instincts and impulses. (ii)

Dam—tolerance, forbearance, fortitude. (iii) Upriti—renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement. (iv) Titksha—endurance, patience, fortitude, sufferance, equanimity. (v) Samadhan—the ability to find a solution, an answer to even the most vexing problem; lack of confusion or doubts; clarity of thoughts and conception. (vi) Shraddha—having faith, belief, conviction, reverence and devotion. (vii) Sakhya—friendship and the ability to co-exist with even one's adversary. (viii) Daya—kindness, compassion, graciousness. (ix) Atma Bodh—self-realisation and being enlightened about the Atma, the pure consciousness, that resides inside one's inner self as his soul, as his spirit.

Sometimes, the last Nidhi of Atma Bodh is replaced with 'Seva' or the natural habit of serving others selflessly.]

37. Sita personifies the virtues of valour and strength.

In iconography, her visible divine form as a Goddess has been depicted as one having four arms. One arm is held in a posture called 'Abhay' (i.e. one that bestows fearlessness upon her devotees), one arm is in the posture called 'Var' (i.e. that which grants boons), and one arm holds a divine lotus.

She is gloriously adorned by a crown and a tiara as well as all other decorative ornaments.

She is standing in the shade of a Kalpa tree with four elephants pouring holy water as libation in her honour through four golden pitchers held aloft their trunks.

She is surrounded by all the Gods who stand around her to attend on her, while Brahma and other senior Gods are praising her by singing hymns in her honour. She is being praised by the Kaamdheni cow who is herself a bestower of the so-called eight Siddhis¹ as well as by the celestial Apsaras (the damsels of the heavens who are, according to mythology, courtesans in the heavenly court of Indra, the king of Gods) and other divine ladies belonging to the different Gods. The divine Vedas and other scriptures are singing her glories as well.

The Sun and the Moon are spreading their sublime light there (at the place where the Goddess Sita is being worshipped) as if they were lamps put up for the purpose of providing light.

Celestial bards and sages, such as Tumburu and Narad, are eulogizing her divine glories by singing devotional hymns in her honour. Goddesses such as Raka and Siniwali² are holding the ceremonial umbrella over her head. Swaha and Swadha³ are swaying hand-held fans for her. Haladini and Mayashakti are swaying the whisk. Sages Brigu and Punyana, amongst others, are offering their worship to her.

Sita, in her celestial divine splendourous form as Goddess Laxmi (the divine consort of Vishnu, the patron goddess of wealth and prosperity as well as all forms of majesty and glory known in this creation) is seated on a throne comprising of a lotus flower with it eight petals. She is adorned by divine and magnificent ornaments. She has pleasant eyes that show her to be very pleased and contented.

This divine form of the great Goddess who personifies/embodies the magnificent and majestic powers of Nature should be realised through proper knowledge of her essential form (by studying the scriptures). This is verily the preaching and knowledge as expounded by this Upanishad. Amen! (37).

[Note—¹The *eight Siddhis* are the following— There are eight *Siddhis* which are divine mystical powers which enables the person to accomplish astounding feats. They are the following—(i) 'Anima'—means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; to become small like an atom; (ii) 'Mahima'—is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; to become huge like a mountain, thereby standing out and being unique or special in a

crowd; (iii) 'Garima'—is to be heavy-weight in any field, to have special qualities that give one's ideas and words a great amount of importance and weight; to have stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) 'Laghima'—is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) 'Praapti'—is to be able to attain, gain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya'—is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa'—is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; to be able to rule over others; (viii) 'Vashitwa'—is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient and subservient.

References—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 151-155, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 23-24. (b) Atharva Veda—Annupurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 5-8 (which says that a wise aspirant should not be deluded by Siddhis); Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12 (which says that the eight Siddhis are enshrined in the first outer ring of the Sri Chakra used to worship Goddess Tripura).

²Raka and Sinniwali—(a) *Raka (goddess)*—First appears in Rig Veda, 2/32/4-5. She is the patron Goddess of the full moon symbolising the ripening of all the good virtues and spreading of fame, majesty, splendour, glory and name. She stands for success in all endeavours and personifies accomplishment that spread one's fame and glory. She provides food and good health, healthy children, bestows nourishment to the life giving herbs (Rig Veda, 2/33/4).

(b) *Sininwali (goddess)*—First appears in Rig Veda, 2/32/6-7. She is the patron goddess of the first moon that appears after the dark disc of the last day of the lunar cycle; therefore she stands for the new moon. She is regarded as the sister of the Gods and the divine consort of Lord Vishnu (Rig Veda, 2/32/6). She is the patron Goddess of wealth like Laxmi, and is the provider of children and symbolises their constant development and enhancement. She also gives light.

³Swaha and Swadha—the word *Swaha* means to offer anything, to dispense, to distribute. The offerings made to the fire sacrifice meant for the Gods is done by saying *Swaha*, while those meant for the dead ancestors is done by saying *Swadha*. According to the Purans, these two are the divine wives of the Fire God. Swaha takes the offerings made for the Gods in the fire sacrifice to them, while Swadha is responsible for taking the offerings made for the dead ancestors in the fire sacrifice to them.]

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Shanti Paath

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Chapter 10

Sharav Upanishad/Sharavo-panishad

This Upanishad was revealed as a discourse between sage Pippalaad and the creator Brahma. It describes the greatness of Lord Shiva in his form known as Rudra.

The word ‘Sharav’ has two connotations. According to one, it means one who is the killer or slayer, and the other meaning is one who is the liberator and a provider of salvation to the creature.

As per the first meaning, Sharav is that form of the Supreme Being which instils fear in the heart of evil and pervert creatures, and kills or eliminates their evil tendencies. This is endorsed by verse nos. 6-7 and explained by citing the instance of Nrisingh being killed by Sharav because the former had gone out of control and was terrorising the creatures. Other instances are in verse nos. 9, 11, 13, 14, 15.

The second meaning of Sharav as the supreme Lord who provides liberation and deliverance to the creature is expressly endorsed in verse no. 31, and indirectly by implication in verse nos. 10, 11, 17, 18, 30.

That Sharav and Shiva are the same Supreme Being known as Brahm is endorsed by verse nos. 3-5, 19-24, 26, 31-34.

The word also refers to ‘the Lord who shines in the heart of his devotees’. According to legend, Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, the half man and half lion incarnation, to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting his own son Prahalad because the child was a devout follower of Vishnu. After having killed the demon, Nrisingh started roaming in the forests, striking terror in the hearts of all the creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of ‘Mahadev’ as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh (refer verse no. 6). Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot (verse no. 19) and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called ‘Rudra’, the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

Presently, when sage Pippalaad asked Brahma, the creator, who was the senior God amongst the Trinity consisting of Brahma himself along with Vishnu and Shiva, he replied that it is Rudra, or Shiva. Hence, this Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Rudra in his manifestation as Sharav, and is therefore named ‘Sharav Upanishad’.

The Gods have praised Sharav and established the latter’s superiority. This Upanishad describes the immense rewards of being enlightened about the esoteric secrets of the real and truthful form of Lord Rudra, along with the special norms to be observed while studying this eclectic philosophy.

This Upanishad also highlights the oneness between Shiva as Rudra and Vishnu. In this context, one should also refer to other Upanishads that espouse the same non-dual philosophy—viz. Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishn Yajur Veda, and the Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 6, verse nos. 8-9 of the Atharva Veda.

In this context it should be noted that there are Suktas or hymns in the praise of both Lord Shiva (verse nos. 9-15, 26) and Lord Vishnu (verse nos. 25, 27-28). Then there is a specific hymn establishing the fact that it is the same Supreme Being who has personified himself as the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and

Shiva (verse nos. 4). The greatness of this Supreme Being is highlighted in numerous verses, e.g. nos. 5, 21-23, 29-32.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. Once upon a time, sage Pippalaad¹ asked Brahma the creator—‘Oh Lord! Please be kind to enlighten me about who amongst the three Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Rudra² or Shiva the concluder, is senior and worthy of honour and worship?’ (1).

[Note—¹A brief introduction to sage Pippalaad is given as a note of verse no. 1, Canto 1 of Prashna Upanishad which is Chapter no. 1 of this volume.

²*Rudra* is the angry form of Lord Shiva. The word means ‘the terrible one; the angry and ruthless one; one who roars and thunders; one who makes the enemy weep; one who destroys this transmigratory world of birth and death; one who destroys ignorance and delusions; one who eliminates evil and perversions.’

Rudra is a Vedic deity and has been eulogized in three full Suktas (hymns) dedicated to him. These are Rig Veda’s 1/114/1-11; 2/33/1-15, and Yajur Veda’s 16/1-66. Besides these Suktas, Rudra is honoured as a deity at a number of places in the Vedas—viz. Rig Veda—1/43/1-4, 5/42/11, 7/46/1-4, 7/59/12; Atharva Veda—5/6/3-4, 6/55/2-3, 7/92/1, 11/2; and Yajur Veda—11/54.

Rudra is regarded as the father of Marut, the Wind God (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). Rudra assumes many forms—usually it is eleven forms (Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/4/9/7), but sometimes they are also said to be thirty-three in number (Taittiriya Sanhita, 1/4/11/1). Rudra is regarded as having a close relationship with Agni, the Fire God (Shatapath Brahman, 5/2/4/13). The Padma Puran, Swargakhanda, Chapter 8 mentions only eight Rudras. These eight, eleven or thirty-three forms of Rudra might mean as many aspects of Shiva.

However, in terms of the Upanishads, the eleven Rudras stand for the ten vital winds called Prans + one Mana or mind. The ten Prans are five chief Prans such as Pran (breath), Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyana, and five subsidiary Prans such as Nag, Kurma, Krikara, Devdutta and Dhananjaya. [Refer—Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 77-87 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-57 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

Rudra is said to have created such mythological figures as Bhuts (ghosts), Pretas (disembodied spirits), Pishacha (goblins), Khusmaandas (malignant imps).

In iconography, he has been depicted as wearing long tresses coiled on the head, has strong powerful arms, has a body decorated variously with serpents or priceless ornaments, and holds a strong and invincible bow and arrow as well as a thunderbolt. When necessary, he becomes ferocious and charges at his enemies on a chariot or on foot, while at the other times he is full of mercy and compassion. He is closely associated with forests and mountains, and is also the patron deity of herbs and medicinal plants. Hence, he is the killer of diseases and a great healer. Here, ‘healing’ would mean spiritual healing rather than physical ailments afflicting a creature.

He destroys sins and evil tendencies in the world, and grants the boon of liberation and happiness.

According to the epic Mahabharata, Anushasanparva, Chapter 14, it is Shiva in the form of Rudra who destroys this creation at the end of one cycle of creation.

Now, who would liberate such primarily innocent souls trapped by Maya, and who would provide protection to other innocent creatures who are being subjected to

torments by this single deluded and evil-possessed soul? Naturally it is their supreme Father who is very merciful and who is greatly pained at the predicament in which his off springs, the creatures, find themselves in. So this Father intervenes not only to free the trapped soul in the evil body, but also to provide succour and solace to other creatures who are being tormented by this single individual.

Thus, the Parameshwar assumed the form of Shrav or Rudra to liberate Vishnu from the evil body of Nrisingh.

The 11 Rudras—The eleven Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. They are the following:--(i) Mannu (मनु), (ii) Manu (मनु), (iii) Mahinas (महिनस), (iv) Mahaan (महान), (v) Shiva (शिव), (vi) Ritdwaj (ऋतुध्वज), (vii) Ugrareta (उग्ररेता), (viii) Bhav (भव), (ix) Kaal (काल), (x) Vamdeo (वामदेव), and (xi) Dhritvrat (धृतिव्रत). The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following— Har (हर), Bahuroop (बहुरूप), Trayambak (त्र्यम्बक), Aparaaajeet (अपराजित), Shambhu (शम्भु), Vrishakapi (वृषाकपि), Kapardi (कपर्दी), Raivat (रैवत), Mrigvyadh (मृगव्याध), Sharva (शर्व), and Kapaali (कपाली).

The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called 'Maheshwar'. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God.

The word 'Rudra' is literally used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness. But this a very misleading title for Shiva because there are a number of great Upanishads which describe Rudra as none but the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged, who sustains it and in whom the creation would finally collapse. It is this Brahm in the form of Rudra who is treated at the supreme Lord God of creation, and hence is called Maheshwar. The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition and Atharvashir Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition are exclusively dedicated to this theme. The Dakshin Murti Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the esoteric significance of the Shiva Tattva or the essential knowledge of Shiva who is the greatest Guru or moral preceptor and teacher of the creatures.

The Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda is especially relevant here because it explains the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra himself, and upon close reading it would be very clear that Rudra is describing Brahm when he describes himself.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Rudras, along with the Vasus and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

Another form of Rudra is known as Kalagni-Rudra. It literally means Lord Shiva, the concluder, in his most ferocious form which is like the 'fire of dooms-day'. Shiva is the greatest ascetic, a great renunciate, most auspicious and regarded as an enlightened God. So his invocation helps the spiritual seeker to burn all his worldly

delusions and taints arising out of ignorance and attachments to falsehoods. This paves the path for his ultimate liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. Lord Shiva is the designated Authority that controls death and destruction, not only of the gross physical world and its visible objects but also metaphorically of all the evil tendencies, all the blemishes and faults that are characteristic of this deluding world and which usually cover the soul of the creature like a layer of thick scum floating on the surface of the otherwise crystal-clear waters of the mountain lake.

The Rudraksha beads (seeds of the tree *eleocarpus ganitrus*) with five faces or surfaces used in rosaries and necklaces are also called Kalagni-rudra beads because these are very much liked by Lord Shiva. The great spiritual importance and metaphysical significance of the Rudraksha beads have been explained in the Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, the Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, and the Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 7, verse no. 8 of the Atharva Veda tradition.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition is essentially revealed by Lord Kalagnirudra when he was approached by sage Bhususnd who wished to know about the immense spiritual value and metaphysical significance of the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice, called the 'Bhasma', and the three lines marked on the body from its paste, called the 'Tripundra'—refer Brahman 1-6, Brihajjabal Upanishad.]

2. The great grandfather Brahm replied—'Oh Pippalaad! Listen carefully to what I would narrate.' (2).

3. One is most fortunate and lucky if he can know or be acquainted with the greatest God known as 'Parmeshwar'—literally the supreme Ishwar or Lord God. This is possible only as an auspicious reward of immense good and righteous deeds done by the aspirant.

Even the chief Gods such as Vishnu who is the chief in the Trinity of Gods, and Indra who is the chief amongst all the rest of the Gods, are unable to know about this Parmeshwar from whose body even I (the creator Brahma) am born (3).

[Note—The 'Parmeshwar' referred to here is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of Brahm, the Supreme Being. Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness which is the root cause of creation. The subtle macrocosmic body of Brahm is known as Hiranyagarbha, and the gross body of Brahm at the cosmic level of creation is the Viraat Purush. As the name itself suggests, the 'Viraat' is the vast, colossus, all-including invisible form of Brahm, and it is from this Viraat that the rest of the units of creation, including Brahma the creator himself, came into being. Since Brahma represents the primary form of Brahm or the initial form that Brahm took in order to initiate the process of creation, the former is also called Hiranyagarbha. Therefore, Brahma is depicted as being born atop a divine lotus springing out of the navel of the Viraat Purush. Since the world is a manifestation of the Viraat Purush, the Purans have called this Viraat as Vishnu—the 'Vishwa or the world in this symbolic form'.

4. It is the same Lord who first bears (conceives and brings forth or reveals) Brahma the creator. It is he who is worthy of acceptance as the Supreme Being.

It is he who is the Lord of creation, the supreme Father, the most exalted, and the inspirer of the Vedas.

Indeed, he is the God of all the gods, and the Father of all (4).

5. It is this Parmeshwar who is the Father of me, Brahma, as well as of Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation. It is he who concludes the entire world at the time of the dooms-day deluge in the form of Rudra or Shiva¹.

We bow and pay our obeisance to that great Lord God. It is he alone who is the regulator of this creation, the most exalted and honourable, and the Supreme One (5).

[Note—¹According to the epic Mahabharata, Anushasanparva, Chapter 14, it is Shiva in the form of Rudra who destroys this creation at the end of one cycle of creation.

The Narad-parivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 8, verse no. 1 describes these three aspects of Brahm as Srishtih Brahm, Viraat Brahm and Samhaat Brahm. This particular Upanishad is Chapter 9 of this volume.]

6. It is this same great Lord who assumed the ferocious form of Sharav (the great killer or slayer) to overcome and kill Nrisingh¹ (6).

[Note—¹According to legend, Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, the half man and half lion incarnation, to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting his own son Prahalad because the child was a devout follower of Vishnu. After having killed the demon, Nrisingh started roaming in the forests, striking terror in the hearts of all the creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of 'Mahadev' as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called 'Rudra', the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

There is another connotation of the word 'Sharav'. The word literally means the killer or slayer. In other words, Sharav is that form of the Supreme Being which instils fear in the heart of evil and pervert creatures, and kills or eliminates their evil tendencies. The word also refers to 'the Lord who shines in the heart of his devotees' as their Atma or pure consciousness.

The creature or the embodied soul is called 'Shar' or the form of the ethereal spirit that has assumed a gross physical body having a head. One who cuts off the head is known as 'Sharav'. The head is a metaphor for pride and ego and their accompanying traits of hypocrisy, haughtiness and arrogance. It is in the head that all evil planning is done, and it is the head that inspires the creature to indulge in all sorts of vices and inauspicious deeds. When this happens, the great God, the Parameshwar, makes it sure that the soul of such a creature is liberated from the sinful body in which it has been trapped by killing the gross body and liberating the soul.

So, while on the surface it appears to be a physical fight between two powerful creatures, one being the Shar and the other being the Sharav, here referring to Nrisingh and Rudra respectively, it is actually a system evolved by Nature whereby evil and perversions are kept under check. It is a system instituted by the Supreme Being himself to regulate and maintain balance, order and law in his creation. Though Nrisingh was Lord Vishnu himself in that form, the latter forgot who he actually was once the Lord had assumed a physical form. This is the effect of Maya—the overwhelming power of delusions that automatically comes with having a gross body like that of ordinary creatures. This situation also highlights the reason why all the creatures are under the overpowering control of Maya—if Maya can delude Vishnu to forget about who he is and wander in the forests as some cruel creature in his form as Nrisingh then it is little wonder that ordinary creatures are held under the overpowering sway of Maya.

Now, who would liberate such primarily innocent souls trapped by Maya, and who would provide protection to other innocent creatures who are being subjected to torments by this single deluded and evil-possessed soul? Naturally it is their supreme Father who is very merciful and who is greatly pained at the predicament in which his off springs, the creatures, find themselves in. So this Father intervenes not only to

free the trapped soul in the evil body, but also to provide succour and solace to other creatures who are being tormented by this single individual.

Thus, the Parameshwar assumed the form of Sharav or Rudra to liberate Vishnu from the evil body of Nrisingh.]

7. When the supreme Lord of the Gods (i.e. Sharav or Rudra) caught hold of Hari's (i.e. Lord Vishnu's in his form as Nrisingh) leg and dragged him away forcibly, all the rest of the Gods were extremely alarmed and they pleaded with the former to have mercy on the latter. They prayed—'Oh the supreme Purush (Lord)! Have mercy on Vishnu. Do not slay him. Glory be bestowed upon you.' (7).

8. At that time, the most mighty, strong and powerful Lord attired in an animal hide (i.e. the almighty Lord known as Rudra or Sharav disguised as a wild beast) ripped apart the gross body of Vishnu (in his form of Nrisingh) and mercifully liberated the latter's soul from it.

Lord Rudra was then honoured by the epithet of 'Virbhadrā'—literally meaning the Lord who is strong, courageous, brave, bold, valorous and valiant (8).

[Note—The Nrisingh was the 'gross body' of Vishnu which the Lord had assumed just like the form of Sharav, the wild beast, that Lord Shiva had done in order to free Vishnu's from the form of Nrisingh.

The philosophy of the Upanishads repeatedly stresses in an unequivocal term that the gross body of any creature is not his 'true self', and that the latter is his Atma, his pure consciousness that is also called his 'soul', his 'spirit'. The gross body is just that—it is merely 'gross' and nothing else. The 'true self' is subtle and sublime, and it resides inside this gross body just like a person who lives in a building made of bricks and mortar. The Atma is virtually trapped within the limits of the gross body; the body acts as a virtual prison for the Atma. Hence, any situation which provides freedom for the Atma from the gross body would be giving liberation and deliverance to it.

Therefore, when Lord Rudra tore apart the external gross body of Nrisingh he actually liberated the Atma known as Vishnu from the prison of the gross body known as Nrisingh. Vishnu is not even remotely like the external features of Nrisingh which was most unconventional in being half man and half lion. Vishnu had assumed this odd form for a specific purpose just like Brahm, the Supreme Being, assuming so many varied forms to carry out specific objectives in this creation. The duty of Lord Shiva in his angry form of Rudra is to bring about the end of any unit of creation when its purpose is served. Hence, when the purpose of Vishnu's incarnation as Nrisingh was served, it fell upon Rudra to carry out his divine mandate to end this unconventional form of Vishnu. After all, to conclude anything is not Vishnu's duty, it is Shiva's role.

However, not to demean this form of Vishnu as Nrisingh and to stress that it is as holy as the Supreme Being himself, an entire Upanishad called the 'Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad' is dedicated to this Lord. It is Chapter 7 of the present volume. A reading of this Upanishad would show that all forms of Brahm are essentially the same, and one must not be either deluded or confused by the external features. It must be noted that the Upanishads are unequivocal in their declaration of the philosophy of Advaitya—i.e. the doctrine of non-duality which stresses that that all forms of 'Truth' are quintessentially one and the same.]

9. Indeed, it is Lord Rudra who can bestow all the Siddhis (mystical powers and accomplishments), and it is he who is the Lord worshipped by all.

We bow and pay our obeisance to the Lord who had also cut off the fifth head of Brahma, the creator¹ (9).

[Note—¹This incident is narrated in Devi Puran, Canto 42, verse nos. 35-54. A full English version of Lord Ram's story called the Ramayan as it appears in this Devi Puran, Canto 36 to Canto 48, has been published separately by this humble author, and this incidence is narrated in it in detail.

Briefly, the story goes that once Brahma got enamoured with his own daughter named Sandhya. At this evil thought of his, Lord Shiva had chopped off his fifth head. So we come to the conclusion here that Shiva, in his form as Sharav, is relentless in pursuit of upholding what is righteous and noble, and eliminating what is not. He has not spared either Brahma or Vishnu when they deviated from the path of Dharma and had broken the laws of Nature. That is why Shiva is honoured as 'Mahadeva', the 'Great God'.]

10. We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who can burn to ashes the entire world by the fierce spurt of fire emanating from the third eye located in his forehead¹, and is so gracious that he re-creates it once again after punishing it (for its sins and misdeeds by reducing it to ashes), and then offers it his protection (10).

[Note—¹Lord Shiva has three eyes, two conventional eyes and one hidden eye located in the center of the forehead between the two eyebrows and the top of the root of the nose. Hence, Lord Shiva is also known as Lord *Trayambak* or Lord *Trinetrum*. The significance of the *three eyes* have been elucidated in a number of Upanishads, viz. (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 6; and Canto 2, paragraph no. 21; Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 10; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4; (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 93.

This *third eye* is not some physical eye but a subtle eye symbolizing the Lord's high level of enlightenment and wisdom. This burning of the evil world by opening of the third eye of Shiva is a metaphoric way of saying that a creature can use his eyes of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment to overcome all delusions and misconceptions about the truth and reality, along with all mischief as well as negativity and evil tendencies in this world. The 'burning' is elimination of such negativity and perversions.

According to Yoga philosophy, an ascetic focuses his Pran or vital winds at this spot in the forehead where he experiences enlightenment and the nectar of bliss dripping from it. By the way, Shiva is regarded as the patron God of all ascetics precisely for this reason.

There is a legendary story associated with this third eye. Once, Parvati, his divine consort, had closed his two eyes, and as a result the world was plunged in darkness. To save the world from this all-encompassing darkness, Shiva willed a third eye between the two eyebrows. This eye spouted fire with its accompanying heat and light. So, the celestial sun can be regarded as a symbol of this third eye.

Once when Shiva was in deep meditative trance and was teased by Kamdeo, the God of passions, at the behest of Gods who had wanted Shiva to marry and produce a male child who would kill the demons, he felt so annoyed by Kamdeo's temerity and impertinence that he opened this third eye to burn him down.

The three eyes of Shiva or Rudra symbolize the Sun, the Moon and the Fire which are regarded as the eternal sources of light in this creation. The Sun and the Fire provide the heat and energy so essential for sustenance of life besides being an eternal source of light, while the Moon is regarded as the pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of bliss and the soothing nectar that neutralizes the scorching effects of the Sun and the Fire. Refer verse no. 14 also. The third eye, as has been noted above, stands for the excellent level of wisdom, erudition, knowledge, enlightenment and omniscience that the Lord possesses.

The *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 21, says that the three eyes of Lord Shiva are the sun, the moon and the fire.

From the metaphysical perspective, his two eyes are the conventional eyes, and his third symbolizes his deep insight and great wisdom and enlightenment. Shiva personifies the fire element which also has a symbolic significance. The fire is known to burn all impurities present in gold when it is put into it, thereby purifying the metal. Similarly, fire is used in blast furnaces to extract iron from its ore. Fire has the inherent ability to reduce to ashes all filth and garbage, which is a metaphoric way of saying that a person who has worshipped this element in the form of Shiva is supposed to have burnt all his faults, blemishes and shortcomings that taint his character and soul, thereby purifying his inner self. The ash is indicative of total renunciation and detachment from the world of materialism, because it is indicative of a renunciate way of life and symbolically stands for burning of everything into the fire pit. That is why Lord Shiva has been called the patron God of ascetics, hermits and Sanyasis who worship the fire element only.

Besides these points, Shiva is the God assigned the task of concluding the world which necessitates his being closely associated with the 'fire element' in the sense that he must be as unrelenting, merciless, powerful and ferocious as the latter in order to conclude this creation inspite of all the odds. He must reduce everything to ashes just like the fire does. And it is from this ash that the new creation would emerge in due course. Herein lie the magic of creation and its chief Lord, Brahm, the Supreme Being—the fact that a new creation rises from ashes!

The *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 93, of the Krishna Yajur Veda says that the third eye symbolizes the Fire element.

Lord Shiva as Lord *Triyambak* appears in the following Upanishads—

(i) Atharva Veda's *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph no. 6 which says that his Mantra should be said when the worshipper applies the sacred Bhasma (ash of the fire sacrifice) on his body from the toe to the head.

(ii) The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4 is entirely devoted to Lord Trayambak. It describes the meaning of this word and the Mantras dedicated to Lord Trayambak in great detail.]

11. We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who had killed Kaal (death personified) by trouncing him under his left leg, and who had drunk the scorching poison called Halaahal without a second thought¹ (in order to protect the creation from being eroded and scalded by its scorching effects) (11).

[Note—¹This refers to the incident when the Gods and the Demons had churned the celestial ocean in search of Amrit, the nectar of eternal life. This scalding and horrible poison known as 'Halaahal' was produced as a result of this churning, and Shiva had volunteered to drink it to protect the creation from its burning effects. So he picked it up in his cupped palms and drank it. But the Lord realised that if he allowed this fierce poison to enter his abdomen it would burn the creation because the entire creation is deemed to be lodged in the Lord's abdomen as he is the Viraat Purush himself. So he kept this poison in his throat, thereby giving it an eternal bluish tinge. In this form, and to commemorate this great event, Lord Shiva was honoured by a new epithet—'Neel-Kantha', the Lord with a purple or blue throat. Refer verse no. 16.

According to some accounts, when Shiva drank this fierce poison, Parvati, his consort, was so frightened at the consequences that she squeezed his throat, and thus the poison remained there forever.]

12. We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who was so pleased by Lord Vishnu when the latter had placed his eyes at his left foot as a token offering that he gave Vishnu the powerful weapon called the 'Chakra', or weapon in the form of a circular serrated discus that Vishnu holds (12).

13. We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who is so valiant, invincible, strong and powerful that he had defeated all the Gods in the Yagya (fire sacrifice) of Daksha¹. In this war, he had even ensnared Vishnu in a snare made of celestial serpents (13).

[Note—¹The story goes that Daksha was his father-in-law, but he did not approve of Shiva's life-style. So, once when he did a fire sacrifice, he did not invite Shiva and his own daughter Sati, the divine consort of Shiva, and neither did he offer any oblations to the Lord along with other Gods of the Trinity as is necessary during such ceremonies. Sati insisted on going to attend the ceremony inspite of Shiva's strong reservations, and there she was so peeved at the insult inflicted on her husband Lord Shiva that she died in the self-generated fire of Yoga. Then Shiva went with his army headed by himself as Virbhadrha. Refer verse no. 8. He ransacked the sacrifice and punished the Gods. When Vishnu tried to defend the sacrifice and intervene on behalf of the Gods, Shiva had him captured in the snare of snakes.

According to some accounts, Virbhadrha was created by Shiva by plucking a hair from his own head.]

14. We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra whose three eyes are the Sun, the Moon and the Fire (representing eternal sources of light, life, energy, warmth and heat).

He had playfully slayed the demon Tirpuraasur¹. [Hence, Shiva or Rudra is also called Tripurari.]

All the Gods are like animals in front of him. That is, all the Gods are under his overall command and depend upon him for their survival and protection. That is why the Lord is honoured by the epithet 'Pashupatinath' or the Lord of animals² (14).

[Note—¹Tarakaasur was the son of Vajraanga and his consort Varaangi. He had done severe Tapa (austerity and penance) as a result of which the creator Brahma had granted him several boons which had made him invincible. He was killed by Lord Subramanya, the son of Shiva and Parvati. He had three sons—Taaraaksha, Kamlaaksha and Vidyunmaali. They had also pleased Brahma and by his blessings built three great cities, collectively called 'Tripura'. These cities were made of gold, silver and iron. When they became a nuisance for the Gods, Shiva destroyed these three cities and the demons with one arrow. These three demon brothers are collectively called *Tripuraasur*. Therefore he got the name of Tripurari—one who destroyed the three enemy cities.

²This concept of how the Lord comes to be known as *Pashupati* has been explained in the Jabalu-panishad of Sam Veda tradition, verse nos. 11-18 which stresses that 'Isha' or Shiva is known as 'Pashupati', Lord of animals, because Shiva is the undisputed Lord of all the creatures, and those creatures who have lost wisdom and a sense of righteousness are no better than animals.

The term 'animal' is a general way of indicating all living beings who are serfs of their sense organs, who lack adequate wisdom and intellect to think for themselves what is Dharma (auspicious, righteous, noble and proper) and what is not, who are indulgent and have a preponderance of Tama Guna in them. Such creatures are overcome with Vasanas (passions and worldly yearnings) and unable to control their natural Vrittis (inclinations, habits, temperaments and tendencies) that are of lowly nature. They live a life wallowing in the illusive comforts and pleasures of the world, forgetting in the hallucination that all the charms of the world are illusive, deluding and entrapping for them and their souls. They have no time or inclinations for higher things of life and the soul. They think that this world is all there is to it, and that there is no better way to spend their precious life than to take a plunge in this world and its material objects. They have nothing to do with such eclectic subjects as Gyan, Atma, Mukti, self-realisation etc.

In order to control such creatures the Lord assumes the form of 'Pashupati' just like a householder has to become a 'cattle-herder' to take care of his livestock.]

15. We bow reverentially and pay our obeisance to the great Lord known as Rudra who is the supreme inspirer behind the various divine incarnations of Lord Vishnu* such as Matsya¹ (the legendary Fish), Kurma² (Tortoise), Varaaha³ (Boar), Nrisingh⁴ (half Man and half Lion), Vaaman⁵ (the dwarf mendicant form of Vishnu) etc.

The powerful Lord had even subjected Indra, the king of Gods, to become weary and tired. He had reduced to ashes the pride of Kamdeo-cupid, the patron God of love and passion⁶, and of Yam, the God of death⁷ (15).

[Note—*It is a very significant observation. It shows that there was some superior Authority who had directed Vishnu to reveal himself as the various incarnations listed in this verse. It is this superior Authority that is known as Brahm. This Brahm is the supreme transcendental Consciousness that resides in the heart of Vishnu to inspire the latter to do anything. If this is the picture at the cosmic level of creation then it is replicated at the level of the individual living being whose Atma is the same Brahm inspiring him to do anything.

¹*Matsya* or Fish incarnation of Vishnu—In this incarnation as a Fish or Matsya, which is the first of ten divine incarnations of Vishnu, the Lord is said to have saved Manu, the progenitor of mankind, and the Saptarishis (the seven mental sons of the creator Brahma) along with their wives during the dooms-day deluge. They were made to board a boat which was pulled by this Fish and saved from being drowned. They re-populated the world later on. It is a story identical to the Biblical story of the Noah's Arc.

²*Kurma* or Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu—It is the second incarnation of Vishnu. The Lord had supported the legendary Mountain called Mandara which had started sinking during the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal and life.

³*Varaaha* or Boar incarnation of Vishnu—It is the third incarnation of Vishnu in which he killed the demon Hiranyaaksha and lifted the earth from the flood water where it had vanished. According to some versions, this demon had hidden the earth in the bowls of the ocean. This extrication of the earth is a symbolic way of saying that the Lord saves the creation from being submerged in the vast ocean of sins and evil. An Upanishad preached by Lord Varaaha appears in the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition as its 30th Upanishad.

⁴*Nrisingh*—The story of this incarnation is narrated in note of verse no. 6 of the present Upanishad. Further, there is an Upanishad dedicated to Lord Nrisingh known as Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad. It belongs to the Atharva Veda tradition and is its 7th Upanishad. It appears as Chapter no. 7 of the present volume.

⁵*Vaaman* or Dwarf incarnation of Vishnu—This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods of his heavenly kingdom, Vishnu had took the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a Vaaman or dwarf and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step and for the third step he measured Bali's own head or his crown. He put his third step on Bali's head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called 'Trivikram'—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he not only bestowed to Bali the kingdom of the nether world but agreed to be his custodian there.

⁶The story of why *Kamdeo-cupid* was reduced to ashes is narrated in note of verse no. 10. Once when Shiva was in deep meditative trance and was teased by

Kamdeo, the God of passions, at the behest of Gods who had wanted Shiva to marry and produce a male child who would kill the demons, he felt so annoyed by Kamdeo's impertinence that he opened this third eye to burn him down.

This is why the Lord is also known as 'Kamari'—the one who had trounced the haughtiness of Kamdeo.

⁷Shiva had trounced *Yam*, the God of death, to save his devotee Maarkandeya. Sage Maarkandey was the son of sage Maarkandu. He was a great devotee of Lord Shiva, the patron God of death, so much so that when death approached him personified as Kaal when the sage was yet quite young because destiny had it that he would die still when young, he clung to the Shiva Lingam (the image of Shiva) with the greatest of devotion, surrender and urgency that comes with one facing certain death. Lord Shiva appeared and prevented Yam, the God of death from tying him in his snare and taking him away. The Lord blessed him with a virtual eternal life, blessing him that he would live for another 14 Kalpas (1 Kalpa = 1 day of Brahma or roughly 4.32 billion human years). His magnum opus is the 'Maarkandey Puran'. He had also edited and abridged the Manusmriti, the code of life and conduct as laid by the first human named Manu to regulate society and act as a constitution and manual for ready reference for the forthcoming human race, into eight thousand verses, and passed it to sage Bhargava. His reference comes in the Mahabharat epic when he approaches the Pandavas and taught them the principles of Dharma (code of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety and nobility). He was the one who had enlightened Yudisthira that Krishna was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Vanapurva, 189). In the same Mahabharat, he preaches the celestial sage Narad the laws of Dharma (Anushaasan-purva, 50-62).]

16. Thus, the Gods prayed to Lord Neelkanth Parmeshwar (literally, the supreme Ishwar or Lord God who has a bluish-tinged throat, a clear reference to Lord Shiva) in various ways to please the Lord and ask for forgiveness from him (16).

[Note—Refer verse no. 11 and its accompanying note.]

17. Pleased by the Gods' prayers, the Lord God destroyed all their torments that take three forms¹ as well as the sufferings associated with birth, death and old age² (17).

[Note—¹The three great torments are called Traitaap. They are the following—Adhi-bhautik—related to terrestrial creatures such as enemies, cruel kings and wild animals; Adhi-daivik—related to unfavourable Gods and malignant stars; Adhi-daihiik—related to the body such as diseases and horrors of old age etc.

²The three points of time when a man has to undergo the maximum amount of suffering is during his birth, during old age when he is infirm and ridden with various diseases, and at the time of death.

The implication of this verse is that the supreme Lord was so pleased with the Gods that he granted them immunity from these sufferings—they were made immortal and imperishable. Henceforth they did not have to take a birth or die or become old in the conventional sense.]

18. When Lord Shiva heard the Gods' pray and saw them showing great respect to him by offering their obeisance in various ways, he was very pleased. The primeval and eternal Lord of creation, Lord Shiva, blessed all of them with his mercy and grace, and gave them his protection (18).

19. He who is worthy of being offered worship, obeisance, honours and prayers, who is beyond the reach of the faculty of speech (i.e. words cannot describe his glories), and the dust of whose feet is eagerly sought even by Lord Vishnu (who is himself one of the great Gods of the Trinity)—that great Lord Maheshwar (Shiva) felt very

honoured and pleased when Lord Vishnu bowed before him with devotion and showed him his respects. [Refer verse no. 8. When Rudra or Lord Shiva had freed Vishnu from the gross body of Narsingh, Vishnu reverted to his primary form. Finding freedom from this gross body of a half man and half lion (Narsingh), Vishnu indeed felt very obliged, and therefore he offered his thanks to Shiva.] (19).

20. A spiritual aspirant who becomes realised and enlightened enough to be acquainted with the truth of the supreme transcendental Brahm who is an embodiment of eternal bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity, Brahm who is so immensely great, indescribable, esoteric, mystical and transcendental that the mind and speech return defeated or empty-handed in their attempt to reach, understand and define him—indeed, such a Brahm-realised and enlightened aspirant has nothing to fear anymore. [This is because such a self-realised man would understand that his gross body is not his true identity, but the latter is the Atma that is his ‘true self’. This Atma is pure consciousness that is a sublime and ethereal entity which is not subjected to the fears and limitations that the gross body has to face.] (20).

21. The eternal and supreme Consciousness lives ensconced secretly in the subtle heart of all living beings¹ in a form that is smaller than an atom but of such immense importance and significance that it surpasses the most important and the most significant entity that might exist anywhere in creation.

Only a few self-realised and highly enlightened spiritual aspirants who do self-less service and have become freed from the snare of all sorts of emotional and mental miseries, grief and sorrows pertaining to this mortal world are fortunate enough to be able to have a divine glimpse of this eclectic, subtle, sublime and divine entity in their own hearts (or are able to realise the presence of this Consciousness in their own bosom) as a reward of the grace and munificence of the Lord himself (i.e. by the grace of Brahm who is also the Consciousness referred to here) (21).

[Note—¹Refer (i) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Subalo-panishad, Canto 8, verse no. 1. (ii) Atharva Veda’s Prashna Upanishd, Canto 3, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 6-9; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 3.]

22. The supreme Lord who is meditated upon and remembered most reverentially by such highly acclaimed souls such as the sages/seers Vashistha¹, Vamdeo² and Shukdeo³ (the parrot sage), as well as by Viranchi (i.e. Brahma, the creator) himself, who is honoured by the offering of prayers by such honourable sages and seers as Sanatsujat and Sanatan (i.e. sages Sanatkumar and others called Sankaadi Rishis)⁴ amongst others—verily, that great Lord God known as Maheshwar (a reference to Lord Shiva) is the Lord who is the same primary and eternal Lord who was present even at the beginning of creation, and who predates all other Gods. [That is why Shiva is called ‘Bhagwan Adi Dev’—the primordial Lord God who was present before the creation came into being.] (22).

[Note—¹Sage *Vashistha* is one of the well known ancient sages and mentioned even in the Rig Veda (refer Rig Veda, 7/33/14). He is regarded as the Manas-putra of the creator Brahma. In other words, he was the mental-born son of Brahma born as a result of his decision to have a son. As such, he is one of the great celestial sages known as Sapta Rishis—or the seven great sages. According to another version, he was born in a Kumbh or a pitcher as a son of the Varuna God (the Water God). Another great sage named Agastya was his twin brother.

He was the court priest or Rajguru of the Ikshavaku dynasty belonging to the Solar race who ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya. It was in this solar race that Lord

Ram, an incarnation of Vishnu around whom the epic Ramayan was written, was born. Vashistha is credited with one of the greatest treatises on Vedanta, called Yog Vashistha. It is also called Maha Ramayan.

Arundhati, also known as Akshamala and Urjaa, was the most erudite, sagacious and wise wife of sage Vashistha. She was the daughter of Prajapati Kardama and his wife Devahuti. Sage Atri's wife Anusuiya was her sister, and sage Kapil was her brother. Her famous son was sage Shakti. She was a preacher and a well known scholar of the scriptures in her own right, and was no less enlightened than her husband Vashistha.

His son was sage Shakti. Sage Parashar was his grandson, and sage Veda Vyas, who is the legendary classifier of the Vedas and the author of the Purans, was his great grandson.

The celebrated sage Kapil, who is said to be the proponent of the great school of Hindu philosophy known as Shankya Shastra, was the brother-in-law of sage Vashistha, being the brother of his wife Arundhati, and the only son of sage Kardama and his wife Devahuti. He taught even his mother spiritual wisdom in Bhagavata, and hence this part of this scripture is called 'Kapil Gita' in which the sage has expounded upon the philosophies of Sankhya Shastra, Ashtanga Yoga (the eight-fold path of Yoga) and Bhakti-yoga (the path of devotion for and submission to the Lord) (3/25-33).

There are a number of legends associated with Vashistha. One such tale narrates how his all-wish fulfilling cow named Nandini was attempted to be stolen by king Vishvarath, the son of Gaadhi. The attempt failed miserably. This king was so determined and in awe of Vashistha's mystical powers that had prevented him from acquiring this cow that he did severe Tapa (austerity and penance) to acquire similar powers. Thus, he became sage a great sage known as Vishwamitra.

²Sage *Vamdeo*—He is a well referred to sage in the Upanishads. According to Aitareya Upanishad, 2/1/5, he had realised the existence of the Atma, the pure consciousness, while still in the womb. The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/10, says that he had realised Brahm, the supreme transcendental Lord, and hence he is treated as being on the same high spiritual pedestal as Manu and Surya.

According to Shiva Puran, Kailash Khanda, 11/12, he had learnt about Pranav, the ethereal form of Brahm and revealed as the sound OM, from Kumarsvami, also known as Shanmukha or Subramanya.

Sage Aatreya was his disciple.

Amongst his great teachings is the Vamdeo Gita. It is one of the sixteen minor Gitas in the epic Mahabharata. It occurs in Shantiparva, Chapters 92-94, and has 94 verses. It is in the form of a dialogue between sage Vamdeo and king Vasumanas. It has been recounted by Bhishma to Yudishthir. The duties of kings are the main theme of this Gita.

The name Vamdeo has other connotations also. Vamdeo is one of the eleven forms of Rudra or Lord Shiva. His divine consort is known as Vaamaa.

The *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes him as being the third name or form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, in verse nos. 10-14. It says—“The third form (of Brahm) is known as *Vamdeo*—basically because Lord Shiva's general demeanours are at odds with the way the world likes to live. He is a renunciate par-excellence and lives completely submerged in perpetual meditation, not at all bothered by the niceties and attractions of this material world. This life style would be treated as unconventional and odd by the less-enlightened creatures of the world who remain submerged, neck-deep, in enjoying the material comforts and pleasures of this world. So it is natural they would call him 'Vamdeo'—the odd, weird, strange and anomalous God. This would be very evident if Shiva is compared with Vishnu and Brahma, the other two Gods of the Trinity. Vishnu is very much engrossed in the upkeep of this world because it is part of his duties—as he is the protector, sustainer and nourisher of this creation. Brahma also remains neck-deep

involved in this creation—because had it not been so he would never have explored means to create creatures who would copulate to propagate themselves. It is only Shiva who remains aloof from this swamp. Further, the word ‘Shiva’ itself means ‘one who is auspicious, beautiful, truthful, enlightened and eternal.’

Iconographically, the face of Shiva pointing to the north is called Vamdeo. This form of Brahm is a symbol of the fire element and stands for the power to purify, absorb and purge everything that comes in contact with it—like the fire that burns all impurities and brings out the inherent natural shine in an entity. He is said to rule over this element.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1 describes the five forms of Brahm but in a different way in the context of creation. It says that Vamdeo is the second form of Shiva who is treated in this Upanishad as being synonymous with Brahm (Brahman 1, verse no. 1). Let us examine what it has to say—“The second subtle form of Shiva is called Vamdeo who produced a sweet fluid which was like sweet water, and the earth was floated on it. [In other words, the first primordial ‘water’ from which the earth emerged refers to the vast cosmic ether that is symbolised by the salty ocean, and this second sweet ‘water’ refers to the underground water that is found under the solid surface of the earth. It is this water that is found in wells and springs. Since it surrounds the earth as a ring underneath the surface, the solid outer surface of the earth where terrestrial creatures and trees grow is virtually floating on this inner ring of sweet water. The salty water of the ocean floats on the surface of the earth and not vice versa.]

The Panch Brahm Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 10-14 describe the third form of Brahm called ‘Vamdeo’]. To quote—“The form of Brahm as ‘Vamdeo’ has the following grand virtues—he is a bestower of great knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment; he is like fire personified (i.e. he has the astounding potential and vigour as possessed by the fire, he is as powerful and potent as fire, as purifying and rejuvenating as the fire which is the third element of creation after earth and water).

He is illuminated with the light that is a metaphor for knowledge and wisdom. It is as brilliant and splendorous as millions of suns (signifying the power of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment) [10].

He is a personification of the virtues of Anand (extreme sense of bliss, happiness and joys, of ecstasy and exhilaration, of beatitude and felicity). The Sam Veda with all its melodious connotations and singing patterns is its revealed form. [The Sam Veda is usually sung melodiously, set to beautiful music with all its captivating charm, as opposed to other Vedas which are chanted or recited in unison or even read quietly in seclusion, and therefore it fits in well with the observation that this form of Brahm is a personification of Anand—for music is indeed exhilarating and uplifting for the soul.]

Since singing obliges one to have a soothing and melodious voice, a voice which is sweet and pleasant, is mellowed and steady, and is able to sustain long notes and tones while singing, this form of Brahm is a personification of these virtues. [A melodious, pleasant, welcoming and sweet voice is the best gift that a man possesses; it endears him to everyone and at all places and time. Further, singing of the Sam Veda requires special skills, and all these qualities would distinguish a man from the rest. In other words, Brahm is not an ordinary God, but it is the sweetest, the most skilled, and the wisest entity in creation. Another connotations is this—‘the mellowed from of sound as indicated by the first vowels of Sanskrit language—viz. ‘A’ as in ‘a man’, and ‘Aa’ as in ‘master’ are indicative of Brahm’s virtues that signify the origin of creation. This is because to pronounce the letters ‘A’ and ‘Aa’ one has to open one’s mouth which symbolise the start of the process of creation.]

He is revealed in the form of the Ahavaniya holy fire, the best of the fires. [This fire is lit at the beginning to invoke the Gods and welcome them, hence is like the herald of good and auspicious intentions in creation.] [11].

Since Gyan is a personified form of this Brahm, it is very potent and powerful in slaying one's enemies (represented by ignorance and delusions). It is empowered with great authority, strength and potentials in this respect.

This Brahm is 'Avaya', i.e. it is imperishable, undiminished and infinite, and a personification of unmatched Shakti, i.e. it is a fount of divine cosmic energy, stupendous strength, great powers and astounding potentials.

His complexion is Shukla (white) in colour. [This word is indicative of, one, semen which is a metaphor for vitality, potency and stamina, symbolising its ability to create and propagate the creation, and second, the Sata Guna which is the best, the most auspicious and noblest virtue in creation. This word 'Shukla' also refers to the Shukla Yajur Veda.]

In spite of the fact that he is such an exalted entity, he has the low quality called Tama in him. [This is because if we are expected to take it for granted that everything in existence is Brahm personified, then it obviously includes the darker side of creation along with the brighter side. The darker side is symbolised by the word 'Tama'—meaning dark, while the brighter side is symbolised by the word 'Shukla'—meaning white. In other words, Vamdeo Brahm possesses the unique and often paradoxical qualities that defy understanding. It is not without reason that Brahm has not been able to be defined even by the Vedas, and they threw up the towel, saying 'Neti Neti'—not this not this.]

He (Vamdeo Brahm) is completely enlightened, wise and realised. No knowledge escapes it; it is a personification of these auspicious virtues [12].

He (Vamdeo Brahm) is not only the regulator and controller of the three worlds, but also has revealed himself in the form of these three worlds. [The three worlds are the ones revealed in the form of the three words uttered by the creator at the time of creation—viz. 'Bhu' referring to the terrestrial world, 'Bhuvaha' to the world above the earth, i.e. the sky, and 'Swaha' meaning the heavens where the Gods live. These three worlds also symbolically refer to the three states in which the consciousness exists—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or the dreaming state, and Sushupta or the deep sleep state which correspond to the Vishwa, Taijas and Pragya forms of existence.]

He is a bestower of all good fortunes and auspiciousness to all the creatures in creation. He gives the rewards to all according to the deeds done by them [13].

He is honoured by the eight 'Akchars'. [That is, he is praised by a Mantra having eight letters or syllables. This Mantra is 'OM Namoha Mahadevaye'.] It also means that he has revealed himself as the eight elements of creation that are 'imperishable, eternal and infinite' by nature—i.e. are 'Akchar'.

This supreme Divinity lives in the heart that is symbolically like a divine lotus with eight petals. [This vision of the heart as a lotus of eight petals is expounded in the Upanishads dealing with Yoga and Tantra.] [14]. (10-14).

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 4, verse nos. 34-42, 44 employ the metaphor of the bird (parrot) and an ant to describe the two types of creatures and the way they take to their Mukti or Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) citing the case of sage Shukdeo who was a parrot, and sage Vamdeo who represented an ant.

In its Canto 4, verse no. 34 it says that 'Sage *Shukdeo* (the parrot saint and son of sage Veda Vyas) found Jivan Mukti as did sage Vamdeo. But there was a subtle difference between the two types of Muktis. Those wise people who follow the path shown by sage Shukdeo find the ultimate liberation and deliverance for themselves in such a way that they do not have to come back into this world again, i.e. they obtain final emancipation and salvation.'

On the other hand, in its Canto 4, verse no. 34 it says that 'those who follow the example set by sage *Vamdeo* repeatedly die and take birth in this world. This cycle would continue for them till the time they find the Truth by practicing Yoga in relation to the profound philosophy known as Sankhya Shastra, understanding its

principle tenets and basic philosophy, besides painstakingly adhering to the theory of Karma (doing deeds correctly, with the proper perspective and wisdom, so that no consequence accrue which would create a baggage that is carried over to the next birth as destiny that forces the creature to enter a fresh cycle of birth and death). It is then only that they can get Mukti.’

In its Canto 4, verse no. 39 it says that those who practice Yoga do obtain Mukti just like sage Vamdeo did, but this involves due diligence and great effort. Followers of the path of Yoga are said to be the followers of the path shown by Vamdeo because they believe in obtaining Mukti through making diligent and hard efforts symbolised by their doing Yoga which is rigorous and involves painstaking efforts over a long period of time. Yoga is fraught with a lot of danger and hurdle as compared to the path of finding Mukti through the pursuance of the path of Gyan or acquisition of knowledge and enlightenment based on meditation and contemplation, study of the scriptures and pondering deeply upon their doctrines and other such methods that do not require rigid exercises and hard labour as required by Yoga.

³Sage *Shukdeo*—He was the son of the legendary seer and renowned sage Veda Vyas. He was highly respected and was born of the celestial maiden named Ghrataachi when she had taken the form of a parrot, called Shuka in Sanskrit, to produce Shukdeo. He had his education under the expert guidance of his father Veda Vyas (refer Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-20, and the entire Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition). He was fortunate enough to have as his wise Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) the legendary king Janak, the father of Sita of the Ramayan fame and the most self-realised and enlightened king of his time (refer Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 28-77) and Lord Shiva himself (refer Shuk Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda which was preached by Lord Shiva to Shukdeo).

His self restraint was so profound that the celestial Apsara, the dancing damsel of the court of Indra, the king of Gods, failed to trap him in her honey-trap of lust and passions. Shukdeo learnt the epic Bhagvata Mahapurana from his father and then narrated it to Parikshit at the culmination of the Dwapar Yug (the third era of the four-era celestial cycle of mythology) and the beginning of the present era called Kali Yug. In an incident narrated in Maho-panishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 21-27 it is described how sage Shukdeo had to wait for twenty-one days before king Janak granted him an audience to test his self control over anger, ego and self-pride of being a son of an enlightened father of the stature of sage Veda Vyas as well as his sincerity and steadfastness of purpose which are important virtues that must be present in a student of spiritualism and important criterion by which his eligibility as a disciple can be judged.

The Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda describes him as a truly Brahm-realised sage along with sage Sankaadi in its Canto 1, verse no. 47.

Shukdeo learnt the epic Bhagvata Mahapurana from his father and then narrated it to Parikshit at the culmination of the Dwapar Yug (the third era of the four-era celestial cycle of Hindu mythology) and the beginning of the present era called Kali Yug (which is the last of the four-Yug cycle).

⁴*Sanatkumar* and others called *Sankaadi Rishis*—Sage Sanatkumar is considered as one of the four Manas Putras or the mental-born sons of the creator Brahma. The other three are Sanak, Sanatsujaat and Sanandan. They are regarded in a perpetual state of boyhood. Together they are called ‘Sanakaadi Rishis’.

Sanatkumar had taught the greatness of Vishnu to demon Vrittaasur, the enemy of Indra, the king of Gods. He also taught spiritual wisdom to sage Narad, the celestial sage.

Sanatasujaat taught spiritual wisdom to Dhritrashtra who was the blind father of the Kauravas of the epic Mahabharat fame. Sanak is said to an eternal companion of Lord Vishnu. Sanandan is regarded as the ancient preacher of the Sankhya Shastra, even more ancient than Kapil.

Sanatkumar, along with sages Pippalaad and Angira, had approached sage Atharva to ask him about the highest form of meditation, the different aspects of OM and the culmination of spiritual journey by realising Brahm in the form of Shambhu, one of the names of Lord Shiva, in Atharva Veda's Atharva-shikha Upanishad.

It is narrated in the Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 7, verse no. 8, that he had gone to Lord Kalagnirudra, one of the forms of Lord Shiva and who had first revealed this Upanishad to one sage Bhusund (Brahmans 1-6) to learn about the metaphysical importance and spiritual value of the Rudraksha beads. [Rudraksha beads are the seeds of the tree *Eleocarpus ganitrus*.]

According to Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Sanatkumar was taught how to wear the Tripundra, the three lines marked on the forehead of all Hindus, by Lord Kalagnirudra himself.]

23. Lord Maheswar, the Great God ('Ishwar') and Lord of all the other gods, is truthful, is eternal, unchanging, steady and always omnipresent everywhere, is a (neutral and dispassionate) witness to all and everything (that is happening in this creation), is eternally blissful and happy, has no comparison or parallel in this creation, and is indescribable and incomprehensible.

The Lord or Bhagwan is also known as 'Girish' as he is the Lord of mountains. [This is because the symbolic abode of Shiva is said to be on the higher reaches of snow-covered Mt. Kailash. The reason for Shiva living in mountains is that he is the greatest Yogi or ascetic, and for an ascetic it is prescribed in the scriptures that he makes mountains and forests his abode. This is to help him in his meditation and contemplation or other forms of spiritual exercises. Mountains are places that give serenity, solitude, peace and tranquillity to the soul. They are the natural habitat for those who wish to pursue spiritual path of meditation and contemplation because they provide the aspirant with the perfect environment that fits their spiritual needs. Besides this, the mountains are metaphors for areas on earth where the positive energy of the consciousness is at its peak—and this is physically depicted in the form of high peaks of mountains that almost touch the sky.]

We say that the Lord lives there or anything else about the Lord only because we imagine it to be so, as it is just not possible to know about him (23).

24. Oh Suvrata (i.e. one who keeps auspicious vows)! The Lord's Maya (i.e. his delusion-creating tricks and highly mystical powers) is so confounding and mysterious that no one can be certain about him or about anything related to him so much so that even I, Brahma, the creator, and Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation, are mystified and most confounded and perplexed regarding the supreme Lord. It's very difficult to get out of the snare cast by this Maya of the Lord. [Refer verse no. 31. Briefly, Maya is the delusion creating power of Brahm, the Supreme Being. It was Maya that was used by Brahm to weave this fabric of creation just like a magician conjures up a magnificent scene on stage out of thin air. In the present context, Maya is a veil that surrounds and hides the 'truth'. One cannot know Brahm in entirety because of the shroud of Maya that surrounds the truth about Brahm. It is because of this veil of Maya that an ignorant person thinks that Brahm and the rest of creation are different and separate entities, that therefore Sharav, Rudra, Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu and all other such forms of the Divinity are independent Gods that are separate and distinct from one another and from Brahm. A person who thinks in this term is deluded. He forgets that the external form or features by which these Gods are recognised and known are the gross forms of the same universal Divinity known as Brahm, and that these gross forms are not the 'truthful' forms of Brahm because

the latter is the cosmic ‘Consciousness’ that is a most sublime and subtle entity instead of being gross in any way. The factor of ‘Consciousness’ is the same in all the external forms that Brahm has taken, and therefore it is only out of ignorance induced by Maya that one thinks these forms as being separate from Brahm. It is out of the deluding affects of Maya that one is unable to know and come to grips about the ‘truth of Brahm’. A Brahm-realised person is one who has overcome this Maya and is able to recognise the truth that exists behind the misleading external façade.]

But this Maya can be easily got over with by remembering or meditating upon the holy lotus-like feet of the Lord. [In other words, if one takes the shelter of the Lord and surrenders himself to the Lord’s holy feet, then the deluding effects of Maya do not touch such a devotee, Maya cannot cast its magical charm on him or in any way affect him because of the Lord’s grace. Maya is regarded as a maid servant of the Lord, and when the Lord is pleased by someone it is natural that the maid servant would keep her hands off from such a person. Refer Ramcharit Manas of Goswami Tulsidas, Uttar Kand, Doha 71, Kha; and Doha 72, Chaupai line no. 1.] (24).

25. [Now, after having praised Lord Shiva as the great God, this Upanishad moves on to praise Lord Vishnu in verse nos. 25-28 and establishing him on a high pedestal which is equivalent to that occupied by Shiva. This is very significant as it removes any doubts as to which of the two Lords is superior. In fact, a wise man would understand that both Shiva and Vishnu, and for that matter Brahma and all the other Gods are merely different forms of one Great God known as Brahm. Brahm has taken so many forms in order to fulfil myriad functions of this creation. It is a clear symbolism of delegation of authority by the central Authority known as Brahm who is like the Emperor of creation. Refer Tripadvibhūt Maha Narayan Upanishad, Purva Kanda, Canto 1 which is Chapter 11 of this volume.]

It is Lord Vishnu¹ who has created this entire creation. [This puts Vishnu on the same exalted pedestal as Brahm, the Supreme Being. In fact, this refers to the Viraat Purush, the all-encompassing, all-pervading and almighty macrocosmic invisible gross body of Brahm from which the rest of the visible and the invisible creation emerged, including Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder. Vishnu and Viraat Purush are regarded as the same Divinity having two names; they are synonymous with each other. But observed closely, the Viraat is the subtler form of Vishnu. When incarnations are being referred to, it is Vishnu who becomes relevant because he represents the slightly grosser aspect of Divinity (Brahm) as compared to the Viraat Purush. When the finer aspects of Brahm’s divine virtues and cosmic powers of Consciousness are being referred to, such as the Lord being omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing, then the Viraat Purush is implied. The term ‘Viraat Purush’ literally means the Lord who has a colossus form that is as vast, measureless and fathomless as this creation. This is the all-inclusive form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, as Vishnu. That is, Vishnu and the Viraat are synonymous with each other. The only probable difference between them is the level of subtlety of their existence—for while the Viraat is the subtler form of Brahm even before Brahma the creator came into existence, Vishnu is the less subtler form of Brahm as he is a contemporary of Brahma and one of the Trinity Gods. While the Viraat Purush is the cosmic form of Brahm from whom the entire creation came into being, Vishnu is that form of Brahm which is responsible for taking care of the creation once it came into being.]

Since on the one hand all the creatures are said to be born from a tiny fraction of Vishnu’s body (or the body of the Viraat Purush) and therefore represent Vishnu in

a microcosmic form, and on the other hand it is me, Brahma the creator, who is regarded as the creator of all the world and its creatures, it follows that in fact it is the Supreme Being known as the Viraat Purush or Brahm who has done both in as much as he has played the roles of a creator as well as that of a sustainer of the creation—i.e. he has subtly transformed himself as Brahma to create this world, and then assumed the role of Vishnu to become a sustainer and protector of what has been created by Brahma. [In other words, the Supreme Being known as the Viraat Purush plays two roles—as Brahma he creates, and as Vishnu he sustains and protects the creation.] (25).

[Note—¹*Vishnu* or Narayan—Lord *Vishnu* has many names such as Vasudeo, Narayan, Viraat Purush etc.

The word ‘Vishnu’ consists of two components—‘Vishwa’ meaning the world or the entire creation, and ‘Anu’ meaning an atom. Hence, this is made up of atoms called Vishnu, and therefore the latter pervades throughout this creation.

According to this verse, the whole creation is a manifestation of Vishnu, and therefore it represents Vishnu at the microcosmic level of creation. Vishnu is put on the same pedestal here as the Viraat Purush because the Upanishads say that the creation is created from the Viraat, and with Brahma the creator because this creation is created by him.

The *Viraat Purush* is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being, from whose body the rest of the creation, both the visible and the invisible, is said to have been formed; the Viraat embodies the whole creation in his own self. The word ‘Viraat’ itself means measureless, infinite, colossus and vast. The manifestation of Brahm as the Viraat includes Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder.

Usually, Vishnu and Viraat Purush are regarded as the same Divinity having two names; they are synonymous with each other. But observed closely, the Viraat is the subtler form of Vishnu. When incarnations are being referred to, it is Vishnu who becomes relevant because he represents the slightly grosser aspect of Divinity (Brahm) as compared to the Viraat Purush. When the finer aspects of Brahm’s divine virtues and cosmic powers of Consciousness are being referred to, such as the Lord being omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing, then the Viraat Purush is implied. The term ‘Viraat Purush’ literally means the Lord who has a colossus form that is as vast, measureless and fathomless as this creation. This is the all-inclusive form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, as Vishnu. That is, Vishnu and the Viraat are synonymous with each other. The only probable difference between them is the level of subtlety of their existence—for while the Viraat is the subtler form of Brahm even before Brahma the creator came into existence, Vishnu is the less subtler form of Brahm as he is a contemporary of Brahma and one of the Trinity Gods. While the Viraat Purush is the cosmic form of Brahm from whom the entire creation came into being, Vishnu is that form of Brahm which is responsible for taking care of the creation once it came into being.

Since on the one hand all the creatures are said to be born from a tiny fraction of Vishnu’s body (or the body of the Viraat Purush) and therefore represent Vishnu in a microcosmic form, and on the other hand it Brahma, the creator, who is regarded as the creator of all the world and its creatures, it follows that in fact it is the Supreme Being known as the Brahm, in his cosmic form as the Viraat or Vishnu, who has done both the jobs of creation and sustenance—i.e. he has subtly transformed himself as Brahma to create this world, and then assumed the role of Vishnu to become a sustainer and protector of what has been created by Brahma. [In other words, the Supreme Being known as the Viraat Purush or Vishnu plays two roles—as Brahma he creates, and as Vishnu he sustains and protects the creation.

Lord Vishnu, as the Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and it is from this form of Brahm that the creator of the visible creation, i.e. Brahma the

old patriarch of creation, had emerged atop a divine lotus that sprouted from the navel of Vishnu. Lord Vishnu is the sustainer and the care-taker of the world. He is the most important of the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma, the creator, and Shiva, the concluder. It's easy to produce and destroy, but a mammoth task to sustain and nourish what has been born.

Vishnu is also known by the name of *Vasudeo* because he is the sustainer and protector of creation, signifying his undisputed lordship over all the essential elements in Nature, called the Vasus of which there are eight in number, and which were created at the beginning of creation to help sustain the upcoming creation. It ought to be noted here that Vishnu is also called Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and it is from this form of Brahm that the creator of the visible creation, i.e. Brahma the old patriarch of creation, had emerged atop a divine lotus that sprouted from the navel of Vishnu. In other words, everything has its origin in the supreme Brahm.

Lord *Narayan* and Vishnu are synonymously treated in the scriptures. The etymology of the word Narayan is—the primary one who has his abode in the primordial causal waters of the cosmos; one who is the abode of all living creatures; one who has his residence in the bosom of all living beings as their Atma or pure self or consciousness; one who is the final goal of all spiritual pursuits. When the transcendental Supreme Being decided to initiate creation, his first revelation was Hiranyagarbha which represented the macrocosmic subtle body of creation, and from it emerged the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic gross body of creation. This 'Viraat' is literally the vast, infinite, measureless, fathomless and colossal form of the supreme Brahm, a form which is all-pervasive, all-encompassing, all-inclusive, immanent and omnipresent in creation. The 'Purush' is literally an entity that lives inside a dwelling, here referring to as the pure consciousness that lives as the Atma of all the living beings. (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/5/18-19). This Viraat Purush is therefore the vast and all-inclusive cosmic Consciousness that entered the gross body of the creature and found a comfortable abode in the heart as his Atma. This Viraat Purush at the macro level of creation is known as Vishnu, the one who lives immanently in this creation, inseparable from it and forming its integral part.

Since Narayan or Vishnu is the term used to imply the Viraat Purush who is Brahm personified at the macrocosmic level of creation, it follows that Narayan or Vishnu is the supreme Lord of creation. It is from him that the rest of the creation has emerged. All forces of creation, right from their origin till their conclusion, have this Narayan representing Brahm as their primary source. It is Narayan that is the eternal fountain from which they all the dynamic forces of creation derive their independent strengths, abilities, authorities, potentials and powers. The primary forces are represented by Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, protector and nourisher, and Shiva the concluder. The other elements of creation are the sky, air, fire, water and earth. Indra represents the chief force that controls all other unit forces of creation, and therefore he has been depicted as the 'king of Gods' because all the Gods are deemed to personify one or the other aspects of the divine forces of creation which are responsible for controlling the various facets of the multifarious and varied creation. For example, Aditya or the Sun gives light, heat and energy to the creation in their twelve forms, including the visible Sun in the sky. The Vasus represent the essential assets that are needed to sustain all forms of life on this earth. Rudras represent the dynamic and forceful nature of a creature that helps it be pro-active and assertive in this world, to protect the assets generated by him and give protection to the society and his dependants by the use of force if necessary. And so on and so forth.

Narayan or Vishnu has *dark blue hue* as his complexion, symbolizing the blue colour of the endless sky which implies that wherever there is sky Lord Narayan is invariably present at the place. Lord Vishnu has all the virtues of the sky element—viz. he is eternal, infinite, fathomless, detached, omnipresent, all-encompassing, all-

pervading, neutral, detached, dispassionate, and the bearer of the entire creation. This colour of Vishnu stands for the sky element of creation.

He has *four arms* signifying the four quarters or quadrants of the compass, implying that the Lord controls and protects all the corners of the creation.

The *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda describes the various weapons of Lord Vishnu as follows—“He looks glorious with his many weapons which always accompany him. They are the Sudarshan Chakra (the serrated discus that is designed like a circular saw), the Panchjanya Shankh (the conch with five stripes), the Padma (the lotus), the Kaumodki Gadaa (the mace), the Nandak Khang (the sword), the Shaarnag Dhanush (the bow), the Musal or the Gadaa (the mace, the pestle, the hammer, the rammer, the dumbbell), the Parigha (the spear or pike) and other such divine weapons.”

Now, let us examine these weapons and their significance.

His *Shankha* (conch) stands for the sky as well as the wind element because the conch is hollow and it makes a resounding sound when air is blown into it. This sound represents the cosmic Naad, the background sound in ether from which, it is visualized by ancient sages and seers, that the entire creation emerged and derived its primary energy and dynamism. It is this Naad from which all forms of the languages are created, and the sound of the conch is so loud that it is heard for long distances. Hence, the sound of the conch stands for the generation and the propagation of life as well as of knowledge.

It is known as the *Panchjanya Shankha*. There is a legend associated with this *Panchjanya Shankha* (conch). There was a demon named Panchajanya. He lived in a minuscule form inside a conch at the bottom of the ocean. Once he ate the son of sage Saandipani. Lord Krishna had killed this demon, and retrieved the sage's son from the Yamloka, the abode of the God of death known as Yama. Krishna had taken this Shankha then, and it is called 'Panchanjanya' after the demon who lived in it.

The Shankha has a great symbolism when used by Lord Vishnu. It proclaims the presence of the Lord when he blows it. The sound of the conch is heard far and wide. According to some accounts, the conch alone stands for all the five elements of creation—viz. the sky, the air, the water, the fire and the earth. Now, let us analyse how the Shankha or conch stands for the five elements as observed here. The conch is hollow from the inside, indicating the sky or space element. It produces sound when air is blown into it, indicating the presence of the air element. The snail had this as its dwelling, and this snail lives in water. Thus, the conch indicates the fire element because it is this fire that helps a creature to survive even in water. The conch is formed in water and not on dry land like trees and terrestrial animals—indicating its origin in the water element. The body of the conch is hard calcium like the rocks and solid surface of the earth, indicating the presence of earth element as its integral part.

His *Padma* (the Lotus flower) stands for the water element as this flower grows in water and cannot survive without it.

The Padma or Lotus is a symbol of purity and cleanliness amongst the surrounding filth because the dirty water of the pond where the lotus grows does not stick to the petals of the lotus flower. It also signifies the fact that the Lord accepts only the best and the auspicious from amongst all in this creation because the lotus flower grows in dirty water of the pond but is untouched by its filth. So these divine virtues of purity and cleanliness are one of the many glorious virtues of Lord Vishnu.

The word 'Padma' also refers to the origin of creation because the creator Brahma was born atop the lotus that emerged from the navel of the Viraat Purush at the time of creation, as well as the fact that the opening of the bud of the flower is an imaginative way of depicting the unfolding or the emergence of creation from the primeval water. It symbolizes the continuously evolving world because lotus springs forth from water, and this world also springs forth from the causal waters of the cosmos and then grows in the vast ethereal space of the sky.

It also regarded as being closely related to the Sun and that is why it opens up when the Sun rises, and closes at sunset. Since the light of the Sun is a metaphor for wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment and purity of thoughts and actions, the Lotus in the hands of Vishnu indicates the presence of these eclectic virtues in the Lord, or that the Lord symbolises these auspicious and divine virtues and qualities of creation.

The Padma is also a symbol of Goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of good fortunes and wealth. Laxmi is depicted in iconography as being seated on a divine lotus in full bloom.

The *Chakra* (discus) is a weapon of Vishnu that is designed like a serrated wheel and is depicted as being brilliantly illuminated and glowing hot like the fire. It is also ruthless like the fire and destroys everything falling in its path. Hence, it stands for the fire element as well as the power of the Lord to destroy all obstacles. It also signifies that Vishnu is able to reduce to ashes all the corruptions and evil forces of creation. The Chakra also stands for the cosmic mind, because like the restlessness and the tendency of the mind to continuously fly from one subject to another without pause, the Chakra too keeps on revolving and flying off to pursue its targets relentlessly on the instructions of Vishnu. Further, the Chakra also is used as a metaphor for this creation which has been visualized in the form of a cosmic wheel.

This Chakra is called *Sudarshan Chakra*. The word ‘Sudarshan’ means ‘one that is auspicious, pleasing and comforting in appearance or to behold’. The ‘Chakra’ means ‘a circle or ring’ and it refers to a circular weapon which is like a round iron saw with hardened and sharp teeth. It is this invincible weapon that Vishnu uses more often than the rest to overcome the evil forces of creation.

According to legend, it was gifted to Vishnu by Lord Shiva when the latter was pleased by the former’s offering of worship to him at Kashi (Varanasi).

A great chunk of the first half of Canto 7 of the Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to this discus.

His *Musal* or *Gadaa* (mace, rammer, hammer, battle-ram, dumbbell) stands for the earth element because it is as heavy and gross as the latter. This Gadaa also stands for the cosmic intellect because the intellect is used to keep a strict control over one’s wayward mind and its inherent fickleness, over one’s sense organs and their inherent restlessness etc. This signifies the ability of the Lord to be able to exercise infallible control over all aspects of creation. Being a metaphor for the intellect, the Gadaa also symbolizes the Lord’s ability to separate the auspicious and the righteous from the evil and the pervert, or to forcefully subdue the evil, pervert and corrupting forces of creation symbolized by the wayward and restless mind as well as the indulgent organs of the body.

The Gadaa is known as the *Kaumodki Gadaa*. It has the following connotation. The word ‘Kaumodki’ consists of two parts—viz. ‘Ku’ meaning ‘earth’, and ‘moda’ meaning ‘happiness. Hence, the mace of Lord Vishnu gives happiness to all the righteous creatures on earth by protecting them against the evil forces represented by demons.

It is called a ‘Gadaa’ because it was moulded from the strong bones of a demon named ‘Gadaa’, and hence bears his name. The demon gave up his bones to respect the wishes of the creator Brahma, who then got a mace crafted out of it at the hand of Vishwakarma, the God’s engineer, and kept it with Varun, the Water God. It was given to Lord Krishna at the request of Agni, the Fire God, when the former had got the Khaandava forest consumed by fire.

The *Nandak Khanga* (sword)—The word ‘Nandak’ means ‘one which gives joy and happiness to the Gods’. The Agnipuran, Chapter 245, describes an interesting episode regarding this Nandak sword. Once, the creator Brahma was performing a fire sacrifice on the banks of river Ganges. A demon named Lohaasur (the demon with a body of iron) came to disturb it. Suddenly, a male warrior-like figure emerged from Brahma’s body. He got transformed into a sword which was given by the assembled Gods to Lord Maha Vishnu who used it to kill the demon and chop his

body into pieces. The Lord then accepted the sword as one of his permanent companions, and named it 'Nandak'—the one that gave happiness and joys to the Gods because it helped to kill the demon who was the cause of their troubles.

The sword called Nandak symbolizes the grand virtues of erudition, sagacity, enlightenment and wisdom. It is the powerful intellect that is able to discriminate between the right and the wrong, and cut through all obstacles in the path of righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility and virtuousness, i.e. the path of Dharma.

The bow called *Saarang*—This symbolizes the cosmic senses of the Viraat Purush. This bow of Lord Vishnu is also known as the *Shaankhya Dhanush* (bow). It was made from the bones of demon named Shaankhya-chuda after he was killed by Lord Shiva.

The *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 7, paragraph no. 68 says that the Lord's chest is adorned by the Srivatsa, the Kaustav and the Vanmaalaa. Now, let us see what they are.

The *Srivatsa*—This is the mark of the foot of sage Bhrigu which he had caste on the chest of Vishnu ones when he got annoyed upon the Lord. The Lord is so enamoured of his devotees that instead of taking umbrage at this disrespect shown by the sage and punishing him for his misdemeanour, he had blessed the sage that his footprint would always remain on his chest as one of the jewels worn by Lord Vishnu. However, Laxmi was so angry at the temerity of sage Brighu that she cursed that henceforth she, in the form of wealth and material abundance, would always shun a Brahmin; it is believed that this is the reason why Brahmins, who are otherwise of a high birth, are always serving others in the society who are junior to them by birth for their monetary needs.

The *Kaustav Mani*—This is a glittering gem worn by Lord Vishnu, and it covers the sign of the Srivatsa. It was obtained at the time of the legendary churning of the ocean and automatically got lodged on the Lord's chest. {Mahabharat, Adiparva, 18.}

The *Vanmaalaa*—This is a garland (mala) worn by Vishnu and is made of flowers of the forest/wild (Van). The flowers are of a wide variety with those of the Kadamba tree (*Nauclea cadamba*) being in the center or the dominant ones. Sometimes, marigold, daisy or xanthium flowers are shown as being used in this garland.

Lord Vishnu has twelve close attendants, and their names have been given in the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 7, paragraph 49 in the context of worshipping them while offering oblations to the worship instrument, called the Yantra. These attendants are headed by Vishwakshen. The list of the twelve attendants is as follows—Vishwakshen, Aachakraaye, Vichakraaye, Suchakraaye, Dhi-chakraaye, Sanchakraaye, Jawalchakraaye, Krudholakaaye, Maholkaaye, Viryolkaaye, Vidyolkaaye, and Sastrolkaaye.

The *vehicle* of Narayan or Vishnu is the bird called *Garud* (eagle or heron), and it symbolizes the spoken word. This is because spoken words are transmitted from one point to another by the medium of the sky just like the bird flying from one tree to another. Words and ideas are transmitted from one person to the other like the bird flying off from one tree and perching on another. That is why speech is likened to a bird. Garud is regarded as a personification of the knowledge contained in the Vedas because this knowledge is transmitted through the means of speech. Besides this point, there is another way of looking at this aspect. The knowledge contained in the Vedas help a wise man to reach his spiritual destination much like Lord Vishnu employing the services of Garud if he wants to go any place. The eagle is known to have a long range of vision and flies high up in the sky. The Garud is able to have a broad perspective of the sight seen below because from its high perch in the sky. This indicates the virtues of Vishnu in having wider knowledge and broad vision of life as well as to remain aloof from the humdrum affairs of the deluding world below. The Garud is extremely fast and reaches its destination in a fraction of a second—indicating the almost instantaneous reach of the Lord in all the directions of the

creation. Since the Gurud is able to fly it also stands for the imaginative abilities of the mind, and since it has a penetrating vision that sees long distances he stands for the sharp and wise intellect that has foresight and deep insight.

Narayan or Vishnu is said to recline on the bedstead of *Sheshnath* or the legendary serpent of thousand hoods who floats on the calm waters of the *Kshirsagar*. Now, let us examine their symbolisms.

The word 'Shesh' means 'leftover or remainder', and 'Naath' means the Lord. At the time of conclusion of creation, 'something' remains from which the new creation would come into being. It is this 'cosmic entity' into which the previous creation collapses and dissolves at the time of its conclusion. It is from this 'cosmic entity', the 'remainder' of the last creation, that the first signs of the new creation would emerge. Hence, the Seshnath represents the cosmic entity that remains after the creation ends. He is the 'Lord' (Naath) of what remains of this creation. Since Lord Vishnu is the unquestioned 'Lord and the Supreme Being' of this creation who remains even after everything comes to an end, and it is from him that the next phase of creation emerges, he is depicted in the Purans and in iconography as being reclining on the Seshnath. Sheshnath also represents the sum total of all the souls in their subtle forms which have been leftovers from the previous generation or cycle of creation, hibernating and waiting for the opportune time to remerge as a new creation. In this context, the *Kshirsagar*, or the ocean of celestial milk called Amrit upon which this Sheshnath floats, is like the preservative ambrosial fluid which sustains life and gives it nourishment during the time it is in hibernating phase before the commencement of new creation or springing forth of a new generation of living organisms. The Kshirsagar also represents the cosmic primordial gel from which the creation was moulded by the Viraat Purush at the time of creation.

The Kshirsagar, which is the celestial ocean of milk indicating Amrit or the ambrosial fluid of eternity and bliss, also signifies that Lord Vishnu is perpetually in a state of blissfulness, beatitude and felicity as he is constantly surrounded by its waters. That is why he is depicted as reclining blissfully and peacefully on the back of the Sheshnath while the latter floats on this ambrosia of blissfulness and immortality.

Again, since Amrit is a bestower of eternity and immortality, Lord Vishnu too is immortal and eternal because he is drenched by the spray of the waters of the Kshirsagar as it heaves and splashes against the body of the Seshnath.

This ocean known as Kshirsagar indicates the primordial fluid from which the rest of the creation is formed, and hence it is the 'causal water' or the causative factor which is at the foundation of all living creation coming into being; it is the wellspring of life in all its varied forms. The scriptures describe that earlier there was water everywhere, and from this primordial fluid emerged the earth and the fire element that kept this earth warm, making it habitable and enabling it to harbour life forms. This fact has been affirmed in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 2, verse no. 2, and the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, the Book of Genesis, verse nos. 9-11.

Lord Vishnu's name first appears in the Rig Veda, 1/154-156. The Lord represents all that is virtuous, noble, righteous, auspicious, high and glorious in this creation. He is all pervading, all encompassing and omnipresent.

He is a personification of Yagya, or the various religious sacrifices (Shatpath Brahman, 1/1/2/13). The Lord has taken numerous forms and revealed himself on different occasions to uphold good and righteous, and trounce bad and evil. Lord Vishnu is also depicted as a synonymous deity for Brahm; he is Brahm personified.

The scriptures describes the various twenty-four incarnations of Vishnu which are called his 'Vyuhas' of Vishnu. A detailed note appended to the Tripadvibhuth Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 18 of Chapter 11 of this volume describes all these incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

The divine glories of Lord Vishnu have been extolled in the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition which is entirely dedicated to him, but especially in its Canto 1, paragraph 5-6, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 11-12, Canto 7, paragraph nos. 67-68, and Canto 8, paragraph nos. 17, as well as in *Vishnu Puran*, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70.

Vishnu is a revered deity honoured by all the Vedas. He appears in all of them, for instance—Rig Veda—1/154-156; 5/3/3; 7/99/1-3; 7/100; Sam Veda—222; 1625-27; Yajur Veda—5/15; 6/4; Atharva Veda—3/27/5.

The *Subalo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 6 also describes the omnipresent and all pervading form of Narayan.

The *Narayan Sukta* has six verses and it appears in the Shukla Yajur Veda. It reveals the genesis of creation in a very succinct way besides extolling and glorifying the primary Lord of creation known as Narayan. The Rishi of this Sukta is Narayan, the Devta is Aditya (Sun God), and Chanda is Trishtup.

Lord Vishnu is the sustainer, nourisher and the caretaker of the world. Therefore, he is regarded as one of the eight mighty Digpals/Digpaals (the main caretakers and superior custodian Gods) of creation. He is the most important of the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma, the creator, and Shiva, the concluder. It's easy to produce and destroy, but a mammoth task to sustain and nourish what has been born.

According to Purans, even Brahma and Shiva have been created from Vishnu. Brahma emerged sitting atop a divine Lotus that sprouted from the Vishnu's navel in his subtler form as the Viraat Purush, a form that existed before the creation began to take shape in its grosser forms, as he lay reclined in the celestial ocean of milk, known as the Kshir-Sagar, on the bedstead of Sheshnath, the legendary serpent that floated on the surface of this ocean. On the other hand, Shiva is said to be born from his forehead when the Viraat Purush deeply meditated and a few drops of sweat emerged due to intense concentration and effort he was making.

The *Yogattva Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 2 describes Vishnu as a Maha-Yogi, Maha-Bhut and Maha-Tapa.

There is a full Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition dedicated to the theme of Vishnu or Narayan. It is called *Narayano-panishad*.

The *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 1 clearly says that it is Lord Vishnu who had incarnated himself as Lord Ram. In its Canto 5, verse no. 9 it is said that at the time of Lord Ram's departure from earth, all the four divine arms of Lord Vishnu (Shankha or conch, Gadaa or mace, Chakra or discus, and Padma or lotus) that had accompanied the Lord during his incarnation as Ram too went to heaven with the Lord.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 1-4 describe how the various aspects of Lord Vishnu known by different names had accompanied the Lord in his incarnation as Lord Ram. Hence, Sankarshan (one of the forms of Vishnu) incarnated as Laxman, Pradumna as Shatrughan, and Aniruddha as Bharat. These three divine forms of Vishnu became the three brothers of Lord Ram who himself was none other than Lord Vishnu himself. The fact that Lord Ram was the great Lord Vishnu himself is again reiterated in this Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 3, 4/5, 4/10, 4/41, 4/45.

The *Paingalo-panishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 1, verse nos. 6 and 10 describes Vishnu in the context of the genesis of creation.

An entire Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition is dedicated to Lord Narayan or Vishnu. It is called 'Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad'. It forms Chapter 11 of our current volume.]

26. Everything in existence comes to an end in a regular cycle and in a sequential order when the time comes. Therefore, everything is impermanent, mortal and perishable, and hence false and illusionary. [This is because if they would have been

real and truthful then they would have been permanent and immortal, as ‘truth’ never ends and it is constant.]

OM salutations! We pay our obeisance and greatest of respect to that Great Lord known as Mahadev (literally the great God or Lord) holding the ‘Shul’ (the invincible and strong spear or any sharp pointed weapon, here meaning the trident held by Shiva) who devours everything and brings them to an end. [That is, Shiva is the Authority that concludes this creation.]

At the same time our obeisance and greatest of respect are meant for the same Lord Maheshwar (literally the great Ishwar or God or Lord) known as Rudra (or Shiva) who is ever so merciful, gracious, benevolent and munificent on all (26).

27. It is only Lord Vishnu who is the supreme, unique, most exalted, most mystical and most enigmatic divine Authority in creation.

Though Vishnu is the Lord who enjoys everything in this world in his gross worldly form as all living beings in whose body the Lord lives as the universal Consciousness (known as the Atma) that lends their bodies life and vitality to enjoy the material things of the world, the Lord himself is absolutely neutral, constant, steady and un-involved (27).

[Note—That is, though the Lord plays a dual role of being the consumer of everything as the creature on the one hand, and as the consumed thing on the other hand—a paradoxical situation because of the fact that each unit and aspect of creation is one or the other manifestation of the same Brahm—he himself remains constant and steady, neither being the consumer nor the consumed. To understand this phenomenon we can take a simple example from material science which says that energy only changes its form and is never consumed or depleted.

For instance, energy may change its form from, say, heat to light as in the electric bulb, from electrical to kinetic and heat as in the dynamo and the motor, and so on and so forth. But the basic entity known as ‘energy’ is the same in all its variations. Similarly, Brahm is the consumer as well as the consumed—meaning one thing is transferred from, say, pocket ‘A’ and placed in pocket ‘B’. In both the cases, it does not mean that the principal thing itself is either depleted or destroyed or changed in any manner whatsoever. It only undergoes transformation but retains its intrinsic quality, virtue and identity.

Let us take another instance. If water is placed in two containers of different shapes and sizes—one, say, tubular and the other conical—it would still remain the same thing, it would still remain water, though its external form and shape are different.

Therefore we conclude that energy in any form would always be ‘energy’, and water in any form or container would still be ‘water’.

Refer verse no. 29 below which explicitly explains this concept.]

28. ‘That Lord (Vishnu) to whom four, two and five oblations are offered during fire sacrifices, let that Lord (Vishnu) be pleased with me.’ (28).

29. The offering that is made to Brahm is in its self Brahm personified. This offering is offered to the sacred fire which is also Brahm personified, and the person making such an offering is also Brahm personified. Even the process of making the offerings is also Brahm from start to finish. [This is unique instance of the philosophy of Advaitya or non-duality which espouses that ‘everything is Brahm’. The person who does the fire sacrifice, the things that are used for making offerings, and the sacred fire to which this offering is made, besides the actual deed of doing the fire sacrifice—all are nothing but Brahm in these apparently separate and distinct forms.

In other words, even though the various units of creation might appear to be separated from one another and apparently have no relation with each other, but when analysed intelligently at the fundamental level of existence they all turn out to be one single unit known as ‘creation’, and since ‘creation’ is uniformly pervaded by Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, it follows that basically they are all Brahm in their individual forms.]

This is why those ascetics who have attained Samadhi or those who have reached the eclectic state of transcendental existence, there is only one non-dual Brahm to be attained. [This is because no matter which deity they worship and pay their respects to, they are actually worshipping and respecting Brahm in that form.] (29).

30. The Lord known as Hari (which is one of the names of Vishnu) shines or reveals himself in the form of omnipresent Consciousness or the various life-factors known as ‘Pran’ that are constantly and invariably present in all the organs of a creature’s body. Such a living creature who embodies Hari or Vishnu in this visible form is known as ‘Shar’.

The eclectic and mystical divine entity that entitles the creature to be known as Shar (i.e. a creature having life and conscious pulsating throughout his body which would have been dead and lifeless had it not been for this ‘consciousness’ that is present inside it) is called ‘Sharav’. Indeed, this Sharav is Brahm who bestows Moksha to the creature (i.e. Brahm provides emancipation and salvation, or liberation and deliverance to the creature’s soul, which is the latter’s ‘true self’). [The universal source of life known as ‘Consciousness’ that lends life to the otherwise lifeless gross body of a creature is known as Sharav. And since ‘Consciousness’ is another name for Brahm it follows that Sharav is no one else but the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm. The creature who is empowered by Brahm, the creature having ‘Consciousness’ in his body, is known as ‘Shar’.] (30).

31. Even the exalted Gods get trapped and deluded by the immense powers of the Lord’s maverick Maya (refer verse no. 24) which cause such delusions as Mamta (having love and endearment for anything in this world inspite of being aware of its grossness, perishability, impermanence and falsehood) etc.—say, who can ever describe even a part of the immense magnitude and great reach of the Lord’s enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious power known as Maya when it is so powerful and effective that it can even delude the Gods? (31).

32. Hari (one of the names of Lord Vishnu which literally means the one who ‘steals’ or eliminates all the torments as well as the evil effects of sins and other misdemeanours of the creature) is beyond (superior to) the transcendental Brahm (meaning the invisible all-pervading Lord), and Isha (literally the ‘Lord’ of all or ‘one who rules over the entire creation’) is beyond (superior to) Hari. Therefore, there is no one equal to or greater than Isha (32).

[Note—If we examine this verse carefully in the context of what has been said earlier about Shiva or Rudra as being the eliminator of all torments, as the supreme Lord who is beyond the reach and understanding of the mind and speech, who is the undisputed Lord God of the entire creation, we come to the conclusion that all the three names mentioned here, viz. Hari, Brahm and Isha, essentially refer to the same Divinity. This is the basic philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta—the philosophy of non-duality, the doctrine that says that it is the same Truth called the universal and eternal cosmic Consciousness that has been given different names according to the various

functions it performs and the forms it assumes in this creation. In essence the terms 'Hari' and 'Sharav' too mean the same thing even literally—because both these words mean 'the one who eliminates or destroys'. In the case of Hari it means the destruction and elimination of the evils and sorrows of the devotee, and in the case of Sharav it means the one who had eliminated and destroyed the evil body of the Nrisingh. The soul of Nrisingh was being tormented by this most unconventional and horrible body as it was half man and half lion. So when this body was torn apart by Sharav, the soul found its freedom and peace from this tormenting existence.

The word 'Isha' means the 'Lord', and since it is usually applied to Lord Shiva, it follows that Shiva is the 'Lord' of creation. But the Upanishads have unequivocally and repeatedly stressed on the oneness of the 'soul' which is nothing but pure and truthful 'consciousness' though the latter might assume myriad forms. Therefore, all these names of Hari, Vishnu, Sharav, Rudra etc. apply to the same divine Being known as Brahm.

In other words, Hari, usually meaning Vishnu, Isha, usually meaning Shiva, and Brahm, usually meaning the Supreme Being, are all one and the same Divinity called by different names and playing different roles in creation.]

33-34. Shiva¹ is the only truthful, eternal and imperishable entity that remains infinitely constant, steady and unchanging, that is immutable and indivisible. Except Shiva everything else is un-truth, illusionary and false.

That is why besides the other exalted God known as Vishnu, the aspirant should meditate and contemplate only upon Lord Shiva who is the Lord (like Vishnu) who can help the aspirant to break free from all the fetters that shackle him down and prevent his liberation and deliverance from this ensnaring world.

We pay our sincere obeisance and the greatest of respect to Maheshwar (the great Lord God) who provides Mukti or liberation and deliverance from the formidable snare of this world which is very difficult to break free from, as well as is the Lord who devours everything in this world. [Refer verse nos. 5, 10, 17-18, 23, 26 and 30 in this context.] (33-34).

[Note—¹*Shiva*— This word *Shiva* refers to the third God of the Trinity, and the one who has been assigned the task of bringing the world to an end. The word itself briefly means the eclectic, glorious and beautiful virtues of truthfulness, purity, auspiciousness, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity, blissfulness, dispassion, detachment, holiness and divinity. These are accompanied by a high degree of peace, tranquility, serenity and their attendant happiness, joy and bliss. Since 'truthfulness and auspiciousness' are qualities that are beautiful, this word also means something that is beautiful and beyond reproach.

Various names of Lord Shiva—Lord Shiva is considered as the most exalted and wisest amongst the Gods, and is therefore honoured with the epithet 'Maha Dev' or the Great God, and 'Maheshwar' or the Great Ishwar as he is regarded as the supreme Lord of the entire creation. [Refer Atharva Veda's Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 34, Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika 4; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 1.]

This is why he is also called 'Ishan'. [Refer Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika 4.]

As the concluder of creation he is known as 'Rudra' because then he has to assume a ruthless and angry form. [Refer Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 10.]

In his form as the liberator of the soul of the creature by destroying the latter's gross external body and freeing the soul, he is known as Sharav. Shiva had assumed this form to liberate Lord Vishnu from the horrible body of Nrisingh (half man and half lion). [Refer Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 6-8.]

He is known as Trinetrum or Trayambak as he has three eyes. [Refer (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 6; and Canto 2, paragraph

no. 21; Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 10, 14; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4; (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 93.]

He is called Pashupati because he is the Lord of lowly creatures with animal-like instincts. [Refer References: (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 8; Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 14. (ii) Sam Veda = Jabalu-panishad, verse nos. 11-18.]

One of his names is Kaamaari because the Lord had reduced the God of passions, known as Kamdeo-cupid, to ashes. [Refer Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 15.]

He is known as Neelkanth because he had drunk the horrible poison called Halaahal which emerged as a scorching froth at the time of churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit or the ambrosia of life and eternity. [Refer Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 11, 16.]

He is known as Shambhu as he is the one who remains uniform, unruffled and calm even under adverse situations. Shambhu is one who exists or is established in an enlightened state of highest consciousness (i.e. is 'Bhu') that is marked by perfect self control, complete neutrality, absolute tranquility, serenity, peacefulness and blissfulness (i.e. is 'Sham'). [Refer Atharvashikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Kandika 3.]

The *Maho-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 7 describes that Shiva was born from the forehead of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, invisible and all-inclusive gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 41 espouses that Shiva lives in the heart of the creature as an embodiment of 'Sat-Chit-Anand', i.e. as his Atma—"Shiva, as Sat-Chit-Anand personified, always lives in the heart. He is a constant witness of all that is happening. That is why the heart is regarded as the doorway to liberation and deliverance from the traps that have been laid out by this delusory and cunning world of artificiality to ensnare the creature in its tentacles."

The *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition was preached by Lord Shiva himself to sage Jabal Bhusund, and it highlights the fact that Lord Shiva is no ordinary God, or even a senior one being a member of the Trinity of Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder, but is the supreme transcendental Brahm himself personified. Shiva is the Supreme Being himself. Refer Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 1; Canto 2, paragraph no. 3, 6-8.

The *Atharvashikha Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 3 declares that 'Shambhu', one of the many epithets of Lord Shiva, is the highest deity to be worshipped and adored, and he represents the fifth state of consciousness that is called the Turiyateet, and to the fourth aspect of the ethereal word OM. This Shambhu or Shiva is Brahm in its best and most pristine form.

The *Yogtattva Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 92-94 says that Lord Shiva, in his form as Rudra, is the patron deity and personification of the fire element, and it is no wonder then that he is surrounded by 'fire-spitting' serpents as a symbolism of this fact. In this Upanishad's verse nos. 98-102 it is asserted that Shiva is the patron deity and personification of the sky element.

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 8, 10, 13, 15 and 19 affirms that Shiva is invariably wrapped by serpents.

The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes Lord Shiva as the south-facing Lord and elaborately elucidates the metaphysical significance of this from.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 4, verse no. 29 says that the Lord with three eyes (Trinetrum) is the bearer of this world having three aspects or the one who is the foundation upon which all the three Gunas such as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna rest (Trigunadhaaram) and is the one from whom the Trinity Gods (i.e. the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder Rudra) are born. This Lord is none other than Lord Maheshwar, the great

Ishwar or Lord of creation who is also known as Shiva, Ishan, Isha etc. This Lord is synonymous with the supreme transcendental Brahm. This fact is endorsed Krishna Yajur Veda's *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 32, and in *Dakshin Murti* or *Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad*.

As the deity of the fire element, he is said to have 'three eyes' (*Yogattva Upanishad*, verse no. 93), and as the deity of the sky element he is depicted as having a moon tucked in his lock of hairs, besides having five mouths, ten arms and three eyes (*Yogattva Upanishad*, verse no. 100). Now let us see their significance.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/42 says that it is Lord Ram who has manifested as 'Maheshwar', the great God. Since this term is conventionally applied to Lord Shiva, it follows that Shiva is actually Lord Ram in this form. Its verse no. 4/43 clearly endorses this view when it says that Lord Ram has manifested himself as Mahadev—the great God. This term 'Mahadev' is also conventionally used for Lord Shiva.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 8 describes the great Mantra of Lord Shiva which gives the worshipper the stature equivalent to Lord Shiva.

The significance of the *moon, the five heads and the ten arms*—

Lord Shiva has been depicted in the Purans as having a *crescent moon* on his forehead. The moon is said to have sixteen Kalaas or phases, symbolising the sixteen Kalaas or aspects out of the total of sixty four Kalaas of the supreme Brahm. These sixteen Kalaas represent the visible world which is one fourth part of the entire creation consisting of the remaining of the Kalaas of Brahm. The visible world is called 'one Pada' or one leg or one aspect or Kalaa of Brahm. So, Shiva is the Lord who presides over the entire visible part of creation, and this world is his ornamentation in the sense that the Lord appears to be so beautiful if we consider the beauty of Nature as the astounding beauty and the expert craftsmanship of Shiva on display.

The moon present on Shiva's forehead also stands for the various eclectic qualities called Kalaas that he possesses and which adorn him like the moon. Symbolically, the devotee is advised to follow the example of his chosen deity Lord Shiva and note the symbolism of the Moon on his head. These eclectic qualities should be as prominent as the moon on the head of Shiva and they should form an integral part of the character of the devotee if he wishes to place himself in the position of being called a sincere follower and worshipper of Lord Shiva. Now let us have a glimpse of these *Kalaas*. They are the various eclectic qualities or attributes that an exalted man should possess, and briefly they are the following—(i) Shraddha (श्रद्धा—faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (ii) Pran (प्राण—life; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (iii) Akash (आकाश—the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (वायु—wind, air element), (v) Tej (तेज—energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (अपः—water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) 'Prithivi' (पृथ्वी—earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (इन्द्रिय—the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (मन—the mind and heart complex and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (अन्न—food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (वीर्य—semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (तपः—austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self) (xiii) Mantra (मन्त्र—the ability to give good advise, the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, logically arrive at a conclusion), (xiv) Karma (कर्म—taking actions and doing

deeds), (xv) Loka (लोक—worldly interactions and behaviours), and (xvi) Naam (नाम—good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory).

Reference should be made to the Chandogya Upanishad, 6/7/1-6 of Sam Veda tradition in this context.

The *five heads* of Shiva stand for the 'Panch Vyom' or the five forms that the sky element is said to have. According to Vedanta, the concept of the *sky* or 'Akash' has many connotations. According to one interpretation, there are *five* subtle skies representing the space surrounding the five sheaths or *Koshas* present in the body of a creature. They are the sheaths that surround the Atma and are called 'Panch Akash'. These are the following—(1) the Food Sheath called Anna Maye Kosh; (2) the Vital Air Sheath called Pran Maye Kosh; (3) the Mental Sheath called Manomaye Kosh; (4) the Intellectual Sheath called Vigyan Maye Kosh; and (5) the Bliss Sheath called Anand Maye Kosh. Refer—Mudgal Upanishad, 4/5 of the Rig Veda.

The *ten arms* of Shiva stand for the ten forms of the subtle sky element. They are the following—(1) Ghatakash—the space inside a hollow pot; (2) Mathakash—the space inside a holy building, such as a holy shrine, a monastery, an abbey etc.; (3) Hridayakash—the subtle space inside the heart; (4) Akash—the vacant or blank space above the earth; (5) Suryakash—the space of the solar system; the space around the sun, or the solar system illuminated by the light of the sun; (6) Paraakash—the space above or beyond the solar system, it is said to burn with the celestial fire; (7) Mahakash—the great sky that is aglow with divine illumination, the heaven; that space which is radiant with a divine glow; (8) Paramakash—the supreme sky beyond the Mahakash, it is said to be very magnificent and encloses everything that exists, including all the other skies; that space which is illuminated, all pervading, all encompassing and full of bliss and felicity; (9) Tattwakash—the elementary space that is at the core of the concept of space, or the space that surrounds the basic elements of creation; by natural corollary it refers to the subtle, sublime, ethereal and supreme space where the eternal, transcendental Brahm has his abode because Brahm is the cause of all the basic elements of creation; there is complete beatitude and felicity there; that space which surrounds the essential truth known as Brahm; and (10) Anatariksha—the physical space where stars are present in deep space; the intergalactic space. Besides these, there is one more space called 'Swarga' which means heaven or the Duloka.

These skies have been ascribed different names just to facilitate understanding, and not because any one form of sky is fundamentally different from the other. For example, the space present inside the mud-pot, called the Ghata-kash, is the same as the space present outside the body of the pot. When the pot is broken, the demarcation wall of the body of the pot is removed, and both the space inside and outside of the erstwhile pot become indistinguishably and inseparably the same. Therefore, the various names are artificial and misnomers.

The *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 100 says that Lord Shiva is most pure and immaculate, and as clear and clean as pure crystal. He has a crescent moon tucked in the lock of hairs on his head. He has five mouths, is very sober, gentle and pleasant, has ten arms and three eyes.

The significance of the *serpents* wrapped around his body—The coiled serpents around his body indicate the fact that he constantly reminds himself of imminent death because serpents are very poisonous and symbolise immediate death. This helps him to remain focused on his spiritual aim of self-realisation instead of being attracted by the material charms of this material world of sense objects and getting deluded by them. The serpents also signify that Shiva is the Lord of death; he is death personified. Since he is able to wrap the serpents around his body and they cannot harm him, it indicates the fact that he has conquered death. That is why he is called 'Mrityunjay', the conqueror of death.

Again, the coiled serpents represent the Kundalini, the coiled subtle energy center at the base of the spine which when activated can entitle the spiritual aspirant to

experience a burst of stupendous spiritual energy which provides him a glimpse of his own divine powers as well as the powers of the cosmic Consciousness present inside his bosom as his Atma. This Kundalini is activated by doing numerous Yoga exercises as described in the Upanishads on the subject of Yoga.

The coiled serpents may also represent cycles of time in the macrocosm and the basic energy of life in the microcosm in the form of sexual energy.

These reptiles are very ferocious, dangerous, poisonous, and a symbol of male potency. The symbolism is that Shiva is a very potent God who can be extremely ruthless and unforgiving towards sinful creatures. He has exercised extreme self control and has 'girdled' or readied himself in preparation for enduring the greatest of hardships and sufferance for self-realisation as well as to provide the world with liberation and deliverance. The serpents warn his enemies not to fool around with him. That is also why he has fire in one of his hands. This fire signifies his ability to reduce to ashes the entire physical world consisting of falsehood and sins as well as eliminate all impurities, imperfections, faults and shortcomings that cripple the creature's spiritual well being.

The symbolism and significance of the *three eyes of Shiva* have been explained above as a note appended to verse no. 10 of the present Upanishad.]

35-35 ½. This great Shastra (scripture) received by sage Pippalaad (from Brahma) should not be given (divulged, revealed, preached or taught) to unworthy or incompetent subjects or aspirants.

[Who are such unworthy or incompetent people? This is being answered now.] It should not be given to those people who are 'Nastik' (heretics, atheist, unbelievers and sceptics), 'Kritaghna' (ungrateful and thankless), 'Durvritti' (those who have evil tendencies and pervert nature; those who are unscrupulous and inclined to malice and sinful acts), 'Duratma' (those who are sinful, pervert, corrupt and evil) [35], 'Dhambha' (those who are deceitful, impostors, boastful, arrogant, ostentatious, hypocrite, full of vanity), 'Nrishansa' (merciless, cruel and lack compassion), 'Shath' (wicked, crafty, deceitful, cunning as well as stupid and foolish), 'Anrit Bhaasan' (speaking lie and being dishonest in one's speech). [35 ½] (35-35 ½).

36-37. On the contrary it should be given (divulged, revealed, preached or taught) to those people who have the following auspicious virtues in them—'Suvrata' (those who follow auspicious code of conduct and are scrupulous in their thoughts and behaviour), 'Subhakta' (are devoted and committed), 'Suvritti' (those who have auspicious and noble aspirations, volitions, temperament and nature), 'Sushil' (are amiable, affable, modest, polite, courteous, suave, sober, obliging, cordial, soft spoken, well mannered, cultured and civilised) [36], 'Guru Bhakta' (devoted to one's moral preceptor, teacher and guide), 'Daanta' (who is self-restrained and self-regulated), 'Shaanta' (peaceful, tranquil, composed, unruffled, calm, poised and serene), 'Riju Chetas' (who is conscientious, is scrupulous, has auspicious and righteous tendency of the mind and intellect), 'Shiv Bhakta' (an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva), 'Databya' (of a charitable disposition), 'Brahm Karmi' (is inclined to do auspicious, righteous, noble and proper deeds selflessly as a means of serving the Lord known as Brahm; treating each deed and action as Brahm in that form). [37] (36-37).

38. Only such people who are called 'Suvrata' (i.e. who strictly observe the above principles) and 'Swa-Bhakta' (are true devotees of Lord Shiva as well as the Lord who resides in their own bosom as their 'true self'—a reference to the pure

consciousness representing the supreme Brahman) are indeed eligible and competent to be given (divulged, revealed, preached or taught) this great scripture.

Oh the most exalted Brahmin! Otherwise, one should protect this sacred scripture from falling into the hands of unscrupulous and incompetent persons (38).

39. [This verse outlines the benefits of studying this Upanishad.]

A wise and learned person who himself reads and studies this great scripture revealed to sage Pippalaad, or makes others hear it by preaching or teaching it to them—verily, he is freed from the snare of the never-ending cycle of birth and death.

A person who comes to learn and understand its esoteric meaning is able to access Amrit (the elixir of eternity and bliss) as well as find freedom from having to reside in a mother's womb (i.e. having to take a birth again).

A person who regularly reads and studies it is exonerated from the horrendous effects of such grave sins as stealing gold, drinking wine, killing of a Brahmin or any other creature, or being lustful towards the wife of one's Guru (moral preceptor). Instead, he gets the auspicious rewards of having studied all the Vedas. Such a person is rid of small and big sins and their consequences, and becomes cleansed and purified¹.

Hence, a spiritually reformed person is deemed to be one who has surrendered himself to the eternal and supreme Lord of creation, and therefore becomes eligible for liberation and deliverance.

He becomes permanently endeared to Lord Shiva, and finds his ultimate rest with Shiva. He does not have to take a birth again. It is because he becomes one with and inseparable from Brahman, the Supreme Being, the cosmic Consciousness.

This is how Brahman the creator preached this great Upanishad (to sage Pippalaad) (39).

[Note—¹It is to be noted here that this way of pardoning of all sins is a standard method in almost all the Upanishads. Their intent is not to condone sinful acts by easily forgiving the sinner by merely reading this or that scripture, but to highlight the grand and majestic mystical potentials and powers of the scripture in question. Besides this, since every human can err, the scriptures show him the path of redemption if he is really interested and sincere for it. All sinners must be given a chance at reforming themselves, and this is the real intent of this blanket pardoning. Further, if a man is sincere and honest regarding his desire to repent and atone for his past sins and demeanours, and once he is given a chance and shown the path to do so, who in his right mind would revert back to his bad old ways and not reform or amend himself in the hope of leading a more fruitful and respectable life marked by happiness and peace.

If he does not reform himself and become a changed man even after reading and studying the scriptures, then surely such a man does not deserve any leniency and pardon and so the scripture wouldn't forgive him! The benevolence shown by the scriptures should not be misconstrued as them condoning sins and vices or granting a blanket reprieve even against the most horrible of sins just by touching them or reading them. Even to think in these terms is highly incredulous, incongruous and insanity.

Their forgiveness is meant for those who sincerely wish to atone for their sinful past and lead a reformed life. This pardon is not for them who wish to exploit the magnanimity of the scriptures to hide behind them to escape punishment by claiming that now since they have read such and such Upanishad which grants pardon they ought to be forgiven from being punished, only to revert to their bad old ways once pardoned. Even in modern society first time offenders are given a chance at

reformation and change, but any such law granting reprieve should not be misused. Habitual offenders deserve no mercy whatsoever.

This fact has been stressed in a number of Upanishads of the Atharva Veda tradition. For instance—Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 12; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 10; Ganapati Upanishad, verse no. 17; Devi Upanishad, verse no. 32; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 13; Dattatreya Upanishad, Section 3, stanza 4.]

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 11

Tripadvibhuti Maha-Narayan Upanishad/ Tripadibhutamahanarayano-panishad

This great Upanishad was revealed as a discourse given by Lord Vishnu to the creator Brahma. Brahma had asked the Lord to disclose the secrets of the 'Param Tattva', the Supreme Principle and the Absolute Truth of creation, by knowing which everything becomes known, and which provides the spiritual aspirant with Mukti or Moksha (liberation, deliverance, freedom, emancipation and salvation).

This Upanishad is a magnificent exposition on the eclectic concepts related to Brahm, the Supreme Being and eternal supreme Consciousness, on how a Jiva, the living being, is, on why the Jiva remains trapped in the world, on what are the paths for obtaining Mukti and Moksha, and what do these terms actually mean, on the various forms this creation takes—the gross and the subtle, the visible and the invisible, the one that is ridden by Avidya and Agyan, or ignorance of the truth as well as by Maya or delusions, and the other that shines by the glory of Vidya and Gyan or knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment, on the four different aspects of this creation which is said to be a manifestation of Brahm, on the mystical meaning of the two esoteric Charms—the Sudarshan Chakra and the Narayan Yantra, and so on and so forth.

It extols and espouses on the supremacy of Brahm, the all-pervading and universally truthful divine entity that is the eternal Consciousness, and the principle of 'unity in diversity' which is at the core of the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, the eclectic philosophy of 'non-duality'. Though it describes the many forms that the ultimate Authority and the supreme Lord of creation known as Brahm takes, it ultimately points out that they are none but the same Divinity in all these forms. Brahm has been said to have four Paads or limbs, meaning aspects or principal forms. The whole of the known world within imagination, even the invisible one extending to the farthest corner of creation, represent only one Paad called the Avidya Paad. This includes all the Lokas, the Gods and the Jivas. The other three Paads transcend this Paad and are very subtle and sublime in nature; they are called the Vidya Paad, the Anand Paad and the Turiya Paad. [Refer: Canto 1, paragraph 5-6; Canto 4, paragraph 6.]

This Upanishad derives its name from the fact that Brahm, the Supreme Being, is also known as 'Maha Narayan'. One of his Paads, the Avidya Paad, is dominated by the Bhuts (elements); it is the comparatively grosser aspect of Brahm. The other three Paads are of subtle nature. Hence the name 'Tripadvi + Bhut + Maha Narayan = 'Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan' Upanishad.

The stupendity and immensity of the greatness of Brahm can be imagined by the fact that other Gods who are themselves no less great and powerful are but only a fraction of Brahm; they are merely Brahm carrying out specific functions in these forms. Some of the names of these Gods as mentioned in this Upanishad are 'Maha Narayan', 'Adi-Narayan', 'Narayan', 'Maha Vishnu', 'Viraat Purush', 'Adi-Viraat', 'Brahma', 'Hiranyagarbha', and so on.

The present Upanishad is unique in the sense that it intertwines in its narration two philosophies—one based on the philosophy of Vedanta which recognises Brahm as the Supreme Being, and the other on the philosophy of Vaishnav cult which regards Lord Vishnu as the Supreme Being. In the process it establishes the fact that essentially both are the same as the Supreme Being is known by many names, including Brahm and Vishnu.

The main thrust of this Upanishad is to emphasise the point that though Brahm is said to exist in all these forms, basically it is a 'non-dual' and an immutable divine entity that remains uniform and universal. It is this Brahm that exists as the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness and the universal Truth of creation. The question as to why then does Brahm appear to have duality and various evident forms that cannot be simply denied or wished away but are definitely not 'Brahm' is emphatically answered and explained in detail in this grand Upanishad. It is this eclectic divinity known as the non-dual supreme Brahm that is so much extolled and revered by the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is this non-dual Brahm that is the aim of attainment of all spiritual aspirants and seekers of Truth. This Brahm is all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-knowing. It is this Brahm that transcends all known definitions and even extends beyond imagination. [Refer Canto 1, paragraphs 4-6; Canto 2, paragraphs 1-8, 12, Canto 3, paragraphs 1-6; and Canto 4, paragraphs 1-6.]

The Upanishad belongs to the 'Devdarshi' branch of the Atharva Veda (refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 2), and is in the style of long narrative prose as opposed to the system of verses that is usually employed in the Upanishads. It is taught by a learned teacher to his earnest disciple.

The Upanishad consists of a total of eight Cantos divided into two main sections—the first is called 'Purva Kanda' consisting of four Cantos (nos. 1 to 4), and the second is called 'Uttar Kanda' consisting of another four Cantos (nos. 5 to 8).

Canto 1 describes what is meant by the enigmatic and most esoteric term 'Brahm', who he is or what it is. It enumerates the grand characteristics and magnificent divine qualities that make Brahm so unique and enigmatic entity in creation that is lauded and revered by the scriptures, besides describing the four Paads of Brahm, literally meaning the limbs of Brahm, and implying the different eclectic forms or aspects of Brahm, both at the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic level of creation. The four Paads of Brahm have been explained elaborately in Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6, and Canto 8, paragraph no. 4.

Canto 2 expands upon the discussion of Canto 1 and narrates the two basic forms of Brahm—the 'Nirguna' or 'Niraakaar' form which refers to that aspect of Brahm which is without any attributes, is indefinable and invisible, and is beyond the reach of mind, intellect and imagination, and the 'Saguna' or 'Saakaar' form which displays characteristics quite the opposite of Nirguna—viz. it has definite attributes, is

visible and verifiable, is comprehensible and described by the scriptures. In the course of this discussion another very important principle concerning Brahm is explained—the concept of Advaitya or non-duality. Included in this Canto are the description of the Genesis of Creation and the all-inclusive and all-pervading nature of Brahm as the Viraat Purush. The concept of Advaitya in the context of Brahm having different Paads and forms as Nirguna and Saguna is further explained in Canto 8 (paragraph nos. 2-7).

Canto 3 describes the ‘Mool-Avidya’—literally the primary cause of ignorance of the Truth, and the various units of measurement of time on the celestial scale such as the length of one life of Brahma the creator, the length of one life of Vishnu, the length of one life of Viraat Purush, and the length of one life of Adi-Narayan, the Primal Purush. This measurement helps one to understand the *relative nature* of the terms ‘birth and death’, or ‘creation and destruction’, or ‘day and night’ etc. on the cosmic scale. This Canto also explains why Brahm appears to have multifarious forms, and cites a beautiful analogy of the crystal appearing to be red when in proximity with the China Rose flower. It then illustrates the formless omnipresence of Brahm by citing the example of the Fire.

Canto 4 further elaborates upon the concept of Advaitya or non-dual nature of Brahm which was first introduced in Canto 2. It explains why Brahm is imagined or visualised to have a dual form whereas it is not the truth as explained in Canto 3 along with enumerating some of the grand divine qualities of Brahm that make the latter so holy and unique. It also describes who a Jiva, a living being is in a very magnificent manner, and then outlines the path leading to Mukti or Moksha (liberation, deliverance, freedom, emancipation and salvation).

Canto 5 answers three very pertinent spiritual questions—viz. (i) How and why does Avidya (ignorance or lack of true knowledge) reappear once it has been destroyed or eliminated?, (ii) Why does a creature remain deluded and trapped in this world of artificiality, and how to get rid of it and become freed?, and (iii) What is the path to Mukti—or liberation and deliverance from this ensnaring world. In the process it describes in graphic detail the path taken by a devotee of Lord Vishnu when he leaves the gross mortal body and embarks upon his spiritual journey to reach the highest echelons of heaven where Vishnu resides, the heaven known as Vaikunth.

The description is continued in the next two Cantos, Canto no. 6 and 7, as well. These three Cantos, viz. 5, 6 and 7, describe in graphic detail the most fascinating journey undertaken by the spiritual traveller as he crosses the various layers of heaven, called Vaikunth, the abode of Lord Vishnu, en-route to his final destination to the Lord Adi-Narayan, the primordial and primary Lord of creation, the Supreme Being who is also known as Adi-Maha Vishnu.

Canto 6 describes the path through many Vaikunths which are traditionally regarded as being the abode of Lord Vishnu, the Lord who is considered as being synonymous with the Viraat Purush, the Supreme Being and Brahm personified. So by describing more than one Vaikunth the Upanishad alludes to the relative nature of existence and extends the ‘philosophy of relativity’ enunciated earlier in Canto 3.

Further, by citing a number of instances such as the existence of a number of Universes and many Vaikunthas (Canto 6), different time scales (Canto 3), the many Paads of Brahm (Canto 1), and the simultaneous existence of both Saguna as well as Nirguna Brahm the Upanishad highlights the fact that the actual and real Truth, though being always and irrevocably ‘one, immutable and unchangeable’, does appear to have more than one meaning, and a man who gets deluded by this dichotomy and schism is the one who is under the spell of Maya and Avidya.

The second half of Canto 7 is dedicated to the description of the Sudarshan Chakra and the Narayan Yantra which is a worship instrument used in mystical forms of worship of Lord Narayan or Vishnu. All the Mantras used in their construction are given in full along with their location and meaning. A diagram depicting the Sudarshan Chakra is added at the end of this Chapter.

Canto 8 essentially describes the following topics as a sort of summary of the preaching of this Upanishad—(i) the non-dual or Advaitya nature of Brahm (paragraph nos. 1-3), (ii) the four Paads of Brahm (paragraph no. 4), (iii) the proclamation, called the Mahavakyas, of a Brahm-realised person (paragraph nos. 5-6), (iv) the attainment of Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance), (v) the two great forms of Yoga, viz. Saalamba and Niraalamba (paragraph nos. 8-9), (vi) the importance of Bhakti or devotion (paragraph no. 12), (vii) how to have the knowledge of the Param Tattva (paragraph nos. 13-14), and (viii) who a true Guru (teacher) is, and his importance.

The Upanishad concludes by emphasizing the profound spiritual benefits of studying and implementing its teachings.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Purva Kanda—Canto 1

[Canto 1 describes what is meant by the enigmatic and most esoteric term ‘Param Tattva’ that refers to the essential and fundamental Truth of creation known as the transcendental Brahm, who or what this principal entity is, what are the principles that govern this Param Tattva, along with the essential meaning and nature of Brahm’s various Paads, literally meaning the four limbs of Brahm and implying the different eclectic forms or aspects of Brahm, both at the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic level of creation. It is in a long narrative prose.

Refer Canto 4 which would further elaborate upon the concepts dealt with in the present Canto no. 1.

This Canto primarily narrates the glorious divine virtues of Lord Vishnu who is also known by the names of Narayan, Viraat Purush and Adi-Narayan, the primordial Lord of creation. The Narayan Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, and the Vishnu Puran, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70 are relevant in the context of this Canto.]

1. In order to learn about the secrets of the enigmatic ‘Param Tattva’ (meaning the supreme principle of creation, the essence and fundamental basis of everything in creation, the eclectic and divine entity that is the irrefutable absolute Truth of existence, and its sublime knowledge), the creator Brahm did severe Tapa (penance and austerity) for one thousand years according to the measurement of time based on the scale used by the Gods.

The great Lord ‘Maha Vishnu¹’ was very pleased with Brahma’s great Tapa and felt obliged to appear before him at the end of one thousand years.

Brahma said to him—‘Oh Lord! Please tell me the secrets of the Param Tattva. This is because you are the only one who is competent enough to enlighten about it, and there is no one else who can do it.

Why is it so? [That is, if you ask me why I’ve said that ‘you are the only one who can tell me about it’, I’ll let you now. It is because—]

You are the only one who is omniscient and all-knowing. You are the only one who is almighty and all-powerful.

You are the support, the base and cause of everything.

It is you who has revealed yourself in all imaginable forms and all imaginable things that exist.

It is you who are the Lord of all.

You are the inspirer and the cause of all deeds and actions.

You are the sustainer, the nourisher, the caretaker and the protector of all.

You are even the one who brings everything to an end.

It is you who shows the paradoxical and mysterious characteristic of being both the ‘truth’ or ‘reality’, and the ‘un-truth’ or ‘falsehood’ at the same time on the one hand, and being beyond this paradox or confusion by being neither the truth nor the falsehood, remaining untouched by this controversy on the other hand.

It is you who uniformly pervades every unit of creation, present in its inside and covering it from the outside. [This is because you are all-encompassing and all-pervading. You warp and waft throughout everything, engulf or surround it from all directions, and encircle or girdle everything from the outside.]

On the one hand you are smaller than the smallest, and on the other hand you are larger than the largest.

On the one hand it is you who is the destroyer or eliminator of ‘Mool Avidya’—the primary or fundamental ignorance and its basis or cause, and on the other hand you move around in and are a native of Avidya (ignorance) itself. You are even the foundation upon which Avidya rests; you bear this Avidya (though you are also the one who destroys ignorance). [In other words, you are very mysterious and enigmatic. You destroy Avidya, and at the same time you foster Avidya. The former form of yours as the destroyer of Avidya represents your grand auspicious aspect known as ‘Gyan’ (wisdom, erudition, realisation, enlightenment), while your form as the sustainer of Avidya represents your ‘Maya’ (delusions) that breeds Avidya.]

It is you who is known by Vidya or knowledge; you are the subject that is studied and the object of pursuing that study; you are knowledge itself personified as well as the object of acquiring of any knowledge. At the same time, the irony is that you are beyond the reach of Vidya—i.e. it is not possible to learn about you or know you by acquiring any kind of knowledge.

You are the primary cause of all causes. You are also the collective of all causes. You are even the each individual cause which is distinct and separate from all other causes.

It is you who is an embodiment of eternal and immutable Anand (bliss, happiness, joy, cheerfulness, beatitude and felicity). You are complete Anand. You are even the fraction of Anand or the residual form of Anand.

You are the one who has attained the state of consciousness known as Turiya. [This is the fourth state of existence of consciousness that is transcendental in nature.] You are even the one who goes beyond it and is established in the Turiyateet state. [The Turiyateet state, as the name suggests, is the fifth state which is higher than the Turiya state.]

The eternal scriptures known as the eclectic Upanishads teach about you; you are the objective of their teaching; it is you who is being researched upon and searched by studying the Upanishads. Indeed, it is you who is worthy to be researched upon and searched by studying of all the scriptures.

It is you who is worthy to be researched upon and searched by the great Gods such as Brahma (i.e. by me), Shiva (the concluder) and Indra (the chief God) along with all the other Gods, besides the scriptures (as noted above).

It is you who is to be sought by all those who are known as ‘Mumuksha’—i.e. by those people who wish to attain liberation and deliverance. [That is, you are the destination of those who wish to find freedom for their souls from this entrapping material world.]

It is you who are the object of constant research by even those who have already tasted the Amrit or nectar (of bliss and happiness). [This is because there is no end to you, and one should not be contented by whatever one knows about you, for you are like a vast and fathomless ocean.]

Indeed, you are an embodiment of Amrit. You are indeed Amrit personified. You are Amrit itself! [Amrit is the sublime and divine nectar or ambrosia or elixir of eternity, bliss, happiness, contentedness, beatitude and felicity.]

Indeed, you are ‘Sarwa-Roop’. You are indeed Sarwa Roop. You are Sarwa Roop! [The word Sarwa Roop means one who has revealed himself in all known and unknown forms and shapes that exist in this creation. Or in other words, all forms or units of existence are basically the same Lord who assumes the form of these individual separate units of creation.]

You are a personification of the grand destiny of all the creatures that is known as ‘Moksha’ (emancipation and salvation). You are also the one who bestows Moksha to all. And you are also the one who personifies all the ways and means by which Moksha is (or can be) attained or achieved.

There is nothing besides you (in this creation). Anything that might appear to have any existence sans you is therefore an illusion and a falsehood. This is a certainty. [In other words, if you are removed from this creation, it would cease to exist and have any meaning.]

Hence, you are the speaker and narrator, you are the Guru (teacher and preceptor), you are the ‘Niyantaa’ of all (i.e. you are the regulator of all), you are Sarwa-Roop (i.e. it is you who lives in all forms), and it is always you (and nobody else) who is worthy to be meditated and contemplated upon—this is certain.’ (1).

[Note—¹Lord Maha Vishnu is the personified macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. Other terms used for him are Viraat Purush, Narayan, Hari, etc. The various incarnations of Vishnu are detailed as a note of Canto 7, paragraph no. 18 of the present Upanishad.

An exposition on Maha Vishnu is given as a detailed note to verse no. 25 of the Sharav Upanishad which is Chapter 10 of this volume.]

2. Lord Maha Vishnu who is an expert in the knowledge of Param Tattva was immensely pleased by Brahma’s prayer, expressed his praise for Brahma and his gratitude by thanking him a lot, and said—‘I shall narrate the secret of the enigmatic concept of ‘Param Tattva’ to you. Listen carefully.

Oh Brahma! The Maha Narayan Upanishad that belongs to the Devdarshi branch of the Atharva Veda containing a sublime conversation between a disciple and his Guru in the form of a discourse has been held from ancient times as being the most famous and authoritative treatise on the concept of Param Tattva.

In ancient times, all great souls (people) who had become enlightened about it had attained Brahm-realisation. Let me tell you about that sublime principle by knowing which all sorts of bondages are destroyed from their root, and by knowing which all that is to be known, all secrets that are to be unravelled, become known (2).

3. The disciple—who was of an exemplary and immaculate character, being calm and poised, sober and disciplined, highly detached and dispassionate towards the material world and its charms as well as not interested in the natural urges of the sense organs of the body, very pure and holy at both the mental as well as the physical level of the body, fully devoted to the Guru, and one who observed the strict codes of austerity and penances—searched and approached a highly enlightened, learned, wise, self-realised and Brahm-realised Guru (moral preceptor, teacher and guide).

Having found him, the disciple most reverentially went round him (did circumambulation in order to show his respect), prostrated himself on the ground before him, joined his palms as a mark of surrender and show of great respect, and approached the Guru most humbly and politely.

The disciple said—‘Oh Lord! Oh Guru! Please be kind to tell me the details of the concept of Param Tattva and its secrets.’

The Guru (teacher) was very pleased and he praised the disciple. [Why did he praise the disciple? It is because very few people would sacrifice the pleasures of life and comforts of the world, and instead treat them as bondages, seeking freedom from this bondage by spending a life of rigorous self discipline, austerity, penance and sacrifice. A good teacher is always glad when he sees a sincere student approaching him for knowledge in which the former is an expert. He begins to treat this student as his own son because he sees in this student an heir who would carry forward his good name, and not only preserve but pass on his knowledge without distortion to the next generation.]

The pleased Guru welcomed the disciple and said—‘I shall narrate the great Upanishad that describes the principles of Param Tattva in a systematic manner to you. Listen carefully (3).

4. ‘What sort is Brahm; how do we know what are Brahm’s eclectic virtues and sublime qualities¹?’ [Clearly, the ‘Param Tattva’ which the disciple wishes to know about is ‘Brahm’.]

Well, the Param Tattva known as Brahm is that enigmatic and esoteric entity that is not limited to or by any given dimension of time. That is, Brahm is uniformly and universally present, in equal intensity or magnitude, in all planes or frames of time—viz. the past, the present and the future. The eclectic and eternal principle that is not subject to being limited by time, that principal entity which cannot be divided or fragmented into segments but remains uniform and constant in all dimensions of time, the divine and enigmatic grand entity that is uniform, steady, immutable and indivisible—verily, such a divine, eclectic, sublime and majestic principle of creation, the Principal Being, the Absolute Truth, is known as Brahm. Incidentally, this Param Tattva is the cosmic Consciousness that is the subject of research and honour by all the scriptures.

Brahm is both Saguna as well as Nirguna. [‘Saguna’= one having attributes and definable qualities. ‘Nirguna’ = the opposite of Saguna; one that has no attributes and definable qualities. Saguna therefore also has a form, is visible and describable, while Nirguna is formless, invisible and indescribable. In this context, refer Canto 2, paragraph nos. 1-8, and Canto 8, paragraph nos. 1-4.]

Brahm is without any beginning, middle or end.

All this, i.e. the entire visible as well as the invisible world, is Brahm. [This is because the entire creation is a revelation of Brahm. Nothing that exists is outside the purview of Brahm.]

Brahm is Mayateet and Gunateet. That is, Brahm is beyond the definition and reach of Maya (i.e. it cannot be subjected to any kind of delusions) and Guna (i.e. it is not subject to being governed by any of the numerous qualities that govern the character and uniqueness of all individual entities of creation).

Brahm is endless and infinite; it cannot be known by logic and visible proof; it is immutable, steady and indivisible; and it is absolute and complete in its self.

Brahm is unique and without a parallel; is an embodiment of supreme bliss and happiness, of beatitude and felicity; is pure and enlightened; is eternally free; is an embodiment of Truth; is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent; is without having any distinctive categories, divisions or sections that may be different from one another; and is immutable, indivisible, seamless, constant, boundless, uniform and universal.

Brahm is a personification of the eclectic virtue of Sat-Chit-Anand. [That is, Brahm is truthful (Sat), consciousness (Chit) and blissful (Anand).]

Brahm is self-illuminated.

Brahm is beyond the reach and purview of both the mind and the faculty of speech. [That is, Brahm cannot be grasped by the mind, and cannot be described by speech.]

Brahm is out of the purview of all proofs and logics. [That is, one cannot prove the existence or otherwise of Brahm by employing worldly method of using logic and proof to establish or deny the presence of anything or its worth and importance.]

Brahm is the only sublime and eclectic entity that one should strive to know and be acquainted with by the study of various Upanishads.

Brahm cannot be divided by, segregated and categorised into segments or categories by any kind of situation, or any dimension of time, or by any of the myriad forms which Brahm takes in this creation.

Brahm is complete and wholesome in everyway.

Brahm is a personification of the Turiya state of consciousness (which is a transcendental state), is Niraakaar (i.e. is unqualified, having no form, shape, contour, attributes, qualities, characteristics etc. of any kind), and is unique and without any parallel.

Brahm is not compatible with the concept of Dwaitya (the concept of duality); Brahm cannot be known or defined or characterised by relying upon this concept of duality. [In other words, Brahm is 'Advaitya'—it is a non-dual and one of its only kind sublime entity.]

Brahm is synonymous with Pranav, the cosmic Consciousness from which the ethereal vibrations that are heard as the cosmic Naad and visualised as the monosyllabic word OM, has emerged. [The vibrations generated by the cosmic Consciousness created the primordial cosmic energy that powered the dynamo of life in this creation.] This Pranav (Brahm) has taken the form of the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the bosom of all living beings and which lends life to the otherwise lifeless gross creation. Therefore, all the Mantras² that have their primary origin in this Pranav (i.e. in the primordial sound of OM which represents the cosmic ethereal vibrations generated by Consciousness, which in turn created the energy that transformed itself into life) are actually an image or reflection of Brahm. The Mantras

can be said to be sound manifestations of Brahm because Mantras are based on letters and syllables which are primarily different genres of sound having their seat of origin in Pranav or OM (4).

[Note—¹The eclectic divine virtues of Brahm have been enumerated elsewhere in this Upanishad also—viz. Purva Kanda, Canto 4, paragraph no. 1.

They are umpteen numbers of Upanishads that narrate the grand and magnificent virtues of Brahm, for instance—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 15-19, Canto 3, verse nos. 17-22; Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 12, 27-28, 30-31, 42; Taittiriya Upanishad Valli 3, Anuvak 10, verse no. 2-5; Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 13; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 4; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 16, 20-21, 26, 29; Canto 3, verse no. 2; and Canto 4, verse nos. 31-32; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 35; Saraswati Upanishad, verse no. 50-52; Shwetashwatar Upanishad. (b) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak 2, section 2, verse no. 1, 9-11; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 3-5, 7-9; Atharvashir Upanishad (full); Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 17-18, Canto 9, verse nos. 1, 16-22; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph 4-6. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 61-64; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad Canto 2, Brahman 3. describes this Brahm's two forms in detail.

Brahm encloses this entire creation from all sides, and nothing exists outside the boundary of Brahm. This fact has been asserted in the Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9; Canto 6, verse nos. 2, 9; and in Gayatri Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Gopath Brahman, Kandika 38.

The relationship between Brahm and the world has been explained in Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 42.

²Mantras—Essentially, they are like formulas or keys that help one to access and benefit from the most mysterious but dynamic spiritual forces of creation. Usually, these forces are represented by different Gods, and each God has his specific Mantra; it is like the case of every individual person having his own identity code. By using a particular Mantra, we are virtually invoking a particular God's powerful forces and harnessing their energy to fulfill our objectives.]

5. Brahm has four Paads (literally meaning limbs or feet, but implying sublime aspects, facets or forms of Brahm)¹. [Refer also Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6; Canto 8, paragraph no. 4.]

What are the four Paads of Brahm? They are—Avidya-Paad, Suvidya-Paad, Anand-Paad, and Turiya-Paad. The Turiya-Paad includes the higher echelons of the transcendental state of existence of Consciousness.

What is the difference between these four Paads, or how can one distinguish between them, or what do they signify?

Well, Avidya-Paad is the first Paad, Vidya-Paad is the second, Anand-Paad is the third, and Turiya-Paad is the fourth.

Mool Avidya (or primary lack of knowledge; primary ignorance) is present only in the first Paad (i.e. the Avidya-Paad), and none of the other three Paads have any trace of it. Some Fraction of Vidya (knowledge), Anand (bliss) and Turiya (transcendental state) exist in all the four Paads to a certain extent. [That is, all the four Paads (or aspects or facets) of creation or existence have certain degree of Vidya (knowledge or wisdom or awareness), Anand (bliss or happiness or joys), and Turiya state (of total dispassion and detachment that comes when one is fully satisfied with certain thing and wants no more of it, or when one is even fed-up of too much of anything) in them. The degree, ratio or proportion of their presence may vary from one aspect to another, but it cannot be said that any one aspect is completely devoid of

any one of them. Even the first aspect of total Avidya (or ignorance) has them—viz. (i) the realisation that there is ignorance is a Vidya or knowledge in itself; (ii) it is said that ‘ignorance is bliss’ because an ignorant person is not aware of the hidden dangers or problems, and so he remains happy and contented in his world of ignorance—that is, Anand is present in the first Paad of Brahm with a preponderance of Avidya; and (iii) ignorance of the pleasures, charms and comforts of something eliminates the rising of desires for acquiring it, which indirectly means being disinterested in it or remaining dispassionate towards it—which is equivalent to the Turiya state. If this is the condition of the state of Avidya, or the state of utter stupidity or the state of being inane, then surely the other three states which are more evolved by nature would surely have Vidya (or knowledge), Anand (or bliss) and Turiya (or contentedness leading to detachment) in them in varying degrees.]

If this is the case then what is the difference between the three Paads known as Vidya Paad, Anand Paad, and Turiya Paad? Well, these three Paads are given these names because they have the relevant virtues as a dominant factor or main virtue in them. [That is, the Vidya Paad has Vidya or knowledge as the dominant factor or virtue; the Anand Paad has bliss and happiness as the dominant factor or virtue; and the Turiya Paad has the transcendental state of existence wherein the creature is totally detached from this material world as the dominant factor or virtue.]

In actuality, there is no difference between them. [All these four Paads or aspects of Brahm relates to the four planes in which the same Consciousness exists. It is like the same entity known as ‘water’ existing in different shapes according to the container it is put into, or having different temperatures which make it freezing, cold, cool, warm, hot, scalding or boiling. Then again the same water assumes different forms such as that of ice, liquid water, a viscous fluid like blood, vapour, steam, raindrops, river, ocean, lake, well, and so on and so forth. Similarly, all the four Paads of Brahm relate to the same Divinity known as the cosmic Consciousness. It is knowledge—or the lack of it—that inspires one to treat these four Paads as either being invisioned as an aid for the purpose of study and understanding of an entity which is so mysterious, enigmatic and esoteric as Brahm, or treat them as having independent and separate existence. The former treatment would be called Vidya, while the latter would be called Avidya. Hence, a wise and erudite spiritual aspirant treats all the four Paads of Brahm as looking at the latter from four different angles.]

Out of these four, it is only the lowest one that is tainted by Avidya, for the rest of them are higher in stature and are marked by purity of knowledge, wisdom and erudition that are eternal, constant and truthful. These three higher Paads of Brahm are an embodiment of rare and transcendental level of bliss, are immutable and indivisible, and are magnificently illuminated as being founts of radiance and splendour of grand proportions.

These three exalted Paads of Brahm (i.e. the Vidya Paad, the Anand Paad and the Turiya Paad) are very enigmatic, esoteric, indescribable, indefinable, immutable and indivisible besides being highly eclectic and blissful.

Out of these three, the central Paad known as the Anand Paad has the eternal Vaikunth (the divine abode of Lord Vishnu) in its center. This magnificent Vaikunth is like a center from which is produced a current of immense glory, divinity, radiance and splendour. [This is because Vaikunth represents the hub around which the wheel of creation rotates. Vaikunth is the abode of Vishnu, a cosmic form of the Supreme Being also known as the Viraat Purush, from whom the creation emerged and then spread in all the directions much like the ripples arising from a point on the surface of calm waters of a lake and then spreading out in concentric circles in all the directions.

Later on in this Upanishad a 'Chakra' would be described which symbolise this particular philosophy as expounded in the present paragraph.]

There is a central figure or an image in this Vaikunth which is brilliantly self-illuminated and an embodiment of Anand (bliss and happiness, beatitude and felicity). The brilliant illumination emanating from this central figure or image radiates out from it in all directions like waves of brilliant light and splendour, and it illuminates the Vaikunth. [Since this Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, this central figure or central Authority residing in Vaikunth is Vishnu himself. In fact, Vaikunth is the divine abode of Vishnu, and is also known as heaven. Lord Vishnu is radiant like the sun, and his radiance illuminates the Vaikunth much like the sky surrounding the sun is illuminated by the latter. In the context of Vedanta, this central figure would be the pure conscious Atma which is an image of Brahm and which resides in the subtle heart of all living beings. This Atma is the central Authority that exhibits the glorious virtues described here in relation to Vishnu who lives in Vaikunth. The Vaikunth then would be the heart of the creature as well as his subtle body consisting of the mind and the intellect. From the perspective of evolution, the Vaikunth would be a symbol of the entire creation that has come into existence—or the creation which is 'illuminated' in the sense that it has been made alive and activated by the presence of the cosmic Consciousness that has injected life and vitality in the otherwise lifeless and inane universe. Anything that is illuminated is visible; knowledge of it is available; its presence cannot be denied.]

Just like one sees numerous stars in the sky indicating the presence of uncountable universes, there are a number of divine abodes and forms that the brilliantly illuminated and radiant Lord Vishnu has taken. But the chief central Authority that lives in them and which is the source of all glories and illumination is known as Maha Vishnu. [There are countless stars in the sky, and each star is illuminated. There is a world around each of them, much like our own sun which is also a star in the cosmic plane, having its own solar system. But the common denominator in all the stars is the 'light and energy' that emanates from them to illuminate and energise their worlds. Similarly, Maha Vishnu is the central Authority around which the entire creation revolves. According to Vedanta, this central Authority is Brahm, but since this Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Vishnu the former is treated as being synonymous with the latter. The countless stars that dot the sky symbolise the countless forms in which the same fount of light known as Brahm has revealed itself. The stars are characterised by 'light' which is a common factor in all of them. Similarly, 'consciousness' is a common denominator in all forms of life that exist in this creation.]

The divine and supreme abode of Lord Vishnu is visualised as being present in the center of the celestial ocean called Kshir Sagar (or the eternal celestial ocean of milk), and it resembles a pitcher of Amrit (ambrosia). [The 'Kshir Sagar' represents the cosmic ether in which the first ripples of creation were formed. The central point—the nucleus—of this cosmic ocean where the ripples were generated and from where they spread in all the directions and corners of creation or universe is the Vaikunth as envisioned in the Upanishad. The source of energy that caused the ripple of life to be generated was the 'Consciousness' that manifested itself as the Maha Vishnu, the Great Lord. Since the pure cosmic Consciousness is also known as Brahm, it follows that the primary spark of life, the primary cause of creation was Brahm in its manifestation as Maha Vishnu. It is an ocean of 'Amrit' because it is the ambrosia of life that provided the nascent creation its first dose of nutrition, and then

sustained its growth and development endlessly. In other words, like Amrit this Kshir Sagar harboured the creation in its vast cosmic bowl and nourished it.]

Just like the divine patron deity of the majestic Sudarshan Chakra² (a disc-like weapon of Lord Vishnu and an instrument of worship) who resides in the center (or core) of it, and just like the Sun that lives in the center of the solar system, the Adi-Narayan (i.e. Lord Maha Vishnu, the primordial Lord of creation, the Primal Purush from whom the creation, including its creator Brahma, is said to be born) also appears to reside in the center of the Kshir Sagar. [If this is extended further it would imply that the supreme Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, lives in the core of this creation, and it is around this Brahm that this creation is woven.] (5).

[Note—¹The four Paads of Brahm are the four limbs, legs, aspects, facets or pedestals of Brahm—The four ‘Paads’ of Brahm are the four legs upon which Brahm stands. These four Paads symbolically establish the greatness and supremacy of Brahm as the all-powerful and all-controlling Authority in this creation. Since Brahm is the supreme Divinity that has revealed itself in the form of this creation, since each and every unit of creation is a manifestation of Brahm and without Brahm nothing exists, nothing has any relevance and truth (refer Tripadvibhuta Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph 1), it follows that the entire creation represents Brahm’s four cosmic forms or aspects or facets—which are called the four legs or Paads of Brahm. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the supreme Brahm has manifested himself and is made known to this world by the means of these four mediums.

These four Paads of Brahm have been explained in the present Upanishad in its Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6, and Canto 8, paragraph no. 4.

Other references are briefly the following—(i) Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda’s Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-19.

²The ‘Sudarshan Chakra’ is described in detail in Canto 7, paragraph 3-14 of this Upanishad. The different Vaikunths that are being referred to here as a metaphor for various universes have been described in Canto 6, paragraphs 15-20, and Canto 7, paragraph 16-18 of this Upanishad.

These Vaikunths are the following—]

6. [This paragraph describes the grand and sublime virtues, the eclectic qualities, the magnificence and divinity of Lord Vishnu. A striking similarity is found in *Vishnu Puran*, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70.

An elaborate note on Lord Vishnu has been appended to verse no. 25 of the Sharav Upanishad which is Chapter no. 10 of the present volume.

The word ‘Vishnu’ consists of two components—‘Vishwa’ meaning the world or the entire creation, and ‘Anu’ meaning an atom. Hence, this is made up of atoms called Vishnu, and therefore the latter pervades throughout this creation. The whole creation is a manifestation of Vishnu. Vishnu must be understood with this perspective in mind.]

It is he (i.e. the divine Being who has been described in paragraph 4-5 above) who is Turiya Brahm (or is the transcendental Divinity known as Brahm). It is he who is also Turiyateet (i.e. the higher echelons of transcendental Consciousness). It is he who is known as Vishnu. [That is, Lord Vishnu and Brahm are the same divine entities. This statement establishes the non-duality between Vishnu and Brahm, and by inference

between all the other units of creation, because each of these units is a manifestation of Brahm or Vishnu, depending upon the philosophy one follows. In this connection it would be interesting to note that Vishnu is also the Viraat Purush, the invisible, all-pervading and all-encompassing cosmic form of Brahm, the form which is regarded as the gross body of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation, and from which the rest of gross bodies of creation emerged and evolved. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11.]

It is Vishnu who is a synonym for Brahm, and these two terms are interchangeable as they indicate the same Divine Being.

It is he (Vishnu) who is the personification of sublime 'light'. [Here, 'light' refers to enlightenment, knowledge, wisdom, erudition and such other auspicious virtues that remove the darkness of ignorance and delusions.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is beyond the purview and reach of Maya (delusions), Gunas (attributes, qualifications and specified characteristics), and Kaal (time and eras), all the Karmas (deeds and actions, and their causes and consequences). [That is, Maya, Gunas and Kaal have no affect on Vishnu, the supreme transcendental Brahm.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is the ultimate Truth, and he has no attributes, epithets, titles and honours. [That is, Vishnu is the Absolute Truth known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. The Lord cannot be defined or lauded by any known epithets and honours. No titles or names would be able to bring the glory of Vishnu to the fore because of one simple reason that Brahm is unimaginably beyond the purview of mind and speech.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as Parmeshwar—the supreme Lord. [This is because he is the supreme regulator and controller of everything in existence.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as Puran Purush—the ancient Lord lauded and extolled in the Purans. [The Purans are ancient Hindu scriptures that narrate the various stories pertaining to manifestations of Brahm as different Gods such as Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma etc.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is expressed or revealed by means of all the Mantras and letters or words of the language. [Since Brahm is consciousness and the very basis of life, all the spoken words, such as the Mantras, are expressions of this Brahm.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is without a beginning and an end (as he is eternal, infinite and imperishable).

It is he (Vishnu) who is revealed in all dimensions or phases of time, space and eras pertaining to the past, the present and the future, as well as in all things that exist in them.

It is he (Vishnu) who is expressed and meant by the term Turiya (which is the transcendental state of existence of consciousness).

It is he (Vishnu) who is unchanging, steady and complete in all respects.

It is he (Vishnu) who is an embodiment of Truth, and an upholder of Truth.

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as 'Atma Ram'—the Divinity that provides liberation and deliverance to the creature when the latter realises that this Divinity is present in his own bosom as his Atma which is pure consciousness. [The word 'Ram' refers to the divine Lord who provides one with Mukti or liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for his soul. The word 'Atma' refers to the soul which is pure and sublime consciousness that resides in the heart of the aspirant. This Atma is the 'true self' of a living being. Hence, the term 'Atma Ram' refers to the eclectic state of self-realisation and enlightenment when the aspirant realises that the Lord who is a provider of Mukti is the one who resides in his own inner being as the Atma or soul. This Lord lives nowhere else but in the creature's own bosom as his Atma, as

his 'self'. This realisation itself frees him from all fetters of ignorance that had tied him down to the gross body as well as the equally gross world.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is not hemmed in by or bound by or subject to any limitations imposed by time and circumstance in their three dimensions—such as the past, the present and the future, or the good, the bad and the routine.

It is he (Vishnu) who is personified 'light' and its illumination, and hence is self-illuminated. ['Light' is a term used to indicate any virtue or factor or quality that removes darkness.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is incomparable and unique in every respect because he is one of his only kind.

What more can be said of the Lord's immutability, uniformity and indivisibility in creation than the fact that there is no division in Vishnu like a day being arbitrarily divided into two parts consisting of a lighted half called the 'day' and the dark part called the 'night', or like one year being divided arbitrarily into various seasons, months and days. [The terms 'day' and 'night' are artificial partition of time created by man based on whether or not the sun is visible in the sky. Actually the sun never sets or rises in the sky, and what one calls a 'day' may be a 'night' on some other part of the earth. Similarly, Lord Vishnu, who is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the Consciousness that pervades uniformly and universally in the entire living creation, is also indivisible. The many forms and names of Vishnu are artificially assigned to the same Lord.]

It is he (Vishnu) who is an embodiment of self-generated bliss; he remains submerged in eternal beatitude and felicity that springs out or effuses out of him spontaneously.

It is he (Vishnu) who possesses magnificence, majesty and greatness of stupendous magnitude, of dimensions that are beyond anyone's imagination and thoughts.

It is he (Vishnu) who is at the core of the 'Atma' of all creatures. [That is, Vishnu is the primary Consciousness that has revealed itself in myriad forms, and that is why he is called 'Atma-Ram'—the basis of the Atma and its most refined and sublime form known as consciousness.]

Indeed, it is he (Vishnu) who is known as 'Parmatma' (the supreme Atma), Gyan-Atma (the enlightened Atma, the enlightened soul), Turiya-Atma (the consciousness that exists in the transcendental state), and so on. It is he who is the divinity implied in all these terms.

It is he (Vishnu) who is Advaitya or a non-dual universal entity in creation.

It is he (Vishnu) who is an embodiment of the highest degree of bliss, beatitude and felicity collectively known as 'Anand'.

It is he (Vishnu) who is known as 'Vibhu'—one who is the almighty, universal, uniform, all-pervading and all-encompassing Lord in creation.

It is he (Vishnu) who is 'Nitya'—always present everywhere with the same intensity and dimension, one who is omnipresent, constant, steady, uniform and universal.

It is he (Vishnu) who is 'Nishkalank' and 'Niranjan'—one who is without any blemishes, aspersions, shame, slander, spot, slur, ignominy, taint, infamy, disgrace and other moral, ethical and spiritual faults of any kind; to have no scars to mar one's immaculacy.

It is he (Vishnu) who has no definitions and attributes; no adjectives or epithets can describe him.

In fact, it is he (Vishnu) who is the only immaculate, un-corrupted and undisputed supreme Lord God of all, called Lord Narayan. There is no one else as exalted and divine as him to be honoured by this name of 'Narayan'.

A wise and learned aspirant who is well aware of the above-described facts and who adores and worships Lord Narayan or Lord Vishnu with this wisdom and perspective is able to obtain Sayujya form of Mukti—i.e. he is able to obtain nearness with his revered Lord. There is no doubt in this statement (6).

[Note—Refer Sharav Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 25, which clearly states that it is Lord Vishnu who had created this creation.]

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Purva Kand--Canto 2

[This Canto primarily narrates the two basic forms of Lord Vishnu—one is called 'Saguna' or 'Saakaar' which refers to the Lord's manifested or revealed form or aspect, and the other is called 'Nirguna' or 'Niraakaar' which refers to that form or aspect which has no visible forms and attributes. It goes on to describe the cosmic form of Vishnu as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic body of Brahm, the Supreme Being, from whom the rest of creation has emerged. The concept of non-duality between all the forms that Brahm takes, including those of the Trinity Gods such as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder, and the chief God known as Indra, is also elucidated.]

1. After having heard the discourse given by the learned Guru (as described in Canto 1), the eager disciple was a little confused. So to remove his doubts, he asked the learned teacher—'Oh Lord! You have said that Vaikunth and Narayan are 'Nitya'—i.e. they are eternal, uniform and steady, being infinite, imperishable and never changing. You have also said that they are the 'Tattva' or the essence of what is known as the Turiya state of existence. But there seems to be some confusion—because Vaikunth and Narayan are 'Sakar'—one that has attributes and virtues (which you have described at length), while the Turiya state is known to be 'Nirakar'—one that has no attributes as it is a transcendental state of consciousness when nothing of the world matters for it; it is a subtle and sublime state of existence.

The Sakar principle has definite form with parts and its characteristic features and limitations, while the Nirakar principle has none of it. The scriptures assert that Sakar is limited and mortal or perishable, while Nirakar is unlimited and eternal or immortal. [This is because anything that has a gross form would ultimately come to an end due to the natural process of aging which is a part of the cycle of creation and destruction.]

Hence, all those entities that have any kind of finite form that has a shape, a gross body and definable features that can be definitely ascertained and described, such as the ones that come under the category called 'Sakar', would be certain to come to an end one day, while those entities that are free from such limitations, and come under the category called 'Nirakar', would logically be eternal, never ending, infinite and immortal. This is not only proved by logic and the process of imaginative thinking but is even practically verifiable. [A simple example would suffice to explain this phenomenon. The element 'air' is not visible, cannot be smelt or tasted etc., and it has no definite attributes, but it is universally present everywhere ever since the creation came into being. On the other hand, its manifested form is the soft breeze

blowing against the face which is pleasantly felt by all, or as the fierce and howling storm which also makes its presence felt in no uncertain terms but in a fearful manner. Both the breeze and the storm arise, gather energy, spend it and then subside to vanish into thin air. The air was present prior to the existence of both the breeze and the storm but no one could make out its presence. The breeze and the storm are manifested or revealed form of this air element which is otherwise invisible and imperceptible. They have a starting point, duration of existence, called their life, and then subside and vanish when their energy is spent. In other words, while the air element, which is the primary cause of these two, is a constant entity that never changes, its manifested form as the breeze or the storm not only have a limited life but also are ever changing.]

Hence, it is logical and correct to say that both Vaikunth and Narayan or Vishnu are not eternal, not infinite, not steady, not constant and not immortal (because they come under the category of ‘Sakar’). Then say, how have you called them ‘Nitya’— i.e. as being eternal, uniform and steady, being infinite, imperishable and never changing, being present steadily, uniformly, consistently, persistently and constantly in all planes of time and place?

The scriptures assert that the Turiya principle is ‘Akshar’—i.e. one that does not decay, one that is imperishable. Hence, it is a well established fact that Turiya is ‘Nitya’.

Nitya and Anitya (which is the opposite of Nitya) are mutually contradictory and opposite by nature. It appears that to have them both (the virtues of Nitya and Anitya) in the same Brahm is very illogical and an incredulous a proposition. Therefore it is proper to say that both Vaikunth and Lord Narayan are ‘Anitya’, or are not ‘Nitya’ (as defined above).’ [(1).

[Note—Refer also to Canto 4 in this context.]

2. The learned teacher dispelled the doubts of the disciple and explained—‘What you say is alright. But the ‘Sakar’ principle is of two types—one with an ‘Upaadhi’ and one without it. [The word ‘Upaadhi’ means attributes, epithets, honours, titles, designation, denomination, degree, definitions, qualifications etc. The word ‘Sakar’ means an entity that has a form and characteristic attributes, an entity that is assigned a particular name and designation, an entity that can be defined, described and understood. Hence, the ‘Sakar with an Upaadhi’ would be an entity that has a form along with definable attributes and characteristic features. In the case of Lord Vishnu and his divine abode called the Vaikunth, these have been described in Canto 1, paragraphs 6 and 5 respectively.]

What is the nature of the Sakar with an ‘Upaadhi’ rider attached to it?

Everything that has its origin in Avidya, or ignorance or lack of knowledge and wisdom, are limited to the Avidya Paad of Brahm (or creation). [In other words, anything that is done out of ignorance or that is sustained by ignorance has any relevance only till the time there is ignorance. As soon as ignorance is removed by the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, the same thing, the same deed etc. seems absolutely irrelevant, out of context and absurd. Since everything in existence is a manifestation of Brahm and nothing is beyond the purview and reach of Brahm, it is natural that even Avidya is a form of Brahm, though Brahm itself is not ignorance but an embodiment of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment. This paradoxical and opposing nature of Brahm is what makes the latter so unique in creation. The concept of Avidya has already been explained in Canto 1, paragraph 5.]

All the things that are categorised as Sakar (i.e. that are definable, describable, with attributes and qualifications) consist of various parts or fractions or aspects or units which are collectively called its 'Avyavs'. All these individual units combine together to give that particular entity its specific characteristics and attributes, its form, nature and identity. These Avyavs help to qualify that entity. This is typical and basic case of Avidya and its effects. [This is because of the fact that the same Brahm exists in all these forms, but it is out of Avidya, or ignorance of the fact and reality, that one distinguishes between any two given entities or situations of creation. He forgets that this distinction is artificial and it does not reflect or depict the actual situation or the truth. Misled by ignorance, one is deluded into believing that Brahm has so many distinct and individually separate forms. To cite a simple example, the sky or space element is basically one and an immutable entity. But this sky is given different names such as Ghatakash or the sky or space that is present in a hollow pitcher, a Mathakash or the sky or space present inside the walls of a monastery, a Mahakash or the sky or space that is present in the vast bowls of the cosmos, etc. But upon close analysis one observes that all of them are the various names given to the same universally one and immutable 'sky element'. Similarly, the same water element is given various names such as an ocean, a sea, a river, a brook, a waterfall, rain water, ice, vapour, steam, moisture etc. This concept of Sakar and Nirakar being the same thing, or having the same meaning when applied to Brahm is explained in paragraph no. 7 below by citing the example of the air element and the earth element.]

Since everything that has a Sakar form also has some or the other kind of 'Avyavs' in it, it is sure to be 'Anitya'. [This is due to the fact that anything that can be defined or described would definitely have limitations as it remains confined to these definitions or descriptions. Its scope becomes butted and bounded by its components. If it goes beyond them, the basic nature would change and so would the description and the definition. Everything that has some qualification must change over time because the criterion used for measuring such qualifications would also change over time. This visible world is a typical case of something being categorised as Sakar, and it is a normal observation that nothing in this world remains constant for any length of time as well as the fact that everything here is perishable and transient. Even the measurement of the length of a day and a night changes; no two days or nights are exactly alike, for everyday a second is either added to or subtracted from them.]

This describes the concept of Sakar principle with qualifications or riders that are called its Upaadhi (2).

3. What is the nature of the second type of Sakar, i.e. the Sakar that has no Upaadhi? [Refer paragraph no. 4 below. The word 'Upaadhi' means attributes, epithets, honours, titles, designation, denomination, degree, definitions, qualifications etc. The word 'Sakar' means an entity that has a form and characteristic attributes, an entity that is assigned a particular name and designation. Hence, 'Sakar without an Upaadhi' would be a sublime entity that is so subtle as to have no specific attributes inspite it having a form, no matter how sublime, and a particular name, no matter how abstract. In this category would come the Viraat Purush, the invisible macrocosmic gross body of the Supreme Being that has no specific attributes and characteristic features, but it nevertheless has a body and a name. This Viraat has been described in paragraph 12 of the present Canto no. 2.]

The 'Sakar without an Upaadhi' is of three types—viz. Brahm Vidya Sakar, Anand Sakar, and a combination of these two called the Ubhayaatmak Sakar (i.e. Brahm Vidya-Anand Sakar). [In other words, the exalted state of existence that is

obtained by the acquisition of the eclectic knowledge pertaining to Brahm is called 'Brahm Vidya Sakar'. The state of existence where Anand or bliss is the dominant and steady factor is known as 'Anand Sakar'. And the state which is the combined result of the two is known as 'Brahm Vidya-Anand Sakar'. Since the exalted state of consciousness that exists as a result of Brahm-realisation is invariably accompanied by eternal Anand, the third state is regarded as the better state because it combines the richness and the goodness of the virtues of Brahm-Vidya and Anand.]

These three forms of exalted existence are collectively called 'Trivid Sakar'. [The word 'Trivid' means having three forms or dimensions.]

The Trivid Sakar again is of two types—viz. Nitya Sakar and Mukta Sakar. [As described earlier in paragraph 1, the word 'Nitya' refers to an entity that is constant and unchanging, while the word 'Mukta' means that which is free. Hence, 'Nitya Sakar' is that form of Trivid Sakar that is constant and unchanging, while 'Mukta Sakar' is that form of Trivid Sakar which is not bound to anything, or is free from everything.]

The 'Nitya Sakar' is one that is called 'Sanaatan'—i.e. that which is eternal, perpetual, primeval, ancient and traditional; it is constant and unchanging. The 'Mukta Sakar' refers to the state of existence that is equivalent to one having attained Mukti (liberation and deliverance) as an auspicious reward of offering of prayers, worship and homage with the greatest of devotion as well as by doing selfless service.

The Mukta Sakar has its roots in profound 'Gyan', or robust and unwavering knowledge of the Truth. In other words, those who are submerged in the thoughts of Brahm, those who have become truly self-realised and Brahm-realised are the ones who are not only spiritually liberated but even their grosser form as the 'body' also becomes an embodiment of Gyan. [This is obviously true because only when a man is acquainted with the spiritual truths would he be freed from the delusory effects of this material world and his gross body consisting of the sense organs which always demand attention for gratification. Such an enlightened and wise man is freed from all kinds of bondages, and this is only possible with acquisition of true and profound degree of Gyan.]

The gross body of such a spiritually liberated person is symbolically deemed to be holy and truthful because it is freed from its grossness. [The gross body normally remains busy in gratification of the sense organs and enjoying the pleasures and comforts of the material world. Since both the sense organs and the world are gross, selfish, corrupted and unholy, the creature's Atma, i.e. his 'true self', that does not free itself from the clutches of the gross body cannot remain unaffected by the body's contaminating effects. But when the creature becomes self-realised, when he understands the purity, the eternity and holiness of his 'self'—which is the not the gross body but the Atma that is 'Sanatan', i.e. is eternal, truthful, unchanging and imperishable unlike the gross body which has characteristics which are just the opposite of the Atma—he begins to treat this Atma and its subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect as his real and truthful body instead of the physical gross body having various sense organs. With this change of perception, the term 'body' also undergoes a profound change in meaning and importance. Instead of being perishable and gross it now becomes imperishable, sublime and subtle.]

But there is a rider—this 'Mukta Sakar' is dependent upon one's wishes; it is optional. [It is only when a man determinedly keeps himself detached from the body and firmly rooted in the Atma—which is the blissful Brahm personified in the form of the pure 'consciousness'—that it is possible for him to obtain Mukti while still having a gross body—or to attain the exalted stature of 'Mukta Sakar'. There might be cases

that inspite of acquisition of Gyan of the highest order a man might still be attracted to the world and the body; he might preach others about the Atma but himself treat his body as his identity. Hence, to really become freed from the fetters of the body is optional. In other words, it is not necessary that by simply acquiring knowledge (Gyan) one would definitely become freed (Mukta) from fetters (Bandhan) of the gross body. It is his 'will' and the 'determination' to do so that actually does the trick.] (3).

4. How can 'Sakar without an Upaadhi' be Nitya (eternal, truthful, immortal and unchanging)? [Refer paragraph no. 3 above. This question arises because all forms that this creation takes are the same Brahm in all their forms. So, if Brahm is 'Nitya', its form as 'Sakar without an Upaadhi' should also be 'Nitya'. But usually anything that is 'Sakar' is deemed not to be 'Nitya'—see paragraph no. 1 of this Canto. So how do we explain this paradox? How do we reconcile these seemingly contradictory situations?]

The answer is this—'Brahm has a cosmic 'form' (i.e. it is 'Sakar') known as the sublime cosmic Consciousness that is extremely subtle and divine as well as is free from any kind of attributes and characteristics ('Upaadhi') that are used to understand and define an entity with a physical form and to relate to it; it has no grossness in it. Besides this, this Consciousness is eternal and infinite, it is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, and it is a constant and unequivocal feature of the entire living creation (i.e. it is 'Nitya').

This Brahm is a sublime and subtle entity characterised by the grand and unique virtues of being 'Advaitya' or non-dual, of being 'Nitya' or constant, indivisible and immutable, of being 'Purna' or complete in all respects, of being 'Anand' or an embodiment of eternal bliss and happiness, of being 'Pavitra' or most pure, untainted, immaculate and holy, of being a personification of profound 'Gyan' which is truthful knowledge and enlightenment, of being always 'Mukta' or freed and unbound, and of being an embodiment of 'Satya' or Truth. As would be obvious here, all these attributes have an eternal value; all these characteristics of Brahm are sublime and imperishable by their intrinsic nature.

Hence, an entity (known as Brahm in the form of the cosmic Consciousness and the Truth of creation) that has a form (i.e. is Sakar) and attributes or virtues (known as Upaadhi as described above) is proved to be of an eternal, constant, truthful and imperishable nature (i.e. it is Nitya). [But this 'Sakar' form of Brahm is unique in as much as it has no grossness in it inspite of it being usually identified by things that are wholesomely gross—for instance, it being identified with this physical world which is irrefutably gross and perishable by nature. This is because this world has a whole lot of attributes and characteristic features, and anything that is such cannot be 'without an Upaadhi'. Further, this world has a certain beginning and an end, and anything with these limits cannot be called 'Nitya'.]¹

It follows that there should be no doubt that there is no other greater or more exalted entity than the Sakar form of Brahm. [That is, since Brahm is a non-dual entity that always remains immutable, indivisible and constant in this creation, no matter in which form it exists, it would still remain the same—i.e. it would always remain and retain its exalted stature of being 'supreme and transcendental'. There is no question of one form of Brahm being junior and the other form being senior. Brahm is a non-dual divine entity that is constant and one single whole—it is the pure Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation that may vary in its appearance because of the angle from which one tries to understand or see it.]

All the Upanishads and other scriptures unanimously and unambiguously declare that Brahm is one and non-dual, remaining always constant, universal and uniform. Therefore, the three exalted virtues associated with Brahm, viz. Vidya (knowledge), Anand (bliss) and Turiya (transcendental state) have no difference or separation between them. [This means that Vidya, Anand and Turiya go hand-in-hand. When one attains truthful enlightenment or Vidya, he becomes submerged in bliss of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation or Anand, and this state of his existence is transcendental or Turiya in nature.]' (4).

[Note—¹This form of Brahm as the cosmic Consciousness is Brahm's subtlest 'Sakar' form. It is 'Sakar' in the sense that the otherwise nameless and formless Divinity has taken a certain form, no matter how subtle, sublime and diffused it is. The Upanishads unequivocally assert that the entire creation is a manifestation of Brahm. Since this creation has a certain 'form', it is the 'Sakar' Brahm in this form.

But this creation has any meaning only because the cosmic Consciousness is woven into its texture as its integral part; it pervades throughout it. Without the presence of this Consciousness there would be no life in creation, and a dead creation is not worth paying any attention to; it is as good as not being there at all.

But at the same time it must not be forgotten that this 'Consciousness' has no specific gross attributes and characteristics; it is not a gross entity that can be defined and established on some pedestal to give it an honour—that is, it has no 'Upaadhi'. Hence, the visible creation is the 'Sakar' form of the Divinity known as Brahm which is fundamentally 'without an Upaadhi' as it is nothing but pure sublime cosmic Consciousness that has no physical specific attributes or characteristics at all.

So how do we justify these two seemingly contradictory situations? Well, this is exactly what is being explained here. The 'Tattva' or the fundamental essence of this living world and its living beings is not their physical gross form or structure or feature, but the subtle and sublime entity known as the 'consciousness' that lies hidden behind the exterior. This 'consciousness' is invisible and absolutely pure and immaculate. This consciousness is the 'Tattva' or essence of creation, because without it the creation would be meaningless and hollow.

This entire creation—whether the one which is the grosser form of creation that is visible around us with all its living beings we see and interact with in this world, or its subtler form in the heaven where Gods and Spirits live, a world that we cannot see—is a manifestation of Brahm. Hence, when we understand Brahm in relation to the creation we call Brahm as being 'Sakar'. But Brahm is basically the cosmic Consciousness that has no gross form, as it is an absolute sublime and subtle entity. Therefore, Brahm is also 'without an Upaadhi'.

Further, the magnificent qualities associated with Brahm as outlined above are of an eternal nature, hence Brahm is 'Nitya' too.

Thus, the contradictory situations that the 'Sakar Brahm' which should normally be 'Anitya' (transient, mortal and perishable) is indeed 'Nitya' (eternal, imperishable and infinite), and which should normally have 'Upaadhis' (attributes and characteristics) is actually 'without an Upaadhi' have been reconciled.]

5. The disciple asked his Guru—'How would one distinguish between the three forms of Sakar you've mentioned—viz. the Vidya Sakar, the Anand Sakar and the Vidya-Anand Sakar?' [Refer paragraph no. 3, 2nd stanza.]

The learned teacher replied—'Obviously, that Sakar form or aspect of Brahm which has a dominance of Vidya, or truthful knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment, is known as 'Vidya Sakar'. Similarly, the Sakar form or aspect of Brahm where Anand, or bliss and happiness, is the dominant feature or virtue is known as 'Anand Sakar'. And by the same reasoning, that Sakar form or aspect of

Brahm which has a dominance of both Vidya as well as Anand would be called 'Vidya-Anand Sakar'.

So we conclude that this categorisation is merely to indicate the dominance or the presence of a greater proportion of one particular virtue vis-à-vis the other, but the Principal that is being described is the same. Even if no extraneous virtues are assigned to this Principal the latter would still not lose its intrinsic qualities. Hence we deduce that these categorisations or aspects are artificially assigned to the Principal to highlight one or the other aspect of its principle, divinity, majesty and greatness, but they in no way affect the primary nature of Brahm which always remains one and non-dual. [In other words, no matter what name or designation or quality or epithet we assign to Brahm, whether we call Brahm 'Sakar' or 'Nirakar', whether we categorise this Sakar into different types such as 'Vidya', 'Anand' and 'Vidya-Anand', or even as 'Sakar without an Upaadhī'—none of these would ever change the primary nature of Brahm. They would not affect Brahm in the least.]' (5).

6. The disciple asked his Guru—'Oh Lord! It looks that for Brahm—which is a non-dual, immutable, indivisible, constant, incorruptible, unchangeable and eternal entity that is an image of infinite bliss, beatitude and felicity—this dual concept of being 'Sakar' (one having a form and attributes; one having qualifications) as well as being 'Nirakar' (the opposite of Sakar) appears to be contradictory. So, how can they exist simultaneously in Brahm, or how can Brahm be both? Please be kind to elucidate upon it.' (6).

[Note—In this context, refer Canto 1, paragraph nos. 3-4, 6, and Canto 8, paragraph nos. 1-8 which also deal with the same question.]

7. The learned teacher removed this doubt in the mind of the disciple by saying—'What you said is correct. But when analysed deeply we will conclude that it is indeed possible. Let us take two instances of the air and the earth elements to explain this concept.

Just like the great air element (which is one of the five primary elements of creation, the others being sky, fire, water and earth) has no form, qualities, qualifications and specifications of its own, i.e. it is 'Nirakar', but when it manifests itself in the body of the creature as the latter's ability to speak and express himself (because air in the form of breath and wind passing through the vocal cords in the throat enables a person to speak), along with the patron deity of speech (known as Saraswati), as well as in the form of the various Prans or vital winds which regulate the functioning of the creature's body (such as the Pran, Apan, Vyan, Samaan and Udaan etc.)¹, then this primarily formless air element is deemed to have become 'Sakar', or has taken various forms with their characteristic attributes. For instance, the spoken word is primarily air element making different sounds which are recognised as alphabets.

Similarly, the earth element that is primarily 'Nirakar', or which has no specific form, attributes and specifications, is moulded into various shapes and sizes, each having their own attributes and names. That is, the Nirakar earth becomes 'Sakar'. [For instance, a potter makes many different things of varying shapes and sizes from a clod of earth, and none of his creations have any resemblance to the primary raw material, the 'earth', from which they are made. But does this mean that they are 'not' earth? Certainly, all the forms that earth takes would be only 'earth' and nothing else. This concept has been beautifully explained in Canto 8, paragraph no. 2

of this Upanishad citing the examples of gold made into golden ornaments, and water existing in different forms as ocean etc.]

This applies to all the other elements such as fire, sky and water which are primarily formless cosmic entities—or are ‘Nirakar’, and each one of them assumes some or the other form having attributes—or become ‘Sakar’. [For instance, the formless sky becomes Ghatakash—the space inside a pitcher, or the Mathakash—the space within the walls of a monastery. The fire has different names—viz. the Grahapatya fire—the fire lit in the household hearth, the Ahawaniya fire—the sacred fire lit to invoke Gods during religious ceremonies, the Dakshinagni fire—the sacred fire lit as a witness during charities, the Yagya Agni or the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice, etc. The water element assumes so many common names such as ocean, river, lake, well, spring etc.]

The above narration applies to the gross level of creation. Even when extended to the subtle level of creation, the same principle holds true. These primary elements that are basically formless, or are ‘Nirakar’, are transformed into respective deities having a majestic form and divine attributes or a ‘Sakar’ form. These deities are the formed versions of these elements—or are the ‘Sakar’ manifestations or versions of the ‘Nirakar’. But notwithstanding their physical variations, they are essentially the same. [For instance, the sky element has Viraat Purush as its manifestation; the air element has the Wind God known as Vayu as its manifestation; the fire element has the Fire God or Agni as its manifestation; the water element has the Water God known as Apaha or Varun as its manifestation; and the earth element has the Prithivi or the Bhu Devi as its manifestation. But all these deities can only show the virtues that are characteristic and specific to their primary elements. For instance, the Fire God cannot show the qualities of the Water God, and vice versa. Thus, whether we treat the ‘fire’ as an element or in its personified form as the ‘Fire God’, we are basically dealing with the same entity known as ‘fire’, and not water or anything else.]

That is why there is no cause of any contradiction, dichotomy or schism leading to any kind of confusion or doubt about the non-duality, uniformity and universality of Brahm, or in the fact that the same Brahm exists both in a Sakar as well as a Nirakar form.

When one becomes truly enlightened and wise about the eclectic and divine virtues of Brahm who is supreme and almighty, who is an esoteric and mysterious Being whose magnificence, greatness and majesty are beyond comprehension—it is only then such doubts about Brahm are dispelled.

In other words, when one becomes aware of the factual position that Brahm represents a composite cosmic Authority that is central and supreme in this creation in as much as it is a combined form or unitary form of all the myriad mystical powers and dynamic forces of creation, of all the majesties and glories that have revealed themselves in magnificently vivid forms in this creation—it is only then that he realises that it is not illogical to conceive Brahm as having (or possessing) at the same time qualities and characteristics that apparently seem to be contradictory and poles apart.

It is the lack of this erudition and wisdom that leads to so much doubts and confusions regarding Brahm (7).

[Note—¹The various vital winds or airs and how they regulate the functioning of the body can be summarised as follows in the *Subalo-panishad*, Canto 9, verse no. 1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, there are fourteen vital winds called Prans present in the body. It lists their functions as follows—(1) Pran—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) Apaana—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing (verse 2); (3) Vyan—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4)

Udaan—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Samaan—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5); (6) Vairambh—this controls speech (verse 6); (7) Mukhya—this controls the hands (verse 7); (8) Antarayam—this controls the legs (verse 8); (9) Prabhanjan—this controls the anus (verse 9); (10) Kurma—this controls the genitals (verse 10); (11) Shyen—this controls the Mana or the thoughts and emotions (verse 11); (12) Krishna—this controls the discrimination, intellect and wisdom (verse 12); (13) Shwet—this controls Ahankar or the notion of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity etc. (verse 13); (14) Naag—this controls the 'Chitta' or the faculty of concentration, memory, sub-conscious, reasoning (verse 14).]

8. It is well established that the two famous and majestic incarnations of the Supreme Being known as Lord Ram (of the Ramayana fame) and Lord Krishna (of the Mahabharata fame) are none else but the same supreme transcendental blissful Brahm—which is a cosmic, infinite, invisible, non-dual and formless entity having no attributes—that has revealed itself in these two divine forms.

These two glorious incarnations of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna have been repeatedly lauded, honoured and glorified by the scriptures, and their virtues, glories, noble ideals and auspicious deeds have become immortal and renowned in the world. But both these incarnations had their own limitations as they were in human form inspite of them being Lord Vishnu (the Supreme Being in his cosmic form as the Viraat Purush) himself in these forms. They had specific divine attributes, characters and personalities, limited areas or geographical dominions of the earth where they lived and carried out their activities which are well known and documented in the Purans, specific eras with a limited time-span in which they had revealed themselves, and so on and so forth, inspite of them being manifestations of Lord Vishnu who is the cosmic Lord without any kind of limitations and habitations, and the Lord who is assigned the task of taking care of this entire creation (and not only of the limited area of the land under the jurisdiction and rule of a particular king such as the kingdoms where Lord Ram and Lord Krishna lived and ruled)¹.

But Vishnu is only one of the numerous cosmic manifestations of Brahm, such as Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder for instance. If the majesty, greatness and glories of only two visible human forms of Vishnu as Lord Ram and Lord Krishna cannot be fully narrated, and of which the scriptures themselves have lauded and extolled repeatedly, then say how can one imagine about the majesty, greatness and glories of the Principal known as Brahm of whom Vishnu is only 'one' form?

[That is, inspite of the fact that Vishnu is the cosmic sustainer and protector who is expected to live at all places at the same time and rule over the entire creation as its supreme Lord, when he had revealed himself, say, as Lord Ram, he had to confine himself to a human body as a noble and great king who ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya which had certain physical boundaries. No matter how great Lord Ram was, his territorial reach was limited to the areas to which the kingdom extended. He was a very kind, magnanimous and gracious king, but this only benefited the citizens of Ayodhya. Lord Ram had liberated many trapped souls from their gross bodies and given them deliverance, but this does not mean that in his physical form he liberated each and every creature born on earth. But such were Lord Ram's great and noble deeds and ideals that his name and fame became immortal and lauded by the scriptures for all times to come. In the context of Brahm it means that if one single human manifestation of Brahm has such immense majesty and glory that the scriptures are never satisfied by lauding it and glorifying it since time immemorial, then say what would be the greatness and glory of the Principal known as Brahm who has a cosmic footprint, whose dimensions are fathomless and infinite,

and of whom Lord Ram is but only one manifestation amongst countless manifestations in as many countless cycles of creation and destruction?]

On the contrary, if one were to treat Brahm as being only Nirakar (i.e. having no forms) then Brahm would be like the sky which also has no physical form. But then, like the sky, Brahm would also become imaginary and without any specifications, an entity that is vividly changing in appearance every now and then, an entity that is full of void, inane and inert. Surely this is not the case with Brahm as the latter is Consciousness and Truth personified.

Therefore, it is wise to accept Brahm in both the forms—as ‘Sakar’ as well as ‘Nirakar’ (8).

[Note—¹Lord Ram lived during the era called Tretiya-yug and ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya, while Lord Krishna lived in the Dwapar-yug and ruled over the kingdom of Dwarka.]

9. [This paragraph narrates the process of creation from the perspective of metaphysics, and likens it symbolically to the opening and closing of the eyes of the Supreme Being. In this context, refer Canto 3, paragraphs 1-6 of the present Upanishad, and Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-51 of Vishnu Puran.]

The origin, the development and growth, and the conclusion of the ‘Mool Avidya’, i.e. the primary ignorance that is the cause of all delusions and their horrendous consequences that not only create a web known as the world but also keep the creature trapped in it, corresponds to the opening and closing of the eyes of the cosmic Lord known as Adi-Narayan (the primordial Lord Vishnu who is also known as the Viraat Purush, the Primal Purush). [That is, when the Lord opens his eyes it corresponds to the initiation of creation, when he closes his eyes it corresponds to the conclusion of creation, and the period when he keeps the eyes open corresponds to the intermediary phase of development and growth.]

When the universal Lord Adi-Narayan, who is blissful in his true self and self-contented in every way (‘Atmaram’), so wishes and lifts his eyelids, it is then that the ‘Avyakta’ (the un-manifest, imperceptible and invisible) aspect of creation, called the ‘Mool Prakriti’ (the primary Nature), is created. This Avyakta represents the lower feet of the supreme transcendental Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness) which is the primary cause of all things that have come into existence, and which is expressed in the form of this existence in myriad of ways.

From the Avyakta or Mool Prakriti comes into being the ‘Mool Avidya’ or primary ignorance or the cause of falsehood. [The reason behind calling the entire creation as ‘falsehood’ is that it is an imagination of the mind of the Lord Adi-Narayan, the Primal Purush. It is the latter’s ‘wishful thinking’ so to say, and therefore the creation has no actual existence. The world came into being (existence) because the Supreme Being desired or wished that it be so. If he had not so desired or wished, the creation wouldn’t have been in existence at all. But even the Lord himself was so fascinated and charmed by his own creation once it came into being that for a moment he forgot that it is an imaginary thing created out of his own wishful thinking, and instead began to regard it as the real thing. Hence, the rising of ‘Mool Avidya’ or the primary form of ignorance is regarded as having its base in this imaginary thinking that has its origin in the mind. Once it came into being, it acted as the breeding ground for ‘Maya’ or delusions. This tendency to first imagine something and then treat it as the real thing is known as ‘Mool Prakriti’ or the primary nature of all creatures. This explains why ‘Mool Prakriti’ gave rise to ‘Mool Avidya’—because this ‘primary or basic nature’ to imagine things that do not have

substance and any truth in them as the real thing having a truthful form and existence is being 'ignorant of the reality and the truth'.]

It is from the same 'Avyakta' and influenced by the 'Avidya' created by it that the entity referred to as 'Sat', i.e. an entity that is 'truthful' (Sat) but tainted by 'ignorance' (Avidya), was produced. This 'Sat' is that form of Brahm which is undeniably true but is tainted and corrupted by the influence of Avidya. [This refers to the next step of creation when Avidya, or lack of knowledge, led to the primarily 'truthful' ('Sat') Brahm that is characterised by being without any attributes and qualifications to acquire certain attributes and qualifications as narrated below. The importance of 'Sat' in this context lies in the fact that though the creation that would now follow as a manifestation of Brahm is outwardly false but it must always be remembered that hidden in this external façade of falsehood is the immortal and immutable 'truth' of creation that is known as 'Brahm'. This Brahm is 'Avyakta' because it is the pure consciousness that is hidden and secretly present in this creation. It is not visible from the outside like the rest of the creation's physical body. The aspect of creation that is visible is the 'Vyakta' form of Brahm, while its invisible aspect is the 'Avyakta' form of Brahm. Since the world is marked by falsehoods and other impurities called the various 'Vikaars' which become imposed or transposed on Brahm for the simple reason that whatever that exists is nothing but Brahm, it logically follows that Brahm itself becomes tainted with the impurities so synonymous with this artificial creation. This creation is riddled with ignorance and artificiality because it is an 'imaginary creation of the mind' in the first place as outlined above. Therefore we conclude that the primary truthful and sublime form of Brahm becomes tainted and corrupted when it gets associated with this gross world and identified in its form.]

From the Avyakta were further created the 'Mahatattva'—the essential virtues ('Tattvas) that granted greatness and magnificence to this creation, and imparted glory ('Mahat') to it and its creator.

From 'Mahat' was created 'Ahankar', or the sense of ego, pride and vanity (which created arrogance and haughtiness). [The link is obvious. When one has some 'Mahat' or a sense of grandeur, majesty or greatness, it is natural that 'Ahankar' would be produced in its wake, and this would eventually subdue him.]

From Ahankar was created the five 'Tanmatras' or the five sense perceptions. [The five Tanmatras are the perceptions of sound or words, touch, smell, taste and sight. When the primary consciousness representing the creature felt 'proud', or had Ahankar in it that it is enabled and empowered to live a life independently and has been given a body that has magnificent capabilities, it decided that it can hear, touch, smell, taste and see various things and interpret them or make sense of them. Thus were created the five Tanmatras of the creature's body in which the Atma or the pure consciousness lived as his true 'self'.]

From the five Tanmatras were created the five Bhuts such as the sky etc. [The five Bhuts are the five primary elements of creation such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth. This is because to 'hear' there must be a sound, and sound needs 'sky or space' to travel and the medium of 'air' to be transported in the form of waves. Further, it was in the cosmic ether that the first waves were created that produced 'sound'. Similarly for example, 'water' was needed to 'taste' something as the chemicals present in anything tasted needed a medium to dissolve and interact with each other to generate the sense of taste. And so on and so forth.]

From these five Bhuts or primary elements there came into being an 'Anda'—or the 'cosmic egg'. [This 'Anda' or the cosmic egg represented a grosser form that

resulted when all these primary elements of creation interacted with each other; the Anda was a result of this interaction. It is like the case of the male sperm fertilising the female ova to produce the egg from which develops the embryo which in turn metamorphoses into a complex creature with a gross, visible and physical body that has no resemblance to the original inputs of the sperm and the ova which are in themselves very microscopic in form.]

This primary form of creation represents one Paad or feet or aspect of the supreme Brahm. [Therefore, the embryo and the visible world that develops from this cosmic Anda or egg is only one Paad of Brahm. And this Paad is the lower feet of Brahm as already said in stanza 2 of this paragraph. The other Paads of Brahm would therefore represent the vast creation much beyond the known world.] (9).

[Note—It ought to be noted here that paragraphs 9-10 describe the 18 Tattvas or essential elements of creation. They are as follows—Avyakta, Mool Prakriti, Mool Avidya, Sat, Mahatattva, Ahankar, the five Tanmatras, the five Bhuts, Anda or Hiranyagarbh, and Viraat.]

10. This cosmic egg ('Anda') has the primary Lord known as Narayan as its basic empowering Authority as well as its essential ingredient. This Lord Narayan is primarily beyond all Gunas (i.e. who has no specific attributes and is beyond conventional definitions), is immaculate and pure Truth personified, and is eternally blissful, but he has assumed a form that has attributes and willingly allows himself to be surrounded by Maya (delusions) because he so wishes and wants to display his maverick powers in a playful manner.

In other words, the fact that the primarily formless and attributeless Lord Narayan has allowed himself to be mired by Avidya (ignorance) and Maya (delusions) that led the formation of the cosmic Anda (egg) that would eventually create the Brahmaand (universe) is so because the Lord had willingly wished it to be so. He wanted a little fun and play, and therefore sportingly created this world and its accompanying delusions. [This paragraph describes the cause of this creation coming into being. The cause is the Lord's desire to do something magical and out of the ordinary; it was due to his 'wish'. When this happened, the first thing was the appearance of the cosmic 'egg' which was the future universe in its primitive, basic and miniature form. This cosmic egg was the 'causal body' of Brahm because it contained or harboured 'the spark of life in the form of consciousness'. It was 'causal' because it acted as the 'cause' of the universe taking shape and coming into being. Hence, Brahm resided in this cosmic Anda as its Atma or soul. Had it not been for the presence of Brahm in it, the cosmic egg would be like any other 'unfertilised egg' which does 'not' harbour life. And even if this 'unfertilised egg' grew and somehow matured into the shape of the universe, the latter would not have harboured life either because of the absence of Brahm or consciousness in it. This lifeless universe would be without an Atma.]

Lord Narayan is none else but Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that is behind everything in existence. Since the cosmic 'Anda' or egg harbours the future world in its bosom, it is sure to have the spark of 'life and consciousness' in it, for otherwise it would be inane and dead. So it is said that Narayan (symbolising 'life' and 'consciousness') is uniformly present in this cosmic egg as its vital ingredient; this cosmic egg is completely soaked in life and consciousness which are manifestations of Adi-Narayan; the cosmic egg is therefore a manifestation of Adi-Narayan. [This 'Adi-Narayan' is a term used to imply the Primal Purush from whom the entire gamut of creation has emerged. He is variously regarded as being the supreme Brahm who is

un-manifest cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading, all-encompassing and beyond any limitations imposed by definitions, as well as Lord Vishnu who resides in Vaikunth, and who is variously named as Narayan, Parmatma, Viraat Purush and Hiranyagarbha. Refer Canto 1, paragraph 5-6.]

The egg therefore has the supreme Lord concealed in it in a subtle form. This Lord is the cause of countless universes coming into being, their sustenance and their conclusion. He is the primary cause of all causes, i.e. he is personified Prakriti or Nature. He is beyond the reach and purview of Maya or delusions, though Maya is created by him and he has allowed himself to be surrounded by Maya in order to create this creation. He is a personified state of consciousness known as Turiya, which is the state of existence which is transcendental in form and nature. It is this supreme and majestic Lord who resides subtly and imperceptibly in the cosmic egg (Anda) described here. [According to Vedanta, this form of Brahm is known as 'Hiranyagarbha', and is also called 'Brahma, the creator'. It is so because from this egg the rest of the creation would eventually evolve. So, Hiranyagarbha is the subtle body of Brahm at the cosmic level of creation. The subtle body consists of the twin instruments of the mind and the intellect which are required to undertake the complex task of creation. This is symbolised by Brahma, the creator, as he is said to have pronounced the Vedas which are the eternal repositories of knowledge and wisdom. It was the creative and imaginative aspect of the cosmic 'mind' that visualised what shape this universe would take, and it was the intelligent and sharp cosmic 'intellect' that actually researched and gave effect to the imaginary conceptions of the mind. Hence, Brahma the creator is regarded as the macrocosmic 'subtle body' of creation. He is also like the cosmic egg because it was he who had given this creation its shape just like the body of a creature is given its shape inside the shell of the egg even before it hatches.]

From this evolves the 'Viraat Purush' which is the 'gross body' of the supreme transcendental Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. It is this Viraat Purush from which the rest of creation has emerged. Only a body that has 'life' and 'consciousness' in it is adored and shown attention by all; it is such a body that does not decay and perish. Once the factors of life and consciousness leave the body, it begins to decay and perish rapidly. Hence, this shows that the 'imperishable and eternal' Brahm in the form of the 'cosmic Consciousness' has himself revealed in the form of the Viraat Purush at the macrocosmic level of creation, and by extension in the form of the individual creature that this Viraat transforms into at the microcosmic level of creation. [The Viraat Purush is the sum-total of all the gross bodies in creation. All things that have a shape and form are created from the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush. In other words, what the individual creature is to Brahm at the microcosmic level of creation, the Viraat Purush bears the same relationship with Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. The 'gross body' has various sense organs or perceptions and actions—so when this Viraat transformed himself as a living being, the latter also depicted these sense organs. They are his five organs of perception such as the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin, and the five organs of action such as the hand, the leg, the mouth, the genitals and the excretory.]

Therefore we conclude that it is the same Brahm in the form of the cosmic Consciousness that is at the core of life and creation at all levels of its evolution, such as the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body (10).

11. [Paragraph no. 11 describes the majestic form and glories of the Viraat Purush. Refer also Canto 6, paragraph no. 8 and 11.]

The Viraat Purush¹, the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being, has countless heads, eyes, hands and legs. [Refer also to This is a symbolic way to highlight the fact that the Viraat is the sum-total of all the gross bodies that live in this creation. The Viraat Purush is a metaphor for the all-inclusive form and all-encompassing nature of the supreme Brahm, as the former represents all living organisms in this creation. According to the theory of Genesis of Creation as outlined in the Upanishads, it is from the Viraat Purush that the whole creation has been moulded; the creation is a manifestation of the Viraat Purush. Since the Viraat is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm as outlined in the forgoing paragraphs, it follows that the creation moulded out of this Viraat is also a manifestation of the Brahm. Therefore, this creation represents the gross body of Brahm. It is this Viraat Purush who created the creature in his own image. Since there are uncountable forms and varieties of creatures or living beings in this creation, from the single cell organisms to the most complex human, and each individual is an image of the Viraat, it is easy to understand the meaning and import of the statement that the Viraat has thousands of hands, mouths etc. as stated above. Besides this point, another interpretation is that Brahm in the form of the Viraat lives in all the places of this creation at the same time. This is in consonance with the eclectic virtue of Brahm as being omnipresent all-encompassing and all-pervading.]

The Viraat Purush, having countless ears², surrounds the entire creation from all sides and uniformly pervades in it. He is omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing.

He (the Viraat Purush) is both Saguna and Nirguna. [That is, the Lord has revealed himself in numerous forms, thereby becoming 'Saguna'—or the one with discernible characteristics, definable attributes and specific qualities. At the same time, the Lord has no visible form as his primary nature is formless and without attributes—i.e. he is 'Nirguna'. This concept has been elaborately described earlier in paragraphs 2-8 of this present Canto 2.]

He (the Viraat Purush) is a personification of the grand virtues of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment), Bal (strength, valour, vitality and potent), Aishwarya (fame, majesty, grandeur, magnificence, glory), Shakti (power, dynamism, energy, punch and vitality), and Tej (splendour, radiance, glory, energy, magnificence, dynamism, agility and speed).

He (the Viraat Purush) is established in the form of innumerable worlds of diverse varieties and forms.

It is he (the Viraat Purush) who is the supreme Lord of creation known as the Parmatma, the supreme Atma or soul of creation. He is an embodiment of eternal and unbound bliss, as well as is endowed with all the noble and auspicious virtues and glories that exist in this creation.

He (the Viraat Purush) is absolutely independent (because he is supreme and not subservient to anything). He is all-knowing and omniscient. He is almighty and all-powerful. He is the ultimate controller of everything in existence. And he is an image of all the most auspicious virtues that ensure all-round well being in this creation.

He (the Viraat Purush) is established in the form of a majestic fount of immense 'Tej' (splendour, radiance, glory, energy, magnificence, dynamism etc.) that cannot be described, is endless, and is most divine.

This Supreme Being having the above grand and magnificent virtues pervades throughout the cosmic *Anda* created from the *Avyakta* due to *Avidya* (as narrated in paragraph no. 9). This *Anda* or the cosmic egg is the basis of *Maha-Maya* that has surrounded the Supreme Being (i.e. it is the basis of creation of the great delusion because it is in this form of the cosmic egg that the Supreme Being had allowed himself to assume a form which is not in consonance with his primary nature of being formless).

[As is clear by now, the Supreme Being that is referred to here is the cosmic Consciousness that infuses life in the cosmic egg. The egg has been literally 'fertilised' by *Brahm*, the Supreme Being, who has passed on to it his 'genes' in the form of 'consciousness' possessing all the virtues enumerated herein above. Therefore, these virtues of *Brahm* would naturally be passed on to the 'embryo' that developed in this egg, and the subsequent 'creation' that would emerge from this cosmic egg upon its maturity. It follows that this is the evident proof why *Brahma* known as *Hiranyagarbha* representing the 'embryo', and *Vishnu* known as the *Viraat Purush* representing the 'creation' would be an image or a 'gene-bearer' of *Brahm*, the Supreme Being. Now, once the 'formless' (or *Nirguna* and *Avyakta*) *Brahm* assumes the 'formed' shape of an egg (becomes *Saguna* and *Vyakta*) he is bound to be affected by the characteristics of something that has a 'form', something that is 'Saguna' (one that has various *Gunas* or qualities) and 'Vyakta' (expressed, revealed). In other words, the *Brahm* which was without any *Maya* (delusions) prior to the entire process of creation rolling out has now become surrounded by it, or tainted and affected by it.]

Therefore, the '*Maha-Maya*' is the gross body created out of delusions of the almighty Lord God known as *Brahm* who is naturally and inherently almighty, all-powerful, universal, uniform, non-dual, and an embodiment of un-bound bliss and beatitude.

It is in each pore of the macrocosmic form of *Brahm* known as the *Viraat Purush* that numerous universes or worlds and their gross things are born or created. Each one of them is a revelation of the same Lord *Narayan*; they are images of the same *Brahm*. [It is because, as has been explained above, they carry the genes of their parent known as *Brahm*. In this context, refer to Canto 3, paragraph nos. 11-12 which will make it clear that the '*Viraat Purush*' meant here is not the one which is regarded as being synonymous with *Vishnu*, but is the '*Adi-Viraat Purush*' that precedes *Vishnu* and from whom even *Vishnu*, the commonly known form of *Viraat*, was created. This creation has been visualised as being in different layers like many concentric circles, one higher than its previous one. This concept will be discussed in Canto 6.] (11).

[Note—¹The *Viraat Purush* is the subtlest form in which *Brahm* revealed itself when it had decided to initiate the process of creation. Though 'subtlest' in relation to the rest of creation, but in its self the *Viraat Purush* was the macrocosmic gross body of *Brahm*. It was from this *Viraat Purush* that the rest of the creation was moulded—refer *Aiteriya Upanishad* of the *Rig Veda*, Canto 1, Section 1, verse nos. 1-4; and Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 1-2. The word '*Viraat*' itself means colossus, huge, immense, large and vast. This manifestation of *Brahm* covered each minute pore of creation; it pervaded throughout the space that would eventually form the area of the cosmos or the universe. It encompassed everything; it included everything. It encircled or surrounded everything from the outside. It was called '*Viraat*' precisely for this reason. Again, it was called '*Purush*' because it provided the vital spark of life in the form of 'consciousness' and '*Pran*' into the otherwise lifeless primordial cosmic gel so that it could become active, alive and show dynamism. It was called '*Purush*' also because *Brahm*, in the form of the 'consciousness', lived in this creation

uniformly and universally in such a way that the two were inseparable from one another, and to give life to the nascent creation as well as to control it from within. When the creation came into being, this Brahm entered in the body of the creature to take up residence in the living being's body—refer Aiteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 3, verse nos. 12-14.

The word *Purush* has been defined in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad*, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. The word Purush consists of two parts—viz. 'Pur' meaning a city or an abode, and 'Ush' means the one who lives there. Hence, the 'Viraat Purush' is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that lives in each aspect of this creation, pervading throughout it, and including in its ambit everything that exists in any form.

The entire creation was produced by Brahm—refer Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 1-8; Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 4.

Brahm resides in the subtle space of the heart of the creature—refer Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 9-10; Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 1; Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4; Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11.

Brahm resides in the gross body of the creature—refer Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4-5; Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 7.

Brahm is the controller of the entire creation—refer Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 7; Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 1, 7.

²The phrase 'having countless ears' simply means that Brahm, in the form of the Viraat Purush, assumed as many forms as there were creatures who could hear. It also means that Brahm, as the living being's consciousness, heard or became aware of everything that was happening in this creation.

The fact that the Viraat Purush has countless ears and as many eyes and mouths has been also stressed in the present Tripadvibhūt Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 6, paragraph no. 11, as well as in Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3, 11, 14, 16.

It is a metaphoric way of saying that a wise man who knows the truth of Brahm is also one who is well aware of everything in this creation; nothing is hidden from his knowledge; he is wise, erudite, knowledgeable, enlightened, omniscient and all-knowing. He receives all information and knowledge, but then picks and chooses what is auspicious and righteous. He is not 'deaf' to the teaching of the scriptures. It ought to be noted here that the creature, the living being, especially the human being, is said to be replica of the Viraat Purush. Refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Canto 1, Section 2, verse no. 3.]

12. [This paragraph describes the concept of uniformity in creation, the eclectic principle of non-duality, in the context of genesis of creation at two levels—one at the macrocosmic and invisible level of the vast creation that consists of Brahma and Viraat (Vishnu), and the other at the microcosmic level of the visible creation consisting of the Prajapati who is the first male on earth and who produced off springs who would eventually populate it. While the cosmic entities such as the sun, the moon and the stars along with everything else in this creation are the off springs of the Viraat Purush, the visible world where humans live, i.e. the earth and its inhabitants were the off springs of Brahma the creator in his manifested form as the Prajapti—literally meaning the Lord of his subjects. By extension, all

the Gods, all the creatures and all other entities in this creation, both at the macro as well as the micro level of creation, are manifestations of the same Brahm known as Narayan.]

It is from Narayan, or the Supreme Being known as Brahm, that Hiranyagarbha (the macrocosmic subtle body of Brahm, also known as Brahma the creator) was born or created.

It is from Narayan that the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, was born or created.

It is from Narayan that the Prajapati was born. It was this Prajapati who is the one who produced off springs who in turn would populate this world. [Hence, he is the first Male from whom the rest of the creatures who eventually populated and ruled over this earth were born. He is the ‘first born’ on this earth, and therefore is regarded as a manifestation of the cosmic creator of the physical world known as Brahma. Hence, Brahma, the cosmic creator of this physical world, is often also called ‘Prajapati Brahma’. The word ‘Prajapati’ literally means one who is the Lord of his subjects and is responsible for their care and welfare.]

It is from Narayan that the eleven Rudras (the various cosmic forms or aspects of Lord Shiva, the concluder and one of the Gods of the Trinity) were born or created. [The 11 *Rudras* have been enumerated in note no. 2 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 7 of the present volume.]

It is from Narayan that the entire creation and its numerous worlds were born or created.

It is from Narayan that Indra (the chief of Gods) was born or created. [The word ‘Indra’ is derived from the root ‘Indri’ meaning sense organs. Hence, he represents the controlling power of Brahm that helps the creature to remain in control of his sense organs, and through them over the world.]

It is from Narayan that all the rest of the Gods were born or created. [These ‘Gods’ represent the various forces of Nature and the numerous powers of Brahm that are necessary to regulate the creation and keep it functioning properly. Hence, they are personifications of these universal forces and powers of Brahm; they are metaphors for various stupendous abilities, the powerful authority and the dynamism of Brahm at the cosmic level.]

It is from Narayan that the twelve Adityas or the Sun Gods are born or created. [The 12 *Adityas* have been enumerated in note no. 3 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 7 of the present volume.]

In fact, it is from Narayan that all the eight Vasus (the patron deities who preside over the various forms of wealth created in order to sustain this creation and meet its needs), all the Rishis (the exalted and wise sages and seers), all the living beings, and all the Chandas (the innumerable hymns that constitute the body of all the scriptures that are regarded as repositories of knowledge and wisdom) were born or created. [The 8 *Vasus* have been enumerated in note no. 1 of verse no. 3 of Canto 1 of the Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 7 of the present volume.]

It is from Narayan that each one of them are born and derive their abilities to live, act and do anything, and it is in Narayan in whom they all dissolve in the end.

Hence, it is Narayan who is deemed to be eternal, infinite, unchanging, uniform, universal, imperishable and constant. It is Narayan who is deemed to be the most exalted and supreme. It is Narayan who is deemed to be self-illuminated.

Indeed, everything and everyone in creation is none but Narayan.

It is Narayan who is Brahma the creator.

It is Narayan who is Shiva the concluder.

It is Narayan who is Indra, the chief God.

It is Narayan who has manifested himself as all the chief directions of the compass as well as the corners of these directions (i.e. he is omnipresent and all-pervading in this creation; there is no spot where Narayan is not present).

It is Narayan who is Kaal (time and circumstance in all dimensions).

It is Narayan who is revealed in the form of all deeds and actions.

It is Narayan who is both the formed aspect of creation, called the 'Murta' or Saguna creation, as well as the unformed aspect, called the 'Amurta' or Nirguna creation.

It is Narayan who is a personified form of all causes that lead to consequences, as well as these consequences themselves. It is Narayan who is both the cause and the action that results from this cause. Indeed, Narayan even goes beyond the concept of a cause and its effect to transcend them and remain neutral and unaffected. [That is, inspite of the fact that it is Narayan who is at the root of all deeds and actions in this world, being their cause as he is the supreme inspirer or motivator, he himself remains detached and non-involved in either the deeds or their results.]

It is Narayan who is the only God or Authority that possesses and exhibits such auspicious and noble divine virtues as being the supreme fount of eternal illumination and light because he is self-illuminated, as being a personification of eternal and profound bliss and happiness that comes with Brahm-realisation, as being constant, uniform and eternal, as being unique because he is without an alternative and parallel, as being faultless, taintless, without any blemishes and corruptions, as being indescribable and indefinable, and as being the only absolutely immaculate, holy, pure and divine Lord of creation.

Narayan is so divine, majestic, magnificent, great, glorious and exalted that he is comparable to none. At the same time, he exhibits exemplary humility and remarkable simplicity by not being, or pretending to be, greater than anyone or anything in this creation.

Indeed, those wise and enlightened souls who come to grips with this majestic and mystical divine truth about Narayan by overcoming all forms of doubts and confusions are able to pierce or overcome all fetters (representing ignorance and delusions), and as a consequence they find freedom and deliverance for themselves. They do find freedom and deliverance, and there is no doubt in it!

Those who realise this truth and worship Lord Narayan with this wisdom and erudition are able to not only attain the Lord but also become one with him. Verily, such a man becomes a personification of Narayan himself (12).

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Purva Kand--Canto 3

[This Canto describes the various forms that the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm has assumed. In the course of this narration, many questions relating to the various facets of creation are answered—such as what is true and meaningful in this creation, and what is not. It goes on to narrate how the world is perceived from two different angles—one establishing that it is true and other as false, and then explains the actual reality. It outlines the concept of 'doomsday' or conclusion of creation at different planes of existence, of how the different levels of

creation come to an end, and in the process describes the concept of ‘time’ on the cosmic scale. In this context, refer also to Vishnu Puran, 2/8/60-68.]

1. The disciple said alright (i.e. that he has understood what was taught to him in the previous Cantos), and asked again—‘Oh Lord! Oh the most learned and wise Guru (teacher)! You have described the origin of the Mool Avidya (primary form of ignorance). Now please tell me about the development and growth of the rest of this deluding creation called the ‘Prapanch’, and how it evolved in a sequential manner. I want to learn about it.’ (1).

[Note—The word *Prapanch* means all the things that are done, seen and observed in this world which are fundamentally fallacious, artificial and deluding in nature. The word Prapanch covers all notions of worldly deceptions, delusions, tricks, mischief, maverism, cunning, deceit, conceit, fraud, artificiality, illusions, deceptions, falsehoods and concealments of all kinds. Since this world itself has no real existence and is nevertheless transient and perishable, these things and the deeds done by the creature should not bother the Atma which should instead be more concerned with things of higher spiritual value, and focus its attention on things that are real and truthful, things that have true substance in them.

The word Prapanch covers all worldly deceptions, delusions, tricks, mischief, maverism, cunning, deceit, conceit, fraud, artificiality, illusions, deceptions, falsehoods and concealments.

Refer the Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse nos. 51; Canto 5, verse nos. 75.]

2. ‘Let it be so’, replied the wise Guru, and continued with his preaching.

He elaborated—‘This creation, described as ‘Prapanch’ because of its inherent nature (described above), is called ‘Anaadi’ as it has no discernible beginning. The question arises as to whether this visible or observed Prapanch (creation) is indeed ‘Nitya’, or is it ‘Anitya’—i.e. whether it is robustly true, persistent, constant, steady, imperishable and eternal (‘Nitya’), or not (‘Anitya’). This creates a doubt in the mind of the aspirant. Now let me elaborate.

Prapanch again is of two types—viz. ‘Vidya Prapanch’ and ‘Avidya Prapanch’ (2).

3. The Prapanch of this creation that is categorised as ‘Vidya Prapanch’ (i.e. the creation or revelation of something that is based on true knowledge, erudition, realisation and wisdom) is said to be ‘Nitya’ (i.e. it is deemed to be true, imperishable, persistent, everlasting and robust).

This assumption is established by the fact that this particular sort of creation has its origin in Vidya, or knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment, which have nothing to do with Avidya, or ignorance and its consequential delusions and deceptions. Therefore, the Vidya Prapanch is a form of creation that is deemed to be a manifestation and spread of Consciousness that is an embodiment of bliss, is eternal and truthful to the core, is pure, untainted, immaculate and holy, and is self-enlightened as well as a personification of the eclectic virtues of wisdom, erudition and knowledge

Obviously, this Vidya Prapanch is ‘Nitya’ (because it is founded on knowledge of the truth that is always constant, eternal and infinite). [That is, that aspect of creation which is based on Vidya is truthful, and ‘truth’ is a virtue that is ‘Nitya’—i.e. it is steady, constant, sustainable, everlasting and unchanging. The opposite of this would be ‘falsehood’ which would be synonymous with ‘Avidya’ or

lack of truthful knowledge of the reality. In the context of creation, this simply means that the aspect of creation which revolves around the sublime ‘consciousness’ as its base and treats it as its ‘essence’ is truthful aspect of creation, and hence it is ‘Nitya’, while that aspect that relies on the physical world and treats it as the truth, which it really is not, is known as that aspect of creation which is ‘Anitya’.] (3).

4. Now, is the second type of Prapanch, called the ‘Avidya Prapanch’, Nitya or Anitya?

Some call this creation arising out of Avidya as being ‘Nitya’ (true, verifiable, real, persistent and infinite) because it continues to flow and spread (like a perennial river that never ceases to flow and never comes to an end). [That is, even if it is accepted that this creation is created out of ignorance and is ridden with delusions and deceits, but it is not deniable that it does exist, that it is visibly observed and therefore its existence proved, that it continues to grow and develop and change every now and then, thereby showcasing its dynamic nature, and that it has no seeming beginning and end because no one knows when it got started and when it would end. Hence, it is deemed to be eternal and infinite. Anything with these characteristics cannot be said to be finite, inane, dead, false and un-true—or ‘Anitya’.]

The scriptures have narrated about the dooms-day, called ‘Pralaya’, when everything in existence would end and disintegrate into nothingness. This is because this creation is deemed to have an origin, a beginning, and anything that has come into existence must come to an end. It does not matter when the origin was, and when the end would come—but the fact is that this creation is not something that can be said to be an end no matter how far it might be in the unknown future, cannot be regarded as being ‘eternal, imperishable and infinite’. Besides this, the world continuously changes every moment, what was in the past is not in the present and would not be in the future, so therefore it cannot be defined or categorised as being ‘unchanging, steady and constant’ which are the necessary requirements for something being ‘Nitya’. Therefore, there are others who regard this creation as ‘Anitya’—one that is *not* eternal, infinite, constant and imperishable (i.e. the opposite of being ‘Nitya’).

Actually, none of these two positions is the truth; none represents the factual position (4).

5. Then, what is the truth; what is the reality; what is the fact?

Well, in fact, the entire Prapanch (revealed creation) having its origin in Avidya is bound to be affected by the latter as it is the cause or root of the former. Therefore, the whole of ‘Avidya Prapanch’ is nothing but an expression and expansion of Maha Maya—the stupendous power of Brahm (or the cosmic Consciousness) to create great (‘Maha’) delusions (‘Maya’).

Since this creation is constantly changing (like the simmering scene observed on hot sand in a desert or the twinkling light of the distant star which is never the same in any two given moments)—i.e. anything that is present in one instant ends in the next and gives rise to something new which again comes to an end in another given instant, in an un-ending cycle of changes—it follows that it is not truly infinite, it is not truly eternal, steady, everlasting, constant, persistent and imperishable. It can be regarded at the best as something that consists of small units soldered together, but it is *not* something that is one single undivided whole, or something that can be called monolithic, one and unfractioned. That is, this creation is *not* ‘Nitya’; or *it is* ‘Anitya’.

Since it is not 'Nitya', it cannot therefore be true, eternal, infinite and imperishable, virtues that come within the definition of the term 'Nitya'. Nothing of substance, worth, truth and reality exists that can have its root or origin in Avidya (or ignorance).

Therefore, this Prapanch (i.e. the manifested creation with all its diversity and variations) which has its origin or root in Avidya is bound to be 'Anitya', or it is false and un-truth. It has no spiritual truth, reality, essence and substance in it (5).

6. Now, what is it that is 'Nitya' then? What is that which can be deemed to have truth, reality, essence and substance in it?

Well, such an entity is known as 'Brahm'. This Brahm is non-dual and unique as it is one of its own kind, having nothing with which it can be compared.

The scriptures assert that there is nothing such as 'duality', or the presence of 'many things' here in this creation that can be called 'truthful and real'. [Obviously, this is because 'truth' will always be 'one', and not 'two'.]

Or, it can be said with certainty that anything that is different or separate from Brahm (or the 'Absolute Truth') has no reality and essence in it; it is false and deceitful; it is imaginary and delusory.

Verily, it is the 'Absolute Truth' that is known as the supreme Brahm. Or, Brahm is the only Truth in creation.

Indeed, Brahm is an eclectic divine entity that is characterised by being absolutely truthful, by being an embodiment of Absolute Truth, absolute Gyan (knowledge that is absolutely truthful) and absolute eternity and infinity (i.e. being truly eternal and imperishable).' (6).

7. The disciple asked again—'If it is true that the creation is impermanent and changes constantly, coming to an end at a certain given time, then what is the sequence in which this conclusion or end happens?''¹ (7).

[Note—¹The world or creation that would now be described represents the fourth Paad of Brahm. This Paad is called 'Bhut' as it is perishable and transient. These Bhuts are the basic constituents that make up this world and are the primary elements of creation in varying degrees of subtlety and grossness. The word 'Bhut' itself literally means one that is like a 'ghost'—i.e. one that is imagined and is not the real thing! It is an apparition. Hence, the world representing the fourth Paad of Brahm, the Supreme Being, is due to the dominance of ignorance of the real truth and lack of truthful knowledge of the reality of Brahm which is actually represented by the other three Paads. This concept is made absolutely clear in Canto 4, especially its paragraph nos. 3-6.]

8. [In order to understand what is being described here in paragraph no. 8 and subsequent paragraph nos. 10-15, it will be fit to have a clear conception of the imagery that is employed for the narration.

The creation started from a point known as Brahm and then spread out in concentric circles just like ripples spreading out from a focal point on the surface of the water of a calm lake. The creation has been envisioned as a structure consisting of many concentric rings of increasing diameter and circumference. These circles or rings are drawn around a central hub or core which is the focal point of these rings.

Now, the first circle represents the domain of Brahma, the creator (paragraph no. 8); the second circle stands for Vishnu, the sustainer, also known as the Viraat Purush (paragraph nos. 10-11); the third circle for the Adi-Viraat, the parent of the Viraat Purush (paragraph no. 12); the fourth for Adi-Narayan (paragraph nos. 13-15);

and the fifth circle represents Lord Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan to whom this Upanishad is dedicated. This Lord is the Supreme Being from whom the rest of the Gods have been born (paragraph no. 15).

The above narration of ever-increasing circles of greater diameters symbolises the expansion of creation. The circumference of any given circle would mark the end of a particular layer or strata or plane of existence. But as any bubble bursts when it has reached its outer limit, this creation also collapses—and this event is metaphorically depicted in paragraph nos. 9 and 16.]

The wise teacher was very pleased, and he respectfully explained—‘One day-time of Brahma (the creator) consists of one thousand cycles of creation and destruction, with each cycle consisting of the 4-Yug period¹ according to the Hindu tradition.

One night of Brahma has the same duration as his daytime.

Therefore, the complete ‘day’ of Brahma as we humans understand this term to mean (i.e. one full cycle of day-time + night-time) would be equal to the total time taken for one day-time and one night-time according to Brahma’s measurement of time at the cosmic level².

During this one day of Brahma, the world known as the Satya Loka (the truthful heaven where Brahma and the other senior Gods such as Vishnu live) is created and destroyed once. [That is, one cycle of creation and destruction of heaven would be equal to one thousand such cycles on earth where mortal creatures live.]

With this cosmic scale of measuring time, fifteen such days of Brahma would be his one ‘Paksha’ or fortnight.

Two such fortnights would be Brahma’s one month.

Two such months would be Brahma’s one season.

Three such seasons would be one solstice in the year of Brahma.

Two such solstices (i.e. the summer and the winter solstices) would make up one year of Brahma.

According to this celestial measurement of time, Brahma’s one life consists of one hundred such years.

This is said to be one life-span of Brahma the creator (8).

[Note—¹The four Yugs are the following four eras or phases of one cycle of creation and destruction—the first is the Sat-yug, the second is the Treta-yug, the third is the Dwapar-yug, and the fourth is the current Kali-yug.

The Satayug which was the great Vedic period of fire sacrifices, the Tretayug culminated with the incarnation of Lord Ram, the Dwaparyug ended with Lord Krishna’s incarnation, and the Kaliyug would end with the great deluge or Doomsday when the entire world would be drowned in water. The next Kalpa would come after that in a cyclic form. This happens because at the fag end of Kaliyug, sins and evils would have reached such a crescendo that the Supreme Being no longer is able to tolerate it though he is most tolerant, magnanimous and forgiving, and decides to finally wind up the whole thing by punishing the world by clean sweeping the slate. Only the righteous and auspicious few survive who would become the progenitors of the next cycle.

The Satayug is also called Kritiyug because elaborate fire sacrifices were done during this phase. It is equivalent to 4800 divine years of Gods, and 17,28,000 human years.

The Tretayug is equivalent to 3600 divine years of Gods, and 12,96,000 human years.

The Dwaparyug is equivalent to 2400 divine years of Gods, and 8,64,000 human years.

The Kaliyug is equivalent to 1200 divine years of Gods, and 4,32,000 human years.

²The days and nights of Brahma are much far extensive than what we understand them to be. The unit of time used to measure one day or life of Brahma is much like we use the term 'light years' when measuring distances of various stars and galaxies in the universe. They are so wide apart and distanced from earth and each other that to measure their distances in terms of earth units such as miles and kilometres would be nothing but madness. The same logic and reason is used to set a separate scale for Brahma and other deities as narrated below.]

9. [The following paragraphs describe the cosmic process of regression or withdrawal or collapse or end of creation. Its creation and expansion has already been narrated in Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12.]

At the end of his life the Viraat Purush¹ (i.e. the macrocosmic form of the creator known as Brahma) finds rest in, or withdraws himself into, his primary form known as the Hiranyagarbha. [This Hiranyagarbha is the subtle body of the Supreme Being, also called Brahm, from which the Viraat Purush had emerged earlier. Therefore, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the cosmic embryo that is nourished in the cosmic Anda, the cosmic egg, which was referred to in the last stanza of paragraph no. 9 of Canto 2. The egg laid by birds has a shell enclosing it, and similarly an embryo of humans too has an enclosing membrane to give it protection inside the womb of the mother. This outer shell or membrane symbolises the outer periphery of creation. Everything and all forms of life are within its walls. The womb of the mother where the embryo is lodged and where it develops would then be like Brahm that harbours this embryo in its cosmic womb. Meanwhile, the chick of the bird or the unborn infant of a man remains in complete darkness till the time it is inside the shell or the womb respectively. It is only when it comes out that it is able to see the light of day and become aware of the presence of the world of colourful charms. In other words, it is only when one breaks free from his old habits and chucks his old habitat that he can hope to find something new and exciting. As long as the chick or the infant remained cocooned in the shell or the mother's womb, it had its eyes closed, but as soon as they emerged outside they opened their eyes and observed the colourful and charming world of countless opportunities and forms. Thus, it is only when one employs one's mind and intellect to 'see around' that he is able to see beyond the darkness of ignorance and see the light of Truth.]

The Hiranyagarbha retires or finds rest by retracting or withdrawing itself further into its primary form which is the cosmic causal body where the cosmic Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, lives.

This state of restful existence and no activity of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of the supreme creator, when the former has withdrawn himself, when he has retracted all his tentacles and decided to take rest for some time by remaining comfortably ensconced in the shell of the causal body in his primary form as the cosmic Atma or Consciousness, is called the period of 'Pralaya' or the cosmic doomsday when everything ends, when everything is dissolved, when everything comes to a rest. During this time there is nothing but void and no activity of any kind. Everything comes to a naught then; it's a state of absolute neutrality and inertness² (9).

[Note—¹The terms *Viraat* and *Hiranyagarbha* must be clearly understood to avoid confusion because they are used for both Brahma as well as Vishnu. The term 'Viraat' means anything of colossus dimensions and nature, something that is vast and infinite. The Viraat Purush is the gross body of the Supreme Being known as Brahm from which the rest of creation emerged—refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11. This Viraat has his roots in the cosmic egg in which the subtle body of Brahm took shape as the cosmic embryo, called the Hiranyagarbha—refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza no. 1. The latter is so-called because it was hidden in the cosmic womb ('Garbha'), and like the yellow-coloured yolk of the egg it was radiant and golden ('Hiranaya') in colour.

It was from this cosmic embryo called the Hiranyagarbha that the creation emerged, including the Viraat Purush, hence it is called 'Brahma the creator'. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza 1.

The Viraat Purush is also the creator of this world as pointed out in Canto 2, paragraph 11, and the former is also entitled to be called Brahma the creator. It must be carefully noted that the difference lies in the level or plane of creation in which a particular entity is being considered for study.

Hiranyagarbha was the primordial cosmic fertilised egg, deriving its name from the fact that its yolk core was yellow and glowing with an incandescent light like the one radiating out from the splendourous Sun in the sky, called the Maartand.

There are different versions regarding this Hiranyagarbha. According to the concept of Vedanta, Brahm is the cosmic supreme and transcendental Consciousness residing in the macrocosmic causal body called the Ishwar. In this context, when Brahm decided to reveal or unfold this creation, first the causal body known as a Ishwar developed the macrocosmic subtle body called the Hiranyagarbha, and from this evolved the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm called the Viraat Purush. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. All these three sublime bodies of Brahm at the cosmic level—viz. Ishwar, Hiranyagarbha and Viraat Purush—were invisible, subtle, unqualified, without any attributes, all-inclusive and all-pervading. It was the unrevealed form of Brahm. But that was just the beginning.

When this visible world was created, which had attributes and qualifications, the same macrocosmic units of Brahm metamorphosed themselves into their respective counterparts in the individual creature's body. Hence, Ishwar is represented by the Pragyā or the individual's causal body, Hiranyagarbha is represented by the Taijas or the individual's subtle body, and the Viraat Purush is represented by the Vishwa or the individual's gross body.

These three bodies are the three states in which consciousness exists, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. At the microcosmic level, the Pragyā relates to the deep sleeper state of consciousness called the Sushupta state, the Taijas relates to the dreamer state of consciousness called Swapna state, and the Vishwa relates to the waking state of consciousness called Jagrat state. The three corresponding states at the macrocosmic level are the Ishwar which relates to the cosmic deep sleep state of Consciousness called cosmic Sushupta, the Hiranyagarbha which relates to the cosmic dreamer state of Consciousness called cosmic Swapna, and the Viraat Purush which relates to the cosmic waking state of Consciousness called cosmic Jagrat.

According to Purans, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the Brahma the creator, as well as to the Viraat Purush because Brahma was born atop a lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu who is no one else but the Viraat Purush. If the word 'Hiranyagarbha' is to indicate the cosmic egg, then it was from this egg, lodged in the womb-like navel of Vishnu, that Brahma emerged. Hence, the 'original creator' was not Brahma but the Viraat Purush as Vishnu, and therefore the latter is the Hiranyagarbha—the golden cosmic egg. So we conclude that Hiranyagarbha essentially refers to the cosmic egg from which the rest of the creation evolved. Since Brahma is said to be the great grandfather of this creation, he is aptly named

Hiranyagarbha, i.e. the cosmic egg from which this visible and gross form of creation evolved.

This entire concept of Hiranyagarbha being produced from the body of the Supreme Being called Narayan or Ishwar have been elaborately dealt with in Mahopanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8 of the Sam Veda tradition.

The Hiranyagarbha is very subtle like the mind-intellect of the creature. The mind-intellect is also called the subtle body because it is through this mind-intellect that the Atma of the individual creature creates this world by using the mind's stupendous ability to imagine, envision and conceptualise things, and then using the intellect to justify it to be true, real and logical. But this instrument of the mind-intellect is invisible, is so subtle and hidden from view that its presence is only deduced by its astounding potentials which are manifested in the form of the gross body and its own stupendous capabilities. Whatever the mind wishes to do, it gets it done by the body.

This Hiranyagarbha is like the musk present in the body of the musk deer. The deer is not able to see the musk but is nevertheless maddened by its perfume, running mad in search of the source of the perfume not knowing that it is hidden well inside its own body. Similarly, the creature is unaware that the supreme Brahm is residing in his own bosom as the pure consciousness called the Atma while he spends his entire life searching for it everywhere in the outside world.

There is another connotation to this observation. Since the mind is the creator of the world by its power of imagination, and then sustaining or perpetuating its own creation by believing in the truthfulness and reality of the world, it is therefore the mind itself that can conclude this world. So, while it is like Brahma the creator, it is also like Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. If the same mind can assume three roles, it is not incongruous to believe that the same Hiranyagarbha is Brahma and Vishnu simultaneously. Since Shiva is a synonym used for the supreme transcendental Brahm—because the word 'Shiva' stands for an entity that is truthful, beautiful, auspicious, divine and holy as affirmed by a number of Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition that deal with the 'Shiva Tattwa', this Hiranyagarbha is also Shiva.

Hiranyagarbha is also called Maartanda, the Sun, because of its golden colour and brilliance like the golden yellow and brilliant disc of the sun in the sky. Like the light of the sun illuminates the world and brings everything in it to light or knowledge, the Hiranyagarbha too brings to the fore the intentions of Brahm by revealing this vast creation. The Hiranyagarbha had spread the sacred divinity, the stupendous glory, the dazzling radiance and the brilliant splendour through the length and breadth of the vast realm of the cosmos like the sun spreading its glory on the earth by way of its energy, light, heat and warmth.

The word 'Hiranyam' also refers to 'Amrit or elixir or nectar of eternity and bliss'; it also means 'green'. That is why greenery is associated with fertility, vibrancy, life and abundance of food and plentiful vegetation. The trees are green, and their precursor, the algae and moss, were also green. Indeed the food is the elixir of life in the world—nothing can ever survive without food and water. So, 'Hiranyagarbha' first created these to initiate the process of creation, and then sustained them once the process got under way. The 'Viraat Purush' as well as the 'Hiranyagarbha' are both used often synonymously to indicate the macrocosmic forms of the Male aspect of creation whose female counterpart is called 'Nature' or Shakti. The Shakti is the dynamic aspect of Brahm's creative powers and an effective method of displaying the Lord's cosmic authority.

The *Viraat Purush*, according to metaphysics, is the gross body of the creation and it is this body which is the source from which the rest of the cosmos was moulded or created or manifested. That is, the entire creation, both visible and invisible, is a manifested or revealed form of this Viraat Purush.

Purush has been defined in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. According to the Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4. When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. According to the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, it was this Viraat Purush himself that entered the body of all the creatures created.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

In fact, the entire Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1 of the Mundak Upanishad is devoted to the theme of Viraat Purush, and it says that the entire creation has been created as a manifestation of the Viraat Purush.

According to reverend Sankracharya's commentary on Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature at the micro level and in the Viraat Purush at the macro level. This Brahm pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation. That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahm because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

According to Vedanta therefore, the word Purush refers to the primary and supreme creator of creation known as the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross Male body or aspect of the cosmos and is the first macrocosmic gross revelation of Brahm. Ultimately, this Brahm is the Supreme Being who has revealed himself as the Viraat Purush. The creation unfolded from this Purush when he metamorphosed as the gross body of the entire creation, visible and invisible. Therefore, he is the sum-total of all the gross bodies of all the creatures taken together in this creation at the macrocosmic level, and it is from his macrocosmic body that the entire creation was moulded. In other words, the Viraat Purush represents the entire spread of the cosmos. At the micro level of the world, the individual creature is the counter part of Viraat Purush. In other words, the individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat; it is an image of Viraat.

Literally, the word 'Purush' means someone who resides in a body. Here the body is the gross forms of the various entities of creation in which the Viraat Purush, as the cosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm took up residence at the time of creation and does so since that time. When the creation would finally wind up, this Viraat would revert back to his original form as the invisible Brahm. An entire Sukta in the Rig Veda, 10/19 is dedicated to this Viraat Purush

In the Purans, he is also known by other names, such as Vishnu, the sustainer. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. The entire universe has been created by Vishnu's passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner.

The word 'Viraat' refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless, and infinite and beyond all terrestrial yardsticks. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water. At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms 'subtle and gross' are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

²This *Pralaya* or dooms-day of Brahm is separate from the dooms-day of this mortal world on earth which is only one day of Brahma. It should be remembered that the entire creation is depicted as being in layers or in concentric circles with increasing distance from the center. Refer Canto 6, paragraph nos. 2-9 in this context.]

10. One day-time and one night-time of Lord Vishnu, who is the protector, nourisher and sustainer of the cosmic egg or the 'Anda' (i.e. the entire Universe) created out of a fraction ('genes' or 'sperm') of the Supreme Being known as Adi-Narayan (or the supreme Brahm), is equivalent to one life-time (or life-span) and one sleeping time (or the 'Pralaya' time) of Brahma the creator respectively. That is, one full 'day' in the life of Vishnu is equivalent in length and duration to one cosmic cycle of birth and dissolution of Brahma the creator of this physical world. [One full 'day' of Vishnu implies both the waking phase and the sleeping phase of Vishnu just like our human days are measured which includes the day time when there is sunlight and the ordinary man is usually awake, and the night time when there is darkness in the absence of sunlight. The 'life-span of Brahma' and the 'duration of Pralaya' have been narrated in paragraph no. 9 above. This means that one hundred years in the life of Brahma is equal to one day-time of Lord Vishnu when he is awake, and one hundred such long years of Pralaya when Brahma, in his subtle form as the Hiranyagarbha, rests in the causal body of Brahm, is equal to one night-time of Vishnu when he retires. Therefore, one full 'day' of Lord Vishnu = one full cycle of creation done by Brahma, starting from his current birth, ending in his dissolution, and extending to the point of time just prior to his re-birth in the next phase of creation.]

With this scale of measurement, Lord Vishnu's fortnights, months, seasons, solstices and years are measured.

Hence, one full life-span Vishnu consists of one hundred crore years measured according to this cosmic scale of time that relates to Vishnu as narrated above. [1 Crore = 10 million units. In other words, one life-span of Vishnu = 100 x 10 million years according to the measurement of time on Vishnu's scale.] (10).

11. At the end of his life-span, Vishnu reverts back into his primary form as the Viraat Purush. This marks the 'end' or the dissolution of Vishnu.

When this comes to happen, the universe ends along with all its different formations and layers. This eventuality when the universe dissolves into nothing is the primary form of Vishnu as the Viraat Purush. It marks the beginning of the great Pralaya or dooms-day of the universe, or the resting phase or the sleeping phase of Vishnu¹.

The resting or sleeping period of Vishnu is of the same duration as his life-span. This is the great 'Pralaya of Vishnu' when everything comes to a naught, when there is complete stillness and inactivity, when nothing exists and moves, when nothing shows signs of life and activity. [The 'resting or sleeping time of Vishnu' is when the Lord rests or sleeps peacefully, and depicted in the Purans as the Viraat Purush reclining on the bedstead made of the coiled body of the celestial serpent known as Seshnath who floats on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as the Kshir-sagar, and which corresponds to the dissolution of creation at the cosmic level or the circle or plane in which Vishnu resides in the broader perspective of the entire creation. This period is equivalent to one crore years also. This concept of measurement is explained in paragraph 10.] (11).

[Note—¹The ordinary waking phase of Vishnu represents the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness. It is during this phase that a creature (a living being) gets actively aware and involved in the gross external world.

On the other hand, the ordinary sleeping phase of Vishnu marks the Swapna or the dreaming state as well as the Sushupta or the deep-sleep state of consciousness when the sleeping creature is neither aware of the outside world nor does he get involved in this external world for the simple reason that his gross body and its sense organs are totally inactive during this state.

This phase leads to the next higher state known as the Turiya state, or the transcendental state of consciousness. This is of a much longer duration than the Sushupta state, and is a perpetual state of bliss when nothing matters. It is during this state that self-realised ascetics find Samadhi, which is a state of trance. While the Sushupta is only momentary and transient because sooner than later the consciousness reverts back to the dreaming and the waking states, the Turiya state is more steady and long-lasting. Once this state is reached, there is no reversal. This is equivalent to the 'Pralaya of Vishnu' which means that the existence of the gross aspect of creation has been completely done away with.

It must be kept in mind that Vishnu represents that aspect of creation that has already taken birth or already has come into being after it was created by Brahma, the creator, and till the time it is concluded by Shiva or Rudra as its concluder. The entire living world passes through these phases—it sleeps for a certain time and keeps awake for certain duration of time. This rhythm of ordinary humdrum life is represented by Vishnu. An ordinary creature remains involved neck-deep in the affairs of the world around him. He takes care of his possessions and his subjects, desires to possess more and still more, and devise better ways to improve his own living as well as those dependent upon him. He protects his own assets and his body to the best of his abilities. All efforts of his are directed towards attaining happiness, deriving joy and pleasures from his surroundings, and generally taking care of his all-round well-being. This is obviously the role of Vishnu as the caretaker, the sustainer and the protector of creation.

However, there are some rare people who realise the futility of this wild-goose chase, and having had the opportunity to study the Upanishads and other scriptures they realise that true happiness and bliss lies somewhere else, that this world is perishable and therefore the joys and happiness that it provides are also transient. So they decide for themselves to pursue the source of eternal and truthful happiness and joy, which they find in realisation of the truth about themselves, and about the 'pure consciousness' that forms their true 'self'. With this realisation they taste the eternal source of Amrit or nectar that they prefer to remain submerged in its ecstasy and keep suckling it. Then they would have nothing to do with this gross external world.

Therefore, for all practical purposes this world has come to a naught for them, it has ceased to exist, it has dissolved. This is equivalent to the 'Pralaya' or the end of the world for them. Since the living being is an image of Vishnu in his form as the Viraat Purush, it follows that this is also equivalent to the 'Pralaya of Vishnu' when

the world dissolves around him. A lot of imagery and metaphors are used to explain these grand philosophies of the Upanishads.]

12. The one life time and one Pralaya time of Vishnu (i.e. one full life cycle of Vishnu) is equivalent to one day-time and one night-time of the 'Adi-Viraat Purush'. [The word 'Adi' means one that was present at the beginning; the primary and the original entity from which the present has come into being. Hence, the term 'Adi-Viraat' would refer to the higher and subtler form of the Viraat Purush from whom Vishnu has been born or created during the very primary stages of evolution of creation. Vishnu is the grosser aspect or the revealed form of the Viraat Purush. Vishnu represents that aspect or quality or dynamism or power of the Supreme Being which helps to sustain, nourish and protect the creation, including the creator Brahma himself. Applying the logic used for Brahma the creator while describing the process of creation and dissolution, it follows that Lord Vishnu, who is more often than not treated as being synonymous with the Viraat Purush, is like Brahma the creator in the higher echelons of creation. Vishnu is the Brahma of the third layer of the cosmic matrix, the third circle of creation called the Vishnu Loka. The first circle is the mortal world where ordinary creatures live—it is called the Bhu Loka. The second circle is the world where Brahma lives—called the 'Brahma Loka'.

The 'Adi-Viraat' is the subtler and more sublime form of the Viraat Purush from whom this universe in which we live is created. The 'Adi-Viraat' is the form of the Supreme Being that is referred to in Canto 2, paragraph 11 which says that millions of universes are born from each pore of the body of the Viraat. This creation has been visualised as being in different layers like many concentric circles, one higher than its previous one. This concept will be further discussed in Canto 6.]

Hence, one 'full day' in the entire life-span of the Adi-Viraat Purush would obviously consist of one life cycle of Vishnu as stated above. [One 'full day' implies a complete circle of one sunlight time and one night time according to our earth terminology. In cosmic terms it implies one full life-span of Vishnu and one full Pralaya of Vishnu as narrated in previous paragraph nos. 10-11.]

With this cosmic scale of measurement of time, the fortnights, months, seasons, solstices and years of the 'Adi-Viraat' are measured.

Therefore, one life-span of the Adi-Viraat Purush is equivalent to one hundred crore years measured according to this cosmic scale of time that relates to the Adi-Viraat as narrated above. [1 Crore = 10 million units. In other words, one life-span of the Adi-Viraat = 100 x 10 million years according to the measurement of time on Adi-Viraat's scale.] (12).

13. At the end of his life-span, the Adi-Viraat Purush withdraws himself into his primary form known as the 'Adi-Narayan', who is adorned by the Maha Maya and is the primary cause of the Adi-Viraat's existence.

That is, at the end of his life-span, the Adi-Viraat dissolves into the Adi-Narayan, the supreme Brahm, from whom the former had been born, or who was the primary cause of the former's coming into being.

[The Adi-Narayan would be the fourth concentric circle, the higher echelon of creation. He is the more subtle form of the Supreme Being that transcends the Adi-Viraat form. It would be noted that the differences between all these cosmic entities is very fine and subtle. It can be illustrated with an ordinary example. The air element is the same within the earth's atmosphere, but the density of air near the earth's surface is obviously more than the highest point of the atmosphere. Even the percentage or

density of the various gases and other ingredients of air vary at different levels. Hence, as we move up and away from the surface of the earth, the ingredients of the air and the characteristics of the space around the earth change, but primarily they will always remain the air and the sky elements, retaining their intrinsic qualities and virtues. Likewise, the same Supreme Being known as Brahm exists throughout this creation in all its different levels, and this Brahm exhibits different sets of characteristics at each level. It is only the degree of grossness and subtlety that changes, and not the primary nature of Brahm. The fact that Brahm appears to change miraculously and exhibit different characteristics at different points of time and dimensions of creation which are much divergent and not related to the original characters of Brahm as outlined in this Upanishad is an evident form of the stupendous ability of the Supreme Being to create delusions. And this is called 'Maha Maya'—or, the Great Delusion.]

The time during which the Adi-Viraat remains at rest or dissolved is called the period of Pralaya of Adi-Viraat and the dissolution of the level of creation which is associated with him. This period is equivalent to the one life-span of the Adi-Viraat (as outlined in paragraph no. 12 above). [That is, the duration of the period of Pralaya of the Adi-Viraat, or the time when he sleeps or lies in rest, which is equal to the period of his one life-span, would be another one hundred crore years or a 100 million years.]

During this phase of Pralaya of the Adi-Viraat, everything comes to a naught; there is absolute stillness and no activity whatsoever.

[Therefore, one full cycle of existence and dissolution of the cosmos at the level of the Adi-Viraat Purush, which is higher than that related to Vishnu, would consist of one full life-span and one full length of Pralaya or resting phase of the Adi-Viraat.] (13).

14. The one day-time of the parent Adi-Narayan, the Primal Purush, is equivalent to one full life-span of the off spring known as the Adi-Viraat. Similarly, one night-time of Adi-Narayan is equivalent to one period of Pralaya of Adi-Viraat. [The 'Adi-Narayan' is the fifth level of creation in the order of increasing subtlety and sublimity.]

Hence, one 'full day' in the life of the Adi-Narayan consists of one such day-time and one such night-time as measured according to the cosmic scale of Adi-Narayan.

Extended further, his fortnight, month, season, solstice and one year is also measured with this cosmic time scale.

Thus, one full life-span of the Adi-Narayan is equivalent to one hundred crore such years as measured according to the scale of cosmic time that is applicable to the Adi-Narayan (14).

15. At the end of this tenure, the Adi-Narayan goes to sleep or takes rest by closing his eyes as per the wishes of the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan¹. This is called the 'Nimesh' of the Adi-Narayan, or the time during which the Lord's eyes are closed.

[The subtle world of Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan is the 6th level of creation of the cosmic matrix. The sequence is as follows—1st level is the world mortal creature, called 'Bhu Loka', the 2nd level is of Brahma, the creator, called the 'Brahma Loka', the 3rd level is that of Vishnu, the sustainer and caretaker, and his world known as the 'Vishnu Loka', the 4th level is of the Adi-Viraat, the parent of the Viraat Purush who is also known as Vishnu, the 5th level is Adi-Narayan, and finally the 6th level or circle

of creation is represented by the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan. In other words, this creation is visualised as consisting of concentric rings, with the 'Bhu Loka' being the inner-most ring, and the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan as the outer-most ring.]

When this happens, the Mool Avidya and the accompanying Anda with all its various layers dissolve into nothing; their existence comes to an end. This is called the Pralaya of creation at the level of Adi-Narayan. [The universe is visualised as an egg that harbours creation at varying levels of subtlety and development. In order to understand the process of dissolution or regression or withdrawal one must know the process of progression or growth and expansion of the entity that regresses or withdraws into itself. The process of forward motion or evolution of creation has already been described in Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12 of this present Upanishad.] (15).

[Note—¹The meaning as to who is the great and the senior God known as Maha Narayan would now become clear. All the divine entities mentioned till now—viz. the mortal world of living beings, Brahma, Vishnu, Adi-Viraat and Adi-Narayan are only one Paad or aspect of the Supreme Being known as 'Maha Narayan'—the Great Narayan or the Great Lord God. This Maha Narayan is the outer boundary of creation of which we are aware, enclosing everything from the outside. These five worlds represent only 'one' aspect or Paad or foot of the Great Lord known as the supreme transcendental 'Brahm', the Supreme Being.

This Brahm is known to have 'four' Paads, hence the rest of the existence that has an extremely subtle and sublime form would logically represent the rest of the combined 'three' Paads of Brahm. These are represented by the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan—literally meaning the Great Narayan with the divine glories that are representative of his three aspects ('Tri Paad') other than the ones already described in this Canto till now. The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan is just like the moat that surrounds a grand huge fort. A better imagery would be to visualise this known creation with its limited span as a huge continent, and the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan as the vast and fathomless ocean surrounding this continent. The fact of the matter is that even in actual practice, the land mass of earth is approximately only one-fourth of the total area of the earth, with the rest three-fourths covered with water, be it in the form of an ocean, a sea or a river. This picture would help to explain the further sub-divisions of the subtler aspect of creation as narrated in the forthcoming paragraph no. 16.

Who essentially is this 'Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan' has been beautifully explained in Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-6 of this Upanishad.

One can well imagine the stupendity of Brahm if only of its feet is so grand that it covers the entire gamut of creation as we know and even can imagine about.]

The 4 'Paads', or limbs, legs, aspects, facets or pedestals of Brahm—The four 'Paads' of Brahm are the four legs upon which Brahm stands. These four Paads symbolically establish the greatness and supremacy of Brahm as the all-powerful and all-controlling Authority in this creation. Since Brahm is the supreme Divinity that has revealed itself in the from of this creation, since each and every unit of creation is a manifestation of Brahm and without Brahm nothing exists, nothing has any relevance and truth (refer *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 1), it follows that the entire creation represents Brahm's four cosmic forms or aspects or facets—which are called the four legs or Paads of Brahm. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the supreme Brahm has manifested himself and is made known to this world by the means of these four mediums.

The four Paads of Brahm stand for the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or deep sleep state, and the Turiya or transcendental state. This fact is affirmed in the Atharva Veda's *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraphs 1-3.

These four Paads of Brahm have been explained in (i) Sam Veda's *Chandogya Upanishad*, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's *Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda's *Mandukya Upanishad*, verse nos. 3-7; *Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6; Canto 8, paragraph no. 4; *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8; *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 5; *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-19.]

16. The above narration of dissolution or regression of creation, extending from paragraph nos. 7 to 15, pertains to the grosser aspect of creation. The present paragraph no. 16 will describe this process when it becomes finer and more subtle.]

At the time of final dissolution, the Mool Avidya (i.e. the primary and principal form of Avidya)—which possesses such unique and mysterious qualities as being distinct from both truth and falsehood, as being indescribable and indefinable, as being without any specific attributes and characteristic features, as being the cause of the creation, its expansion and dissolution, as being the most ancient and the primary element since the beginning of everything, as being the primary cause of all the other causes, and as being endowed with the greatest of mystical and magical powers known as 'Maha Maya' that ever existed in this creation—withdraws its self, along with all its grand qualities and vivid forms that have expanded in all the directions of creation, into its primary and most subtle form which is at the root of its coming into being in the first place. When this happens, all the above qualities of the Mool Avidya, which make it so unique, enigmatic and mystical, are abandoned, and it reverts back to its unqualified and neutral source, known as 'Avyakta', from which it had sprung at the time of expansion of creation.

The root cause of the origin of the Avidya is known as 'Avyakta'—i.e. one that is not manifest, one that is not expressed, one which cannot be described and known because it is very subtle, minute and atomic in nature. This Avyakta is the secret that is not known. So, the Avidya dissolves into the Avyakta¹.

Finally, at the last stage of dissolution, the Avyakta collapses and dissolves in the Brahm. This situation is akin to the state of existence of the 'fire element' after the fuel is exhausted. [The Fire is an eternal element, and when the fuel is exhausted it just retracts its self into its primary form as the 'Avyakta' Fire. That is, the visible form of the 'fire' becomes invisible and un-manifest, but it has not died in the real sense as it is an omnipresent and eternal entity. When the conditions are conducive and favourable, the 'fire' would jump back to life and become evident; it would be re-kindled.]

In the context of Adi-Narayan, the Supreme Being from whom this creation springs forth, it implies that when the Maha Maya (the great delusions that surround the primary nature and form of the Supreme Being) is removed or discarded by the Lord, he reverts to his principal divine form that is feature-less and indescribable. It was the Maya (delusions, or ignorance of the truth) that had led to the creation of a web of imaginary features around the basically feature-less Consciousness called Brahm. Primary Avidya (primary ignorance of the truth) and Maya (delusions that accompany Avidya) had given shape and form to an entity that has no forms and shapes. Hence, when Avidya and Maya are removed, this principal entity (Adi-Narayan) becomes free from their influence and becomes one without any attributes

and qualifications. The latter form is the principal form of Adi-Narayan, the Avyakta (the subtle and the un-manifest).

In fact, all the creatures (i.e. all forms of life in this creation) acquire or assume their original nature and form (as the blissful 'self', the immaculate 'consciousness') when the Adi-Narayan sleeps².

Even as the colourless crystal appears to be tinged red when it is associated (extremely close; touching) a red-coloured flower of China Rose (*clom eviseora*), and regains its original pristine colourless form when the flower is removed (or the crystal itself is removed), the pristine and immaculate prime nature of Brahm appears to be similarly tainted and influenced when there are Maya and Avidya near this Divinity. When this happens, Brahm appears to exhibit various attributes and qualifications; it appears as having a dual form or existence, and exhibits other such delusory features that are natural effects of Maya and Avidya.

When all such attributes and qualifications that are assigned to Brahm and used to describe the latter are eliminated, what remains is the pristine pure primary form of Brahm that has no attributes, qualities or characteristics; this Brahm has no forms and shapes, no qualifications whatsoever.' (16).

[Note—¹The cause of this entire creation coming into being is that Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, decided to 'create' it. It is an 'imagination' of Brahm; it was his 'wish' personified. Once the imaginative mind of Brahm created this creation, it began to believe it to be true; the mind become conditioned into believing that something which has no pith and substance, something that is entirely imaginary was actually true and real. This is because this world was Brahm's own creation, and anyone who creates something is highly attached to it at the emotional level.

This had two effects—(i) since Brahm is super Consciousness empowered with stupendous and astounding mystical powers and abilities, the 'imaginary' world created was made 'real'; and (ii) Brahm was so charmed by his own creation that for once he forgot that it is imaginary. As a result, Brahm got sucked in a vortex of delusions which were his own creation.

So, the genesis of this creation and its myriad delusions lie in fundamental 'Avidya' or basic lack of awareness of the reality that had engulfed Brahm at the very first stage of creation. Brahm had forgotten the truth that what unfolded before his eyes was nothing but 'imaginary', that the colourful canvas of the creation was his own 'wishful thinking' taking a shape, and it was no less than the colour of the sky as seen during sunset or the shimmering water as seen in the desert mirage.

Thus, Brahm transformed or metamorphosed into Brhama the creator. This is why the two words—'Brahm' and 'Brahma'—have very close resemblance. Once sucked into the vortex and overcome with both Maya and Avidya, Brahm plunged head-on into the Prapanch of this creation—he became Vishnu to take care of his off spring in the form of this creation.

But when wisdom dawned on Brahm, he decided to get out of it and renounce it. So he became Shiva, the patron God of ascetics and hermits. And finally, fed up with the constant disturbance caused by the steady pricking of the world created by him, and to regain his eternal peaceful and tranquil state to which Brahm was accustomed, he decided to wind up the game—thereby assuming the form of Rudra.

So we see that when the basic or fundamental cause of delusion—i.e. the 'Mool Avidya'—is removed, what remains is the undefined divine entity known as 'Avyakta'. That is, Brahm was 'Avyakta' or unmanifest and unknown till the time Avidya or ignorance overtook him, because once this happened Brahm assumed the role of Brahma to create, Vishnu to sustain what he created, and then Shiva or Rudra to conclude it. These are the 'Vyakta' or manifested form of Brahm. Besides this, the known world is said to be an image of Brahm, and since this creation is visible and manifest for all, it represents the 'Vyakta' form of Brahm.

Therefore, what was fundamentally 'Avyakta' (unmanifest, mysterious and unknown) became Vyakta (manifest, evident and known). This is why the cosmic Consciousness is known as 'Avyakta' while its manifested form as Brahma, Vishnu etc. as well as the world are known as 'Vyakta'.

²This concept must be clearly understood. The individual living being is an image of the Supreme Being known by various names such as Narayan, Viraat Purush or Brahm. When he is awake and active in this world he surrounds himself with so many emotions and feelings. He speaks, tastes, smells, sees, hears, feels, goes here and there, accepts and gives, excretes, and enjoys the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects of the world. Not only this, he hankers for them, yearns for them, fights and commits the greatest of sins for them, and spends his entire life-time pursuing them relentlessly. That is not the end—for at the time of death he regrets that he has to leave behind this ever-so changing world and desires to take birth again to re-live in it and wallow in it once again. This is akin to him being surrounded by Avidya and Maya—because in spite of being aware that this world is artificial, perishable, ever-changing, transient and most deceitful, a world that is a hot-bed of miseries and pains, of turmoil and turbulence, but definitely not a provider of eternal bliss and peace, he still yearns for it and treats it as the true and the real thing. This situation is like the Adi-Narayan being surrounded by Avidya and Maya.

Now, when the same living being sleeps, he is totally oblivious of the surrounding world and its charms. In this state of existence he lives as the 'consciousness' that moves (pulsates, vibrates, radiates) inside his gross body.

In the higher echelons of sleep however, his sub-conscious mind also goes into hibernation, and he stops even to be disturbed by any kind of dream. This is the state of complete bliss. It is the true nature of the creature's 'self' which is the pure 'consciousness' referred above. Since this 'consciousness' is at the core of his existence, it is called his 'soul' or Atma. In the context of the Adi-Narayan, when the Lord sleeps as narrated in this Canto, he is deemed to have discarded all the surrounding Avidya and Maya, and rest in his blissful 'self', the primary cosmic Consciousness that is the only Truth in creation, the Truth that is also known as 'Brahm'.

It must be noted here that all forms of life in creation are images of the same Supreme Being known as Adi-Narayan or Brahm. When the cosmic Consciousness assumes a body, however subtle it might be, it is called Narayan. When it dispenses with this body, it exists in its primary form as the 'Consciousness', and then it is known as Brahm. Any kind of body which has no consciousness pulsating inside it would be dead, lifeless and inert. So, 'Brahm' is the consciousness or the soul or the Atma of Narayan. Hence, Brahm is the 'Adi-Narayan' because it is the primordial and the primary ('Adi') dynamic force of creation known as the cosmic 'consciousness' that keeps Narayan and all his manifestations alive.]

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Purva Kand--Canto 4

[This Canto will narrate the form of the supreme and eternal essence or Tattva that exists when Maha Maya or the Great Delusion that accompanied Mool Avidya or primary ignorance is eliminated. The non-dual nature of Brahm is emphasised once again, along with explaining why Brahm appears to be dual and why this latter notion is fallacious. This Canto enumerates some of the grand and magnificent virtues of Brahm, as well as the four Paads of Brahm from two different perspectives (refer paragraph nos. 3 and 6). It also describes the meaning of the terms 'Unmesh'

(waking) and ‘Nimesh’ (sleeping). In this latter context, refer Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-16.]

1. [This paragraph enumerates the eclectic and grand virtues of Brahm. Refer also to Canto 1, paragraph no. 1.]

OM salutations! The original and primary form of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the prime Tattva or essence of creation, comes to the fore when all attributes and qualifications having their genesis in Maya and Avidya are dispensed with (as narrated in paragraph no. 16 of Canto 3). [Maya = delusions; Avidya = lack of truthful knowledge; ignorance. Both of them have their own set of problems which they create in their wake.]

Brahm is beyond Avidya (as well as its accompanying Maya), and hence it is most immaculate and pristine pure, most incorrupt and untainted.

Brahm is an embodiment of blissfulness and beatitude of the highest order that comes with supreme spiritual realisation and enlightenment. Hence, Brahm is known as ‘Kaivalya’—the divine entity that is unique and on of its own kind in this respect.

In fact, all the four Paads or primary forms or aspects of Brahm are formless and attribute-less in their principal form. [Refer Canto 1, paragraph 4-6; Canto 2, paragraph no. 9; Canto 4, paragraph no. 6.]

Brahm is immutable, indivisible and uniform.

Brahm is complete in its self; Brahm lacks nothing and is wholesome.

Brahm is self-illuminated and a personification of the divine virtues of Sat-Chit-Anand. [Sat = Truth; Chit = Consciousness; Anand = Bliss.]

Brahm is unique in the sense that it has no Lord over it. There is no entity superior to Brahm. [This is why Brahm is called ‘supreme and transcendental’, and is envisioned as enclosing the entire existence from the outside like a cosmic moat surrounding the fort of the universe.]

Brahm is a personification of all causes and effects.

Brahm is a personification of eternal consciousness and its characteristic bliss, beatitude and felicity.

Brahm is a personification of the eternal values of the highest degree of auspiciousness, holiness, sublimity and divinity.

Brahm is a personification of eternal and infinite Anand—bliss and happiness.

Brahm is a personification of splendour and radiance of immense intensity.

Brahm is complete in all respects, being wholesome and fulfilled.

Brahm represents the combined form of all the visible and invisible forms in which the eternal Consciousness exists.

Brahm is the most astonishing and mysterious entity that embodies the magnificent virtues of Anand (bliss, beatitude and felicity) and grand Vibhutis (grand characteristics and immaculate qualities in creation) of the highest degree and purest form.

Brahm is the pillar that symbolises the eternal consciousness. [Just like any pillar that supports a huge structure, Brahm as ‘consciousness’ is the cosmic pillar that supports life in all its forms in this creation.]

Brahm is a personification of pure Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment) and pure Anand (bliss, beatitude and felicity). Indeed, Brahm is synonymous with Anand that is complete in every respect.

Brahm is a fount of immense electrifying and grand virtues that are as dazzling, splendorous, radiant, glorious and dynamic as the Electric.

Thus, we have just outlined the magnificent and divine form of Brahm that is eternal and immutable.’ (1).

2. The disciple, who had been listening attentively, said to his learned teacher—‘Oh Lord! How is it possible for Brahm to have four Paads (literally feet, but implying the various aspects or designations or forms of Brahm) when it is said that Brahm is non-dual, immutable and without any attributes. Please explain it to me how to reconcile these two opposite characteristics of Brahm.’ [Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 5, Canto 2 which describes Brahm as being Saguna as well as Nirguna, Canto 3 which describes the different life-spans of various forms of Brahm, and Canto 4, paragraph no. 6 which also deal with the same question.] (2).

3. The wise teacher removes his doubts. He explains—‘No, there is no opposition or contradiction in Brahm. Brahm is unequivocally and irrefutably Advaitya or non-dual—this is absolutely true. In fact, this is what has been emphasised in earlier discussions. No differences or dichotomies have been said to exist in Brahm. [This is because there is nothing except Brahm which is the ultimate ‘cosmic and universal truth’.]

The various forms in which Brahm is said to exist, the so-called different Paads or aspects of Brahm, are simply conceptualisations just to visualise and help understand about something that is primarily beyond the scope of the mind and the intellect to understand and analyse. All attempts to describe Brahm with attributes are just efforts to somehow understand something as divine, esoteric, enigmatic and mysterious as Brahm, an eclectic and divine entity which actually has no attributes. Therefore, Brahm showing duality is non-existent; it is Brahm that is non-dual that actually exists.

So, understand things in the correct perspective and context.

It is said that Brahm has four Paads. Out of them, one Paad (aspect or limb or branch) of Brahm is known as Avidya (lack of true knowledge), and the other three Paads are like Amrit. [Amrit is the ambrosia of eternity. Hence, the other three major aspects of Brahm are eternal and free from ignorance and its accompanying delusions. Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 5, and Canto 8, paragraph no. 4 which describe the four Paads of Brahm. Refer also to Cantos 2 and 3 which primarily emphasise the fact that inspite of Brahm having myriad of forms and names—visible as well as invisible, microcosmic as well as macrocosmic, independent as well as all-inclusive, gross as well as subtle—primarily all of them are the same and irrefutably refer to the same divine entity known as ‘Brahm’. The different aspects are mainly for the purpose for understanding Brahm, and are the different angles from which the same entity is viewed, studied or explained.]

The divine form of Brahm as having four Paads on the one hand, and as being a non-dual Advaitya entity on the other hand as narrated in this Upanishad is in accordance with the tenets and axiomatic maxims of other Upanishads. They do not clash with each other. [That is, if you analyse the teachings of the previous Cantos, the main point which is stressed is that notwithstanding what Brahm looks like due to the influence of Maya and Avidya, its primary form is the same. Or, that it is the same Brahm which assumes both the Saguna form and the Nirguna form as outlined in Canto 2. Since ‘truth’ is always the same in whatever form or shape it exists, it follows that Brahm which refers to the ‘cosmic and universal truth’ will always be the same, or be non-dual. If there is any confusion of duality in Brahm it is out of Maya (delusions) and Avidya (ignorance). The numerous names and epithets applied to

Brahm also are misnomers because they lead to confusions about the an entity that is without any names and epithets, an entity that has no second or parallel, or one that has no definable forms and attributes which any given name conjures up in the mind. Canto 2 should be read along with Canto 3 in this context as the former stresses that all forms of Brahm, whether Saguna or Nirguna are one, and the latter Canto enumerates the various forms of Brahm as revealed in the form of various layers of creation such as that of Brahma, Vishnu, Adi-Viraat, Adi-Narayan, Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan etc.] (3).

4. The Upanishads describe the magnificent and grand virtues of Brahm known as the ‘Tripaad Brahm’—i.e. that aspect of Brahm which is symbolised by the three divine Paads (limbs or aspects of the Supreme Being) that are distinct from the fourth Paad. The fourth Paad is dominated by Avidya (ignorance) and Maya (delusions) which stand for darkness. Hence, that form of Brahm which is distinct from and not affected by the tainting effects of the fourth Paad characterised by darkness associated with Avidya and Maya is honoured by the holy Upanishads as the ‘Tripaada Brahm’—or Brahm with three limbs or aspects that are free from the darkness. [Obviously, this second form of Brahm would be glorious and radiantly illuminated like the Sun in the dark sky. It ought to be clearly understood here that the 4th Paad is the lowest Paad and covers the whole gamut of known creation as narrated in Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-15. This 4th Paad is the lowest and the grossest aspect of Brahm where Avidya and Maya are the dominant players—refer Canto 8, paragraph no. 4. Such a creation is transient and ever-changing. It has a certain beginning and an end—something that is quite the opposite of and inconsistent with what one expects from Brahm which the Upanishads unequivocally and unanimously proclaim to be one, non-dual, unchanging, steady, constant, infinite and eternal. So, while the 4th Paad is the lowest aspect of Brahm, the 1st Paad would refer to the highest and the most sublime form of Brahm, with the rest of the two Paads lying in between. These four Paads have been described in paragraph no. 6 of this present Canto 4.]

A spiritual aspirant who honours Brahm in the glorious form as ‘Tripaada Brahm’ is sure to attain Moksha for himself. [This is because he would be dealing with the higher and more evolved stages of consciousness.]

Such an enlightened person should think in the following manner—

‘This ‘Tripaad Brahm’ is beyond darkness. It is a divine fount of light and illumination that itself eliminates darkness.

The Tripaad Brahm is a personification of supreme bliss, beatitude and felicity; it is eternal, imperishable, truthful and most divine; and it is known as ‘Kaivalya’ because it is unique and one of its only kind.

I (the spiritual aspirant) know (am acquainted with) this great Purush (the divine Being, the divine Brahm, the Supreme Being) who is as splendid and radiant as the celestial Sun (‘Aditya’)¹, and who is beyond the reach of darkness (‘Tama’). [The word ‘Tama’ means darkness and it implies a preponderance of the negative virtues of Avidya or ignorance and lack of true knowledge (refer last stanza of paragraph no. 5), and ‘Maya’ means delusions along with all its accompanying spiritual problems. The ‘Aditya’ or the Sun is the only self-illuminated celestial body in the sky, and all the planets are lighted by it. This metaphor of the Sun in relation to Brahm is most apt because it is Brahm that is at the core of life in this creation. Brahm is pure cosmic Consciousness. It is the Consciousness that injects ‘life and vitality’ into the otherwise lifeless and inane creation; it is the Consciousness that ‘illuminates’ this world for the creature in as much as it enables the creature’s body to perceive the

external world through his sense organs of perception just like the celestial Sun lights up the world for him to see with its physical light. The whole creation revolves round this Consciousness just like the planets go around the Sun. The Sun is the sustainer and protector of life on our planet, and hence to liken it with the supreme sustainer and protector known as Brahm is also very appropriate for purposes of understanding. Again, the Sun is the most evident source of light in the world and it removes the latter's darkness by its own illumination which also is another reason for its selection to represent Brahm.]'

Those who understand this and realise the truth of Brahm in the aforesaid manner become a personification of Amrit in this world while they are still alive. [The term 'Amrit' literally means the ambrosia or nectar or elixir that provides eternity and bliss. Hence, here it means that a wise, erudite and self-realised person who has become enlightened enough to know and understand what the essence of the term 'Brahm' is as described in this and other Upanishads indeed becomes highly enlightened and exalted. He accesses the supreme fount of eternal spiritual Truth that provides him with never-ending bliss that gives him eternal peace and happiness. When this is achieved, he becomes a living example of someone who is a personified form of Amrit, someone who effuses ambrosia of spiritual bliss and happiness, i.e. he becomes 'Brahm personified'. Positive energy radiates out of him much like the brilliant light radiates out in all the directions from the Sun. He exhibits all the grand characteristics that are expected from a realised soul who has become Brahm-realised and self-realised, someone who has understood the grand Truth and Reality of creation, someone who has overcome the effects of Maya and Avidya.]

Such a person is said to have obtained 'Mukti'. There is no other way to attain Moksha (final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation). [The 'Mukti or Moksha' referred to here is known as 'Jivan Mukti'—a phrase meaning he has attained liberation and deliverance while his soul or his Atma still lives inside the gross body in this world, or while he is still alive.] (4).

[Note—¹The *Sun* or *Aditya*— The Sanskrit word for the Sun God or Aditya is *Surya*. This word has three connotations—viz. (i) *Sarteha*—one who moves. This refers to the Sun because it moves constantly across the sky. It also refers to the supreme cosmic Consciousness that makes all movement possible. (ii) *Sviriyate*—this means one who receives and accepts. This virtue refers to the fact that all offerings offered to the fire sacrifice are done in the presence of the Sun, and since the latter is the celestial cauldron of fire all the offerings are deemed to be offered to it. In another plane, it refers to the Jiva, the living being, who receives stimuli from the world and then accepts them and deduces that the world from where they originate is real and true. (iii) *Suvateha*—meaning one who shines. This is very obvious in the case of the Sun. This virtue refers to the supreme Self or supreme Consciousness that is self-illuminated and self-effulgent.

Sun God or Surya appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the 'eye' of the Viraat Purush, and at the time of creation when this Viraat Purush revealed himself as the individual creature such as for example a cow, a horse and a man, the Sun God took up residence in the eye (refer Aitereyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4). He is also regarded as visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9). The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). The Sun is like the Atma of all the creatures (Akchu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

The Sun is the brightest, the most splendourous, the brilliantly radiant, the most majestic and grandest entity in the entire firmament. The whole length and breadth of the sky is lit with its light; all the objects present in the sky, visible or invisible, are illuminated by its light. It is the eternal and infinite celestial source of light, heat and energy; it inspires, fosters, sustains and protects life in this world; it is synonymous with and a metaphor for life in all its dimensions. Its splendour and radiance makes it an apt metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment. As an embodiment of this virtue of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity he has been held in high esteem and as the great teacher and preacher of eclectic knowledge pertaining to the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. He had assumed the form of a horse and revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda to the great sage Yagyavalkya. He was also the teacher of Hanuman, said to be incarnate Wind God and Lord Shiva, and who was the great, most ardent and the wisest devotee of Lord Ram.

From the physical perspective also, the Sun is regarded as a fount of light, energy and heat which supports life in all forms in this physical world. No life is imaginable without the presence of the Sun.

The Sun is the source of light, heat and energy for this earth. The Sun regulates seasons and rains, it controls the cycle of day and night, thereby regulating all aspects of life on earth. It is a symbolic personified and visible form of Brahm, the sublime form of the Supreme Being also known as the Viraat Purush, the vast and infinite macrocosmic form of Brahm. No life is imaginable without the Sun. Therefore, it is Pran personified. The Moon is lighted because of the Sun; the Moon has no light of its own but shines due the light of the Sun falling upon it. Therefore, the Moon showcases the magical power of the Sun to light up even distant bodies which have no light of their own. In other words, this Pran element represented by the Sun is capable of injecting life in an entity which has no life of its own, here the instance of the Moon. Since the Moon is lighted due to the inspiration provided by the Sun, it is like the Rayi. The Sun is the inspirer, and the Moon is the inspired one.

The Sun is an excellent example of the gross and the subtle aspects of Brahm. The eternal fire that is burning inside the disc of the Sun is the subtle aspect of Brahm; it provides the power and energy to the Sun to shine and burn. This fire is the 'inspirer' of the gross aspect of Brahm. The disc of the Sun is the 'inspired'—the heat, light and energy that the physical body of the Sun gives is due to the fire burning inside it, but no one can see this fire. The viewer sees the disc of the luminous Sun only which is the inspired aspect of the Sun. The hidden fire in the Sun is the Pran of the Sun because it lends the latter its worth and power to shine. This 'Pran' of the Sun, i.e. the fire burning inside the Sun is Brahm manifested in its subtle form. The visible disc of the Sun, with its dazzling brilliance and splendour, giving out heat, light and energy is the manifested aspect of Pran or Brahm; it is the gross body of Pran or Brahm. Hence, it is the Rayi of the Sun.

But the fire burning inside the Sun is not the complete picture of Brahm which is a transcendental entity that surpasses all definitions. At the most, the fire represents only one of the numerous virtues of Brahm. Therefore, to say that the hidden fire inside the Sun is Brahm personified in a subtle form is only a 'part or fraction' of the entire truth. In fact, the fire is a 'subtle image' of Brahm just like the external luminous disc of the Sun is the 'gross image' of Brahm. The fire embodies some of the grand virtues and characteristics of Brahm. The fire is the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm, and hence it is the 'Rayi' of Brahm because it is inspired by Brahm to burn and give out light and heat. In the context of the Sun, this fire becomes the 'inspirer' and the Sun becomes the 'inspired'. The Sun being a visible manifestation of the stupendous glories of Brahm is therefore the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm. The 'inspirer' Brahm is invisible. So when one worships the Sun as a manifestation of Brahm, he does so both in its subtle ('Amurta') and gross ('Murta') forms as mentioned in this verse. When the gross is worshipped, the subtle is automatically deemed to be worshipped. They both represent the 'inspired' aspect of the sublime

Brahm that transcends both the gross and the subtle. Brahm is the universal ‘inspirer’ of both.

The Sun is at the core of life on earth; it helps in producing food crops of all varieties such as cereals, pulses, vegetables etc. that are eaten by the living being to survive and gain energy and strength. Without the light, energy and heat of the Sun there would be no vegetation on earth. Hence, the Sun is the ‘inspirer’ and the ‘food’ that is produced by the grace of the Sun is the inspired. When the food is eaten it gives the creature energy, strength and vitality. Therefore, that secret and invisible aspect of food that is used by the creature to derive energy, strength and vitality is the Pran of the food, while its external form, its external body is the gross aspect of this Pran. When this food is eaten and digested by the eater, the Pran is transferred to the eater in the form of the latter’s own Pran, and the strength, energetic activity and vitality that the body of the eater shows is the inspired aspect of this Pran. The food therefore is the Pran, and the eater is the Rayi.

All the units of Nature that depend upon some Principal, such as the Moon depending for its light on the Sun, are called Rayi. These units may be visible (having a gross form) or invisible (having a subtle form).

The Surya Mandal, i.e. the divine abode of the Sun God, has been narrated in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 10, verse nos. 1-23. It is also referred to in the Tripadvibhut Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 as falling in the path of a spiritual aspirant who, upon leaving his gross body, is going astride the Garud (the divine vehicle of Vishnu which is represented by the OM Mantra here) through the path of the sky to the heaven where Lord Vishnu lives.

Atharva Veda’s *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 28 describes why Aditya or the Sun God is worshipped by wise men. “Aditya (the Sun) illuminates the world (i.e. it provides the world its light, life, energy, heat and dynamism). This is why Aditya is worshipped and honoured by wise and erudite persons who seek purity and knowledge.

The Sun gives ‘light’ and removes ‘darkness’. In other words, it grants knowledge and wisdom by removing the darkness of delusions and ignorance. Since the celestial Sun is employed as a metaphor for Brahm and the Atma, it follows that one meditates and contemplates upon the latter two entities to attain true spiritual knowledge and enlightenment that would remove one’s darkness caused by worldly delusions, and which is the cause of all his fears and perplexities. (28).”

According to Yoga Upanishads, the Sun God has his symbolic presence in the naval of the body in the Nabhi Chakra or the Manipur Chakra, and as the fire element in the Mooladhar Chakra, the Swadhisthan Chakra and the Kundalini. The dynamic energy of the sun represented by its life-giving powers is revealed in the form of consciousness that flows in the Pingla Naadi, the nerve passing through the right nostril.

The *Akchu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition lists some of the virtues of the Sun God in its Canto 1, verse no. 1 which is exclusively dedicated to his grand virtues as follows—he provides the creature with the ability to see; he lights up the world for him; he provides the creation with its life and sustains it; he moves across the sky with his army of light rays to protect the world from darkness; he personifies the three basic Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama much like Brahm; he takes the creature away from darkness representing delusions and ignorance towards light symbolising wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment; he is like the Swan—pure and immaculate; he is the bearer of life; he is the Jatveda (one having whatever is born or created as his property; the all-possessor; one who knows everything and is known by all creation; the word is usually applied as an epithet for the eternal fire element of which the sun is a visible manifestation and container); he is as intrinsically valuable as molten and purified gold; he is Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance for a noble cause) personified; he is the emperor of creation and is crowned with a

glittering crown and wears an equally glittering robe consisting of rays of the sunlight; he is the son of Aditi, the mother of Gods, and he lives as 'sight' in our eyes.

Aditya or the Sun God, or his visible form as the celestial Sun, has been repeatedly regarded by the Upanishads as a visible *manifestation of the Viraat Purush* who himself is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. For example, Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad—1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15; Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is the *eye* of the Supreme Being—refer Aiteriyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and finds his abode in the creature's eye—refer Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

The *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6, 8 describes the Sun God as the *Pran*—the vital life giving factor in creation, the life consciousness, and in Canto 1, verse nos. 9, 12-15 as *Prajapti*—the creator, motivator, nourisher, sustainer, protector and caretaker of the subjects of this creation. He is called the Fire God or the Vaishwanar Agni, the Viraat Purush, the Pran or life consciousness that supports all life in this world—Canto 1, verse no. 7.

The *Akchu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is fully dedicated to the Sun God. It has two parts—in its Canto 1 sage Sankriti offers prayers to the Sun God, and Canto 2 contains the metaphysical and spiritual teachings of the Sun God for the benefit of the sage.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1, says that the Sun God is known as 'Mitra', literally meaning a friend. This is because the Sun God's benevolence and life-sustaining abilities make him a fast friend of every single living being in creation. He fosters life and is a friend of life rather than being its enemy by annihilating it. He helps the world to develop and grow as well as to acquire its stupendous magnificence and glory—refer *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is also known as 'Savita'—refer *Savitru-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, and *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, Canto 2 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

The *Narayan Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in *Brahmo-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/27 says that Surya or the Sun God is a manifestation of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified.

The Sun God is one of the ten Lokpals or custodians of the world because all forms of life on earth revolve around the benevolence of the Sun.

'Aditya' or the Sun God appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda-- 1/41/4-6; 2/27; 8/47/14-18; 10/185; Sam Veda—395; 397; Yajur Veda—23/5; 34/54; Atharva Veda—5/3/9-10; 16/3.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 11 describes the great Mantra of the Sun God.]

5. The supreme source of light that empowers ‘light’ itself to shine and illuminate its surroundings is said to be obviously beyond the reach and purview of ‘Tama’ (darkness). [This is natural because darkness and illumination cannot cohabit or co-exist.]

This supreme source of light and illumination, called the ‘Param Jyoti’, shines above and over everything in creation. It is the light that shines from the above to illuminate everything below. This Param Jyoti (i.e. the Tripaad Brahm) is the base that supports all things in existence, it is the foundation upon which the entire edifice of creation, visible and invisible, rests, it is beyond the scope of the mind and its imaginative powers to visualise and understand it, and it is like the self-illuminated and splendid celestial Sun that illuminates the world below from its exalted position in the sky.

That ‘Tattva’ (principle, essence)—which is one, immutable and non-dual, which is ‘Avyakta’ or un-manifest and indescribable, which is ‘Anant’ or without an end, which is revealed in the form of the world or itself is a combined image of the whole world, and which is ‘Adi’ or the most ancient as it is present since the very beginning—is called ‘Rit’. [The word ‘Rit’ literally means holiness marked by the virtues of truth and righteousness, and it refers to an entity that personifies these glorious virtues. Here ‘Rit’ stands for the Tripaad Brahm which is also known as the Param Jyoti.]

It is this Tattva and Param Jyoti that is designated as ‘Satya’, the Absolute Truth.

Indeed, it is this divine and holy entity that is known as the supreme, transcendental and the purest form of Brahm.

In the aforesaid discussion, the word ‘Tamas’ refers to Avidya or lack of true knowledge (because such a situation is akin to darkness which means ‘Tama’) (5).

6. [This paragraph clearly delineates the four Paads of Brahm. Refer also to Canto 1, paragraph no. 5, and Canto 8, paragraph nos. 4-7.]

All the Bhuts (living creation) combined represent only one Paad (limb, aspect, version, form and manifestation) of the supreme Brahm.

The other remaining three Paads of Brahm are like Amrit; they are equivalent to the ambrosia of truthfulness, eternity and imperishability, the elixir of bliss, beatitude and felicity. [That is, the Tripaad Brahm, the transcendental aspect of Brahm that is much more subtle, sublime and exalted than the one represented by the Bhuts with their limiting and binding effects and comparative grossness, is so divine and holy, so rejuvenating and invigorating spiritually that it is equivalent to Amrit, the ambrosia that is nectar-like and gives eternal peace and bliss to the spiritual aspirant who accesses it. The ‘Bhuts’ refer to the five primary elements of creation from which the creation, both the visible as well as the invisible, has come into being. The creation referred to as Bhut is mortal and transient, and therefore it is not true, it is not eternal, and it is not constant. Hence it is also not the truthful form of Brahm as the latter is eternal, truthful and constant. The world or creation covered under the category of the 4th Paad of Brahm has been described in Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-16. This is obviously so because all the entities mentioned there are perishable and come to an end—Brahma, Maha Vishnu, Adi-Viraat and Adi-Narayan all come to an end. The Mool Avidya and Avyakta would also come to an end. What remains at the end of the sequence is ‘Brahm’, the ‘Tattva’. This aspect of creation is the 4th Paad of Brahm because of the simple reason that it has a beginning, a known and fixed life-span, and an end. As opposed to this situation, Brahm is supposed to be endless and

without any beginning as it is infinite, imperishable and eternal. But the point to take into consideration at this juncture is the fact that everything in existence is a manifestation of Brahm, that there is nothing in existence that is not Brahm. Therefore, it is logical to say that even this gross and most lowly Paad or aspect of Brahm is also a part of it; the 4th Paad of Brahm is not separate from Brahm.]

The Brahm that is represented by the other three divine Paads, known as the Tripaad Brahm, is established in the 'Param Vyom', the supreme Sky or the higher Heaven. [(i) The word 'Vyom' means the sky, and so it refers to the subtle sky where the supreme Brahm resides. (ii) The three Paads referred to are the 'Satya' or the truthful aspect of Brahm. This aspect of Brahm is regarded as also being equivalent to 'Amrit', the ambrosia of eternity and bliss of the highest degree. (Refer paragraph no. 3 of the present Canto no. 4.) It is also like the fount of 'light'. (Refer paragraph nos. 4-5 of the present Canto no. 4.) It is a combination of 'Vidya' or true knowledge, 'Anand' or bliss and happiness, 'Turiya' which is the transcendental state of consciousness, and 'Turiyateet' state which is the higher state of Turiya. (Refer paragraph no. 5 of Canto 1.) These three Paads of Brahm are collectively recognised as being 'Sat-Chit-Anand'—truth, consciousness and bliss. It is not gross like the 4th Paad, but extremely subtle, sublime and divine. But when 'Brahm' is invoked in a wholesome manner, all the four Paads are to be taken into consideration. Otherwise it would present a deformed and fractured view of Brahm.]

The Supreme Being known as Brahm who is recognised as having the three divine Paads (referring to the qualities of Vidya, Anand and Turiya; the virtues of Satya, Amrit and Jyoti) is established high above and shines from there to illuminate the rest of the world (much like the celestial Sun that shines in the heaven to illuminate the entire solar system). The remaining one Paad of Brahm (i.e. the one aspect of Brahm that is represented by the Bhuts) has revealed itself as the lower world where all the creatures live.

When this lower world having two dimensions, the movable and the immovable, came into being, the Supreme Being secretly entered it as the all-pervading consciousness. [That is, once the lower world moulded from the Bhuts, or primary elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth, came into being, the primary source of life known as 'Brahm' entered into it as the vital spark of life called 'consciousness'. It was like giving the gross organ of sight, the eye, the ability to see. Just like the eye without its ability to see is as good as dead, the world consisting of Bhuts without this vital factor of 'consciousness' is as good as dead. Anything 'dead' is worthless, useless and decay-able. That is why when this consciousness leaves the gross body of the creature, the body begins to decay rapidly at the time of death. Since this world is subject to change, decay, death and final end, it cannot be a true form of Brahm which is an eternal entity that remains unchanging, that is steady and is imperishable. Hence, this mortal world consisting of perishable gross bodies and its inherent transient nature is not the real thing, and to treat it as the truthful Brahm is indeed fallacious and highly erroneous. But then, why is this world usually regarded as 'true'? Well, the answer is it is due to the fact that this aspect of creation has been created by the fourth Paad of Brahm in which the primary ingredients are Avidya and Maya. What more can one expect from something having its genesis in ignorance and delusions? Refer Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 3, paragraph 1-7; Canto 4, paragraph 3.]

Indeed, the three Paads characterised by the auspicious and grand virtues of Vidya, Anand and Turiya are eternal, truthful and imperishable, while the remainder fourth Paad consisting of Avidya is mortal, cause of miseries and is perishable (6).

7. [The disciple asked—] ‘What is the ‘Unmesh’¹ and ‘Nimesh’² of the Atma-Ram Adi-Narayan³?’

[Note—¹The word ‘Unmesh’ means opening of the eyes or blooming of flowers. Here it would mean the conception, the birth or appearance, and the evolution, development and growth of creation. It also refers to the waking state of consciousness in which the mind perceives the outside world through the organs of perception such as the eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin. Therefore ‘Unmesh’ would mean to be conscious of the outside material world of sense objects, and to be involved in it and influenced by it. Refer next paragraph no. 8. Refer also Canto 5, paragraph no. 2.

²The word ‘Nimesh’ is the opposite of Unmesh and therefore means closing of the eyes or withering and falling of the flower. Here it would imply the conclusion of creation till the time the next phase of creation comes. It also refers to the sleeping state of consciousness when the external world is shut off for all practical purposes. It is when the creature becomes contemplative and inward looking, when he is focussed on his Atma, his pure self, rather than the outside world and the gross body. Refer next paragraph no. 8.

³The word ‘Atma’ means the pure consciousness that is the soul and essential life giving and sustaining factor in the body of the creature at the individual level and of the world at large at the composite level of creation. The word ‘Ram’ refers to the Supreme Being, the one who provides liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the creature as well as the world in which this creature lives. That is why the Beej Mantra or the root letter ‘Ra’ of the word Ram is regarded as the one which provides a creature with Mukti and Moksha. Obviously, this ‘Ram’ is the supreme Brahm who resides in the subtle heart of all as their Atma. Hence, the term ‘Atma-Ram’ refers to Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the creature’s heart as his Atma, his soul.

And who is this ‘Atma-Ram then? The answer is ‘Adi-Narayan’. Therefore, the Adi-Narayan is Ram or the supreme divinity known as Brahm who bestows Mukti and Moksha; this divine Being lives in the heart of all living beings as their Atma. The prefix ‘Adi’ refers to the fact that the divine Being referred to here is not the one who is usually referred to as Viraat Purush or Vishnu, or even Hiranyagarbha or Brahma, but the Supreme Being who preceded them. It is from the Adi-Narayan that the other Gods came into being; the Adi-Narayan is their parent. When the time comes for the conclusion of creation these above-named divine entities retract and withdraw themselves into their primary forms in the reverse order of progression of creation as clearly outlined in Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-16.]

8. The teacher explained—‘To be conscious of the external world, to perceive the outside world of gross material objects by being extrovert and employing the gross organs of perception in the body, is called ‘Unmesh’. It is compared to the opening of the physical gross organ of sight known as the eyes so that one can actually see and observe the presence of the gross physical world.

On the other hand, the sight that is inwardly focussed, that does not need the opening of the physical organ of sight known as the eye to see anything, the in-depth and penetrating inner-vision that comes from wisdom, erudition and enlightenment, the vision that has its origin in the ‘inside’ world illuminated by the consciousness and wisdom residing in the subtle aspect of the body of the creature such as the heart and the mind respectively rather than in the ‘outside’ gross world which is seen by the gross body and which is artificially lighted—this ‘sight’ is called ‘Nimesh’. It is akin to closing of the eyes when one sleeps, because the physical sight is shut off.

To contemplate and meditate upon one’s true ‘self’, to be introspective, to research and discover the truth about one’s own ‘self’ known as the Atma by

meditating and focusing the mind and intellect inwards, to completely eliminate the thoughts and perception of the external gross world, to be introvert—it is equivalent to closing the gross organ of sight in the body known as the eye. It is called ‘Nimesh’ in the spiritual parlance—i.e. the closing of the physical organ of the eye, and instead opening the inner eye of wisdom and enlightenment that leads one to ‘self-realisation’ and seeing the inner world of the pure consciousness.

On the other hand, to search about one’s identity and roots in the gross external existence, by attempting to know about one’s bearing, about who one truly is in relation to his surroundings in this mortal and gross world by examining the perceptions received from the outside world and then becoming aware of one’s bearing and identity based on what is perceived, is akin to seeing anything by the medium of the gross organ of sight known as the eye. This is called ‘Unmesh’ in spiritual parlance—it is seeing or observing anything to establish its existence or becoming aware of it by keeping the eyes open. Since the perception of the things of the world are done by the gross organs of perception, which in this case is looking at things of the world with the physical eyes of the gross body in order to see them and becoming aware of their existence, the way one identifies oneself and relates himself with the surroundings in view of what he sees is bound to be influenced or affected by the medium used for this perception. Since the medium is gross—i.e. since all the physical organs of the body, including the ‘eye’, by which the creature perceives the external world are gross—it automatically follows that the result would be also proportionately distorted and they would present a picture that is not the real thing.

[Hence, one gets deluded and misled. So, inspite of seeing everything clearly he has not seen anything at all. At the most he has seen only the outside features, the external façade, and believes them to be the reality. But the gross organs of perception of the body, such as the eye in the present case, do not have the ability to penetrate even the thin veil of the cloth that surrounds the body, so how can they peep behind and know what this cloth covers or wraps? The physical organ of the eye does not have the ability to see what lies behind the gross exterior façade of the creature’s body, for it is so weak in its penetrating powers that it can’t even see behind his clothes, what to speak of its ability to penetrate the skin, bones, flesh and marrow? In other words, in the metaphysical and spiritual field, a person has only seen and become aware of the exterior face of creation if he does not have the inner eye of wisdom and enlightenment open to see the truth; he has not seen the truth that is hidden behind this external façade. Hence, inspite of technically being ‘awake’ he is actually ‘asleep’, as he is deluded into believing something that is basically untrue as being true.]

The duration of the Unmesh is equivalent to the duration of the Nimesh.

[This is taken from the physical perspective of the world. The physical ‘day’ is divided equally into two halves—the ‘day-time’ which is equivalent to Unmesh because a man is awake then, there is sunlight and he can see everything clearly, and the ‘night-time’ which is equivalent to Nimesh because a man closes his eyes to sleep and there is an all-engulfing darkness which does not allow him to see the external world. The fact that the waking time and the sleeping time—the day and the night—are approximately equal is further highlighted in Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-15 which detail how the day and the night of Brahma, Vishnu etc. are measured in the cosmic term of this measurement.

But if one were to take a broader view of creation from the metaphysical and spiritual perspective, the Unmesh would be the physical world that comes into existence when the mind thinks about it, and the Nimesh would be its dissolution

when the same mind stops to think of it. This also corresponds to the waking and the sleeping patterns of the physical world as described above. It also implies that one half of a man's life is spent in taking care of his world, and the other half is expected to be spent by him in taking care of his own spiritual welfare.] (8).

9. [This paragraph explains why the dual concept of there being a Jiva or a living being and an Ishwar or the Lord arises. It would be followed up in paragraph nos. 11-13 subsequently.]

During the period of Unmesh (i.e. when the external world is perceived employing the gross organs of perception in the gross body) the Avidya (lack of true knowledge; ignorance of the reality and truth) is the dominant feature. [From the spiritual perspective, the gross world that is seen to exist and the gross body which the creature thinks as his 'self' is out of total ignorance and false notions.]

On the contrary, during the Nimesh period this Avidya is totally dispensed with. [That is, when one turns inwards and contemplates upon the 'truth' of existence by shutting off all sources of delusions that are created by the outside world, it is akin to shutting-off of all ignorance. Then what is observed is free from being tainted by Avidya.]

As soon as Unmesh resurfaces (i.e. as soon as one opens the eye, or as soon as one begins to perceive the existence of the gross external world and starts to relate himself with it, or soon as he becomes extrovert), the factor of Avidya (lack of knowledge of the truth that has its genesis in ignorance) also stages a come-back because it is propelled to the front by the very subtle and hidden Vasnas that are present in the creature. [These Vasanas are his natural passions and desires to enjoy the material comforts and pleasures of the world and its sense objects, to gratify the body and its sense organs. They drive the creature towards the world of artificiality or the world of Avidya, and away from the Truth represented by the world of Vidya.]

As soon as this happens, all the accompanying paraphernalia of Avidya make a colourful and forceful resurgence. With this development there arises the concept of duality as a natural corollary, as a natural follow-up, and as a natural consequence. [That is, once one allows himself to be trapped by Avidya, the latter catches hold of the prey with a vengeance and viciously hold him in its vice-like grip. The creature becomes overwhelmed by delusions that propel him towards believing as true what is essentially untrue.]

Because of the mischief created by Avidya, or because of the lack of knowledge of the reality, there arises the concept of cause and its effect. The creature who is overcome with Avidya during the Unmesh phase of existence begins to see duality in the world—he begins to see or perceive a difference between the Jiva (the individual living creature) and the Ishwar (the Lord who appears to control this creature, who can punish and give reward, and to whom the creature offers his respects and worship)¹.

The Ishwar is designated as being the cause of this creation, and the Jiva is the effect. The existence of this creation with all its units, including the living creature, is attributed to the Ishwar (the Supreme Being; the Brahm; the Adi-Narayan). The product that reveals the dynamism of this Ishwar, the effect of what Ishwar wished to do, is in the form of the Jiva², the living being (9).

[Note—¹Since 'Avidya' is the dominant factor when one begins to relate himself with the gross world, he is bound to be influenced by it. Thus, he begins to see everything through the mirror of Avidya—the state of lack of truthful knowledge

which is driven by ignorance and delusions. Thus he begins to hallucinate. He begins to think or imagine that the moving entity known as the Jiva, the living being with a gross body that shows activity as if it is self-empowered, is a truthful entity. He is convinced of it because he can actually see this Jiva and its physical deeds. But then he also observes that this Jiva is not totally independent because he is punished for his sins or misdeeds and rewarded for his good deeds. Therefore the seer or observer concludes that there must be a superior Authority that controls the Jiva, who punishes him or rewards him according to the theory of cause and effect. He names this Authority as 'Ishwar'—the Lord—who oversees this world, who sits in judgement. Obviously, a distinction becomes evident between the controller and the controlled, the Ishwar and the Jiva. This fallacious notion that the Jiva and Ishwar are two separate and distinct entities is the root cause of the concept of 'duality' or Dwaitya. Actually there is no such thing as is repeatedly stressed in this and other Upanishads. This is because it is the same Consciousness that exists at the two planes of existence known as the Jiva at the micro level of creation, and as the Ishwar (also known by various names as Brahm, Narayan etc.) at the macro level.

²This is because Ishwar, in his primary form, has no physical gross body and does no physical deed. Ishwar is the invisible and eternal Brahm that is the cosmic Consciousness personified. But the physical form of this Ishwar is in the shape of a Jiva, a living being. This Jiva has a gross body, it does so many things and generally carries out the wishes of the Ishwar as the latter's representative. The primary Authority that has resulted in the creation of an entity known as a Jiva is Ishwar, and since the Jiva is vested with all the dynamism and powers possessed by Ishwar himself, since Jiva is a personified form of Ishwar as the latter's true representative, it follows that basically and principally there is no difference between them. To take a worldly example, the representative of a monarch is equivalent to the monarch himself. The representative's insult is insult of the principal, the monarch. Whatever the representative says or does is deemed to be done by his principal, the monarch. Likewise, the Jiva is Ishwar himself personified. But even as the monarch has the right to withdraw his delegated authorities and powers, the Ishwar too can retract himself and this causes the death or end of the creature. That is why as long as this Ishwar lives in the Jiva as the Atma-Ram, the pure 'consciousness', the Jiva is alive and conscious and represents the Ishwar, and as soon as this consciousness leaves the gross body, the Jiva dies. Extending this argument further we can deduce that as long as the Jiva shows auspicious and noble virtues so characteristic and unique to Brahm, the former is like the latter. And soon as this stops happening the Jiva becomes separated from Brahm.

A Jiva/Jivatma (a living being; a creature)—*Who is a Jiva* (a living being) has been explained in the following Upanishads—(i) Atharva Veda's Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 3; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 9, 11-13. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Saraswati Upanishad, verse nos. 47-48; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 41-45; Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 15; Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 6-7. (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2.

The *relation between a Jiva and Brahm/Ishwar/Parmatma* has been explained in the following Upanishads—(i) Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4 (difference between Jiva and Parmatma); Canto 9, verse no. 10 (difference between Jiva and Prakriti); Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 9, 11-13. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 41-45; Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 5; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 52-53, 70, 73. (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2 (subject of Jiva vis-à-vis Brahm).

The reason *why the Jiva remains trapped in this world* has been elaborately explained in Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 9, 11-

13; and Canto 5, paragraph nos. 3-8. How to find liberation from this world has been explained in the present Upanishad's Canto 5, paragraph nos. 9-13.

The concept of *Jiva and Jiva-Atma* has been beautifully brought out in Shaarirakopanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition in its verse no. 15.

Why a Jiva takes a new birth has been answered in—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 71, Canto 4, verse no. 40; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 31; Canto 3, verse no. 24; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/10-12. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 12, 33; Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 4-14; Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse no. 1-6. (iii) Atharva Veda's Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 10-13, and Canto 5, paragraph nos. 3-13; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 23; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 3, section 2, verse no. 1; Mundak 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 10; Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10.

Relation between a *Jiva and Prakriti (Nature)* has been explained in (i) Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no. 10.

Difference between *Jivatma and Parmatma*—(i) Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 9, 11-13.]

10. The Maha Maya—or the dynamic powers of Ishwar (Brahm, the Supreme Being) that create delusions of stupendous proportions—is under the control and supervision of the Lord. The Maha Maya is obedient to its Lord, the Ishwar. [In fact, the Supreme Being is called 'Ishwar' because he is the 'Lord of all', including the Maya.]

The Maha Maya works in accordance to the wishes and desires of the Lord. It resolutely carries out what the Lord determines to do. The Maha Maya is eternally empowered by all the majestic and mystical powers and undiluted authority so that it can carry out the Lord's wishes endlessly without interruption.

This Maha Maya is the great progenitor of other forms of endless Mayas which together create a web of delusions.

This Maha Maya is regarded as the magical body that Lord Vishnu (one of the divine forms of Ishwar) assumes when the Lord wishes to do so and play around in a sporty manner. [That is why the various magical feats done by different incarnations of Vishnu are regarded as the Lord's Maha Maya doing them. It is the delusory effect of the Maha Maya that the world believes that Vishnu has taken the form of a human etc. and done this and done that. Actually it is the Lord's Maya that does it for him.]

The Maha Maya is so un-imaginably great in its reach and import, so mysterious and powerful that even the world's creator known as Brahma (who is so wise that he created the Vedas, the repository of all knowledge and wisdom) cannot understand and fathom it.

Those who worship Lord Vishnu and are devoted to him are able to overcome the effects of Maha Maya and easily cross it. [That is, Maha Maya is not able to cast its delusory net on them.]

On the other hand, those who do not have any devotion for Lord Vishnu cannot overcome this great Maha Maya in spite of their best of efforts (10).

11. They (i.e. such people who do not honour Lord Vishnu and therefore are affected by Maya) continue to be trapped in the cycle of birth and re-birth repeatedly for an endless time, being impelled and motivated by the various components of the Antahakarans (the 'inner self' and its various Vasanas and Vrittis—the various natural inclinations, desires, yearnings, passions tendencies and habits etc. of a creature that traps him in the vicious cycle of birth and death and re-birth)¹.

This Antahakaran is the field of activity of Avidya. [That is, when true knowledge is lacking, the accompanying ignorance and related delusions directly affect the inner being of the creature, and through it, his whole thought process, temperament and life. It must be noted that mind and the intellect are important components of the Antahakaran, and it is the mind and the intellect that do the thinking and analysis for the creature. So when Avidya is the dominant player, its influence would be evident in all the spheres of life of the creature.]

At the same time it cannot be denied that the Antahakaran (the subtle inner-self) remains activated and empowered due to the presence of ‘consciousness’ inside the gross body of the creature. Since this ‘consciousness’ that keeps the creature alive and activates his Antahakaran is a reflection, an image, of the cosmic Consciousness which is synonymous with the divine entity known as Brahm, it follows that Brahm is the divine One who is reflected in the inner-self as well as the body of the creature. This ‘reflection’ or ‘image’ of the cosmic Consciousness is called the ‘Jiva’, the living being² (11).

[Note—¹*Anthakaran*—This is the subtle body of the creature consisting of four components such as the mind (Mana), the intellect (Buddhi), the faculty of reasoning, thought, discrimination, understanding and the ability to pay attention and focus the mind and intellect on any subject (Chitta), and the notion of ego, pride and vanity, and their attendant arrogance and haughtiness (Ahankar).

The word ‘Antahakaran’ literally means the ‘inner instrument’ of the creature by which his mind works and receives the world. The word has two components—viz. ‘Antaha’ meaning ‘inner’, and ‘Karan’ meaning ‘instrument that causes the mind to work’. The external organs of the body such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which are the organs of perception physically receive the inputs from the external world, but their actual functioning is due to this Antahakaran or the inner instrument of the subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect complex because if the latter malfunctions the former are useless.

Out the three states of existence of the creature, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states, the mind is active in the first two states only, and therefore the Antahakaran is related to only the first two states of existence. But even here its main field of activity is internal and not external as is implied in the word ‘Antaha’ itself which means ‘inner’. Therefore, the external organs of the body such as the organs of perception and action are only subsidiary and play an ancillary role only vis-à-vis the activity of the ‘inner self’ consisting of the mind, intellect and sub-conscious as well as the subtle heart which is the seat of various sentiments and emotions. This is simply because the inner self receives inputs from the outside world through the instrument of the external organs, and all the activity of the inner self in relation to the world in which the creature lives depend upon these external organs directly or indirectly.

The Antahakaran functions in four different ways and gets four different names according to these four functions. (1) It is called Chitta or sub-conscious mind and its ability to receive information and remember while performing the function of reception and retention. (2) It is called Mana or mind when it performs the function of questioning, doubting and willing. (3) It is called Buddhi or intellect when deducing, deciding and determining. And (4) it is called Ahankar or ego, self pride, arrogance of knowledge when it identifies itself with each of these functions—when it thinks that it has the ability to remember, to question and debate, to decide and will.

The word would therefore briefly mean the inner self of the creature consisting of the subtle body rather than the outer self consisting of the gross body. It is said to be one of the 19 Tattwas or essential elements that came into being at the very commencement of creation. According to the *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 4, these 19 Tattwas are as follows—five organs of

perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin) + five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genital) + five Prans or vital winds or airs (Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyan) + four Antahakarans (Mana, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankar) = nineteen.

Depending upon how one interprets the word 'Antahakaran', it is said to have one, two, four or five components.

The Antahakaran *one dimension or aspect* is called the Mana, but this Mana itself has two subtler aspects—viz. the mind and the heart because the notion of Mana as it affects the inner self of the creature revolves around the various tugs, pulls, pushes and prodding that the different hues of character traits such as emotions, sentiments, impulsiveness, spontaneity etc. exert on the creature. The word 'Mana' cannot be restricted to the dictionary version of the term as meaning only the mind, because the heart plays an equal important role in the entire setup. This fact has been elaborately described in Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 101-102.

The Antahakaran with *four dimensions* is described in Shaarirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 4. These four dimensions are Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankar or Abhiman (pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, vanity, false self-importance etc.). Again it would be noted that the subtle component of the heart play a secret role in this setup because the ingredient of pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance along with their sentimental and emotional quotient are very closely related with the heart.

The Naradparivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 5, verse no. 24 describes four Vrittis that affect a man's behaviour, thoughts, temperaments and deeds. These are also called the four Anthakarans.

The Antahakaran with *five dimensions or aspects* is described in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6, and in Paingalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, and in Canto 2, verse no. 3—both of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The five components of Antahakaran are—(i) Mana (mind), (ii) Buddhi (intellect), (iii) Chitta (the faculty of concentration and memory; knowledge and consciousness), (iv) Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance), and (v) Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature) which decide the basic nature of a person and the way he would react to a given circumstance, the way he would deal, behave and interact with the world, the way he would interpret things, the way he thinks, the things that would appeal to him and the things he would abhor etc.—all depends upon the mental setup tinged with the fundamental character traits that are firmly ingrained in him.

Since the mind, intellect and the sub-conscious are involved in the definition of Antahakaran, it would follow that the following too would be included as the five components of Antahakaran—(i) Praman—knowledge that helps to establish the truth; (ii) Viparyaya—ignorance, delusions, illusions such as imagining a snake in a piece of rope; this is erroneous knowledge; (iii) Vikalp—alternatives; that knowledge which is acquired by hearing of it but may not present the correct picture, such as for example a wooden puppet—there seems an apparent difference between plain wood and the puppet, but they are basically the same and defined with the same word 'wood'; this knowledge is neither true nor false for to say that the puppet is different from an ordinary piece of wood because of its distinctive shape and value would be as much true as saying that it is plain wood; (iv) Nidra—meaning sleep; when a man remains oblivious of any truth just like anything gets hidden in darkness though it is very much there, that man is likened to a man sleeping soundly inspite of the goings on around him and therefore remaining unaware of them; and (v) Smriti—literally meaning memory; it refers to that knowledge which is based on experience and witnessing so that it is etched in memory; such knowledge becomes robust and gets soundly established in mind with the passage of time.

²The Srimad Bhagvat Mahapurāṇ, 4/9/6 describes this concept of a *Jiva being a reflection of the Supreme Brahm* as follows—‘My salutations to the Supreme Being who is almighty and all-powerful. The Lord has entered my heart, enlivens my vital Pran (breath), my limbs and my sense organs, and also empowers my faculty of speech—all of which would otherwise have remained dormant and ineffective.’

The question ‘who is a Jiva’ is most precisely answered in this Canto. A Jiva is a living entity in whose Antahakaran, his inner self, the Chaitanya, the eternal and universal Consciousness, is reflected. The Antahakaran consists of the Mana or mind, Chitta or sub-conscious, and Buddhi or intellect. Therefore, the Consciousness that keeps these units of the inner self empowered, enlivened and activated besides shining in them and imparting them with its own unique virtues which are divine, holy, glorious and sublime is what makes an ordinary living being into a Jiva. Hence, what distinguishes a Jiva from all other entities in creation is the presence of Consciousness with all its magnificent qualities in his inner self so much so that this inner self becomes an embodiment of Consciousness.

A creature who is wise, erudite and enlightened, who can distinguish between the right and the wrong, the correct and the incorrect, who has the power of discrimination so that he can analyse any given situation and decide what is good for him and what is degrading and ominous for his spiritual welfare, who is conscientious and ethical by nature and not under force of circumstances—in short, a creature who lives an exemplary life according to the laws of Dharma, a life of auspiciousness, righteousness and noble conduct and thoughts, who is wise enough to understand the reality about his own self as well as the world around him and know who is ‘true self’ is by grasping the essence of the teaching of the Upanishads and other scriptures has the right to be classified as a ‘Jiva’. The rest are all living beings but not Jiva in the true sense because they are no better than animals, insects, worms and other lower forms of life including the plants which too have life in this creation.

Since this Chaitanya is self-illuminated, glorious and radiantly splendid like the celestial Sun, it follows that the Jiva in whose Antahakaran this Chaitanya shines would be also be shining and radiant as the Chaitanya. For example, if we hold a polished mirror against the Sun, the image formed in the mirror would be equally blinding and splendid as the actual Sun in the sky. Therefore, such a Jiva would be self-realised and Brahm-realised. He would be effusing a holy glow of this Chaitanya around him just like the glow-worm which is radiant from its self-generated light.

From the angle of the more gross aspect of creation, we can understand this concept in a different way. A dead body from which the ‘consciousness’, or life and its evident signs of various perceptions and senses felt by the various organs, has left would not be called a Jiva or a ‘living being’. It would have no use of the components of the Antahakaran either. No amount of ‘Vidya’ or true knowledge can keep the subtle aspect of the creature’s existence such as the mind, the intellect and the sub-conscious on the one hand, and the gross body and its components such as the organs of perception and action on the other hand, activated once the ‘consciousness’ decides to leave the body. This ‘consciousness’ is therefore a personification of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, that is at the very foundation of life and existence in this creation. It is this cosmic Consciousness that is reflected as the Jiva or the living being. It has assumed a microscopic form to live inside the individual creature, enabling his Antahakaran to remain activated besides entitling the creature’s gross body to have ‘life’ so as to enable the creature to be called a Jiva, a ‘living being’.

Who is a *Jiva* (a living being) has been explained in the following Upanishads—

(i) Atharva Veda’s Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 3; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 9, 11-12. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Saraswati Upanishad, verse nos. 47-48; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 41-45;

Shaarirako-panishad, verse no. 15; Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 6-7. (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2.

The *relation between a Jiva and Brahm/Ishwar/Parmatma* has been explained in the following Upanishads—(i) Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4 (difference between Jiva and Parmatma); Canto 9, verse no. 10 (difference between Jiva and Prakriti); Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 11-13. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 41-45; Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 5; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 52-53, 70, 73. (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2 (subject of Jiva vis-à-vis Brahm).

The reason *why the Jiva remains trapped in this world* has been elaborately explained in this present Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 11-13; and Canto 5, paragraph nos. 3-8. How to find liberation from this world has been explained in the present Upanishad's Canto 5, paragraph nos. 9-13.

The concept of *Jiva and Jiva-Atma* has been beautifully brought out in Shaarirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition in its verse no. 15.

Why a Jiva takes a new birth has been answered in—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 71, Canto 4, verse no. 40; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 31; Canto 3, verse no. 24; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/10-12. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 12, 33; Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 4-14; Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse no. 1-6. (iii) Atharva Veda's Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 10-13, and Canto 5, paragraph nos. 3-13; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 23; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 3, section 2, verse no. 1; Mundak 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 10; Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10.

Relation between a *Jiva and Prakriti (Nature)* has been explained in Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no. 10.]

12. Some say that all the Jivas (living beings) have the characteristic attribute of possessing an 'Antahakaran'. [That is, all living beings have a subtle component of the body known as the Antahakaran, which constitutes of the Mana (mind), the Buddhi (intellect), the Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankar (ego, pride) that determine the individual's personality and qualities. See note to paragraph no. 11.]

Others assert that all the Jivas have the characteristic attribute of having a subtle body that lives in the gross body that is born from or created out the Maha-Bhuts, the great primary elements of creation¹.

Still some others say that the Jiva is the reflection of the Chaitanya (consciousness) in the Buddhi (intellect). [That is, the consciousness that inspires the intellect and enables it to perceive, think, reflect, analyse, contemplate, deduce, decide and determine are the functions that make an entity distinguished from another that cannot perform these intelligent tasks. The entity that shows the above attributes is called a Jiva or a living being who is conscious, and that which doesn't is not a Jiva. Therefore, a living being who is conscientious, wise, thoughtful, intelligent and mindful or 'conscious' of his responsibilities and moral duties would be called a 'Jiva' in the true sense of the word. The rest would be no more than life-less entities such as rocks, or un-intelligent creatures such as plants and other lower forms of animal life.]

All these different forms of Jivas or the classification of living beings into different categories is based on the characteristic attributes that they possess or exhibit. But fundamentally there is no difference between them. [This is accordance with the theory of Advaitya or non-duality that stresses that all forms of creation are

basically the same because they are simply different forms of the same Brahm, the universal Truth. Since ‘Truth’ can be only one and not two, it follows that if the world is to have any meaning in it then it must conform to this basic fact about ‘Truth’—and it is that the ‘Truth’ will always remain one and not two. This at once shoots down the concept of ‘duality’ in creation! We can understand this eclectic phenomenon by a simple instance. Just like the same metal ‘gold’ is called by different names because of the different forms, shapes and sizes into which it is moulded to create various items of ornaments and decorative jewellery having myriad names and values though the primary ingredient is the same ‘gold’ in all of them, or just like the same element ‘earth’ is moulded by a potter into different forms and shapes with varying sizes and contours and given different names though the same element known as ‘earth’ is inherently present in all of them—similarly, all the Jivas or living beings are basically and inherently the same because they have the same universal ‘consciousness’ in them as the primary element that entitles them at all to be called a ‘Jiva’ in the first place. That is, notwithstanding the different definitions of Jiva according to various schools of thoughts and philosophy, the fundamental nature of a living being cannot be changed—and this is the fact that they are called a ‘living being’ because of the presence of ‘consciousness’ in them. Without its presence, no entity would be entitled to be called a ‘Jiva’ no matter how beautiful, important, intelligent or handsome he might be! For instance, the modern world’s computer is very intelligent and performs great calculations in a jiffy, and even helps one to predict the future and trace the past precisely based on intelligent interpretation of the data, tasks that would take a normal man a very long time to do even if it is at all possible for him to do it. But would anyone in his right senses call a computer a ‘Jiva’ or ‘a living being’?] (12).

[Note—¹The 5 *Maha-Bhuts*—They are also called the ‘Panch Maha-Bhuts’ are the five primary elements of creation. They are sky or space, air or wind, fire or energy, water or all forms of liquids, and earth or all forms of solids. The Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes these elements in great detail along with their manifold influence on this creation, including the latter’s very existence. The gross body of the creature is made up of these five elements in varying proportions. According to Trishiki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, the ratio of these elements in this creation is the following—earth is one half, and the rest half consists of water, fire, sky and air elements in the ratio of one-eighth each.

Refer also to Jabal-darshan Upanishad, 8/5-6; Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no.2; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 176-178; Yogtattva Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition verse nos. 85-99.

The 12 *Maha Bhuts*—According to the Gayatri Upanishad of Atharva Veda’s Gopath Brahman, Kandika no. 37, the twelve Mahabhuts are the following—Brahm (the Supreme Being), Akash (sky), Vayu (air or wind), Jyoti (light), Aapo (water), Bhumi (earth), Anna (food), Pran (life or the vital winds that sustain life), Mana (mind), Vaani (speech), Vedas, Yagya (fire sacrifice) = 12.

According to Kandika 38, they are the following—Veda, Vaani (speech), Mana (mind), Pran (life; vital winds), Anna (food), Bhumi (earth), Aapo (water), Tej (fire), Vayu (air or wind), Akash (sky), Brahm (the Supreme Being), Brahmin = 12.]

13. [This paragraph essentially answers the eternal question—‘why is a living being called the Jiva trapped in this world’?]

The universal and uniformly wholesome and self-contented Lord known as Lord Narayan always plays sport out of his own wish. The Jiva or the living being too continues to play sport in this world out of his own wish. [Therefore, they appear to

be the same entity. This is true because the Jiva is an image of the Viraat Purush which is one of the many names of Lord Narayan.]

[Just like Lord Narayan or Lord Vishnu getting sucked in the quagmire representing the arduous job of sustaining and protecting this endless world which is his own creation in the first place, thereby robbing the Lord of his peace—] The Jiva, the living creature, (also) gets trapped in the web of this artificial world in his desire for enjoying it. He remains shackled to this despicable and contemptible world of sense objects and materialism in his pursuit of its comforts and pleasures inspite of being aware of its inherent impermanent nature, its turmoil and turbulence, and it being a cause of all his spiritual bondages and miseries. This result in the Jiva remaining trapped in the endless cycle of birth and death in this gross world. [This passion and yearning for the world is contrary to the Jiva's primary form which is the Atma, the pure consciousness, also called the Atma-Ram, and its nature of being enlightened and wise, and consequentially being dispassionate and detached from all grossness that is associated with this world. This basic delusion and ignorance of the reality is the cause of the Jiva remaining trapped in the endless cycle of birth and death in this gross world. This situation is compared to Vishnu remaining involved in the sustenance and protection of the world once the Lord created the Maha Maya—the 'great delusion', and then allowed himself to be served by it or surrounded by it. See paragraph no. 10 of the present Canto no. 4. If the Maha Maya can be so powerful that even Vishnu the Lord is not free from its affects then how can a humble creature be free from it? This is the obvious reason why the Jiva who allows himself to be attracted towards this world gets ensnared by it.] (13).

[Note—The reason why the Jiva remains trapped in the world and the endless cycle of birth and death has been continued and magnificently explained in Canto 5, paragraph nos. 3-8 below.]

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Uttar Kand—Canto 5

[This Canto answers three very pertinent spiritual questions—viz. (i) How and why does Avidya (ignorance or lack of true knowledge) reappear once it has been destroyed or eliminated?, (ii) Why does a creature remain deluded and trapped in this world of artificiality, and how to get rid of it and become freed?, and (iii) What is the path to Mukti—or liberation and deliverance from this ensnaring world. In the process it describes in graphic detail the path taken by a devotee of Lord Vishnu when he leaves the gross mortal body and embarks upon his spiritual journey to reach the highest echelons of heaven where Vishnu resides, the heaven known as Vaikunth. The description is continued in the next two Cantos, Canto no. 6 and 7, as well.

There are many other Upanishads also that deal with the mysterious question 'what happens after death?' Some of them are the following—

- (a) Rig Veda = Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1.
- (b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10.
- (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 4/3/33, 35-38, 4/4/1-14, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2, 14-16, etc.; Subalopanishad, Canto 11.
- (d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Taittiriyo-panishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Kathopanishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20; Canto 1, Valli 2, verse no. 1-6; Canto 2, Valli

2, verse no. 6-8; Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 4-17; Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 24.

(e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9-10, 13-16; Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9-10; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 10; Mundak 3, section 2, verse nos. 1-2; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 23.]

1. Paying his obeisance to the Guru who is like a God, the disciple bowed before him and asked again—‘Oh Lord! How and why does Avidya (ignorance or lack of true knowledge) reappear once it has been destroyed or eliminated?’ (1).

2. ‘It is true’, said the erudite Guru and continued to explain. He elaborated—‘Even as frogs, insects and other creatures make their appearance at the onset of the rainy season, the completely subsided Avidya too makes a come-back and resurfaces at the time of ‘Unmesh’¹’ (2).

[Note—¹The term Unmesh has been explained earlier in Canto 4, paragraph nos. 7-9. Unmesh literally means opening of the eyes. So, when the Viraat Purush, the almighty supreme Lord of the creation, opens his eyes, it is the beginning of the process of creation. The first thing to appear is Maha Maya, the Great Delusion. The Lord employs the services of this Maha Maya to create the world. Since the instrument used for this creation is Maya it is obvious that it is like the scene created by a magician, or the mirage seen in a desert. Avidya and Maha Maya go hand in hand because ignorance of the reality and delusions are complimentary to each other. Refer Canto 4, paragraph nos. 10-13.

There is another way of interpreting this word. When a creature opens his eyes he becomes aware of the world and its fascinating charms. When he closes them the world vanishes, and with it its charms. A creature is attracted to the world because of the magnificent scene he sees, which kindles in him a desire, a desire to be near it, to acquire it, to enjoy it, and then to preserve and protect his possessions and augment them. The creature does all this in spite of the fact that the world is mortal and transient, that its charms are illusive and temporary, that it cannot lead to satisfaction but only stokes the fire of more desires and yearnings, that it is full of miseries and pains, of turmoil and turbulence, and that it is like a vicious whirlpool which traps the unfortunate ones who land in it. But then its charms are so very alluring and irresistible that the deluded creature falls prey and cares not. The Unmesh in this case would be opening of the eyes and becoming aware of the charming world of astounding magnificence, so alluring that for once all wisdom is eclipsed and the creature thinks ‘let us taste it and then we will throw it away’. But the wine is very addictive, and once it gets its hold on the creature, he is done in for good.

The second scenario is this. When the creature finds this visible world interesting, he makes so many efforts or does so many deeds and takes so many actions to fulfil his desire to enjoy the world’s attractions and gratify the urges of his sense organs. He succeeds and this stokes his desires and passions further because he wishes to reap more rewards of his deeds, actions and efforts. He cannot completely be contented, so is the nature of the infinite alluring charms of this endless world. So, when he dies, he is unsatisfied and thinks that many things are yet uncompleted, many things are to be done yet. As a consequence of these unfulfilled desires and unrequited love for this world, he takes a birth again. This lands him in the vicious cycle of birth and death that is characteristic of this world.]

3. The eager disciple asked the second eternal question—‘Oh Lord! How and why the Jiva (the living creature) gets trapped endlessly in this world? Why is he deluded and waylaid by it? How can the Jiva find liberation and deliverance from it? What form or shape does the path of Moksha (emancipation and salvation; liberation and

deliverance) take? What is the medium or instrument or channel by which it can be successfully achieved or accessed? What is the way towards Moksha? What is actually meant by the term Moksha? What is Sayujya Mukti? Please be kind to elucidate these eclectic concepts for me.' (3).

[Note—The answer to the basic question 'why is a Jiva trapped and why is he deluded' is explained in paragraph no. 4-8, while the concept of what constitutes Mukti or Moksha is given in paragraph nos. 9-13. The concept of Sayujya Mukti is outlined in paragraph nos. 14-17. Basically, Sayujya Mukti is to become one with the deity worshipped, or to merge with this deity so there is no separation between the worshipped and the worshipper. The deity in this particular case is Lord Vishnu.]

4. The teacher was extremely pleased with the sincerity and eagerness of the disciple to learn. He praised the learner and preached—'Listen carefully. It is because of the cumulative negative effects of the evil deeds done repeatedly in numerous past lives and their accumulated denigrating consequences that the Jiva (the creature) is unable to distinguish between the gross body and the Atma, the pure consciousness that is his true self.

So he is deluded to think that the gross body is his identity and 'self'. Since he has heard that the 'self' is known as the Atma, he thinks erroneously and most stupidly that 'the body is the Atma', that the 'body is the self'. (4).

[Note—In other words, the evil deeds done by a creature so much taint his intellect and wisdom, rousing in him so many passions for the world and the desire to gratify the urges of his sense organs for enjoyment of their respective objects of the world that he forgets about who he actually is. Since the sense organs of the body are the domineering factor in his relations with the world, so as long as he relates himself to the world and keeps enjoying its comforts and pleasures, these organs become most important and relevant for him—simply because he cannot enjoy the world without them. All the deeds done by him, all the actions taken by him and the efforts made by him are channelised through these sense organs and the body. So in due course of time the creature begins to identify himself with the gross body. He forgets that this gross body is not in fact his 'true self', and that the latter is the Atma which resides in this gross body. The body is evident and easy to relate to, while the Atma is such a subtle entity that it needs a lot of patient and purity of thought to become acquainted with it. The creature is in such a tearing hurry to grab as much as he can in as short a time as possible that he loses the inclination, does not have the patience and the desire to know about his roots.

As would be evident now and in the forthcoming paragraphs, this idea of Mukti and why the creature remains trapped in the world has already started in paragraph nos. 11-13 of the previous Canto no. 4.]

5. The deluded Jiva thinks negatively; negativity takes a firm hold of him. He thinks 'I am Agyani and have limited knowledge' (i.e. I am ignorant; I lack wisdom and knowledge); 'I am a Jiva or a living being' (who is separate from the Ishwar—in this context, refer Canto 4, paragraph no. 9, 11-13); 'I am full of great miseries and sorrows'; 'I am trapped in the web of birth and death in this world from times immemorial'.

Due to this negative thinking and its associated depressions, the creature feels absolutely hapless, hopeless and dejected besides being deluded, and so he is unable to recover due to its accompanying hallucinations that are extremely overpowering.

It's such a heady cocktail of immense negativity, lack of truthful knowledge and awareness of the reality that it perpetuates itself endlessly and keeps the creature viciously tied in its vice-like grip. The creature therefore remains trapped in the world

through the medium of the body which helps him to enjoy the world and its comforts and charms. This passion never ends, and so the trap never ends!

If this tendency to be deluded is not overcome, if such negative thoughts are not banished, if the desire to enjoy the world and be passionate about it never ends, if one continues to think in material terms and regard his body as his 'self' instead of the Atma, then it is obvious that this chain can never be broken and the creature can never hope to find liberation and deliverance from it (5).

6. Such a deluded and misled creature continues to experience and enjoy the false and illusionary charms of the sense objects of this world which is dream-like itself, i.e. neither the world nor its objects and their charms have any reality and truth in them.

The creature is so overwhelmed with this fascinating experience that he desires more of it; he expects, longs for and aspires to have more of this world and its sense objects. This never ends as the illusion never ends.

As a result, the creature never finds satisfaction and contentedness; he is never fulfilled and done with. So he keeps on running behind this mirage endlessly, he relentlessly pursues it while it recedes from him the more he attempts to go near it. The whole present life and all the lives henceforth are spent in this fruitless endeavour.

He assumes numerous bodies of infinite varieties and forms, some are honourable and some lowly, some are gross and huge while others are microscopic and most inconsequential and humble. In all these forms the creature does uncountable deeds and accumulates their results which may be good and auspicious as well as bad and painful. Some of the results are enjoyed or suffered by him in that life while others are carried forward to the next birth. Some of his desires are fulfilled in the current life and some remain unfulfilled, causing the Jiva (living being) to take another birth to complete the unfinished task or unrequited desires.

The unfulfilled desires create stronger passions; the mind, the sub-conscious and the intellect which constitutes the Antahakaran (the inner self of the creature) become so much pre-occupied with them that the latter (i.e. the Antahakaran) does not have the time and energy left for anything else. [This is the reason why delusions and ignorance perpetuate themselves.]

This vicious cycle keeps the creature perpetually trapped (6).

7. Such trapped creatures do not even have any inclination to find a way out of the quagmire in which they are trapped. By and by, the creatures even forget that they are trapped at all. So the deception continues; it perpetuates. [Refer paragraph no. 8 below. The reason is that they aren't aware that they are trapped. Since for them the world is the true thing and it is all that matters to them in this existence, and since they believe that their gross body is their true 'self' and the medium for happiness and fulfilment, they have no reason to find out about anything else other than these two entities they believe to be true and fulfilling—viz. (i) the world, and (ii) the body. The world becomes the object, the target, and the body becomes the medium for reaching it, for obtaining it, for getting access to it. In other words, when the deluded creature believes that the world is real and it is the only thing that can provide him with his much sought-after happiness and joy, he uses his body relentlessly in pursuing this world and its sense objects. Therefore, when the foundation of beliefs is false, when the base is shaky and the premise of any decision is wrong, the edifice erected on it is also bound to be illusory, shaky and impermanent, the result of any such decision

would be wrong. How can anything with this background give eternal bliss and peace of mind to the creature who is on the wrong path?]

Hence, what is essentially inauspicious and demeaning, what is basically false and illusionary, what is fundamentally flawed and corrupted, what is degrading and a harbinger of all evils appears to be good, real and auspicious to them. Instead of attempting to find a way out of the logjam, they prefer to wallow in it, remain perpetually engrossed in it, and thereby trapped in it for an infinite length of time.

Due to the reasons of having passions for the world and its fascinating sense objects which are actually degrading, ill-got and bade an evil omen for their spiritual welfare and well being, creatures who are deluded and ignorant of the true situation, those who are overcome with such negative thinking as outlined in the above stanzas, think otherwise. [That is, they think the world and the gross body are for real, they are true, their charms and pleasures are true and real, they give truthful happiness, peace and bliss. So, such deluded creatures keep enjoying the world and the body, and they never attempt to break free from their shackle. The affect is that their Atma, their ‘true self’, remains trapped in the prison of the gross body that is tied to the attractions of the material sense objects of the gross, deluding and intrinsically entrapping world.]

Thus, the path of Moksha, or the path that can free them from this quagmire and deliver their souls, the path that would lead them away from the world and thereby deny them an opportunity to enjoy it, seems a wrong path, a path that is ill-conceived, erroneous, misleading and cumbersome to them. And instead, the path that helps them enjoy the world and gratify their sense organs seems more attractive, charming, correct and practical for achieving the objective of fulfilment by them.

A Jiva (creature) thinks that successful acquisition of desired objects of the world, the ability to fulfil all wishes and achieve all material successes in the world, are the criterion of a fulfilled and successful life in which all contentedness, happiness, majesty, peace and bliss can be achieved by this means.

If he fails in this endeavour, he is overcome with surging sorrows and regrets, he feels miserable, anguished, frustrated and tormented, he feels crestfallen, defeated and failed, he feels agonised, agitated and fidgety—in short, all his peace and happiness take a toss (7).

8. In fact, they do not have any inclination or desire to enjoy the eternal nectar of unbound bliss, profound contentedness, absolute fulfilment, and a sense of immense beatitude and felicity that comes with Brahm realisation that would be possible by turning away from delusions and falsehoods, and towards the truth and the reality.

The reason is that the Jiva (the deluded and ignorant creature) is not aware what the bliss of ‘Brahm realisation’ is and what are its spiritual rewards; he is not aware of the profound bliss, immense peace, a great sense of spiritual fulfilment and contentedness, along with the highest degree of beatitude and felicity that accompany ‘Brahm realisation’. [Had he been aware of the purity and the immensity of such positive virtues as those that come with Brahm and self realisation, he wouldn’t have had the desire or the inclination to settle for something as inferior and of low quality as the deceptive enjoyments, the illusory happiness, the transient pleasures and the imaginary comforts which he derives by indulging in the gross world, that is nevertheless perishable and transient, through the medium of the gross body that is equally perishable and transient. No one in his right mind, and having wisdom and erudition would opt for an inferior option when he has the choice to choose the best with the same amount of effort and energy.]

Such a Jiva is not even aware of the difference between what is ‘Bandhan’—i.e. to remain shackled, to be tied by fetters, to remain bonded and bounded, and what is ‘Moksha’—to be freed and unbound, to be liberated and delivered, to find emancipation and salvation.

The irony is that in the absence of this knowledge they do not even realise that they are bonded, that they are tied down by strong fetters and they are shackled.

Why does this happen; how is that the Jiva comes to such a sorry state?

Well, as stressed above, it is out of the domineering presence of Avidya or Agyan—or lack of truthful knowledge about his real ‘self’ and about the reality of the illusionary world with its equally illusionary charming objects. [He is not aware that the body is not his ‘truthful self’, and that the world, so seemingly charming and alluring, is actually false and illusive; it is a Pandora’s Box of miseries and pains, of tribulations and troubles. Its almost like the case of a fly wallowing and breeding in the filth of the stinking drain without realising where it is or what it is doing.]

Why is Avidya or Agyan so dominant and strong?

It is due to the lack of interest in and a strong natural urge or natural inclination for acquiring the virtues of Bhakti (devotion), Gyan (wisdom, erudition, knowledge, sagacity, skills and enlightenment), and Vairagya (renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement).

Why does one lack this auspicious desire or interest?

It is due to immense darkness that has eclipsed the Antahakaran, the inner self of the Jiva. [The ‘Antahakaran’ is overshadowed by Avidya and Agyan (ignorance and delusions). Since it is constituted of the vital thinking apparatus of the creature such as his Mana (mind), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Buddhi (intellect), it is natural that with a corrupted and tainted inner apparatus, the entire thinking process and the ability to discriminate between the right and the wrong, between the correct and the incorrect, are severely compromised, are immensely corrupted. It’s like the corrupted software of the computer which does not allow the machine to function properly. Hence, the creature is seriously handicapped, and he is unable to determine what is good for his spiritual welfare and what is not. This concept has been elaborated earlier in Canto 4, paragraph nos. 11-12.] (8).

9. [Paragraph nos. 9-13 would outline how the Jiva, the living creature, can find Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, from this world.]

The disciple enquired from his learned teacher—‘Then say, in the situation described by you, what is the way by which one can find Mukti (liberation and deliverance) from this world?’ (9).

10. The wise teacher replied, outlining this way—‘As an auspicious reward of numerous good deeds done by a creature (living being) over many births (or lives) in the past, he is fortunate enough to find company of wise, erudite and enlightened ones. These wise ones are like the ripe fruits of the teaching of the numerous scriptures; they are embodiments of the grand knowledge enshrined in the scriptures; they are filtered form of the eclectic tenets and principles of the scriptures¹.

Their association (contact, company and communion) kindles natural wisdom and erudition in a creature to judge for himself what is lawful, morally correct, ethical, right and auspicious, and what is not; what ought to be done and what ought to be avoided; what would be good for him and uplifting for his soul, and what would bog him down and lead to his downfall and degradation.

Armed with this wisdom, sagacity and erudition he would be naturally inclined towards auspiciousness and righteousness; he would be naturally swerving towards higher goals in life, and away from objectives that would be denigrating for him and his soul.

With this auspicious way of thinking and its corresponding behaviour, deeds, actions and activities, all evils and sins are slowly done away with. With this elimination of evil deeds and sinful activities, their attending evil consequences are also eliminated. This results in the Antahakaran, the inner self, to become cleansed, purified and holy (10).

[Note—¹That is, just like the physical fruit of a tree presents the vital nutrients in a ready-made form to be just picked up and eaten, the wise teacher is similarly an embodiment of the knowledge contained in the scriptures because he has already studied them thoroughly, has churned them and extracted their essence to be presented to eager student in a refined and made-easy format through his preaching. It is just like the case of honey that is the essence produced by the honey-bee from the nectar it collects from a wide variety of flowers over a long period of time. Once the fortunate student reaches such a wise and enlightened Guru he would be straight-away accessing the nectar of the scriptures without having to undergo the arduous task of studying the voluminous texts which involves an obvious strenuous exercise of plodding through their endless volumes and then spending a life-time understanding them correctly. Besides this, there is always the risk of misinterpreting the tenets, the principles, the doctrines, the axioms and maxims proclaimed by the scriptures because they are so esoteric and secret that more often than not they seem contradictory and confusing, which would lead to perplexity and frustration on the part of the student. The teacher on the other hand has already done the spade work so to say, and virtually presents the ready-to-eat and pre-cooked meal for the benefit of the hungry and eager spiritual aspirant.]

11. This cleansed and purified inner self is now ripe to receive the blessings of the wise and learned Guru¹. [That is, once the mind, the sub-conscious and the intellect which are the subtle bodies of the creature and collectively called the Antahakaran of a creature, are scrubbed clean of all worldly impurities and imperfections that had earlier tarnished them and had cast their dark shadow on them, the creature becomes ready to receive the light of true knowledge. This can be understood by a simple example. If one wishes to see the Sun being properly reflected in a mirror, the mirror has to be shining clean. Otherwise the brilliance of the Sun would be mired by the unclean and grimy surface of the mirror which would not reflect the glory of the Sun in its true intensity.]

When the Guru becomes pleased, the disciple is blessed by all mystical powers, and he is able to access all knowledge which then becomes easy for him².

With the blessings of the Guru and access to high knowledge, all the disciple's worldly fetters of ignorance and delusions are broken; he is set free automatically.

All auspicious virtues and noble qualities come naturally to him; nothing remains between him and the acquisition of these auspicious virtues and noble qualities.

Just like a man who is born blind can never even imagine what is meant by the shape, form or size of anything, a person who has not had the good fortune of being blessed by a Guru and taught by him can never hope to access any knowledge that is truthful and profound. Without the help of the Guru he is not able to learn the Tattvas (the essential principles of the scriptures) even in crore of Kalpas. [The phrase 'crore of Kalpas' is to indicate a very long period of time. This is because without the help of a practical guide, the complicated and most intricate doctrines of the scriptures

would not be properly and correctly understood by him just as in the case of modern learning in schools, colleges and universities when a student needs proper grooming under the care of an expert teacher in his field of learning to actually become an expert on the subject himself.]

This is why as soon as the Guru becomes pleased and blesses the disciple, all sorts of esoteric knowledge becomes known to him. [This statement is just a symbolic way of saying that the blessing and benevolent grace of the Guru are necessary for acquiring good education. When the teacher is pleased he would take great personal interest and care in the education of the ward, and would not withhold any information from him.] (11).

[Note—¹Refer also to Canto 8, paragraph no. 17 of the present Upanishad.

The word *Guru* has two parts—viz. ‘Gu’ meaning darkness, and ‘Ru’ meaning light. Hence the word ‘Guru’ means a person who can remove the darkness symbolising ignorance and illusions that has engulfed the disciple from all sides and act as a hindrance or an obstacle in his emancipation and salvation by showing him the truthful path, or lighting his path with the light of knowledge and holding out his hands to support him when he falters. Therefore he is an exalted, revered and much sought after person who can remove the darkness of ignorance of his follower by showing him the light of knowledge and guides him whenever he finds himself in a moral dilemma and quandary. He is the person who is both the moral preceptor as well as the spiritual guide of his disciple. He is supposed to act as a neutral advisor to his ward in all matters temporal and spiritual. The disciple is expected to confide in him his greatest of secrets without the fear of betrayal or blackmail. He is the one who is expected to have risen above all kinds of vested interests and keeps the welfare of the disciple as his main objective. He is the one who has transcended the mundane and has acquired sublime awareness of the supreme Reality, because only those who are themselves aware of anything can hope to tell others about it. Therefore it is deemed that only a person of high mental, intellectual, spiritual and ethical calibre can become a true Guru.

A true Guru is treated as being equivalent to the ‘Trinity Gods’—(1) Brahma, the creator, because he creates or helps to take birth good virtues and noble qualities in his disciple; (2) Vishnu, the sustainer, because he nourishes, sustains and helps to inculcate and develop wisdom and enlightenment in his disciple and leads him on the truthful path; and (3) Shiva, the concluder, because he helps to end, conclude and eliminate ignorance and negative traits in his disciple. He is ‘God like’ because he functions in all these capacities at the same time, besides being exalted in all knowledge, being virtuous, of high moral character and beyond reproach, being a source of unbound spiritual energy, being self realised and enlightened, and being eternal in the sense that what he advises to his disciple, the path he shows, the light that he lights in the dark heart of the creature, makes him immortal. The Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 explicitly asserts that Lord Shiva is the universal Guru of all, and that the Guru is Shiva personified in this form.

Therefore, a Guru is honoured for the divine virtues that he represents and embodies, that he teaches and implements in his life, for the divinity, for the Lord and for the personification of the great teachings of the scriptures that he exemplifies. It is not his physical body that is of any value for veneration, for the soul and not the body is venerable.

The Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 14-18 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition elaborately describes the virtues that a true Guru should possess.

The *importance of a Guru* has been emphasised in a number of Upanishads, viz.—

(a) Shukla Yajur Veda’s following Upanishads—Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 14-18; Shatyayani Upanishad, verse no. 39; Niralamba Upanishad, verse no. 30.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 35; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 44; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 56-59, and Canto 6, verse no. 79; Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 39; Shuk Rahasya Upanishad, in its verse no. 21; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 52-53; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4; and Canto 2, verse nos. 12-13; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 76; Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 (Lord Rudra is the universal Guru).

(c) Atharva Veda's following Upanishad—Manduka Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 2, verse nos. 12-13; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph nos. 10-11, and Canto 8, paragraph no. 17, 1st stanza; Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 1.

(d) A minor Upanishad named the 'Dwayo-panishad' is entirely dedicated to enumerating the chief characteristics of a Guru. It is not known to which Veda it precisely belongs.

²When the teacher (Guru) is especially pleased with a particular student, he would naturally be inclined to pay more attention to him as compared to others. This is natural for him because he sees in this student a spark of great future, a soul who would sincerely and honestly carry forward the teacher's legacy forward and make his teachings as well as his name and fame immortal. As for other less brilliant and devoted students, or those who are just mediocre and run-of-the-mill sort, the teacher has no such grand expectations from them. So he prefers to impart the best of education to his special and most-favoured student. The teacher would even unravel top secrets to him because he is confident that this disciple would never misuse them and also understand these secrets correctly and properly. This relationship is just like a father of more than one son. The father would have a natural love for the son in whom he sees a bright future and from whom he expects the family's good name and fortune to get a boost as compared to those sons who are like blights on the family.]

12. When a truly spiritual, devoted, self-realised and wise Guru showers his divine grace upon the spiritual aspirant it is then that the latter develops an interest in listening to the preaching and being taught about God besides paying attention to such spiritual practices as doing Dhyan (contemplation and meditation) etc. [When the learned teacher is interested in what he is teaching as well as when he pays a personal interest in the pupil whom he treats more as his ward towards whom he has moral responsibility rather than just fulfilling some formal obligation, he puts in his best of effort in what he teaches. The teaching becomes more of a one-to-one conversation and discussion, for the student does not feel shy in asking questions to remove his doubts and the teacher too takes full interest in quenching the student's thirst for knowledge and information. So, when the preaching or teaching becomes a personal interaction, it becomes meaningful and effective. The student and the teacher both feel fulfilled—the former by accepting the knowledge in its entirety, and the latter by giving all that he has.]

With this spiritual pursuit done diligently, all the different Granthis (knots) representing numerous evil Vasanas and Vrittis (passions, desires, inclinations, habits and tendencies) that are present in the heart of the aspirant from time immemorial are untied and done away with. As a consequence, all the Kaamanaas (numerous desires, wishes, hopes, yearnings, expectations etc.) that are present in the heart and the mind (i.e. in the inner self of the spiritual aspirant) are also eliminated (just like a student clarifying his doubts on a topic when his learned teacher explains it to him threadbare).

When this happens, the Parmatma makes his glorious appearance in the thallus at the end of the stalk of the symbolic Lotus that is present in the subtle heart¹. [That

is, when the spiritual aspirant starts practicing meditation and contemplation, when his inner self called the Antahakaran has withdrawn from the external world and instead is focused on higher objectives of life marked by knowledge and enlightenment, when he concentrates his attention inwards and experiences the presence of the self-illuminated and pure consciousness inside his own subtle heart, he is able to have a symbolic vision of the supreme Atma there. This is because his individual Atma is a reflection of the cosmic Atma, as there is no notion of duality in Atma because it is a synonym for the eternal cosmic 'Consciousness' that is non-dual, immutable and universal. It is to be noted here that the subtle aspect of the heart is deemed to be like a lotus flower.]

This fructifies into the development of strong and steady Bhakti (devotion, dedication) for Lord Vishnu. [Refer also Canto 4, last stanzas of paragraph no. 10.]

This leads to the development of Vairagya (complete renunciation, detachment and dispassion) towards the sense objects of the material world.

Vairagya fosters the development of Vigyan (the ability to analyse available information intelligently to deduce the truth behind the external façade which is more often misleading and deceptive, and the ability to find out the reality of anything or any given situation).

The Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment) that comes with Vigyan and Vairagya (obtained as a grace of the Guru as well as of Lord Vishnu) becomes ripe, fruitful, strong, steady and effective by constant, persistent and consistent practice.

When Gyan reaches its full maturity, the spiritual aspirant obtains Jivan Mukti². [What happens when 'Jivan Mukti' is achieved is described in the next paragraph nos. 13-16 below. It basically refers to that form of Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance when the aspirant is still alive in this world, has a gross body, does all his required deeds and duties, and generally lives a normal life, but internally he remains completely detached from the both and its sense organs as well as the material world and its sense objects. He remains in a perpetual state of meditation and has reached higher echelons of spiritual realisation when his consciousness stays in the transcendental state called Turiya.] (12).

[Note—¹The following Upanishads endorse the metaphysical view that the subtle heart is like a Lotus—

- (i) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 8, section 1, verse no. 1.
- (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 14; Daskhin Murti Upanishad, verse no. 25; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 93/1-93/15.
- (iii) Atharva Veda = Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 3.

²The concept of *Jivan Mukti* has been explained in a number of Upanishads, e.g.

(a) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition = Sarvasaar Upanishad, verse no. 2; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6, 15, 42, Canto 4, verse no. 1, 21-35, 18-33, 42-43, Canto 5, verse no. 56, 59, 75-76; Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 79-80, and Canto 3, verse no. 33; Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 12-13, and Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 4, 6-15; Akchu-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 32-39; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-32; Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 5; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 46-47, 144, 151, 161.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition = Paingalo-panishad, canto 3, verse no. 5, and canto 3, verse no. 9-11; canto 4, verse no. 6; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 1/4/3-4; 2/3/6-7; 2/4/5-6; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 12 and 43-47; Muktikopanishad, Canto 2; Shatyayani Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 19.

(c) Sam Veda = Mahopanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 37-73.

(d) Atharva Veda = Ram Rahasaya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 11-17; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 2, especially verse no. 27; Canto 3, especially verse no. 2; Canto 4, especially verse nos. 17, 52, 58-59; Canto 5, verse nos. 5-6, 91-108; Atma Upanishad, verse nos. 10-20.]

13. When Jivan Mukti is achieved, all the gross forms of Vasanas (inherent desires and natural inclinations present in a person) that drive a person towards this world and impels him to do various deeds, both the good deeds as well as the evil deeds, and thereby remain entangled in the web cast by them, are completely eliminated. He no longer hankers after the world; he remains totally detached from, uninterested in and oblivious of it¹.

With the elimination of all gross forms of Vasanas pertaining to the gross world and the gross body, the only ones that remain are the sublime forms of Vasanas—or the higher forms of subtle desires that are auspicious in nature and helps a creature in his all round spiritual upliftment instead of pushing him down into the whirlpool of the world and remaining trapped in its vortex. Such refined or sublime forms of Vasanas inspire sincere and steady Bhakti, or devotion and dedication in him.

When Bhakti reaches its climax, the all-pervading, omniscient and almighty Lord Narayan is ‘illuminated’ or perceived everywhere. The whole world appears to be enlivened by the glory and illumination of Lord Narayan; it appears to be a personification of Narayan.

‘There is nothing but Lord Narayan everywhere’—firmly rooted in this eclectic belief, firmly convinced of its truth, the spiritual aspirant roams anywhere he wishes without any hindrance. [The enlightened aspirant is able to see his Lord in each unit of creation. This is also the tenet of Advaita Vedanta which emphasises that the same Brahm, the eternal cosmic supreme Consciousness, is a non-dual entity that is universal and uniform in the entire creation. Since each unit of creation is a manifestation of Brahm—or Lord Narayan in the present case—it is but natural to see the Lord everywhere. With his own Lord everywhere, he never feels alone or scared of anything!] (13).

[Note—¹When one does not do any deed there is no question of any result accumulating. So the person is freed from their effects, good and bad. ‘Not doing any deeds’ does not mean that he sits idle and lies motionless. It means that since he has distanced himself from the body and its sense organs and is not mentally involved in them, what the body does or does not is of no relevance to him. He does not get emotionally attached to any deed, and does not expect any reward by doing them. He also is unbothered by the punishment incurred by something done by the body without his mental involvement because the pain of punishment is also a relative notion, and with the mind focused elsewhere there is nevertheless no feeling of pain whatsoever. Since such a highly realised person is detached from the body, he also has no attractions for the world and its objects for the simple reason that the world with its charms is perceived by the sense organs of the body, and with the body and its sense organs out of the picture, the world ceases to exist and matter. Besides this, such a person is deemed to have reached a level of enlightenment when he understands the transient and false nature of the world, and any wise man would not hanker for something that has no truth in it, that has no sense in it, that has no essence in it.]

14. This perpetual state of dispassion and detachment is akin to the state of existence known as ‘Samadhi’. [Samadhi is a trance-like state of bodily stupor at the gross leel

of existence when the person is not aware or conscious of his surroundings and what he is doing.]

In such a spiritually eclectic state of Samadhi one sees the Lord of the world, Lord Jagdishwar, everywhere and at all times. [In other words, whatever exists is nothing but the Lord of creation in that form for a highly realised and enlightened spiritual aspirant. He sees each unit of creation as a visible manifestation of his Lord.]

Such an acclaimed and highly attained holy soul is able to have a first-hand and face-to-face experience of the Lord. [That is, he can communicate with the Lord directly; he has a direct contact, a direct connect with the Supreme Being and can see the Lord first-hand; he has a divine vision of the Lord and witnesses him face-to-face.] (14).

15. [The following narrative is a bit long and it outlines what happens when a devotee of Lord Vishnu, or a self-realised and enlightened man dies. It will be noted that the initial part of the narrative corresponds to the philosophy of Yoga which elaborately describes how a practitioner of meditation collects all his vital winds called Pran and uses various techniques of Yoga to direct the Pran upwards to finally leave the body through the Brahm-Randhra which is a hair-like slit in the cranium. Yoga calls it 'Kaivalya Mukti'. The second half of the narrative describe how devotees of Vishnu obtain the divine abode of the Lord they worship. The latter sort of Mukti is called Samipya and Sayujya. Samipya means to be near the deity worshipped, and Sayujya means to merge and become one with the deity. The following paragraph nos. 16-17 would trace his path in heaven where Vishnu resides. This narrative would be followed up in Canto 6 as well.

A reading of the narrative that follows in this Canto and continues in the next two Canto nos. 6 and 7 would give a magnificent picture of the multi-layered and astoundingly mysterious Heaven. It is almost like a travelogue being narrated by a person who has undertaken an interesting journey through fascinating countries to reach his final destination. But the overriding question here is this—when the Upanishads have unequivocally and unanimously declared that the Supreme Being known as Brahm is only 'one' and not more than one, i.e. the philosophy of Advaitya or non-duality in creation, then how come we have so many heavens and so many different Gods and angels residing in them, all of them as divine and glorious as the other? How do we reconcile the fact that there are so many Vishnus and as many Vaikunths (abodes of Vishnu) with the eclectic philosophy of Advaitya? Well, this question is answered in Canto 8, paragraph nos. 1-7 of this Upanishad.

The description of what one encounters during his journey through the various layers of heaven are almost like a person's first hand account of his travels across various countries. The mountains, rivers, glittering cities and charming verdant forests are all very much the same wherever one goes on the surface of the earth, with slight variations of course. At one place the mountain may look green and at some other place it might be blue, but the word 'mountain' would imply the same thing.

Had it not been for political divisions of the earth artificially into numerous countries and states, the earth which God made would be one single habitat. The former division of earth into tiny or huge countries and states and continents would be like the concept of 'duality' or Dvaitya in terms of metaphysics, while the latter view of one single earth as the habitat of the living creature would obviously be the 'non-dual' or Advaitya view of the Upanishads. Further, history has shown that what was one single country at some given point of time in the past becomes two or more independent countries in future, and vice-versa. So, an intinerant traveller who had

travelled decades ago and undertakes the same journey through the same terrain now or in future would be describing two or more different countries, and even one country as the case may be as compared to what he had experienced long long ago.

The same analogy applies to the various heavens and their description in these three Cantos. The similarities in the different sights that the spiritual traveller sees en-route to his chosen spiritual objective of reaching the Supreme Being known as Brahm, his final destination, also proves that these divisions of heaven into different segments is also artificial and imaginary. This view of the journey through the heaven conforms to the ideas expressed in relation to the journey on the surface of the earth through different countries as outlined above. Basically they are all the same, and the divisions are artificial. It is also just like the imaginary divisions of the sky into various layers or the air being given different names just for the sake of understanding while everyone knows that neither the sky nor the air can be fractioned or mutated and then assigned independent names and identity.

There is another similarity between the journey through the different layers of heaven and that through various countries on earth. When an important person visits a country or a state, protocol is observed—he is welcomed at the boarder, escorted to the head of state, mutual respects, honours and necieties are exchanged, and then the visitor is seen off at the state's boarder as he enters the next state. The same thing would be observed as one reads through the narrative of this Upanishad wherein the spiritual traveller is welcomed in one heaven, escorted to its chief deity, mutual respects, honours and necieties are exchanged, and then the traveller is escorted to the boarder of the next layer of heaven.

Keeping this in mind, let's begin the magnificent journey through the Heavans.]

When this devotee of Lord Vishnu and a highly self-realised man wants to leave the mortal body, all the attendants of Lord Vishnu come to him (to escort him and facilitate his passage to heaven).

The devotee focuses his attention on the Lord and contemplates that his inner self, his 'true self', is nothing but the 'Atma-Tattva' (i.e. the essential element of life and existence which is pure consciousness) that is present in the subtle space of his Lotus-like heart (which is compared with a divine Lotus to indicate its purity and immaculacy).

With this eclectic and enlightened view about himself, the devotee worships and honours the Lord. He worships and honours the Lord internally by offering his 'true self' at his service. [That is, he does not offer any form of external worship or offers verbal prayers or physical oblations as is usually done during formal process of worshipping. Instead, he prays and worships the Lord internally. This is the most sincere, highly evolved, most extolled and a true form of worship because it involves one's inner being, one's 'true self', one's Atma, one's subtle body, and excludes the gross body and the fallacious notion of it being the 'self' who is worshipping the Lord. The latter is a false form of worship because the instrument used for worship—i.e. the gross body—is false!]

Then he continues to say the 'Hans Mantra'—which is 'So-a-Ham'¹ (literally meaning 'That essence and truth is me'—while he exercises full control over all his sense organs and their natural tendency to be extrovert (i.e. run towards their respective sense objects in the material world) and tames the mind. At the same time, silently pronounces the divine Mantra of Pranav (Brahm) which is OM and focuses him mind on it. While doing this he also simultaneously but gradually controls and

harnesses the vital winds in the body called Prans (by practicing Pranayam or breath control, Bandha or closure of all the subtle apertures of the body, etc.), and diverts them upwards. He (here meaning his 'true self', his Atma, his pure 'consciousness', his vital life forces) moves up with the Pran and ultimately makes his exit from the gross body through the Brahm-Randhra² present on the top of the head. [Yoga Upanishads describe in graphic detail how the Pran makes its exit thorough the Brahm-Randhra which is a hair-like slit on the top of the head on the cranium. The Atma rides piggy back on the Pran and escapes from the body along with the Pran. This form of Mukti is described as Kaivalya Mukti³ because once the Pran escapes in the outer atmosphere, it merges with the parent air element and never re-enters the body. The rest of the body disintegrates into its other components—the earth, water, fire and sky.]

[Now, the symbolic form of worship of the Lord is described by drawing a parallel from the physical form of worship that the devotee is well acquainted with and accustomed to from his earlier stages of life—]

The aspirant who is striving to attain Mukti by allowing his Pran (vital life forces) to escape through the Brahm Randhra worships the Lord (Brahm; the cosmic Consciousness) at this high point (i.e. the Brahm Randhra) by using the Mantra 'So-a-Ham' (to establish oneness between himself and the Lord known as Brahm; to establish oneness of his own consciousness with the cosmic Consciousness). This Lord occupies an exalted position at the top of the twelve units of existence. [The 'twelve units' consists of the following—(a) the gross body with its five organs of perception such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin, and the five organs of action such as hands, legs, mouth, excretory and genitals, as well as (b) the subtle body consisting of the mind and the intellect. By saying that the Lord sits on the top this pile it is meant that he is the Emperor who presides over this body of the creature. According to the genesis of creation, when the Supreme Being had finished creating the body of the man, he injected all its vital organs with their respective life-senses. Then the Lord decided that this creature of his own creation would need his guidance and control, so he entered and took up his exalted abode at the highest point in the body, and it was the top of the head. If the individual's body is regarded as a microcosm of the universe, the top of his head is equivalent to the highest 'heaven' where the Supreme Being resides.]

This mystical form of worship is done by offering symbolic forms of the five objects used in formal worship. [The five objects used as offerings in formal worships are flowers, scent or perfumes, water, lighted lamp and sweets. The five things offered now instead of these things are the five main vital winds called the 'Panch Prans'—viz. Pran (breath), Apaana, Vyan, Samaan and Udaan.]

This is followed by worshipping and honouring the Gyan Atma, the subtle consciousness that is at the core of the sixteen Tattvas of creation and which invests them with their inherent virtues and natural characteristics along with empowering them with the necessary vitality and strength to form the basic infrastructure of creation. The Mantra used here is also 'So-a-Ham'. [This is done to indicate that the aspirant has realised the universality of the soul and the consciousness. He has understood that the Gyan Atma that empowers the Tattvas of creation is the same consciousness that has enlivened his own body and his vital winds. It is the same consciousness that is also called his 'true self'. The sixteen Tattvas mentioned here are the following—The sixteen Tattvas are the following—the five organs of perception (ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin) + the five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital) + the five Prans (the five subtle forms of the vital winds

present inside the body—such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaana) + one Mana (mind) = 16.]

In this way the spiritual aspirant discards his mortal body and assumes an ethereal form of the body which is very subtle, without any tangible form as if it was almost imaginary, a body which exists in the ethereal form similar to the Mantras (OM, Hans and So-a-Ham), a body which is most pure, holy and divine like the self-illuminated and glorious Brahm (cosmic Consciousness), a body which is eternally and supremely blissful, and a body which is like the magnificent divine form of Lord Vishnu.

He then takes a symbolic purifying bath with this ethereal body in the symbolic holy river Ganges that itself is holy and ethereal and has emerged from the large toe of the exalted Lord Anant (i.e. the Lord who has no end; the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu) who is established high up in the heaven like the Sun is in the solar system.

Having assumed a divine and ethereal body like that of Lord Vishnu himself, the aspirant adorns himself with magnificent clothes and bows to his Guru to pay his last respects to him and thank him.

[Ready to embark on his onward journey towards his final destination of attaining Mukti when he would be ultimately reaching the highest citadel of Param Pad, the traveller readies himself to undertake the long and magnificent journey through the many Vaikunths, the heavens where Lord Vishnu lives in his different forms—] The aspirant then invokes Vishnu's vehicle known as Garud (the legendary heron or eagle) in a symbolic manner by treating the ethereal Mantra of OM representing Pranav or Brahm as a personification of Garud. [This Mantra OM is the most enabled of the Mantras and is regarded as the nearest analogue for Brahm, the Supreme Being. It provides a direct access to Brahm. So a wise aspirant invokes this OM Mantra in order to go direct to his chosen destination—i.e. the Supreme Being. Since the principle of non-duality has taught him that Vishnu is the same as Brahm, both being the same Divine Being, he chooses OM as a symbolic form of Garud.]

When Garud is thus invoked and arrives to take the aspirant ahead, he worships the former and pays his respects to this divine vehicle by offering all the symbolic five objects that are needed for such purposes. [These are flowers, scent, water, lighted lamp and sweets. A lot of symbolism is again used here. OM is an ethereal sound formed of currents in cosmic ether. It represents the dynamism of the wind element. This wind element has assumed five dynamic forms vis-à-vis the individual aspirant—they are called his 'Pran'. So, the meaning here is clear—the aspirant offers all his vital winds to OM; he collects all of them to empower him to lift himself and find freedom from the 'gravitational pull' of the gross body. 'Gravitational' because the gross body is dominated by the 'earth' element.]

The aspirant pays his obeisance to his Guru finally by going round him in circles (i.e. circumambulating him). He takes the Guru's permission before boarding Garud in the form of Pranav or OM. [That is, he finally takes his last breath and says OM before exiting from the body.]

At this time he appears as glorious as Lord Vishnu himself. He is marked by divine signs that are unique symbols of Vishnu, and is adorned by magnificent clothes as worn by Vishnu. [This refers to the 'ethereal body' of the spiritual aspirant, and not his 'gross physical body' that lies dead on the ground.]

As the devotee aspirant embarks upon his celestial journey to heaven (i.e. to Vaikunth where Lord Vishnu resides) through the path of the sky, he is escorted (led) from the front by the Sudarshan Chakra (the discus of Vishnu) in a personified form.

Vishwaksen too protects him. [‘Vishwaksen’ is a deity who is said to protect devotees of Lord Vishnu from all evil omens and charms. He occupies the same importance as Lord Ganesh who is worshipped before all other Gods during any religious ceremony to grant it his protection and ensure its successful completion.] Other attendants of Vishnu surround him on all sides.

On both sides of the path to heaven there are many holy and auspicious places. He is welcomed, honoured and shown due respect by the holy men (divine spirits) who inhabit these places as he passes through them on his onwards journey.

He reaches and enters the ‘Satya-Loka’, the abode of Brahma the creator. There, he worships Brahma, and in return is himself honoured and shown respect to by Brahma and other holy residents of Satya-Loka.

Proceeding ahead, he reaches the abode of Lord Shiva called the ‘Ishan-Kaivalya’ (or the celestial Kailash). There, he meditates upon Lord Shiva and offers his worship to the Lord. In return, he is shown due respect and honoured by Lord Shiva and his attendants.

From there, he goes ahead and crosses the ‘Graha Mandal’⁴ (the abode of the various Stars and Planets that are said to affect the creature’s life on earth) and the ‘Sapta-Rishi Mandal’⁵ (the abode of the seven celestial Rishis or sages; astronomically the area of the constellation of seven stars called the Great Bear).

Moving ahead, he crosses thorough the boarder that marks the realm of the Sun, called the ‘Surya Mandal’, as well as the realm of the Moon, called the ‘Chandra Mandal’⁶.

Then he remembers (meditates upon) Lord Kilak-Narayan and enters the ‘Dhruv Loka’. He has an auspicious view of this ‘Dhruv Loka’ (the realm of the North Star) and worships Lord Dhruv⁷.

Then he passes through the next ring in the celestial sky by crossing through the ‘Sishu Maar Chakra’ (also called the Sishu Maar Mandal). There he worships the God known as ‘Sishu Maar Prajatpati’⁸, or the presiding deity of this Mandal which lies beyond the Dhruv Mandal.

Then the aspirant worships Lord Vishnu who resides in the center of this Sishu Maar Chakra⁹ as its core or hub. Vishnu is the eternal and almighty Lord who forms the foundation that supports everything in this creation. The Lord is so pleased by him that he reciprocates his worship by honouring the devotee himself and also praises him.

From there, the devotee moves ahead and reaches higher where he attains supreme bliss and happiness (of achieving his much sought-after destiny located in the upper echelons of heaven where his revered Lord Adi-Vishnu or the Lord Adi-Narayan resides as narrated in paragraph no. 17 herein below) (15).

[Note—¹The Mantra *So-a-Ham* has been described in a number of Upanishads—viz.

(i) Sam Veda = Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 83. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 28; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 17, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11-2, Canto 5, verse nos. 69-72.

Similarly, the Mantra *Hans* has also been described in a number of Upanishads—viz. (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131, Canto 2, verse nos. 5, 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 52, 54-55. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of

using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93.

²*Brahm Randhra* is a hair-like joint or slit on the top of the skull where the two parts of it are joined. It is believed that the supreme Brahm had entered the creature's body at the time of creation through this slit. Refer Aeiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Section 1, Canto 3, verse no. 12; Paingal Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 11. Great ascetics aspire to access Brahm by concentrating their attention here; at the time of death their Pran or the vital wind leaves the body through this opening by splitting it.

Mukti (or liberation and deliverance) by the escape of the Pran (the vital winds) along with the Atma (the consciousness) through the Brahm Randhra has been described elsewhere also—viz. Krishna Yajur Veda = Kshuriko-panishad, verse nos. 18-20; Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 27; Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 12-17; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 103-106.

³The concept of *Kaivalya form of Mukti* has been explained in a number of Upanishads, viz.—(a) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 7-8 and 15; Muktiko-panishad; Subalo-panishad, Canto 13, verse no. 1, and Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 3, verse no. 1; Brahman 3, section 2. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/15, 103-106; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 12-18; Sarva-saar Upanishad; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 4; Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 15; Niralamba Upanishad. (c) Atharva Veda—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 21; Canto 5, verse no. 22; Canto 7, verse no. 11; Canto 9, verse nos. 9-11, 19-22; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15, 1st half; paragraph no. 17, last stanza; Canto 6, paragraph no. 22; Canto 8, paragraph no. 6, paragraph no. 19 last stanza; Atma Upanishad, verse nos. 23-25.

⁴*Graha Mandal*—There are said to be nine 'Grahas, collectively called the 'Navgraha'. They are the following—Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu. However, the Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 2, verse no. 9 refers to only eight Grahas, and they are the following—Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, and the combination of Rahu and Ketu which are considered as one and not two entities as they are supposed to represent the ascending and descending phases of the Moon. This Upanishad is in honour of Lord Rudra as another name of Brahm, and says that Rudra is a personification of the eight Grahas.

The Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 12, verse no. 1-28 describes the Grahas and their divine chariots and their horses.

⁵The *Sapta Rishi Mandal*—the phrase literally means a group of seven sages. This group is divided into two sets of sages that relate to two different Manvantars (Hindu eras measured according to the period of one Manu, the progenitor of living beings during one phase of creation on earth)—viz. (i) the sages of the 'Vaivasvata Manvantar', and (ii) sages of the 'Swayambhu Manvantar'.

The seven sages of the 'Vaivasvata Manvantar' are the following—Atri, Bharadwaj, Gautam, Jamdaagni, Kashyap, Vashistha, and Vishwamitra.

The seven sages of the 'Swayambhu Manvantar' are the following—Angiras, Atri, Kratu, Marichi, Pulaha, Pulastya, and Vaishtha.

The group of seven bright stars in the sky, popularly known as the Great Bear, is a personification of these seven great sages of yore.

⁶The *Surya Mandal* has been described in detail in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 10, verse nos. 1-23, while the *Chandra Mandal* is narrated in the same Puran in its section 2, canto 12, verse nos. 1-28 along with the description of the various Grahas.

From a more practical view point it is like a cosmic journey undertaken by a modern space-craft launched to reach the deep recesses of the cosmos. It is not a small wonder that ancient sages and seers could envision such a voyage into outer

reached of the universe by the sheer power of their mind. In the present scenario narrated in this Canto, our protagonist or hero devotee appears to have just crossed the solar system!

⁷*Dhruv*—He was the elder son of king Uttanpaad from his first wife Suniti. The king was so charmed by his second wife named Suruchi that he completely neglected Suniti and Dhruv. Once it so happened that the child Dhruv was snubbed by his step-mother for attempting to draw affection of his father. The child was very upset and despondent. He approached his mother for solace. She advised him to accept Lord Vishnu as his eternal and loving Father and protector. For this, Dhruv had to do severe Tapa (austerity and penance). The overwhelmed child was so determined that he immediately proceeded to the forest to do Tapa. He met the celestial sage Narad on the way who instructed him on ways to meditate upon the Lord. The Lord was extremely pleased by Dhruv's sincerity and devotion and appeared before him. He blessed the child and gave him two boons—one was the restoration of his honour and kingdom of the kingdom, and the other was a permanent place in the heavens, a position so exalted, steady and unwavering that even the God could not match it. So, in due course of time, Dhruv assumed a personified form of a divine God and took up his heavenly abode in the Dhruv Loka. The story related to him is narrated in detail in the Vishnu Puran, section 1, cantos 11-12.

The *Dhruv Loka* or *Dhruv Mandal* is represented by the North Star and its immediate environs in the celestial map. The North Star is a personified form of Dhruv. The North Star has a great symbolic importance and value here. This star remains static and unchanging in its position in the sky—it is a metaphor for stability, uniformity, unchanging nature, steadfastness and durability. It is a vital guide for navigation purposes in the night. Hence, if a person is steady in his thoughts and single-mindedly pursues his chosen path, always keeping the aim in sight, he is sure to achieve success and obtain his objective in life. The objective of the spiritual aspirant is to attain his Lord Vishnu and find Mukti. So when he has crossed all hurdles and overcome formidable obstacles in the symbolic form of praises and honours lavished on him en-route to heaven as described above in this narration, it is only then that he can rupture through this world and reach the exalted abode where Vishnu lives. Now, if the celestial sky is imagined as a huge sphere, then this is the point from where the cosmic traveller has ruptured the solar system and entered the upper reaches of the cosmos where the upper heaven is situated. Since Lord Vishnu's abode is supposed to be unchanging and steady in its glory unlike other worlds, the metaphor of the North Star as a gateway to Vaikunth, the abode of Vishnu, appears to be very appropriate here.

The *Polar Star* is fixed in the northern horizon. So this stanza clearly means that the heaven-bound spiritual traveller or the spiritual pilgrim is heading 'north'. This term 'north' is a metaphor for the upwardly inclined spirit, the inherent and natural tendency of the soul to look up and not down. This means that the soul of all the creatures, if left to its own, would always be inclined to be virtuous, auspicious, noble and righteous, to be aspiring to move up in the hierarchy of creation and revert back to its ethereal form that is eternal, infinite and unbound, and find its final emancipation and deliverance, rather than remaining trapped in the lowly world where it has taken a dwelling in the gross body of a creature.

The 'north' is an allegory for a higher level of positive energy of the supreme Consciousness or the heaven which provides an elevated and an exalted stature to the creature as compared to the 'south' direction which stands for the nether world, the hell and the lowly forms of creation. Hence, while the 'north' is spiritually rejuvenating, uplifting and liberating, the south on the other hand is degrading, demeaning, demoting, and tantamount to fall and a downward slide of the creature. This is also why ascetics and hermits head for the mountains in order to meditate and contemplate because these mountains are located in the northern direction when one

thinks in the terms of the grand Himalyan ranges in the context of India where these Upanishads were revealed.

The word *Kilak* refers to a nail or peg used to fix the position of something. In other words, the wise and enlightened aspirant is focused on his spiritual objective; he is fixed on it. No temptations of the glittering heaven would be strong enough to either distract him or keep him trapped in its snare. He would not stop from moving ahead inspite of the most fascinating sights he encounters on the way to his final destination. He would not think, say, that instead of undertaking the journey continuously he should rather take rest and feel contented with whatever charms that are so easily made available to him in the various layers of heavens that he encounters. No, he keeps moving ahead relentless. He does not wobble, waver or dither in his determination of his spiritual pursuit. When this imagery is applied to the practical world, there is a noble message for all spiritual aspirants—and that is, they should keep their mind fixed on the objective and do not fall prey to the uncountable temptations and alluring charms of the material world. The latter acts as the stumbling block in the path of one's liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. He should neglect them and move steadily ahead.

⁸The *Sishu Maar Chakra* or Sishu Maar Mandal and its presiding deity, the Sishu Maar Prajapati, is described in detail in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 9, verse nos. 1-5. It is said here that the Dhruv Loka is situated at the tail end of the Sishu Maar Chakra. The Sishu Maar is one of the many esoteric forms of Lord Vishnu, and it is shaped like a chameleon, or a lizard or an alligator. It represents the 10th sign of the Zodiac and is called the Capricorn. The Zodiac is the belt or band of constellation of stars through which the Sun, the Moon and the planets move across the sky.

⁹The deity known as *Sishu Maar* is a form of Lord Vishnu as a celestial chameleon or alligator. The constellation of stars around this central Authority is represented by the Zodiac sign of the Capricorn. In other words, when this deity known as Sishu Maar Prajapati is worshipped, actually it is Lord Vishnu who is being honoured in this form. In the broader perspective of things, this fits in very well with the concept of Advaitya Vedanta or the principle of non-duality that stresses that whatever that exists in this creation is nothing but one single Divinity revealed in all these forms. Therefore, not only the deity of the Sishu Maar Chakra but all the others mentioned in this Canto or anywhere else in this Upanishad are in fact none but Vishnu in that form. It must be noted however that the term 'Vishnu' itself is a synonym for the Supreme Being known as Brahm, the divine entity which is the Absolute Truth of creation and the eternal cosmic Consciousness. The worship of Vishnu in the center of this Chakra is alluding to the fact that Brahm is central to all forms of life in this creation, whether it is the life on earth or it is the life in the heavens.]

16. Now when he has reached Vaikunth (the abode of Lord Vishnu), all the divine residents of this exalted heaven come to him. All of them welcome him and show their respects to him. On his part he too worships them and shows them his respects.

He then goes to the banks of the heavenly river known as 'Virjaa'. [This river is present in Vaikunth.] He takes a holy dip in it and bathes in its holy waters. Remembering the Lord (Vishnu) and meditating upon him, the devotee abandons his subtle body in the water of this river. This subtle body is in the form of his Panch-Prans, the five vital winds, which have brought his Atma or soul to this holy abode of the Lord. [The five vital winds referred to here are Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaana. Earlier it has already been described how he had left his gross body and made his exit from it through the Brahm Randhra riding piggy-back upon these five Prans.]

Having discarded the subtle body in the water of the Virjaa river, he emerges from it in an ethereal form which is as holy and divine as a Mantra, a body which is

most divine, glorious and splendorous, a body which is an embodiment of eternal and imperishable bliss, beatitude and felicity, and which is like Lord Vishnu himself. [This form of Mukti or finding salvation is called 'Sayujya' when the devotee becomes one like the deity whom he worships.]

He worships himself on the banks of the river, goes around himself as a token of respect (performs circumambulation), and then bows to his own self. [It seems very odd to do these rituals to worship and honour his own 'self'. But it must be remembered that at this point of time the devotee exists in an ethereal form and is a personification of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord. His existence is neither gross nor subtle; rather he has transcended such dimensions or notions. He exists in the form of the universal Spirit. Whom would an Emperor honour if he has to do so? Whom would the supreme Lord worship if he has to worship someone? The answer is 'his own Self' because there is no one senior to him whom he can honour or worship.]

With this ethereal body that is divine and radiant, he enters the Vaikunth proper. There he duly honours and worships all the other holy residents of the place. [Obviously, all of them are like Vishnu. It is because all have accessed this divine abode of Lord Vishnu, known as Vaikunth, only after having passed through all the rigid disciplines this devotee has gone through, and then only could they assume the ethereal form as a Holy Spirit. So the new arrival is unable to distinguish between them and offers his worship to all of them as personifications of Lord Vishnu.]

Then he looks around or goes sight-seeing. He observes a magnificent city with numerous high walls, beautiful buildings, arched gateways, wondrous aerial vehicles, and charming gardens and enchanting green areas.

Then he sees a glorious mountain in the center of Vaikunth. It has dazzling summits, is most magnificent, beautiful and fascinating, is absolutely unpolluted and pristine in natural beauty, and is most wondrous, mighty and lofty in dimensions. This divine mountain is named 'Brahmaanand' because it is 'a mountain of bliss that comes with Brahm-realisation'¹. [This mountain is a personification of the ecstasy and unbound bliss, beatitude and felicity that comes with Brahm-realisation. It is the citadel where Brahm—the travellers main destination—resides. So the spiritual pilgrim would immediately leave this Vaikunth and move ahead on his journey as narrated in the next paragraph.] (16).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 6, paragraph no. 15.]

17. On the summit of this mountain there is a fount of brilliant light having a divine illumination of stupendous radiance and splendour. This represents eternal Anand or everlasting bliss of the highest degree and intensity.

At its core there is the flame of undiluted Gyan or truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. In the center of it is an altar that is spiritually empowered and mystically awakened. [That is, this holy altar has mystical powers that come with awakening of the Holy Spirit.]

This altar is full of Anand, and is also adorned by a forest of Anand. [That is, spiritual bliss and ecstasy of self and Brahm realisation have completely drenched this altar, it is soaked in this bliss, and this profound bliss is present in it in great abundance. The term 'forest' is a metaphor for abundance and density of Anand in this center of holy Vaikunth.]

On this holy altar, in its center, there is present a divine light of immense brilliance and intensity. In its center is present a most glorious and auspicious 'seat'. In the center of this seat is located the divine serpent named 'Sheshnath'. It is on the

back of this Lord Sheshnath that the supreme Lord known as Adi-Narayan (the primary form of Lord Vishnu; the Viraat Purush; the primal Lord Vishnu) reclines.

The devotee meditates upon Lord Adi-Narayan on this divine seat and offers his worship and respects to the supreme Lord of all that exists, the great Lord of all lords. The Lord is the eternal facilitator, protector, enhancer and sustainer of impeccable and imperishable Anand (spiritual bliss and ecstasy, spiritual beatitude and felicity that is of the purest form, and is infinite and perpetual by nature).

After having worshipped Lord Adi-Narayan, he performs circumambulation and bows most reverentially before the Lord. He takes leave of the Lord, and proceeds ahead onwards in his journey to his final and ultimate destination (to where Brahm resides)¹.

He leaves this lower Vaikunth and rises higher and goes still higher. Then he crosses the five other Vaikunths and finally reaches the 'Kaivalya state' of the 'Anda-Viraat'. [The five higher Vaikunths mentioned here have been described in the next Canto nos. 6 and 7. The Kaivalya state of the soul is when it finally merges with the cosmic Soul to become one with it. In other words, when the Atma of the spiritual aspirant merges with Brahm—the cosmic Soul, the supreme Consciousness—he is said to have achieved the 'Kaivalya state of Moksha', or the spiritual emancipation and salvation that has no equal or parallel. The 'Anda Viraat' is the cosmic Consciousness that lives in the cosmic Egg from which this creation has emerged. It refers to Brahm from whom even the Hiranyagarbha emerged, and from whom the Adi-Narayan was born. In this context, refer to Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12, and Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-16.]

When the devotee reaches this final destination, he worships the Anda-Viraat and finds supreme Anand on having finally arrived at his destination (17).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 6, paragraph no. 15.]

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Uttar Kand, Canto 6

[Continuing with the description of the heaven with its vast dimensions, the present Canto outlines the shape of the 'Brahmaand', the Universe, along with the detailed description of the different Vaikunths which are like so many districts, boroughs or counties of a huge state. The term 'Vaikunth' unifies them all into one single cosmic 'country', so to say, the country of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being himself.

These Vaikunths are the following—Yog Laxmi Vaikunth/Maha Maya Vaikunth (Canto 6, paragraph no. 14); Paad Vibhuti Vaikunth (Canto 6, paragraph no. 15); Vishwaksen Vaikunth (Canto 6, paragraph no. 15-16); Brahm Vidya Vaikunth (Canto 6, paragraph no. 17, 19); Bodhaanand/Bodh Vaikunth (Canto 6, paragraph no. 17, 19-20); Tulsi Vaikunth/Tulsi Laxmi Vaikunth (Canto 6, paragraph no. 18); and Anand Vaikunth and Vidya Vaikunth (Canto 6, paragraph no. 19).

The next Canto 7 would describe the other two Vaikunths, viz. the Sudarshan Vaikunth (Canto 7, paragraph no. 2); and the Tripadvibhut Vaikunth (Canto 7, paragraph no. 17).

These are like different enclaves within the heavenly abode of Vishnu called by the general term 'Vaikunth'.

It will be noted that the creation, the universe, has been envisioned as an egg, the 'Anda', known as the 'Brahmaand'. This cosmic egg is divided into five

consecutive layers called the various Vaikunths. At the center is the seat of the supreme deity known as the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan. Canto 7 will describe a worship instrument known as the 'Chakra or Yantra' which is a worship wheel. This wheel has a number of circles within the outer periphery, and around the central hub. It is a geometrical depiction of the cosmic egg being referred to here. In order to reach the deity Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan located in the hub, the spiritual pilgrim or traveller would obviously have to cross each of these circles, each representing one Vaikunth as named above.

Canto 6 and the early part of Canto 7 describes this journey, while the later half of Canto 7 would describe this Chakra.

There is another very interesting spin-off about the narration of the various Vaikunths in this Upanishad. If we read Cantos 5, 6 and 7 together we discover that it is a very vivid description of the fascinating universe which the spiritual traveller witnesses and passes through during his journey through the heaven. It seems straight out of some science fiction movie. A modern man who is intelligent and inclined to look beyond the humdrum of routine affairs of life towards what lies ahead of the horizon endeavours to unravel the profound secrets of the universe by sending scientific instruments and probes on board rockets and space ships that travel endlessly in deep space for years to reach their targeted areas. But till now this is only a one-way journey as no method has yet been discovered by which these ships and space crafts can ever hope to come back to earth. The only thing they have helped mankind to achieve is a sneak-peep into the fathomless and endless pit of the deep recesses of the universe. The miracle is that the present narrator of our Upanishad could go to the farthest end of this universe and then *come back* to describe to us and other would-be travellers as to what they can expect to encounter on their out-bound journey!]

1. When the spiritual aspirant has obtained supreme Anand (as described in the concluding stanzas of Canto 6 above) as he reaches the highest level of the present egg-shaped world in which he lives, he realises that this is not the end of the creation and the destination of his journey. He realises that the Universe is much larger and the world known to him is only a speck of dust on the vast beach of the cosmic horizon. [As has been already pointed out earlier, this is like a modern-day concept of intergalactic cosmic journey. The analogy is very obvious here.]

So he pierces the shell of the present egg-shaped world, ruptures all its various layers, and escapes out of it. He looks around in wonder and awe, and views the magnificent expanse of the fathomless fascinating Universe stretched all around him.

He then understands the astounding immensity and the vastness of the expanse of the creation by having deep insight and the ability to wisely analyse and interpret things correctly and in the proper perspective that is achieved with the highest level of wisdom and erudition that comes with Brahm realisation.

[Here the term 'Brahm realisation' would apply to the ability to see beyond the visible and the apparent. Brahm is an esoteric, enigmatic, mystical and divine Being that transcends known definitions and boundaries. So, only when a man has the level of intelligence and analytical ability that he can visualise things that are still unknown and arrive at definitive conclusions that he is able to make great discoveries and inventions. The history of modern science is pregnant with such incidents. Hence, only an enlightened man of the highest wisdom, erudition, deep insight, a brilliant and analytical mind, and a sharp intelligence can ever hope to look beyond this world and

attain the pinnacle of spiritual glory. This understanding is very important in the context of the present Upanishad also because it describes many forms of heavens and many forms of the Supreme Being. An ordinary aspirant might be confused that if there is one 'Supreme' Being then how come there happens to be so many Gods and even so many forms of Vishnu. Well, herein lies the answer. They are no one else but varied manifestation of the same and one Divinity known as Brahm, the cosmic and universal Absolute Truth and the eternal Consciousness. The next stanza would make it absolutely clear.]

Upon the dawn of this Brahm realisation and its accompanying exceptional high level of enlightenment, wisdom, sagacity and erudition, the spiritual aspirant realises that the numerous and varied descriptions of the world and the universe, i.e. of the creation, that have been given by various scriptures such as the Vedas, the Shastras, the Itihasas (ancient histories), the Purans (mythological histories), and all other body of knowledge contained in so many different texts and narratives, as well as that which has been described and explained in so many different ways by as many sages and seers, even by the Gods including Brahma the creator, are nothing but narratives of only one 'country', or a limited area of the cosmic map of the entire Universe that was created!

All these narrators (who give varying and often contradictory descriptions of the Universe and its supreme cosmic Creator) do not know the facts and the actual truth of the Universe called the Brahmaand. It is much bigger and diverse than imagined.

[The Vedas recognise a plethora of Gods which are actually personifications of the various dynamic forces of Nature or the various dynamic aspects of the Supreme Being. Then the Vedas offer a long liturgy of prayers to this litany of Gods and deities. When the truthful God is one, then any intelligent man would question the existence of so many Gods and wonder whether they are indeed in existence. Besides this, the Vedas were primarily meant for fire sacrifice rituals. When the Upanishads emphasise that the 'true God' resides in one's own self, when a number of Upanishads dealing with Sanyas (renunciation) explicitly lay out that one should not worship any external God or deity except the one who lives inside the subtle heart as the Atma, the pure and eternal 'self' known as the Consciousness, when they proclaim such great doctrines as 'So-a-Ham'—i.e. 'that is I', where then is the need for so many Gods and deities? The Upanishads even preach that the real fire sacrifice is one which is done internally in a symbolic manner with the body itself as being the fire-pit and the vital winds as the offering. This practice of having numerous Gods and deities is extended to the Purans and Itihasas. So what applies to the Vedas also applies to all of them. In short, a wise and self-realised spiritual aspirant is well advised to avoid them as they are more entangling than liberating. This fact is endorsed by many Upanishads themselves—viz. Avadhut Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 15 ½, 18 stresses that the scriptures are redundant for those who have already achieved self-realisation and attained the eclectic state of spiritual enlightenment. The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-5 affirms that mere pursuing of scriptures can never lead to one's liberation and deliverance and neither can one find the Lord only on the basis of relying on them. Similar ideas are also said in the Akchu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 41-41 ½. The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 33 also advises one not to indulge in the scriptures beyond a certain limit.

If the scriptures have such limitations, then one can easily understand the limitations of the preachers who teach what they were themselves taught and had

studied. If the basis of study itself is shaky, then the teaching would obviously be as shaky, if not more. It is not that all the sages and seers fall under a general category; they are uncountable exceptions to this generalisation. The indictment implied in this paragraph is not meant for them or for those who study the scriptures but don't take them too literally. Instead, they have the ability to think for themselves and peer deep inside to decipher the hidden message of the scriptures—they understand that all the various forms of godheads mentioned in these scriptures are none but only one Supreme Being in all these forms. For instance, the present Upanishad itself presents a litany of Gods, numerous levels of heavens etc., but at the same time it never tires of pointing out that Brahm is one and it is 'he' who is known by so many names. The scriptures speak the truth, and 'truth' is always one and not more than one. The trick is to understand the hidden meaning of the words of the scriptures, their intent rather than the literal meaning of the words, to unravel this 'truth'. One should not be distracted by so many interpretations of the same truth as is metaphorically depicted in this journey when the spiritual traveller meets so many Vaikunths and so many different Vaishnus that if he is not enlightened and wise he would be flummoxed. Further, the scriptures were revealed and explained by a chain of ancient sages and seers—and not by one single person. Therefore, variations in the method and the terminology are bound to creep in. The preacher or teacher has to modulate his language and methods to suit the present circumstances prevailing at the time as well as the intellectual calibre of the targeted audience. Hence, though the principles taught were universally one and simple, the texts themselves became complicated and diverse.]

It must be noted here that the word 'Brahmaand' consists of two parts—viz. Brahm and Anda. 'Brahm' refers to the Supreme Being known as the all-pervading, all-encompassing, eternal and immutable cosmic Consciousness which is the only 'vital spark of life' and the only 'Truth' in existence, while the word 'Anda' means an egg. The universe is conceptualised as an egg-shaped entity, and the mysterious and most astonishing factor that enables this egg enclosed by a hard shell to harbour and nourish life without any external assistance, to become self-sustaining and self-sufficient, is known as Brahm. The innards of the egg is just like a shapeless mass of jelly, and it is the most surprising wonder of creation as to how this mass metamorphoses itself into a wonderful creature having exceptional sizes, shapes, features and beauty along with astounding complexities of character. Therefore there must be some hidden and inexplicable authority, power and dynamic force that enables this to happen. It is known as Brahm.]

Such narrators who are unaware of even the external shape and form, or the real nature and the truth of the universe or creation in which they live are not expected to be aware of what lies beyond it.

[From the perspective of a wise and enlightened man who has become self-realised and Brahm-realised, those who talk about material world and high or low forms of life depending upon the theory of deeds and results, even about spiritual matters in terms of various forms of Mukti or liberation and deliverance, numerous heavens and as many deities, Gods and spiritual destinations, and so on and so forth, are actually ignorant of the 'truth' and the 'reality' of what is indeed the fact. No faith and reliance should be placed on them or their teachings. They cannot be trusted with the truth of Brahm and Consciousness. It ought to be noted here that these statements are not at all meant to insult or demean the scriptures or their preachers but to emphasise the point that it is more important to understand the hidden meaning in their teachings and doctrines rather than just going by their words and external form

of narratives or descriptions, no matter how vivid and explicit they might be. For instance, in the present Canto and also in the previous Canto and the one that would follow it, a vivid description is given of the many forms of Vaikunth and Lord Vishnu along with the physical path taken by a devotee through the sky to reach this Vaikunth and Vishnu side by side of explaining that there is only one Supreme Being known as Brahm, that this Brahm is a resident in one's self as one's own Atma, and there is only one highest form of Mukti known as Kaivalya in which the individual soul merges with the cosmic Soul, or when the aspirant realises the fact that his own Atma is Brahm personified, and hence now there is no need to seek Mukti outside. The dichotomy, the paradox, and the attendant confusion is evident. It is to remove this spiritual perplexity that this entire paragraph is dedicated to.]

In this situation, how can they know about more esoteric and sublime things pertaining to the Spirit such as the concept of Mukti or Moksha—i.e. of how truthful liberation and deliverance, real emancipation and salvation can be achieved? Mired by such profound degree of ignorance and delusions, how can they know the difference between what is true Gyan (knowledge) and what is Agyan (lack of knowledge)?

[This is because they talk about reaching one or the other heaven, of being near one or the other God, or of assuming the divine form of these Gods as a reward of leading an auspicious life, and they call it Moksha. Then they have a plethora of Gods and Goddesses, numerous forms of Muktis and Mokshas, uncountable worlds and as many rituals. It's all against the eclectic theory that the Supreme Being is non-dual, one, immutable and all-pervasive Consciousness that has no physical form and distinctions as it has a uniform, universal and an ethereal existence. Therefore, all the various philosophies, of which there are two main divisions, only add to confusion if they are not understood in the correct context and properly deciphered. When wisely analysed one would realise that they all talk about one 'God' having different names, and one destination of the 'Spirit' or soul which is finding what 'truly' it is and how to free one's self from evil in this world, which is called Mukti. The two main divisions of Hindu philosophy are 'Astika Darshan' which accepts the authority of the Vedas, and the 'Nastik Darshan' which does not accept them. The 'Astika Darshan' has six branches and the 'Nastik Darshan' has three branches. The six philosophies of the 'Astika Darshan' are the following—Nyaya Darshan of sage Gautam; Vaisheshik Darshan of sage Kannaada, Sankhya Darshan of sage Kapil, Yoga Darshan of sage Patanjali, and Mimamsa Darshan of sage Jaimini. The three philosophies of the 'Nastik Darshan' are the following—Charvaak Darshan of sage Charvaak, Jain Darshan of Lord Mahavir (Jainism), and Buddha Darshan of Lord Buddha (Buddhism).

This paragraph also advises a wise man to avoid numerous cults and practices of varying denominations that sprout around individuals or schools of thoughts. It also advises, by its implications, that one should use one's own intelligence and wisdom to judge things for himself, and not to blindly follow any Guru or scripture just because he has a big name and a huge following.] (1).

2. [The disciple asked—] 'What is the shape of the Brahmaand (i.e. the Universe)?' (2).

3. [The teacher answered—] 'It is shaped like the egg of a hen.

It is all-inclusive and consists of all the Maha Tattvas (great elements) of creation. It is radiant and glowing like molten gold.

Its splendour and dazzle resembles one crore Suns rising together. [1 crore = 10 millions.]

It is visibly manifested as all the four types of creatures. This is the gross form of creation. [The four types of inhabitants of this universe are the following—(i) ‘Andaj’ (those born from an egg, e.g. birds; (ii) ‘Swadej’ (those born from sweat and dampness, e.g. bacteria, fungi and lice; (iii) ‘Udbhij’ (those born from seeds, e.g. plants; and (iv) ‘Jarayuj’ (those born from an embryo inside the womb, e.g. a man). All of them have a gross body.]

It is covered by all the five Bhuts which form the various sheaths around it. these Bhuts represent the subtle aspect of the universe or creation. [The five Bhuts are the primary elements of creation. They are sky, air, fire, water and earth.]

It is surrounded or enveloped from all sides by the following four subtlest entities—Mahatattva (the Primal Essence which is Brahm), Ahankar (ego and pride), Tama (darkness that existed prior to life, or the darkness of ignorance against which the light of knowledge shines, or the darkness of the cosmos in which is embedded the numerous worlds having their own lights much like our own solar system embedded in one corner of the Milky Way), and Mool Prakriti (primary Nature).

[We observe three layers of creation here—the gross, the subtle and the subtlest. The gross level consists of the four types of living beings with the gross body; the subtle level consisting of the five Bhuts; and the subtlest level consisting of the last four entities such as Mahatattva, Ahankar, Tama and Mool Prakriti. If the individual creature is regarded as the Universe in a miniature form then these three rungs of creation would be identified in his own body. They are the following—the outer gross body consisting of the sense organs, the subtle body consisting of the mind and the intellect, and the subtlest body called the inner self consisting of the Anthakaran.] (3).

4. The cosmic egg consists of various layers symbolising different levels of creation. Each level has its own plinth upon which that layer is built. One plinth (or diameter) is said to be one and half Crore Yojans in length. [1 crore = 10 million units; 1 Yojan = approx. 8 miles, but according to some other measuring scales it is said to be either 4 or even 16 miles. Taking the median value of 8 miles as the standard, it follows that the diameter or ‘plinth’ of the cosmic egg is $1.5 \times 10 \text{ million} \times 8 \text{ miles}$.] (4).

5. The Universe or Brahmaand measures from all sides (i.e. its circumference is) approx. two Kharab Yogans. [1 Kharab = 1 billion units; 1000 millions. Hence, the circumference = $2 \times 1 \text{ billion} \times 8 \text{ miles}$.]

The Supreme Being (Brahm or Adi-Narayan or Maha Vishnu) supports this from the bottom in the form of the ‘Maha Manduk’. [The word ‘Manduk’ means a frog. Hence, the Lord supports this cosmos by becoming a cosmic frog and keeping it afloat in the cosmic sea of ether.]

It is like a playing-ball for Lord Narayan. This known universe or Brahmaand or world sticks to the side of one corner of the greater Brahmaand known as ‘Vishnu Loka’ (the Vaikunth). It possesses uncountable and most magnificent qualities that cannot be even imagined by anyone, has not been seen or observed by anyone, and neither has been heard by anyone (5).

6. Just like the Brahmaand described above, there are umpteen numbers of other Brahmaands that are illuminated (i.e. in existence). They have their own worlds and their own surroundings (6).

[Note—In modern age we can visualise each of these Brahmaands as a galaxy. The universe has counteess such galaxies. The Hubble Space Telescope has taken a deep peek into a tiny area of the vast canvas to send back pictures that astro-scientists have analysed to discover that the area has around 5500 galaxies in various stages of evolution and dissolution. This is named by them as XDF—the Hubble eXtreme Deep Field. Thus we have scientific proof that there does exist a kaleidoscope of Brahmaands (galaxies) in this creation.

As we proceed in this narration of the Brahmmands (universes) and the spiritual journey of the aspirant through them we find that he crosses numerous divine worlds, each more glorious and fascinating than the other in specific details but generally following the same pattern. This is also true for the galaxies discovered by scientists—for all of them are more or alike except in detail of size, age, composition and stage of development or dissolution. See also the introductory paragraphs of this Canto.]

7. Those other Brahmaands have four mouths, five mouths, six mouths, seven mouths, eight mouths—in this sequence they extend to thousands of Brahmaands with thousands of mouths. [The number of mouths of different worlds extending to thousands of mouths is simply a metaphor to indicate the stupendous number and variety of these worlds. It also might mean creatures ranging from the single celled organisms such as the algae and the amoeba, to the most complex living beings such as the human race.]

All of them are tiny fractions of Lord Narayan's cosmic body. [Refer Canto 2, paragraph no. 11; Canto 6, paragraph no. 8.]

Each one of them has been created by a separate Brahma (the creator) who has the Raja Guna as the dominant virtue in him and who is only a fraction of the Supreme Being. [The Raja Guna is the inherent quality that motivates Brahma to create the material world around him. Brahma stands for the creative dynamism of Brahm. The Raja Guna is the quality in one's character that motivates one to get involved in activities of the world.]

Similarly, each world has its own Lord Vishnu (the sustainer and protector) with a dominance of Sata Guna, and its own Lord Maheshwar (i.e. Lord Shiva) who is the concluder with a dominance of Tama Guna. Both of these Gods are but a fraction of the vast and all-encompassing Supreme Being called Brahm.

[The Sata Guna is the best of the three qualities and motivates the one who has it to be gracious, compassionate and merciful towards all; it kindles a tendency to give succour and solace to others. Hence, Lord Vishnu possesses this quality as a dominant virtue in him, and this is why he is a merciful Lord who is entrusted with the task of taking care of the world. Vishnu personifies the ability of the Supreme Being to sustain, nourish and protect this creation. Similarly, Lord Shiva has the Tama Guna in a dominant ratio as this quality is motivates one to be short-tempered, angry and intolerant. This is why Shiva possesses these qualities which are however necessary for him to conclude this creation without showing any regrets. Hence, Shiva personifies the ability of Brahm to conclude this creation when the Lord so decides.

The implication of this stanza is that the creation—no matter at what level it exists at a given point of time—has three basic Gunas or qualities in it in different and varying proportions. These three Gunas together form a 'triangle', a geometrical depiction of creation. This is why the creation is called 'Trigun-Mayi'—one that has three Gunas, one that is completely dependent on and characterised by presence of the three Gunas. In this symbolic triangle representing this creation, even if one of the corners representing one Guna is removed, the triangle ceases to exist—i.e. the

creation ceases to exist. That simply translates into an incontrovertible fact that if we must have an entity known as a 'creation', then we must have all the three Gunas in place.]

All these Brahmaands or Universes are like numerous fish and bubbles of water that endlessly swirl around in the cosmic ocean of infinite dimensions and depth. [The countless galaxies float in the vacant space of the universe. This 'space' is the 'ocean' referred to here.] (7).

8. Like the rounded fruit of the tree called Amvala (Indian Goose Berry; *Phyloanthus Embelica*) in the palms of children who play around with it as if they were tiny balls, all these numerous Universes of diversity that cannot be enumerated are tiny balls in the hands of Vishnu who plays around with them. [Lord Vishnu is a term that is applied to the Viraat Purush here. All the three Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are born from the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being.] (8).

[Note—Refer Canto 2, paragraph no. 11.]

9. Just like the chain of pitchers attached to the water-wheel that draws water from the well, countless Brahmaands along with all their accoutrements go on turning endlessly (i.e. taking birth, expanding and finally coming to an end to be re-born once again) in each of the pores of the body of the Lord Maha Vishnu. [The epithet 'Maha' clearly indicates that the Vishnu referred here and in the previous paragraph is not the one who is compatriot of Brahma and Shiva but someone who is senior and superior to them. He is 'Maha' or 'Great'. Obviously, it is the Viraat Purush.] (9).

[Note—Refer Canto 2, paragraph no. 11, and the current Canto 6, paragraph no. 7 in this context.]

10. When the spiritual aspirant has reached this stage of Brahm Gyan (i.e. when he has developed the highest degree of wisdom and erudition in spiritual matters) he has come to know all the secrets of creation along with its different universes from the inside and the outside. That is, he has now become truly Brahm-realised.

He has seen all the magnificent views and fascinating things, he has experienced and witnessed all the charms and attractions of this creation which are astonishingly awe-inspiring, most mysterious and extremely intriguing by nature. He has literally taken a dive and immersed in the symbolic ocean of joys and surging ecstasy that overwhelm him after this mesmerising experience. Then he crosses the outer boundary that marks the periphery of that section of the infinite cosmos where these Brahmaands are situated.

[That is, he has become highly wise and perfectly enlightened so much so that there is no secret of creation that is hidden from him. The phrase 'from the inside' refers to his experiencing the world first hand by being directly involved in its day-to-day activities, and in the process coming in direct contact with its material objects and charms along with the numerous joys and sorrows that are so natural and normal in this world. The phrase 'from the outside' refers to the state of renunciation and dispassion when he had completely distanced himself from this world and remains a neutral observer or mute spectator to all that is happening around him. So he is fully conversant with both. He has nothing more to desire and expect in this world. He is fully contented and fulfilled. Only such a person can ever hope to ever find true liberation and deliverance from the material pull of this world. He has seen, witnessed

and experienced everything first hand, both from the within as well as from the without.]

He then sails through a vast and uniformly dark cosmic void, observes the symbolic city of 'Mool Avidya' (primary ignorance) located in this fathomless realm of darkness, and remembers or meditates upon the great patron Goddess of this darkness as well as of 'Maha Maya' (the Great Delusion), the Goddess known as 'Avidya Laxmi' (the personified form of ignorance, a fount of ignorance, and its patron Goddess). He visualises this great Goddess as being surrounded by infinite number of Maha Mayas (i.e. uncountable delusions), as being a Goddess who herself is a sum-total of the greatest of Maha Mayas in existence (i.e. she embodies the greatest delusions that ever exist in this creation). This great Goddess is adorned by garlands of immense brilliance and dazzle, is the very foundation of all the great Maha Mayas and lends them her unflinching support and unquestioned protection, is a Goddess who frolics and roams merrily around the mountain of Anand (i.e. is always wallowing in happiness and joys of material comforts and pleasures—implying that the latter are symbols of a person being ignorant and in the dark in spiritual matters), and is the mother of 'Mool Prakriti' (primary Nature that determines a creature's basic instincts, natural temperament, urges, passions and inclinations that are an integral part of his character).

The spiritual traveller then offers his worship to her in various ways, bows before her and gives his thanks to the great Goddess of Maya who is the progenitor of all the worlds taken together. She is the Goddess who represents Lord Vishnu's dynamic powers to create great delusions.

[That is, he says a virtual 'thank you' to all the delusions of all kinds that attempt to trap him in their vice-like grip and tie him down to this delusory material world of sense objects and its fascinating allurments. This world is transient and mortal, it is not the truth and it never gives eternity. So the passage through this entrapping world of material comforts and sense gratifications is equivalent to the passage through the dark void of the cosmos en-route to one's spiritual destination of reaching heaven. This is like sailing through this world of darkness by remaining aloof from it so that the spiritual goal of finding bliss and eternal happiness as well as liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, which in turn is a result of deeds and their consequences compounded by a man's unfulfilled hopes, desires and passions, can be actually achieved. A conscientious man focused on his spiritual goal is advised to be wary of the honey-trap laid out to catch him by the Maha Maya. Incidentally, this Goddess is also known as Laxmi, who is the patron Goddess of material wealth and worldly prosperity; she is their patron deity. In other words, the spiritual aspirant is made beware of the temptations of worldly riches and their charming allurements, and to take care to not fall in their honey-trap.]

He then moves on ahead to reach the citadel of his spiritual journey which culminates with his attaining the stature of the Viraat Purush. [That is, now he has elevated himself to a level of spiritual existence when he looks at this creation from the perspective of the Viraat. His narrow-minded and short-sighted vision of creation has given way to broadness of approach and wisdom. He has not only realised that he is just a tiny fraction of the vast cosmic ocean, but also that what he had been treating as the 'creation that has an existence' till now is actually founded on the shaky ground of 'Avidya', or ignorance of the truth. It is really the 'Avidya Paad' of Brahm! That is, it is false. This is amply clear in the next paragraph no. 11. So he decides to move on in search of the 'truthful aspect of creation' or the 'creation that would truly

represent Brahm', i.e. the 'Vidya Paad' of Brahm, and ultimately 'Brahm' himself.] (10).

11. [The disciple asked—] 'What is the form and shape of the 'Adi-Viraat'?'

[The learned teacher answered—] 'The whole gamut of creation that comes within the ambit of 'Avidya Paad' (which is the fourth Paad or limb or aspect of Brahm) is Virrat.

[The 'Avidya Paad' is the entire range of creation that forms the fourth limb or Paad of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. It consists of that aspect of creation that has a birth and an end, the creation extending from the single-cell organism right up to the various Gods including the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder. It has been described in full in Canto 1, paragraph no. 5, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-11, Canto 3, paragraph nos. 1-15, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 3, 6, 10-13.]

[Since Viraat is the cosmic gross body of Brahm, since the entire creation is said to be a manifestation or revelation of this Brahm who permeates each single pore of it in the form of cosmic Consciousness, and since this creation is of astonishingly stupendous variety and astounding number of forms, it follows that—] The Viraat has his eyes, mouth (head), hands and legs in all the directions. [Refer also to Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11, 14, 16.]

[That is, Brahm is present everywhere and in as many forms as there are number and types of creatures. The phrase 'eyes in all the directions' refers to the fact that the Supreme Being sees everything everywhere; nothing is hidden or secret from him. He therefore is all-knowing and omniscient as well as a witness to all. Similarly, he is the one who speaks in all the tongues (languages) spoken in this mortal creation; he is the one who forms all the creatures who have a gross body with a head that sees (has eyes), hears (has ears), smells (has a nose), tastes (has a tongue) and thinks (has a mind). It is this Viraat that accepts everything and does anything with his hands; it is the same Lord who goes anywhere and takes the world where it is headed by his legs.]

He gives hands to those creatures who need it; he gives wings to those who need it to fly.

This almighty and all-competent Lord God creates the heaven and the earth alone, without any help of any kind.

His divine form is so esoteric and mysterious that it cannot be viewed in any form by the eyes, whether physical and actual, or imaginary and illusionary.

[That is, the Supreme Being is invisible to the gross organ of sight, i.e. the eye. The eye cannot see him either in actual, physical terms like it sees other things in this world, or even imagine his ethereal form in the way it sees imaginary things such as ghosts and phantoms, or other illusions such as the one seen in the mirage formed in a desert or the scene created by a magician. The mirage as well as the magical scene has no real existence, but for all practical purposes the eye sees them and cannot deny that they do exist. Brahm or the Viraat Purush or the Supreme Creator of this world is so mysterious that the same eye that has the astonishing ability to see physical forms as well as imaginary forms fails to 'see' this Lord.]

The Lord is experienced and witnessed (or, seen, visualised, his presence felt) only by meditation and contemplation using the subtle organs of the body such as the heart, mind and intellect. [That is, the Lord is beyond the reach of the gross organs of the body. He can only be known in a subtle manner through the subtle organs.]

Those wise, erudite and enlightened ones who understand this and have known this mystical fact are the ones who obtain the Amrit (ambrosia, elixir) of eternity and

bliss. They become an embodiment of Amrit themselves (i.e. they become eternal and blissful) (11).

[Note—Refer Canto 2, paragraph no. 11.]

12. The spiritual aspirant who is en-route to his final destination of reaching the Supreme Being (as is being presently narrated from Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 onwards) meditates and contemplates upon his all-inclusive cosmic divine form as the Viraat Purush, a form that is beyond the vision of the eye and incomprehensible by the mind, worships the Lord in many ways, pays his obeisance to him, and takes the Lord's (Viraat Purush's) permission to move ahead on his journey.

Rising higher, he has a panoramic view of the next world of maverism created by Avidya. He observes a most fascinating world and the magical things it contains, a world that is not only created by Avidya but is also an expansion of Avidya.

[That is, he observes the magical world created out of nowhere by the Viraat Purush—a world that has no real existence but is nevertheless so cleverly and expertly made that it creates an illusion of reality and authenticity—like a spectator of a road-side magical show, or a visitor to an art gallery. This is the world of 'Avidya' because it is hollow from the inside and has come into being because of ignorance of the truth and the reality. The observer is filled with awe and astonishment of the highest degree at this fascinating sight. He enjoys this scene while on his way to the abode of the Supreme Being, or Brahm, which is his final destination. This episode, like many others in this narrative, has a great symbolic value. It implies that a wise man knows that what he 'sees' around him in this world have no actuality in it; everything is a mirage and non-reality. So he enjoys the fascinating sight and moves on with his life; he smiles, and after some refreshment, proceeds towards his destination like a traveller who stops for a while on the road-side to refresh himself and then moves on. Like the itinerant traveller headed to his destination, the spiritual aspirant too does not waste much time entangled in the illusionary things of this world. This is the spiritual message in this narrative.] (12).

13. Then he reaches the place where he encounters the 'Maha Yog Maya' of Lord Vishnu (i.e. the great delusion-creating powers of the Lord) in a personified form.

[The concept of the *Maha-Maya* or the great delusion can be understood with a simple illustration. The air element is the same within the earth's atmosphere, but the density of air near the earth's surface is obviously more than the highest point of the atmosphere. Even the level of the various gases and other ingredients of air vary at different levels. Hence, as we move up from the surface of the earth, the ingredients of the air, their density, ratio and properties, change, but primarily they will always remain collectively a part of the air element, inalienable from it, while still retaining their unique virtues which might be different from the air as we understand it to mean. Likewise, the same Supreme Being known as Brahm exists throughout this creation in all its different levels, and this Brahm exhibits different sets of characteristics at each level. It is only the degree of grossness and subtlety that changes, and not the primary nature of Brahm. The fact that Brahm appears to change and exhibit different characteristics other than its original attributes at different planes of creation or existence is called 'Maha Maya'—or, the great delusion.

The phrase *Maha Yog Maya* combines the meaning of Maya and Yoga. Maya means delusions, and Yoga means to bring about a union between any two entities. Hence, the great delusion which is so powerful that it brings together two impossibilities together and makes them appear to be real is called Maha Yog Maya.

For instance, this world is not the 'absolute truth' because anything that is 'true' would remain constant and unchanging. Since the world is changing every moment, it cannot be the absolute truth. Therefore it is false. Truth and False are opposite things just like fire and water; they cannot co-exist. If one thing is true, it cannot be false, and vice versa. But Maha Maya is so powerful that the creature is certain that this world with all its sense objects and charms is true and real. He sees others dying but thinks that he would live forever. Since bringing together of two things is called 'Yoga', this bringing together of two impossible things together to make them appear to be true and possible, or making the truth appear as false on the one hand while making false appear to be true on the other hand is called 'Maha Yog Maya'.]

This Maha Yog Maya is so powerful that it creates an illusion of dichotomy and opposition in the various forms of the eternal supreme Brahm who is an embodiment of infinite bliss.

[Brahm is indivisible, immutable, non-dual and one. Though Brahm has assumed as many diverse forms as they are independent units in creation, each unique in its self and different from its neighbour, and is given so many that they numbers run into thousands, yet Brahm is one and non-dual. All these varied forms and shapes of Brahm are nothing but like the same colour having many hues and shades. They are like the same letter of the alphabet that is used in countless permutations and combinations to form hundreds and thousands of words. The immense diversity creates doubts in the mind of a thinking person as to the reality of Brahm, whether what is said of Brahm as being non-dual and immutable is true or whether it is false. This creates a lot of confusion, perplexity, restlessness and doubts in the mind of the aspirant about the reality and authenticity of Brahm, thereby robbing his peace of mind and its attendant bliss. A man torn between reality and falsehood can never find rest and happiness; he can never find spiritual bliss and mental peace.]

This Maha Yog Maya is like a veil surrounding the truth of Brahm. The magical world created by it is most fascinating and highly astonishing; it is full of maverick tricks, and is like an ocean of surprises which is full of unexpected events and sights. It is so mysterious that inspite of being illusionary and created out of delusions it still appears to be real and everlasting; it appears to be an image of happiness inspite of its horrifying whirlpools of miseries and pains, of turmoil and turbulence.

[That is, though the world created by Maya is illusionary and therefore all its charms are also illusionary, it appears to be so true and real that the creature falls prey to its charms and allows himself to be trapped by it. The deluded creature thinks it to be permanent and a source of happiness and pleasures. He therefore yearns for its sense objects that provide comfort, pleasure and joys, thinking that by acquiring them he would be so much comfortable, richer and happier. But he forgets that a source that itself is illusionary, that has no existence, can never provide anything that is real and has any truthful value. When he discovers that he has not got what he had expected or yearned for, or that things go on changing every other day and his earlier possessions become outdated the next day, he feels dismayed and distraught. He wants more and still more. This never-ending cycle can obviously not give peace and rest to anyone. It is like a thirsty man running behind the mirage in the desert in search of water which he never finds. Thus, the 'great delusion' that is so powerful and sweeping in its reach, import and effects that it can actually bring about a fusion of the truthful with the falsehood so as to make what appears as the 'real thing' is known as the Maha Yog Maya.]

The illusion created by this Maha Maya is so effective that the eternal and real Vaikunth (the abode of Lord Vishnu) appears to have a duplicate form as reflected in the great ocean of Avidya (ignorance) created in this illusionary world of Maha Maya.

[It is very important to understand the import of what is being said here. A deluded worshipper thinks that there is a physical Vaikunth high up in the heaven where a physical God known as Vishnu lives. For him, this Vishnu is the almighty Lord of creation. Well, both this Vaikunth and its Lord Vishnu are not the real Vaikunth and Vishnu that the Upanishads talk about as being the true destination of spiritual aspirants who seek emancipation and salvation by finding the Supreme Being known as Brahm. What they perceive as Vaikunth is not the real destination of the soul because of their ignorance of the reality, and what they think is Vishnu is not the real Lord who is the Supreme Being of creation. This is because the 'real' Vishnu who is synonymous with Brahm is eternal and imperishable, but the Vishnu who relates to the fourth Paad of Brahm has a beginning and an end. This is clearly laid out in Canto 3, paragraph no. 10-11. Thus, this Vishnu is not the eternal and immortal Vishnu who is Brahm, the Supreme Being. If this Vishnu is not the real Brahm, then how can his abode called Vaikunth be the real Vaikunth? The real emancipation and salvation is known as 'Kaivalya Mukti' when the individual's Atma, his 'pure consciousness' merges with the supreme Consciousness. This may happen even without leaving the gross body, in which it case is called 'Jivan Mukti', as well as by leaving the body when it is called 'Videha Mukti'. The gross body is made of five elements such as the sky or the subtle spaces that are present between cells and tissues, the air or the vital winds that keep the body alive, the fire or energy that keeps the body activated and energised, the water or the fluid part of the body, and the earth or the grossest part that make up the skin, bones, flesh and nerves and veins etc. When the 'consciousness' leaves the body, the latter automatically disintegrates into its components. This 'consciousness' is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. Hence, the real Vaikunth is inside one's own self, and the real Vishnu is the Supreme Being residing in one's own inner self as the Atma. The body itself is a cosmos in a miniature form. If one has not become 'self-realised', he cannot become Brahm-realised, and therefore all notions of Mukti and Moksha that he might have, or the belief that there is some physical heaven in the sky where some God lives is just as illusionary as the world in which he lives! This is the great message of this paragraph. It is in strict consonant with the doctrines and philosophy expounded in and espoused by the Upanishads.] (13).

14. When the spiritual aspirant reaches this place, he meditates upon this Goddess known as 'Yog Laxmi' who is a fraction of the Maha Maya, and offers his worship and respects to her.

[The Yog Laxmi again has the same meaning as the phrase Maha Yog Maya. Laxmi is the patron goddess of material wealth and prosperity. Therefore, the word is used as a metaphor for the same and also to imply a great treasury where wealth is in abundance. Now, since the world created by the fourth Paad of Brahm is itself false as it is created by Avidya fostered by Maya, all its wealth would also be false and entrapping for the creature. Hence, Yog Laxmi is the personification of all those factors that tie a creature down to the material charms and comforts of this world, its material wealth, its sense objects etc. It is called 'Yog' Laxmi because a creature makes so many efforts or does such great Tapa (austerity) and suffers so much just in order to access this world and its material wealth. The phrase combines 'Yoga', or the immense effort made by one to reach one's target, and 'Laxmi', or the material wealth

of this world. It also implies that two incompatible things are made to cohabit—i.e. true happiness and peace are made to coexist with the world and its transient wealth which are a treasury of sorrows, miseries, pains and grief, of turmoil and turbulence.

This Yog Laxmi is a 'fraction' of the Maha Maya because material wealth is only one part of the immense variety of delusions created in this world.]

The Goddess also respects him. [The Goddess is pleased with him that he has not fallen in the trap of delusions cast by Maha Maya. She praises his wisdom, erudition and sagacity.]

Then the spiritual aspirant takes her permission to rise higher (and proceed ahead on his journey to emancipation and salvation). From a high position, he observes the numerous and magnificent ways in which the Maya has expanded itself, and feels awe-struck and astonished by the magnificent sight that he beholds before him. [It's like viewing a metropolis from high up in the sky while riding an air plane. The lights of the city spread below cover it in a thick blanket of diffused bright light of many hues which make the area of the earth and the surrounding sky appears to be self-illuminated in a charming array of light.] (14).

[Note—This would be the 'Yog Laxmi Vaikunth' or the 'Maha Maya Vaikunth'.]

15. Above it (i.e. beyond the realm of the Laxmi) is the divine eternal city known as 'Paad Vibhuti Vaikunth'. It is so striking, most astonishing, absolutely magnificent, and most majestic and grand in its form that it appears to be a treasury of such virtues as splendour, grandeur, majesty and magnificence that exist in creation.

It is irrigated with the nectar of bliss and happiness that flows through it.

It appears very auspicious as it is surrounded by a river of Amrit, or the river of ambrosia that is full of the elixir of eternity and bliss surging in it.

It is inhabited by the eternally liberated Souls who roam in it freely.

It is full of buildings that resound with happiness and joy that comes with enlightenment and wisdom.

In the center of it is a mountain called 'Chidanand'—i.e. a mountain of eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity.

On the summit of this mountain there is a fount of brilliant light having a divine illumination of stupendous radiance and splendour. It represents eternal Anand or everlasting bliss of the highest order and intensity.

In the center of it there is a 'Vimaan' representing a fount of supreme Anand.

In the center of this 'Vimaan' there is a gloriously radiant and self-illuminated glowing seat. This glowing seat is like the thallus at the end of the stalk of the lotus flower. On it is seated Lord Adi-Narayan, the primal Lord.

[The word 'Vimaan' literally means a flying machine, an aerial vehicle such as a chariot used by the Gods. The word also means a house or a palace or a dwelling of Gods which is usually seven storeys in height. In temple structures, it is the multi-storeyed tower erected over the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine where the consecrated deity is placed. It also means a seat or an altar where the worshipped deity is seated.

In the present context it refers to a center or a seat of supreme bliss and beatitude.]

The spiritual aspirant meditates and contemplates upon this divine Lord Adi-Narayan, and offers his worship and respects to the Lord. The Lord is so pleased by him that he also reciprocates by showing respects to the worshipper.

The spiritual traveller takes the Lord's permission and moves ahead on his spiritual journey to reach his goal of the ultimate heaven (i.e. find final emancipation and salvation)¹.

Rising higher, he pierces through the various layers of the shell that cover this egg-like universe that is made up of Avidya (and which represents the fourth Paad of Brahm).

He now reaches that part of the creation that is the junction point of the universe called Avidya Paad and that which is Vidya Paad².

The traveller now reaches the next Vaikunth, called the glorious 'Vishwaksen Vaikunth', which is located here.

[Vishwaksen is an important attendant of Vishnu and regarded as the chief amongst the Lord's attendants. He is given precedence over all other attendants or close associates of Vishnu and has the same importance that Lord Ganesh has amongst the Gods. Like the latter who is worshipped first in all religious ceremonies and invoked to give protection and help in successful accomplishment of all endeavours, Vishwaksen too is regarded as the protector of all devotees of Lord Vishnu and helps them in their endeavour to reach the Lord.] (15).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 5, paragraph nos. 16-17.

²Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 5; Canto 3, paragraph nos. 3, 6, 11.

This is the point where the lower world of Avidya end and the next world of Vidya starts. In other words, it is the boundary between the fourth Paad of Brahm known as Avidya Paad which includes the entire mortal world, and the world of Vidya Paad which is the second Paad of Brahm.]

16. This divine city of Vishwaksen Vaikunth is illuminated by rows upon rows of brilliantly lit lights of immense intensity. It is full of and also surrounded from all sides by divine bodies who are personified forms of the virtues of eternal Anand (bliss, cheerfulness and happiness) as well as of Gyan (knowledge, enlightenment and wisdom). There are numerous buildings and chariots in it that also personify pure Gyan. It has countless mountains (i.e. hills and hillocks) that symbolise mounds of endless Anand. It therefore appears to be extremely astonishing and fascinating. [In short, this divine Vaikunth is full of Anand everywhere. Its happiness and bliss, its cheerfulness, merriment and joyousness are evident everywhere. There is no trace of miseries, sorrows and pains, or of any kind of turmoil and turbulence in it. It's charming and magnificent to the extreme.]

In the center of this magnificent divine city there is a hill or large mound known as 'Kalyan Parvat'—the mountain of welfare and well being. On its top there is a 'Vimaan' (a chariot, a dwelling or a palace, or a multi-layered tower, a seat or an altar where the worshipped deity is seated) which symbolises pure and unadulterated Anand.

Inside this Vimaan there is a divine and very glorious seat that is located at the center of illumination that is of extreme brilliance and is like the splendour that emanates from Brahm, the Supreme Being. This seat resembles the thallus at the top of the stalk of the divine Lotus flower.

On this seat is seated, most majestically and with great dignity, Lord Vishwaksen who is a personification of the virtues of majesty, magnificence, power and authority. He is the upholder of law (i.e. Dharma, or the righteous code of conduct for all activities undertaken by all inhabitants of this creation) and ensures that it is strictly implemented while firmly enforcing prohibitions on unlawful activity. He is the motivator or inspirer of all inclinations, temperaments, tendencies

and habits that form the nature of all the creatures. He is the primary cause of all causes that result in any kind of activity in this creation. He epitomises all the eclectic signs of Anand unbound. [That is, he possesses the signs or characteristics that are the hallmarks of someone who is extremely happy, contented, cheerful and blissful.] He is a personification of Lord Maha Vishnu (the great sustainer, nourisher, care-taker and protector of creation). He protects all kinds of Mokshas (spiritual liberation, salvation and emancipation). [That is, he is the patron God of Moksha and helps those who seek spiritual emancipation and salvation. Those who seek liberation and deliverance from this entrapping world regard Vishwaksen as their patron God or deity.] He is extremely powerful and strong, bold and brave, valiant and valorous.

The spiritual aspirant meditates on Lord Vishwaksen who has these divine attributes, worships the Lord in many ways, and pays his obeisance to him by bowing before him and doing circumambulation around him. Then he takes his leave from the Lord and moves ahead on his onward journey.

As he rises higher he attains an excellent and dignified stature of having accessed Vidya, or the higher level of knowledge and wisdom. He has a panoramic view of the divine and eternal Vaikunth that is glowing with the light emanating from the supreme Brahm spread all around him. This magnificent sight fills him with extreme Anand (cheerfulness, happiness, joys, bliss and contentedness).

[This is a metaphoric way of saying that each step forward in his spiritual progress gives him greater majesty and enlightenment; it gives him greater joys and happiness; he feels more and more bliss and contentedness overflowing him. His stature and dignity goes on enhancing as he moves up in the rung of spiritual ladder towards his final Moksha.] (16).

17. Moving ahead on his spiritual journey (to this final destination of finding Brahm and thereby attaining his Kaivalya Mukti) he crosses many oceans representing Vidya and reaches the divine river called the 'Brahm Vidya Nadi'—literally the river of knowledge and enlightenment associated with Brahm.

He takes a dip in it and bathes in its water.

[That is, he washes off any trace of ignorance that might still be sticking to him till now by taking a dip and bathing in this river of true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment.]

He meditates upon the Lord and takes another dip (to wash off remnants of his past ignorance, shortcomings and impurities) to cleanse and sanctify himself further. He discards his previous subtle body that was in the ethereal form equivalent to Mantras, and assumes a new body which is more subtle, more spiritually evolved, more glorified and highly ethereal in form. This new body is known as 'Vidyanand'—meaning that this body is an embodiment of 'Anand', or bliss, happiness, joy and contentedness that comes when one has attained Vidya, or truthful knowledge and wisdom.

Having obtained this exalted, glorious and divine body which resembles the one possessed by Lord Narayan, he worships his own Atma (his pure consciousness that is his true self and a personification of Brahm, the cosmic and eternal Consciousness).

[This state of spiritual achievement when the aspirant is able to assume a form which is similar to his chosen deity is called 'Sarupya Mukti'. The fact that the spiritual aspirant has reached this level of spiritual enlightenment is metaphorically implied when it is said that he has taken a dip and bathed twice in the river of Vidya as stated above. Surely such an enlightened soul is expected to realise that the true

Lord whom he has been worshipping till now is no one else but his own 'self' known as the Atma. This Atma is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. This realisation of the 'self' as the pure consciousness fills the aspirant with extreme Anand, or bliss and ecstasy of a high order.]

He is then adored and shown due respect by the divine residents of this Vaikunth who are themselves eternally liberated (because they do not have to assume another gross body by having to take a birth in the gross world again against their wishes).

Overwhelmed with happiness, joy and ecstasy of the highest order, the exhilarated aspirant proceeds ahead to reach and enter the next higher Vaikunth. 'Brahm Vidya' flows through this divine abode; this Vaikunth is rich and pregnant with the glories associated with Brahm Vidya.

[That is, just like a soft, pleasant and fragrant breeze is known to blow in a city free from pollutions and located at a hill station with clean and fresh air, giving it a most charming and relaxing environment, the sublime currents of Brahm realisation and knowledge that flow in this divine city in incessant currents gives it a sublime and spiritual aura. The whole atmosphere of this place is rich in the flavour and aroma of spiritual realisation and its attendant ecstasy and bliss.]

This Vaikunth is known as 'Brahm Vidya Vaikunth'. It is in it that the spiritual aspirant has entered.

It is surrounded on all sides by mountains or hills personifying endless Anand (bliss, happiness, joyousness, cheerfulness, felicity and beatitude) and the exhilaration and ecstasy associated with it.

This divine place is adorned and made glorious by the presence in it of thousands of magnificent ramparts and towers that epitomise Brahm Vidya, and countless beautiful buildings awash with Amrit-Anand (i.e. where the nectar of bliss and happiness are in great abundance, literally overflowing and submerging them). These edifices naturally emanate sweet and sublime fragrances and aromas that are divine in nature. [That is, everything in this Vaikunth epitomises and personifies all the eclectic virtues that come with acquisition of 'Brahm Vidya', or truthful knowledge of the Supreme Being, and its attendant 'Anand' of the highest degree and of a sublime nature which gives eternal bliss and ecstasy that comes with the realisation of Brahm. Any place that is auspicious and holy would naturally develop a divine aura around itself as compared to a place which is not.]

In the center of this divine city known as 'Brahm Vidya Vaikunth' there is a high citadel known as 'Bodhaanand'. Hence, this exclusive enclave would be known as 'Bodhaanand Vaikunth'. This is because it provides extreme bliss that comes with attainment of Bodh.

[The word 'Bodh' means wisdom, awareness, realisation, enlightenment and knowledge, while 'Anand' means bliss, happiness, ecstasy that comes with this realisation. Hence, the spot where the Lord who epitomises these virtues lives is indeed a fount of both Bodh and Anand. And this is why this citadel is known as 'Bodh' + 'Anand' = 'Bodhaanand'. The abode of this extreme Anand that comes with Bodh is therefore known as the 'Bodhaanand Vaikunth'.]

In its front is placed a 'Vimaan' (a chariot or seat or an altar over which there is a tower-like structure). This Vimaan is in the form of Pranav or the ethereal word OM.

[That is, it does not have a physical structure or form but is ethereal in nature and it symbolises the Mantra OM. It is upon this Mantra OM that the Atma of the aspirant had sat to reach upper levels of enlightenment that would lead to the

aspirant's Kaivalya Mukti. It's the medium by which one can reach his higher goal of emancipation and salvation. It is upon this chariot of OM that the holy God who is the presiding deity of this Vaikunth sits. It is this chariot that would take the spiritual pilgrim still higher up in the heaven till he reaches his ultimate destination of becoming one with the cosmic God, the supreme Brahm who is the ultimate 'Spirit' and the 'Father' of the entire creation.]

On this Vimaan is seated a Goddess who is the patron deity of the entire realm of Brahm Vidya. Her mere glance is enough to eliminate all forms of endless Avidya (infinite lack of knowledge; infinite sources of ignorance; the opposite of Vidya) from their roots. She is unique and one of her only kind (because of these and other grand qualities).

This Goddess is the 'Laxmi' that provides Moksha; she is the endless treasury of Moksha. [That is, she is the Goddess representing the dynamic power of Brahm-realisation and enlightenment that can provide the spiritual aspirant with liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation. When Avidya, or ignorance, is eliminated, it is natural that Vidya, or truthful knowledge, would sprout in its place. This sprouting of Vidya would ultimately grow into a full-fledged tree if properly taken care of by the aspirant. Then the fruit of this tree would be Moksha. It ought to be specially noted here that the word 'Laxmi' is not used here in the way it is usually referred to and employed to mean worldly assets, prosperity, majesty, opulence and grandeur. Here the word means a treasury of Vidya or knowledge that can provide the aspirant with Moksha, the great spiritual treasure he has set out to find. This is because the context in which this term is used in this paragraph is that of 'Vidya Vaikunth'. Hence, here the term 'Laxmi' means an abundance of Vidya in this part of upper heaven which leads to liberation and deliverance of the soul. From a broad perspective it also means that if one seeks Moksha, the only treasury that he needs is Vidya or wisdom, erudition, truthful knowledge and enlightenment.]

The spiritual traveller offers his due respect to her, worships her properly by doing circumambulation around her, offering flowers and oblations to her, and singing hymns in her honour.

The Goddess is very pleased with him so much so that she herself praises him and gives him due honour—i.e. she reciprocates his gestures of showing respect.

The aspirant then takes her permission to move onwards on his journey to the next higher spiritual destination, and the Goddess accompanies him. [That is, Vidya or the dynamic power of knowledge of the highest order personified as a Goddess known as Laxmi escorts the spiritual aspirant to make sure that he doesn't slip on the way, that the demons known as Avidya or lack of knowledge, and Maya or delusions do not play mischief with him and create an unnecessary road-block in his spiritual journey.]

Reaching the other bank of the river known as Brahm Vidya (i.e. having crossed this river), he observes countless Vaikunths which are full of Vidya and Anand. This divine sight fills him with immense delight and unbound joys.

[Obviously the term 'countless' is a metaphor for numerous districts and enclaves of the Greater Vaikunth that stretch for countless miles beyond this main river. A careful reading of this paragraph would show that the Brahm Vidya Vaikunth is divided into two parts by this great river which flows through it. It's like a great city flourishing on either sides of a great river.]

Further ahead he crosses many oceans full of Gyan (true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment) and Anand (true bliss, happiness and joys). Then he travels through many 'Brahm Vans' (forests which are endowed with the glory and majesty

of Brahm), and walks continuously over many summits of auspicious mountains to reach a place where he finds many divine Vimaans lined up. These Vimaans are personified forms of Gyan and Anand.

[These Vimaans are either divine chariots or holy palaces or shrines of the supreme God lined up just like airplanes on a huge airport or the many magnificent buildings inside the royal compound of an Emperor. It might also mean that numerous other spiritual aspirants had already reached this place prior to our traveller. These vehicles seem to be abandoned by them after having reached their destination. It ought to be noted now that if this interpretation is taken into consideration, then our present traveller, who does not stay here but moves ahead on his journey, is far more wise and enlightened about the true destination of the soul than his predecessors who had taken up their abode at this place as implied by the number of parked—or should we say ‘abandoned’—chariots.]

When he reaches this place, the spiritual traveller feels immense ecstasy and happiness (because he has achieved success in reaching another milestone towards his ultimate spiritual destination of attaining Brahm and Kaivalya Mukti) (17).

[Note—As would be evident from the profuse use of the terms ‘Anand’ and ‘Vidya’ in this paragraph, the Vaikunth being described here is higher than the Vaikunth which is present in the world dominated by Avidya, and which has been left way behind by the spiritual traveller in the closing stanzas of paragraph no. 15. The Vaikunth where he is travelling now is the one present in the third and second Paad of Brahm, i.e. the Vidya Paad and Anand Paad. Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 5, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 3 and 6. This Vaikunth is characterised by the dominance of Vidya and Anand of the highest and truthful form.

The following ‘Tulsi Vaikunth’ described in the next paragraph also has these characteristics.]

18. Next in his view comes the illuminated Vaikunth called the ‘Tulsi Vaikunth’. It is most auspicious and a provider of spiritual welfare. [The name ‘Tulsi Vaikunth’ is derived perhaps from the fact that it is rich in Tulsi or Basil plant. The atmosphere of this place is pregnant with the sweet aromatic smell of the Tulsi leaves. This plant is very dear to Lord Vishnu, as much as, if not more than, Laxmi who is his divine consort.]

It is endowed with immense glory, majesty, grandeur and magnificence. It is like an extremely brilliant fount of splendour and radiance that embodies all the glories and magnificence that are associated with Brahm. It is surrounded by many high walls symbolising eternal Anand that is robust and steady.

[In other words, this divine place is illuminated with the light of Brahm-realisation and is soaked in spiritual bliss and ecstasy that is lively and vibrant. It makes the place very attractive and a happy place to live in. Its environment is rich and pregnant with the glory and divinity of Brahm.]

It is situated on the top of a mountain called ‘Anand Parvat’ which symbolises ‘Amit Bodh’.

[The name ‘Anand Parvat’ means a mountain where one can find bliss, happiness, joyousness, cheerfulness and ecstasy in great abundance, while ‘Amit Bodh’ refers to the attainment of immeasurable, endless and infinite spiritual awareness, wisdom, realisation and enlightenment. Hence, when one has reached this Tulsi Vaikunth he is deemed to have gained extreme Anand as well as Bodh. Or, this Vaikunth is characterised by the presence of the virtues of Anand and Bodh of the highest order.]

It is made all the more auspicious and holy by the flow of the river called 'Bodhanand'—literally meaning the river that personifies the spiritual bliss and ecstasy that comes with realisation, awareness and enlightenment about the Truth.

It is adorned by numerous gardens and forests of Tulsi trees (the holy Basil plant) personifying endless Anand. [This is the reason why this part of the heaven is known as the 'Tulsi Vaikunth'.]

It is an epitome of purity and holiness, and is the most pure and holy place amongst all.

It is a personified form of 'Chit'—i.e. of subtle consciousness as well as of something that is lively, vibrant and dynamic.

It's crowning glory is that it is full of holy and divine Beings who have become 'Nitya Mukta', i.e. have attained eternity and liberation from the fetters of the gross body and the world, and their attendant negativity and grossness.

It has countless divine Vimaans (chariots, palaces, shrines and towers) that are made up of Anand. [That is, just like an ordinary Vimaan on earth is made from some material thing, these divine Vimaans are crafted from the subtle virtue of Anand—i.e. extreme spiritual bliss, happiness, ecstasy and joyousness. They appear to be images moulded out of these grand virtues. Since Anand is used to craft them into their present shape, it is natural that they would exhibit nothing but Anand in their characteristic features, their intrinsic value and their properties. These Vimaans are personified or visual or evident forms of Anand.]

It is like a personified form or fount of divine spiritual radiance that forms the center or core from which the virtues of radiance, brilliance and splendour spring out and surround it from all sides (18).

19. Having entered the Tulsi Vaikunth, the spiritual aspirant has an auspicious sight of the patron Goddess of this holy and divine place, known as 'Tulsi Laxmi'.

She is seated with dignity on a glorious Vimaan (an altar or seat), is the divine Goddess who is the consort of Lord Vishnu, the Lord who is complete and self-contained in every respect, is an image of astounding beauty and magnificence as well as the patron deity of these virtues, and is served round the clock by attendants who are full of Anand (bliss, happiness, joys and ecstasy) obtained by being Bodh (realised, aware, attained, wise, knowledgeable and enlightened).

The spiritual aspirant meditates upon this divine Goddess 'Tulsi Laxmi' and offers his respects and obeisance to her. He does circumambulation around her, bows to her, worships her and prays to her by many special hymns.

His worship is reciprocated by the Goddess who also gives him due honours. The holy residents of the place too show their respects to him in various ways.

Taking leave from them, he moves ahead and rises higher to reach the banks of a divine river called 'Parmanand'—literally meaning a river of supreme Anand, or a river in which spiritual bliss and happiness flow like water in a metaphoric sense.

He has a blissful and cheerful sight of the spread of the divine Vaikunth everywhere around him, and this exhilarating sight fills him with ecstasy and delight of the highest degree.

The residents of the place are images of truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment (Gyan) and most ancient (Puran). [These holy residents appear to be old sages and seers who have attained this high stature due to their spiritual achievements and learning.] They duly respect and honour him when he reaches this place.

Beyond the river are divine forests and gardens where flowers rain down like ordinary rain-drops, and where sweet and sublime fragrances and perfumes of different varieties and intensities fill the surrounding environment. These forests are most auspicious, holy, glorious and magnificent.

Then he comes across oceans of Amrit (ambrosia; elixir) surging with heaving waves and electric-like fast flowing currents personifying the energy, the vibrancy and the dynamism that accompanies Anand (bliss, ecstasy, happiness, joy, exhilaration and cheerfulness) that is of an eternal and profound nature.

Passing through numerous chains of mountains and their lofty summits where rows upon rows of divine Vimaans are lined up, and which are like images or icons of Anand and Vidya personified, the spiritual aspirant reaches the boarder of Vidya and Anand Vaikunths.

[These Vimaans appear to be divine chariots of many Gods and divine Spirits who roam around in the higher reaches of the heaven. They can also be shrines of these exalted souls or altars for offering worship to them. They could be at the same time mausoleums or cenotaphs in the honour of exalted souls who lie at rest here.

The passage till this point was through the part of heaven that comes within the third Paad of Brahm, i.e. the Anand Paad. This would be evident when we consider the fact that all the places and things encountered till now had the dominant virtue of Anand in them. This word 'Anand' is repeated again and again to describe their virtues and specialities. Anand characterised every phase of existence till this point in heaven, though it must be remembered that Anand is a virtue that is present in anything or any circumstance where one finds happiness and comfort. Anand is available in the enjoyment of the material world, it is available in spiritual realisation, and it is equally intense in wallowing in the material world of sense objects as it is in total renunciation. All depends upon how one defines and views 'Anand'. So, Anand is present in the world of Avidya (ignorance) and Maya (delusions) as well as in the world of Vidya (knowledge, learning) and Gyan (wisdom, realisation, enlightenment). It will also be present in Turiya state of transcendental existence of consciousness where nothing matters at all. But the Anand of Avidya Paad is gross and entrapping for the soul by its inherent nature, while that of Vidya Paad is of eclectic, pure and divine nature; it is spiritually uplifting and liberating.]

Now the spiritual traveller will enter the second Paad of Brahm's vast realm, called the 'Vidya Paad'. This will be the 'Vidya Vaikunth' or the 'Bodh Vaikunth', so-called because of the pre-dominance of the virtue of Vidya (truthful knowledge) or Gyan (wisdom, erudition and enlightenment) in it.]

Here, at the junction point of the 'Anand Vaikunth' and the 'Vidya Vaikunth', the spiritual traveller reaches the river known as 'Anand'—the river of bliss, happiness, joys and ecstasy. [This river perhaps marks the natural boundary between these two Vaikunths just like rivers often make natural boundaries between two countries or states on earth.]

He takes a dip in this holy river and crosses it to reach the other side where he enters another forest known as 'Bodhanand'—the forest of Bodh (wisdom, awareness and realisation) and Anand (bliss, happiness and ecstasy), a forest where these two sublime virtues are as abundant as trees in a dense forest. This forest is full of the virtues of Anand and Bodh (which fill this place like tall trees in a dense forest). Beautiful flowers rain down as nectar from above in this divine forest. This forest is full of currents of supreme Anand that flow through it incessantly (like drafts of pleasant cool wind or gusts of comforting breeze blowing in a forest on earth). This

forest looks most auspicious and astonishingly charming and comforting to the spiritual traveller who derives immense comfort and pleasure on entering it.

This forest is so huge and vast in its dimensions that it resembles an ocean surging with Anand.

Beyond it are mountains known as ‘Krida-nand’—i.e. where divine Spirits living in Vaikunth go to play and enjoy themselves (much like the hill-stations or picnic spots on earth). [The word ‘krid’ refers to sport, play, game. Hence, the complete word Kridanand means playful activities that give immense pleasure and joy. It is on this mountain that exalted souls living in the upper heaven go to enjoy themselves like we go to hill stations for vacations.]

In the center of these mountains and surrounded by them is the divine Vaikunth called ‘Bodhanand’—i.e. the Vaikunth where Bodh and Anand are the dominant virtues. This is the Vaikunth of the ‘Brahm Vidya Paad’, called the ‘Brahm Vidya Vaikunth’.

[That is, the spiritual traveller has now reached the second Paad or realm of Brahm which is known as ‘Vidya Paad’. Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 4, and Canto 4, paragraph nos. 3, 6. Highest degree of Vidya or truthful spiritual knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and insight are the hallmarks of this heaven.]

This Vaikunth (i.e. the Bodhanand Vaikunth of Brahm’s Vidya Paad) is well illuminated by high and well lit towers, turrets, walls, parapets and buildings (19).

[Note—It will be noted that rivers, forests, mountains and cities and other such features that a spiritual pilgrim encounters in his journey through the various Vaikunths have almost identical names, characteristic features etc. There should be no confusion about it. We must remember that he is travelling through ‘heaven’, and therefore whatever he sees or encounters or witnesses is of the best and the highest quality. They are expected to have divine quality and glorious virtues in them.]

It is easy to visualise the situation if we apply the same concept of journey that a person may undertake on earth. While going around the globe he would find mountains, rivers, oceans, forest and cities which are all basically the same, except in their finer details. They are all fundamentally the same in all the countries, but man has given them different names. Similarly, the different landmarks in the different Vaikunths are basically the same, and the names are artificially assigned to them in order to separate one group of sights from the other as he progresses from one Vaikunth to another.

It would be easy to understand this when we apply this concept to earth. The geographical features of earth such as its mountains, rivers, valleys, forests etc. have no names of their own, and neither was the earth divided into countless countries and states that exist today. So, suppose a traveller was going around the globe in today’s world, he would be describing a number of countries as well as these features of the earth as belonging to one country ‘A’ and to another country ‘B’, and so on and so forth.

This would also help us to understand the concept of Advaitya and Dvaitya easily. The undivided earth that is yet not partitioned according to political boundaries would represent the concept of Advaitya, while the same earth divided into a number of countries, each having an independent existence but depending on each other for survival, would stand for the Dvaitya concept of Vedanta.]

20. This Vaikunth is full of numerous Vimaans which appear to be as many images of the virtue of Anand.

[The Vimaans are the numerous altars, shrines, other buildings and chariots of Gods, and they are so pleasant and beautiful to behold that they appear to be images of bliss and ecstasy of the highest degree.]

It is dazzlingly illuminated by the gleaming lights radiating out from countless magnificent buildings that symbolise attainment of special spiritual knowledge, erudition and wisdom, collectively called 'Bodh'.

[The metaphor is to impress upon the spiritual traveller on the one hand and the reader of this Upanishad on the other hand that the virtue of 'Bodh', i.e. the eclectic and divine qualities of spiritual wisdom, realisation, awareness, truthful knowledge, enlightenment etc. that are compositely encapsulated in one single term 'Bodh', are the ones that provide immense source of illumination to the spiritual aspirants. The light of Bodh would remove all darkness from their path. Bodh is enlightening and empowering, and it is the opposite of Agyan or lack of knowledge and dominance of ignorance. Agyan would be the cause of darkness.]

This divine city is adorned by many playgrounds.

It is a personification of the two glorious virtues of 'Bodh' and 'Anand'; it represents the spiritual bliss and ecstasy that comes with realisation and enlightenment.

There are numerous ornamental pavilions, decorative flags, festoons and banners, whisks, big tents and canopies, doors and archways etc. that adorn it in all the directions.

It is thronged on all sides by eternally blissful divine Spirits or Souls that have found permanent liberation from the world (and permanent abode in Vaikunth).

It has uncountable mountains and hills of immense glory, majesty and splendour.

[That is, this Vaikunth is like a treasury where these virtues are concentrated.]

It is the realm of undivided, un-fractured, seamless and constant Anand that comes with Bodh.

[That is, the virtues of spiritual bliss, ecstasy, happiness and joys that come with enlightenment, wisdom, realisation and awareness of the spiritual truths are so common, and a natural and constant feature of this Vaikunth that they to resemble the continuous current of sweet life-giving water flowing in a perennial river which never goes dry even in the longest of summers. This river not only provides sweet water to its immediate surrounding areas but helps irrigate large tracts of land all along its course, thereby fostering happiness and well being throughout the land where it flows.]

It is so sublimely beautiful and divinely magnificent that words and the faculty of speech fail to visualise it or express its form and beauty in words.

It is a glorious realm of immense 'Tej' (radiance, brilliance and splendour) associated with Brahm and its accompanying Anand.

[That is, the glorious virtues of spiritual radiance, brilliance and splendour that are accompaniments of Brahm and of those who have become Brahm-realised, collectively called 'Brahm-Tej', and the unbound nectar of bliss, ecstasy, happiness, joy and contentedness that come naturally in this state of the soul, are the dominant features of this Vaikunth. They effuse and radiate out from it.]

This divine Tej is uninterrupted, steady and un-flickering.

[It is like the lighted flame of a candle that is protected against wind by a glass chimney. The flame would stand erect and remain steady, unmoving and without any flicker.]

This divine city of Vaikunth is like a pure composite structure made out of all the Anand that exists in this creation.

It is an image and visible form of immutable, imperishable and eternal Anand that comes with self-realisation and enlightenment.

The spiritual aspirant enters this glorious Vaikunth called the 'Bodhanand Vaikunth' and is honoured by all its divine residents (20).

21. There is a citadel atop a mountain here in this Vaikunth, and it is named 'Parmanand', literally the mountain of supreme Anand (bliss). This citadel is like a divinely illuminated and splendorous Vimaan (shrine, altar, seat, tower erected over a shrine or altar) symbolising a personified form of the virtues of Bodh (spiritual wisdom, awareness, erudition and realisation).

Inside this Vimaan is a seat that is mystically empowered and spiritually infused with great powers and authority, making it 'alive and activated' (instead of just being a lifeless sitting place that has no vitality in it).

[That is, it is not an ordinary seating mat or a lifeless throne made of certain material, but it is a seat where the mystical powers of the divine Holy Spirit have been invoked, thereby injecting 'life and consciousness and divine powers' into it. It can be compared to an electric gadget that is made alive and active when empowered by the flow of electric current in it.]

The spiritual aspirant meditates upon the Lord Adi-Narayan (the Primal Narayan; the Primeval Lord) who sits on this divine seat, and then offers his devotions, prayers and worship to the Lord. He does circumambulation around the Lord, worships him in various ways, offers flowers and prays to him by singing many special hymns (21).

22. [This paragraph describes the culmination of the spiritual journey of the aspirant. The Lord welcomes him, seats him next to himself, and anoints him to the kingdom of Moksha, or gives him his much-desired fruit of ultimate and final spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation.]

When Lord Adi-Narayan sees that the devotee is reverentially standing before him in a divine ethereal form that is like an image of the Lord himself, he (Adi-Narayan) invites him (the devotee) to come and be seated on the glorious seat in the Vimaan alongside the Lord.

[The Vimaan and its seat have been previously described in paragraph no. 21.]

The Lord then anoints him to the kingdom of Moksha, or bestows upon him eternal liberation and deliverance, blesses him with final emancipation and salvation. The Lord is accompanied by all other liberated souls of Vaikunth in this official acceptance, initiation and anointment ceremony.

The Lord sanctifies him and symbolically purifies him by chanting of Mantras.

[These Mantras are divine words or phrasal hymns which act like charms having mystical powers to clean and sanctify the subject.]

Then the devotee is washed or bathed in water contained in pitchers of Anand.

Great musical instruments, that are magnificent and divine in nature, are played cheerfully to mark this auspicious ceremony and also to honour the devotee, while the Lord and other holy attendants show their respects to the freshly anointed devotee in a number of ways.

The anointed devotee is then honoured and worshipped as a living embodiment of Lord Adi-Narayan when the Lord himself offers to him and adorns him with all the visible signs that are unique to the Lord.

Then the Lord, accompanied by all the other exalted Souls attending this auspicious occasion, goes around him ceremoniously, bows before him, and unanimously proclaims in front of the august gathering 'You are Brahm ('Twam

Brahmasmi'). I am Brahm ('Aham Brahmasmi'). There is no difference between you and me ('Aavayorantaram Na Vidyate'); You are Me (i.e. you are my form and equivalent to me—'Twamewaaham'); and I am you (i.e. I am also one with you; there is no difference between you and me; both of us are indeed one and the same—'Ahamev Twam').¹

After making this proclamation and revealing its truth in practical terms, Lord Adi-Narayan vanished from the site.

[How did the Lord reveal the truth of the Mahavakya or the 'great spiritual truth'? It was done by showing to the world that his devoted follower and one who believes in the Advaitya philosophy of the non-duality and the universality of the soul, the Atma, the pure consciousness that is known in Vedanta as the 'true self', has the same ethereal body and adorned by the same signs of divinity as borne by the Lord himself. Thus, the Supreme Being gave the devotee the same respect that is shown to him by others. He offered obeisance to the devotee himself to prove that what is said above in the Mahavakyas is indeed the truth.] (22).

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that this proclamation is the great Mahavakya of the Vedas that establishes uniformity and divinity of the Atma or Soul. The Mahavakya is 'That Thou Art' (Tat Twam Asi), 'This Self Is Brahm' (Ayam Atma Brahm), and I Am Brahm (Aham Brahm Asmi).

The Mahavakyas appear in a number of Upanishads, such as the following—

- (i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad.
- (ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi).
- (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-3, 8; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi).
- (iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk Rahasayo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2.
- (v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8. Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15; Canto 6, paragraph no. 22; Canto 8, paragraph no. 5; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14 (Tat Twam Asi—That Art Thou); Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9-10 (So-a-Ham); Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 8 (Brahmasmi—I am Brahm personified); Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-8 ('Hans So-a-Ham'); verse no. 11 ('So-a-Hamarka'—that essence is me); Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15 ('Tattwamasi'—i.e. that supreme essence or truth is you; the second Maha Vakya is 'Ayamatma'—i.e. that essence known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is my own Atma, my own 'self'; the third Maha Vakya is 'Brahm Aham'—i.e. Brahm is me; the fourth Maha Vakya is 'Aham Brahmasmi'—i.e. I am Brahm).

According to *Paingalo-panishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 2 of the Shukla Yajur Veda, they are the following—(a) 'Tattwamasi'—that essence or Tattva is you; (b) 'Twam-Tadasi'—you are that; (c) 'Twam-Brahmasi'—thou art Brahm; and (d) 'Aham-Brahmasi'—I am Brahm.

The *Adhyatma Upanishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 2, 10 describe the great saying 'So-a-Ham', i.e. 'that essence is me', and in verse nos. 30-31 describe the other great saying 'Tattwamasi', i.e. 'that essence is you'.

According to *Mandal Brahmin Upanishad*, of the Shukla Yajur Veda, they are the following—(a) 'That is me', or 'that is I' is mentioned in Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; (b) 'I am Tej or I am energy personified', 'I am Pragya or personified knowledge', 'I am one and immutable', 'I am pure and non-dual

Brahm’—these are mentioned in Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; (c) ‘I am the eternal and immaculate Parmatma’, ‘I am that essence’, ‘you are me’, ‘I am you’ are mentioned in Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; (d) ‘I am Brahm’ appears in Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 1; and finally (e) ‘You are me’ appears in Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2.

According to *Shuk Rahasaya Upanishad*, verse no. 22 of Krishna Yajur Veda, they are the following—(1) ‘OM Pragyana Brahman’. [OM salutations! The truthful and pristine pure knowledge which is all-inclusive, most sublime and eclectic in nature is Brahm personified.] (2) ‘OM Aham Brahmasmi’. [OM salutations! Indeed, I am Brahm.] (3) ‘OM Tattwamasi’. [OM salutations! That Brahm is you; that Principal Absolute and essence is you; it is you; or ‘that art thou’.] (4) ‘OM Ayam Atma Brahman’. [OM salutations! This Atma, the pure conscious soul or ‘self’ of the creature, is Brahm.]

The *Chandogya Upanishad* of Sam Veda tradition describes the great saying ‘Tattwamasi’ in great detail in its Canto 6, sections 1-16 with numerous examples when Uddiyak, son of Aruni, taught this great axiomatic maxim of the Vedas to his son Shwetketu. It winds up the exposition with the final declaration of ‘Tattwamasi’, ‘that art thou’, in verse no. 3, section 16 of Canto 6.

According to *Avadhut Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 2, an Avadhut Sanaysi is a living embodiment of the great saying ‘Tattwamasi’.

According to *Kaivalya Upanishad*, verse no. 16 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, the Mahavakya is ‘That Brahm is you; you are it’. Verse no. 17-23 of this Upanishad also affirms that the truly realised person is one who sees ‘his own self in every aspect of this creation’ simply because the entire creation is nothing but a revelation of one single immutable and truthful entity known as Brahm.

The *Sarvasaaro-panishad*, verse no. 12-14 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition explains the terms ‘Tat’ and ‘Twam’.

According to *Varaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 32, the great Mahavakya which is exclaimed by the self-realised ascetic as soon as he discovers the truth about himself is ‘I am Shiva’. The word ‘Shiva’ refers to the supreme transcendental and quintessential Brahm which is the cosmic Absolute, the universal Truth and the only Reality in creation. The word ‘Shiva’ itself means ‘one who is pure, auspicious, truthful, holy, divine, beautiful, renunciate, most wise and enlightened’.]

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Uttar Kand—Canto 7

[This Canto will describe two other Vaikunths, viz. the Sudarshan Vaikunth and the Tripadvibhuta Vaikunth. When the spiritual traveller enters this upper stratum of the heaven, he has finally entered the realm of the Supreme Being. These two Vaikunths together form the first Paada of Brahm. It is the highest pedestal of Brahm.

This Canto goes on to elaborately describe the great ‘Sudarshan Chakra’ or the Discus of Lord Vishnu, as well as the great ‘Narayan Chakra’ which is the wheel symbolising the divine esoteric powers of the Supreme Being. This Chakra is employed in the ritualistic forms of worship, prayers and offering of sacrifices to Lord Narayan or Lord Vishnu. All the Mantras used in the Narayan Chakra are listed here. Finally, it concludes by describing the divine form of Lord Adi-Narayan.]

1. The spiritual aspirant, who has now been bestowed the same divine and exalted stature as that of Lord Narayan himself, takes permission from the Lord and rides on

the back of the eternal vehicle of Lord Vishnu or Narayan known as Garud (the celestial heron or eagle) to move on towards higher reaches of Vaikunth.

As he moves ahead, he is surrounded by all the holy residents of Vaikunth, escorted from the front by Sudarshan Chakra (the discus of Vishnu), and protected by Lord Vishwakshen (the chief of Vishnu's attendants).

[Refer Canto 5, paragraph no. 15. It resembles a royal procession of Gods.]

Going higher and still higher, he reaches the realm of 'Brahmanand Vibhuti'—literally an area of the higher reaches of heaven where the majestic and magnificent virtues of spiritual bliss, ecstasy, happiness, beatitude and felicity of the best and the purest kind that come with attainment of Brahm are the only features present everywhere.

Here he observes the supreme Anand associated with Brahm and its divine realisation spread everywhere in Vaikunth which is Anant, or a Vaikunth that has no end.

He is submerged in surging waves of great Anand (spiritual bliss and ecstasy) and virtually becomes an ocean of this Anand.

He sees or meets countless holy Souls and divine Spirits who are personified forms of 'Atma Ram' (liberated and self-realised Souls), and are like treasuries of Anand (i.e. they effuse extreme happiness and ecstasy that comes with realisation). He offers his respects and worships these holy and divine Souls in many ways.

They reciprocate his gestures cheerfully and worship him in return.

Proceeding ahead, he goes higher and still higher in the realm of heaven to reach higher levels of Brahmanand Vibhuti. [Refer stanza no. 3 above.]

Then he crosses oceans of Anand which are adorned by many magnificent mountains and surging waves of supreme forms of Anand.

Further ahead he crosses more divine realms which are endowed by better and higher qualities of such glorious virtues as enumerated herein above, virtues having infinitely astonishing and magnificent magnitude that progressively go on becoming better and more refined as the aspirant moves ahead and reaches higher in Vaikunth.

This unprecedented sight overwhelms the aspirant, and he is awe-struck with amazement (1).

2. Beyond it is illuminated the Vaikunth known as 'Sudarshan Vaikunth'.

[Sudarshan is the divine Discus of Lord Vishnu, and it is present here in a personified form as the Lord of this particular area of Vaikunth.]

It is always auspicious and holy, abounds in endless and infinite divine glories and majesties, is surrounded by thousands of walls representing Anand that literally embraces in its blissful arms the entire realm of this Vaikunth, has ten thousand rooms or chambers or sections, has countless divine and radiant spokes¹, is a provider of immense and everlasting Anand (perpetual sense of care-freeness, happiness, joys and cheerfulness) to even the Gods (because it provides them with the boon of fearlessness and promises them eternal protection from all sides), is a symbol of pure and unadulterated wisdom, realisation, truthful knowledge, erudition and skills ('Shuddha-Buddha'), is illuminated and radiantly splendid like it were a fountain-head of dazzling Electric ('Vidyut') representing dynamic and intense flow of spiritual ecstasy, bliss, happiness and joy ('Anand'), is like a vast ocean of supreme and infinite Anand, and is inhabited by countless Souls who are highly enlightened and self-realised (2).

[Note—¹It must be noted that Sudarshan is a wheel-like weapon, and this is why it is said to have 'spokes' and 'sections or chambers'. These 'sections or chambers' are

the areas between two spokes. The many 'walls' surrounding this symbolic city are the multi-layered outer straps that go around the circumference of the wheel-like Sudarshan Chakra and give strength to it.

This observation that this Vaikunth is called 'Sudarshan', the divine discus of Vishnu, and that it has 'spokes' like that present in a wheel, show that this heaven is circular in pattern. It has different tiers of districts or areas that are represented by the layers of circles made in the diagrammatic representation of this Vaikunth. These are criss-crossed by broad promenades, avenues and streets that the spokes and the counter-spokes of this wheel symbolise. The Citadel of this Vaikunth is symbolised by the 'hub and axle' of the wheel; it is here that the chief diety, the Supreme Being known as Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan according to this Upanishad, lives. The 'hub' of the wheel would be the central esplanade area from which all the boulevards and streets radiate out in this Vaikunth. This 'hub' would represent the closest ring of attendants of Lord Narayan. The central pivot around which the whole edifice of creation rotates, the 'axle' of this symbolic wheel-like Vaikuntha, is the Lord himself.

This inner-most circle or the central point can be likened to the Capitol that sits atop a central plaza from which the main arteries and avenues of a great planned city radiate out in all directions.

The entire wheel that represents the whole of Vaikunth in a symbolic form also represents the whole creation—because the creation also moves in a circle and is like a giant cosmic wheel rotated by the Supreme Being.]

3. In the center of this divine city is the great Chakra (wheel) called 'Sudarshan'.

This 'Sudarshan Chakra' is always moving or revolving (i.e. it is not static and stagnant; it is dynamic and full of vigour and vitality; is energised and active).

It is huge and most ancient.

It is most holy, pure and sanctified so much so that it has the potential power to clean those who come in its contact and help them to find liberation and deliverance from all sins and their horrendous consequences. [The Sudarshan Chakra is a circular saw-like weapon of Lord Vishnu. Being a divine and powerful weapon it is able to cut-off all sins and eliminates them; it is able to destroy all negativity and evils that might linger on in the spiritual aspirant inspite of his having reached this high and spiritually elevated stature.]

[The devotees of the Lord who have been attentively hearing their Guru describe the path to find Mukti or Moksha, i.e. emancipation and salvation, or liberation and deliverance, finally proclaim in ecstasy as they exult in their newly discovered knowledge—] 'We, the devotees of Lord Vishnu, will be able to overcome and crush all our enemies in the form of grave sins and misdeeds when we are blessed and given protection by this divine and great Chakra (3)'.

4. This ever-moving great Chakra is like the majestic doorway or gateway to the divine abode of the great Lord God. [Or, this Sudarshan Chakra is the gatekeeper of Vaikunth where Lord Adi-Narayan resides.]

'Let this glorious and divine Sudarshan Chakra—which is aglow with brilliant light of intense energy and illumination, is most holy and pure, is a scintillating fount of immense brilliance and splendour, is intensely illuminated and radiant, is immensely splendid and glorious, and from which thousands of streams of Amrit (nectar, elixir or ambrosia) gush forth in endless streams—bless us with wisdom and erudition of the highest order and of the purest form in this world.

Let it provide us with an auspicious and honourable mind and intellect so that we can think rightly, correctly, judiciously, honourably, scrupulously, and with noble

principles of 'Dharma', or the principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, propriety and probity, kept in view while dealing with this world.' (4).

5. [The scriptures laud and offer their obeisance to this great Sudarshan Chakra which has an esoteric structure as follows—]

'This holy and divine Sudarshan Chakra is provided with ten thousand spokes, is self-illuminated and aglow with brilliance and splendour, it is an embodiment of immense valour, power and strength, it is a composite form of all the numerous powerful and most potent weapons and dynamic energies in existence, it is a personification of the glorious virtue of invincibility, cosmic energy and dynamism along with the divine powers and authority possessed by Lord Vishnu, it is of immense dimensions spreading to millions of Yojans (1 Yojan = roughly 8 or 16 miles), is adorned by infinite number of festoons and garlands which emit brilliant flames and dazzling light, is the primary source of origin of all virtues of auspiciousness and holiness, and is like the holy shrines that adorn holy pilgrim sites (5).

[Note—The description of this Chakra or wheel-like weapon of Lord Vishnu starts from the outer periphery or circumference, and moves in towards the central hub. It has several tiers, and the one described in this paragraph refers to the outer tier or rung. The next paragraph would describe the second tier or rung from the outside.]

6. Inside the outer ring is another ring. This ring (which is the second tier) is brilliant in illumination which is most delightful to behold. This second tier of the Chakra has a ring that has thousands of serrated edges. It is called a 'Sastraar Chakra'. [It resembles a circular saw.]

It is like a magnificent 'Mandal' (zone, circle, sphere, part of an extended area, territory or realm) having immense 'Tej' (illumination, radiance, splendour, energy and dynamism), and is as brilliantly illuminated as a fount (or source) from which dazzling stabs of Electric symbolising an intense form of Anand spring and gush forth. [As the wheel turns, the dazzle emanating from this second rung of the Sudarshan Chakra is ever-changing like the simmering light of a diamond that radiates out from the stone in brilliant rays or staff of light when it is moved in the sunlight.] (6).

7. The third tier of the Chakra has another brilliantly self-illuminated ring having six hundred spokes. It too is as glorious, magnificent and splendorous as its predecessor in its dazzle and brilliance. It is the best place to keep one's attention focused on, or to think about. It is a symbolic dense collection of all the virtues of Vigyan at one place.

[That is, all the knowledge of the best sort that can stand the test of logic, rationality, intelligent interpretation, proof and verification are represented by this Chakra's third tier. It is metaphoric way of saying that true knowledge is brilliant and splendorous by its inherent nature. It is self-illuminated and vibrant. It has numerous branches represented by the six hundred spokes here.] (7).

8. The fourth tier of this Sudarshan Chakra has another glorious self-illuminated ring having three hundred spokes. It too is like the center of supreme auspiciousness and spiritual welfare, and is as dazzling and splendorous as countless suns. [Refer paragraph no. 7.] (8).

9. The fifth tier of this Sudarshan Chakra has another glorious self-illuminated ring having a hundred spokes. It too is like a Mandal (zone, circle, sphere, part of an extended area, territory or realm) having immense 'Tej' (illumination, radiance, splendour, energy and dynamism) radiating out from it. [Refer paragraph no. 6.] (9).

10. The sixth tier of this Sudarshan Chakra has another glorious self-illuminated ring having sixty spokes. It is a symbolic manifestation of supreme Brahm-Tej, i.e. it is the illumination, radiance, splendour, energy and dynamism of the supreme Brahm that is vividly seen in the form of the divine magnificence, the 'Tej' and the blinding dazzle of this Chakra (10).

11. Inside these six tiers of gloriously illuminated rings is a hexagon. It is also self-illuminated, most brilliant and divine to behold. It is like a treasury and fount of immense Tej (illumination, radiance, splendour, energy and dynamism) of astounding magnitude (11).

12. This hexagon has a divine seat or an altar of extreme and supreme form of Anand (spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude, felicity). In the center of this seat or altar is an area that is so splendorous, lustrous and brilliant in its divine illumination that it resembles a Mandal (sphere, zone, circle or ball) where the Sun, the Moon and the Fire are present simultaneously. [The Mandal here is like the thallus of the Lotus flower. The center of the seat is then the middle of this thallus and the tip of the stalk of this flower.]

One can observe a divine shine of extreme brilliance at this place. [It appears that a torch is lighted in the stalk of the Lotus flower, and its light shines in each pore of the tissue of the thallus present on its top to give it its beautiful lustre and radiant glow.] (12).

13. In the center of this divine seat or the central altar (i.e. at the absolute center of the hexagon) is seated a personified form of the presiding deity of the Chakra, i.e. Lord Sudarshan. He is as radiant and splendorous as millions of brilliant Suns.

Lord Sudarshan or 'Sudarshan Purush' is no one else but Lord Vishnu himself in this form. This is because Lord Sudarshan is endowed with all the divine and holy signs that are so unique, extraordinary and peculiar to Lord Vishnu that no other God or deity can ever have them (13).

14. The devotee and spiritual aspirant meditates upon this divine and glorious form of Lord Sudarshan who is none but Lord Vishnu himself personified, worships and honours him in various ways, does circumambulation to show his respects, and bows before the Lord.

The Lord is so pleased with him that he reciprocates his gestures by offering respects and honours to him, and praising him personally. The aspirant takes leave of the Lord, and having obtained the Lord's permission he moves ahead on his journey to higher abodes in the heaven.

He goes higher and still higher in the upper strata of heaven. He observes the higher reaches of Vaikunth which is eternal and infinite as well as an image of extreme Anand. This sight fills the spiritual aspirant with extreme bliss, elation, happiness and joy; he feels ecstatic and exhilarated (14).

15. Rising still higher he crosses various locations which are most unusual, astonishing and mystifying, are of infinite dimensions, and are full of personified forms or images symbolising numerous virtues collectively called the various 'Vibhutis' (the virtues of excellence, dignity, majesty, glory and fame; spiritual attainment).

Proceeding still ahead he encounters vast celestial oceans of infinite and fathomless Anand (i.e. oceans of bliss, beatitude, felicity and joys of extreme magnitude), and crosses them cheerfully.

Then he reaches the divine abode called 'Advaitya Sansthan'—i.e. the divine abode where the non-dual Divinity resides; an abode that has no parallel and is the ultimate destination of this spiritual aspirant; a divine establishment (Sansthan) that is specially dedicated to the principles of non-duality, and where the Principal entity that is a personification of the spiritually liberating and highly eclectic principle of non-duality (Advaitya) resides.

[It is the place where Brahm, the Supreme Being, resides. This Brahm is the Advaitya principle that blesses this aspirant with the best kind of Mukti or Moksha for his soul, or which bestows upon him spiritual emancipation and salvation which gives his soul permanent liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. This sort of Mukti or Moksha which is of the final kind and beyond which there is nothing is called 'Kaivalya'—literally, the Mukti or Moksha that is one of its own kind, which is so unique and esoteric that it has no parallel, which is the only kind of spiritual liberation that establishes oneness between the aspirant's soul and the supreme Soul of creation known as Brahm, thereby removing any distance or a notion of duality between them.]' (15).

16. [The disciple asked his Guru—] 'Of what kind is the 'Advaitya Sansthan'?'

[The word 'Advaitya' means non-dual, peerless, unique, unparalleled, without a second, and matchless. It also means an entity having the glorious virtues of immutability, indivisibility, consistency, homogeneity, universality and uniformity. The word 'Sansthan' means an institution, an organisation, a body, an association, a place, a philosophy or doctrine or school of thought which specialises in certain field or has precedence over others in terms of certain qualities or virtues which are dominant there. For instance, we talk about an institution of higher philosophical learning that teaches about non-duality of existence, or the Sansthan of Advaitya. It means that the only philosophy which is taught here is 'Advaitya', and nothing else. The Advaitya Sansthan is that body or institution that recognises only non-duality of existence as the final and only Truth. It excludes all other schools of thoughts that treat this existence as having a dual nature, such as there being a Jiva or a living being, and an Ishwar or Lord having separate existences.

In the realm of metaphysics, the only divine entity that is honoured as being 'Advaitya' is known as Brahm. It is the only ethereal, cosmic, all-inclusive, sublime and most subtle 'body' that is unique in this respect. It is a holy and eclectic 'institution' that is recognised and honoured as being the only Advaitya entity in creation. And therefore the phrase 'Advaitya Sansthan' would refer to the state of existence of consciousness when one has realised the non-duality of Brahm, that the latter is the only Absolute Truth and the cosmic Consciousness that is eternal, imperishable, unchanging, steady, immutable, universal and uniform in every respect. So when a spiritual aspirant becomes enlightened about the supreme Truth and the Consciousness of creation, i.e. when he becomes self-realised and Brahm-realised, he is deemed to have attained access to or an admission to the Advaitya Sansthan. The

following narrative would outline the characteristic eclectic qualities that makes this Advaitya Sansthan so unique and sets it apart from other Sansthans.

The ‘other Sansthans’ would refer to all the numerous experiences and philosophies that the spiritual aspirant had encountered and passed over during his long spiritual journey to reach the ultimate goal of his life—the ‘Advaitya Sansthan’. He experienced them all, showed his respect to them all, did not contradict them, but remained focussed on his ‘one’ target, and it was to reach the final destination which has no duplicates or parallels. It is this ‘one’ and ‘non-dual’ Brahm that is recognised as the Absolute Truth of creation and the cosmic Consciousness that is revealed in all the forms of creation. When the spiritual aspirant reaches a high state of realisation and becomes firmly convinced of this fact he is said to have attained the ‘Advaitya Sansthan’.

The present paragraph is a glimpse of the magnificent and most glorious virtues of this divine institution (Sansthan) that is unique and peerless (Advaitya) in every respect. It ought to be noted that words are just indicators which help one to get an idea of the immensity of the supreme divinity, the greatness and potentials of something that the scriptures themselves assert is beyond description and comprehension. Hence, the epithets used here to describe the grand attributes of this ‘Advaitya Sansthan’ or the state of Brahm-realisation are not exhaustive or exclusive—they are only indicative of the greatness, the divinity and the holiness of this institution. The sage who attempted to describe the indescribable attributes associated with Brahm was himself not confident of whether he is actually saying what he meant or whether the words he uses are sufficient to convey the right and correct message. This is the reason there are numerous repetitions—to emphasise that one word means more than one thing. A given word has fine differences in its various meanings or connotations, each having a different nuance or shade of meaning in different contexts and circumstances. A fine distinction exists between the various nuances of the same word. So the sage repeated them to drive home the point that it is not sufficient to look at Brahm from only one angle or deriving a limited view of Brahm relying on one meaning of a given word. Brahm must be treated in a holistic and an all-inclusive format or meaning. A limited or short-sighted view of Brahm would create distortions in and confusions about something that is immaculate and impeccable.]

[The Guru replied—] ‘The divine establishment called Advaitya Sansthan has the following eclectic qualities—It is an embodiment of infinite Anand (spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity).

[As explained above, the Advaitya Sansthan refers to the supreme state of transcendental existence where one has realised the non-duality and the absolute truth of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. He would also have realised that his own ‘truthful self’ known as the Atma or the soul is none other than this cosmic Consciousness, and therefore ‘he’ is also Brahm personified. This eclectic and supreme form of realisation and enlightenment leads to the Kaivalya Mukti that marks the culmination of his spiritual quest as described in the concluding stages of this great Upanishad.]

It cannot be described or spoken about in words.

It is an eternal ocean of infinite Bodh (enlightenment, wisdom, realisation of the Truth, erudition and truthful knowledge).

It is an ocean of infinite Anand.

It is free from all negative qualities that are spiritually demeaning and degrading, as well as those attributes that are opposing, heterogeneous or

contradictory in nature (thereby causing a lot of ambiguity, perplexities, bewilderments, confusions, doubts and consternations arising out of uncertainty). On the other hand, it is well endowed with positive qualities and spiritually enhancing virtues that are uniform and universal in nature as well as homogenous and compatible spiritually.

It is without any ‘Avayav’—i.e. it has no limits, fractions and parts having fixed shape, contours, dimensions and attributes (as it is infinite, eternal, imperishable, immutable, indivisible and endless).

It is ‘Niradhar’—i.e. it has no support or foundation for its self; it does not need any prop to support it; it is self-supporting and self-sustaining. [The Advaitya Brahm is the primal Consciousness that is the cause of the entire world coming into existence, sustained, nourished and expanded; it is the very foundation of this living creation, whether visible or invisible, and it does not need any other thing to support it. It is the axle around which the wheel of creation rotates. This is why it is called the principal ‘Adhar’ or the basic support and primary foundation of this creation.]

It is ‘Nirvikar’—i.e. it has no Vikaars in it; or it is free from all kinds of negativity, faults, shortcomings, blemishes, taints, corruptions and scars that are associated with the rest of creation.

It is ‘Niranjan’—i.e. it has no ‘Anjan’ or darkness of any kind; it has no black soot smeared over it to hide its pristine purity and glorious nature. In other words, it is faultless, flawless, untainted and without any blemishes of any kind.

It is ‘Anant’—i.e. it is endless, infinite and eternal.

It is a compact or composite form or a rich treasury of ‘Brahm-Anand’—i.e. it is a vigorous and vibrant fountainhead of the spiritual ecstasy and divine blissfulness that comes with Brahm-realisation; it is an embodiment of the highest quality of ‘Anand’ (bliss, ecstasy, happiness, joys, beatitude and felicity) that is associated with Brahm, the supreme Truth and eternal Consciousness in creation.

It is a compact or composite form that represents the sum total of this creation which is an expansion of or manifestation of or revelation of the supreme Truth and eternal Consciousness which resides here, and which has sprung forth from here in the form of this creation.

It is ‘Nirmal’—i.e. it is clean, pure, immaculate, incorrupt and pristine.

It is ‘Nishkalank’—i.e. it has no taints, blemishes, shortcomings, faults, scars or accusations on its character that can affect its immaculacy, dignity, standing or high spiritual stature; it is free from any infamy or ignominy; it has no negative attributes that can be demeaning and degrading for its exalted and highly respected stature. To be without any blemishes, aspersions, shame, slander, spot, slur, ignominy, taint, infamy, disgrace and other moral, ethical and spiritual faults of any kind; to have no scars to mar one’s immaculacy.

It is independent and free from any reliance on others.

The spotlessly clean and brilliant rays of light radiating out from thousands of Suns that are themselves most ‘Nirmal’, i.e. spotless, holy and purified, are no more than insignificant sparklers or inconsequential sparks compared to it (i.e. to the Advaitya principle, to the primal Lord and the only true Principal of creation known as Brahm, the supreme cosmic Consciousness; to the ‘Advaitya Brahm’; to the ecstasy and spiritual beatitude obtained when one becomes Brahm-realised). [The allusion to the celestial Sun is to drive home the point that Brahm is extremely splendourous and radiant as well as self-illuminated. It is around this Brahm that the wheel of life rotates just like the case of life on the planet earth being directly dependent upon the Sun and its light, as well as the fact that all the planets of the solar

system rotate around this central axle of the Sun. Like the Sun, it is Brahm that 'illuminates' or gives life to this world. Just as the entire system would collapse without the Sun, the entire edifice of creation would collapse without Brahm.]

It is like an embodiment or personification of all the eclectic tenets, the great doctrines, the irrefutable maxims and axioms of all the Upanishads. It is like the meaning of all the Upanishads revealed for the spiritual aspirant.

[That is, when the aspirant attains the spiritual goal of Brahm-realisation, when he understands the essential meaning and the basic spirit of the term 'Advaitya' in relation to Brahm and his own truthful 'self' called the Atma, it is then that he is regarded as having understood the essence of the Upanishads and their teachings.]

It is beyond the purview of all material proofs and logics.

[That is, it cannot be proved and its existence and truthfulness cannot be understood by applying traditional methods of proving anything to be true in this material world.]

It is not the subject matter of speech and mind.

[That is, it is so mysterious, esoteric and enigmatic that neither the faculty of speech nor the mind can either know about it or describe it in any way whatsoever.]

It is an entity that is 'Nitya Mukta'—i.e. it is eternally liberated, it is always unshackled, it is forever free from all bondages that act like spiritual fetters for a creature.

[This statement can be interpreted to refer to the eternal Atma, the pure consciousness that is also known as the 'self' of a living being. This Atma is an image or a microcosmic form of the supreme Consciousness known as Brahm. If the principal Brahm is eternally free and without any fetters or shackles, it follows that its counterpart known as the Atma would also be eternally free and without any bondage. In other words, a self and Brahm realised person is deemed to be spiritually liberated and free from all worldly shackles.]

It has no 'Aadhar'—i.e. it has no foundation upon which it rests, it does not need any support for its self, it needs no proof for its existence; it is self-supporting and self-sustaining.

It has no 'Aadi and Anta'—i.e. it has no beginning and no end; it is infinite, eternal and imperishable.

It is a personified form of 'Kaivalya'—i.e. it is non-dual, without a parallel, unmatched and unique in every conceivable form and meaning.

It is 'Param Shaanta'—i.e. it is supremely calm, tranquil, serene, peaceful and restful.

It is smaller than the smallest, subtler than the subtlest, and finer than the finest.

It is greater than the greatest, grander than the grandest, and more eminent than the most eminent in creation.

It is an embodiment of 'Anand' (bliss, joy, happiness, beatitude, felicity, ecstasy and exhilaration) that is endless, infinite, immeasurable and fathomless.

It is an embodiment of 'Shudha' (pure, uncorrupted and unadulterated) 'Bodh' (knowledge, enlightenment, awareness of the real truth, wisdom, erudition and sagacity), 'Anand' (bliss, joy, happiness, beatitude, felicity, ecstasy and exhilaration) and 'Aishwarya' (majesty, grandeur, fame, magnificence and accomplishments that give authority, powers, potentials and renown).

It is a composite of all the various types of extreme Anands that exist in this creation.

[The point in repeating this word 'Anand' often is to stress that since Brahm is a fountainhead that spouts constant streams of Anand, a person who is able to reach it would never thirst for Anand. After all, everyone does anything because that deed and the thing obtained by this deed gives him pleasure and comfort; no one would do anything that does the opposite. But all the deeds and their results vis-à-vis this world are transient and perishable, so why not seek Brahm which would give him a infinite source of Anand alongside providing him liberation and deliverance from all the miseries and torments that come with being associated with this world?]

It is 'Avinaashi'—i.e. it is imperishable and non decay-able.

[This is obviously because it is eternal, infinite and without an end.]

It is 'Kutastha'—i.e. it occupies a high position, is unalterable, unchanging, steady, immovable and constant, and is most secret, enigmatic, hidden and esoteric.

It is 'Achal' and 'Dhruv'—it is absolutely immovable, steady, constant, consistent and unchangeable.

It is free from the numerous limitations, restraints, constraints and inhibitions that are associated by 'Disha' (regions, quarters, directions and space) and 'Kaal' (time, era, period, circumstance and situations).

[For instance, if we say an entity is present in the 'north direction' (i.e. the north Disha) then that entity becomes limited to this area of space. It is neither in the 'north-east' nor the 'north west'. Again, if a person thinks that Brahm has a particular set of virtues, is confined to certain doctrines and governed by certain laws, then again he is wrong because Brahm is not limited or confined to them alone, and it is equally and as intensely and as certainly present in the other. Similarly, if one believes that Brahm is limited to a certain time or period, or is subject to the conditions prevailing at that time, then again he is mistaken as Kaal has no effect on Brahm. Why is it so? The answer is evident in this paragraph itself. A careful reading of the glorious and most eclectic divine virtues of Brahm would show that since it is omnipresent, all-pervading, universal and uniform it ought to be evenly distributed in all the spots of the 'Disha' as well as all the phases of 'Kaal'. Similarly, it ought to remain the same in all the points of time and space, whether of the past, the future or the present.]

It fills the entire world (creation) from the within and the without (being all-pervading and all-encompassing). It is complete and wholesome by nature.

It is the subject matter researched upon and much sought after by great Yogis (ascetics).

It is not subjected to the usual notion of existence vis-à-vis the world as consisting of things, time, space etc. constituted of various units, parts, fractions or segments.

[In other words, Brahm cannot be broken up into units, parts, fractions or segments even for the purpose of study; it is one, indivisible and immutable whole.]

It is always 'Nutan'—i.e. it is always new, fresh and pure; it is always unprecedented; it never gets stale or old. Its present is as fresh as its past, and so would be its future.

It is 'Nitya Pari-purna'—i.e. it is always and eternally complete, full, self-contained and wholesome in every respect.

It is an embodiment of 'Akhand Anand' that is like an eternal fount of 'Amrit'—i.e. it is a personified image of immense and unbound Anand (bliss, happiness, joys, beatitude, felicity, exhilaration and ecstasy) that is constant and eternal; it never diminishes, fades or comes to an end. This Anand is so magnificent, so vigorous, so exhilarating and of the highest spiritual quality that it is like the

ambrosia of life, the elixir of happiness, joys, bliss, ecstasy and beatitude, called 'Amrit', itself personified.

It is 'Shashwat'—i.e. it is eternal, everlasting, perpetual and permanent.

It is the 'Param Pad'—i.e. it is the supreme designation of the soul; it is the highest stature obtainable by a spiritual aspirant; it is the pinnacle of spiritual achievements; it is the citadel of spiritual enlightenment and realisation beyond which nothing exists and beyond which nothing remains to accomplish. It is the supreme state of existence of the consciousness, the position which is synonymous with Brahm. It is the stature that is 'supreme and transcendental' by nature, beyond which nothing exists or matters.

It is like a huge mountain (a treasury, collective, composite or fount) of Electric (extreme brilliance, illumination, radiance and splendour) that represents sparkling gush of extreme, bubbling Anand (spiritual bliss and ecstasy) that knows no bounds (is of the highest order). This mountain is one of its kind; it is self-illuminated.

[When the spiritual aspirant has reached the citadel of spiritual enlightenment, when he has become Brahm-realised, he is overcome by extreme spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity. Nothing more is left to be known and achieved. The ecstasy is so overwhelming that he is unable to conceal it and it bubbles over like a frothy stream gushing out furiously from amongst the rocks of a mountain. The Anand is so extreme that it is likened here to scintillating and dazzling Electric. The holy glow acquired as a result of Brahm-realisation and self-realisation is so brilliant that the entire being of the aspirant appears self-illuminated like a glow-worm; it effuses a divine light that radiates out from it.]

A divine light symbolising seamless Anand of the highest spiritual quality that is permanent, eternal and imperishable shines over there.

[That is, when an aspirant becomes Brahm-realised, when he attains the highest level of enlightenment and spiritual wisdom, the Anand that he derives then is steady, of an eternal nature and of a consistent form. It is not transient and subject to change over time and situations.] (16).

17. Inside this glorious abode (known as 'Advaitya Sansthan' as described in paragraph no. 16) is the ultimate citadel (or the Capitol Hill) known as 'Tripadvibhut Vaikunth' (where the supreme Lord called Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan, or the supreme transcendental Brahm, resides in a personified form).

[Once one enters an institution or a 'Sansthan', he wishes to be acquainted with the main Authority or Principal there; he would like to interview him and meet him personally. The office or residence of this chief Authority or Principal would naturally be separate and distinctive from the rest of the buildings of the place; it would be his private chamber or abode. In the present context, once the spiritual aspirant has attained the 'Advaitya Sansthan', once he has gained sufficient knowledge of Brahm so much so that he has become entitled to come close to this eclectic Divinity, he now wishes to realise his dreams of having an interview and personal interaction with Brahm, the supreme Authority of creation, its Emperor, in search of whom he has come here in the first place.

The present paragraph makes a spiritual aspirant acquainted with the grand qualities that mark the sanctum sanctorum of the Advaitya Sansthan where the chief deity resides.

It would be noted now that almost all the adjectives used previously are repeated once again. This is because the august institution called 'Advaitya Sansthan' as described in paragraph no. 16 got its characteristic qualities and derived its very

name because a divine entity resides there. This divine entity is known as 'Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan' to whom this entire Upanishad is dedicated. Hence this entity must also epitomise these grand virtues. Since it resides in a citadel called 'Tripadvibhut Vaikunth' located at the center of the Advaitya Sansthan, the former would also have the same attributes, magnificence and glories as the latter.

We can draw a parallel to visualise what is meant here. Brahm is the eternal Truth and Consciousness that is realised at the culmination of one's spiritual pursuit. It is like the light burning inside the chimney of a lantern that has lent the latter its illumination and brightness. The vicinity of this lantern is more powerfully and brilliantly illuminated than the area further away from it, though the very presence of the lantern would remove darkness of a large area. A light of a lantern can be seen from a very long distance in a pitch dark night, and it was used to give signals in earlier times. This metaphor can be used to visualise the spiritual aspirant's progress from being simply an entrant, a beginner in the spiritual path who has just faintly become aware of the 'light' of Truth and Consciousness against an all-enveloping darkness of ignorance and delusions (Agyan and Maya respectively) that surround him like a thick blanket. As he moves step-by-step closer towards this distant source of 'light', he slowly moves away from darkness and comes so much closer to 'light' until the time when he has come very close to the lantern. It is then only that he sees the lighted wick inside; it is only then that he sees the source of the illumination and brilliance of the lantern. From a distance he could just see a faded or an obscure dot of light, then coming closer he thought that the chimney around the lighted wick is giving out light, and finally when he comes very close to the lantern he realises that the glass chimney has no light of its own but is simply glowing in the light of the flame inside it. He gazes at this source of light and after some time this glare blinds him. Now, if he turns back and looks around, every thing would be dark for him; he would not be able to see anything. This is a physically verifiable phenomenon—when one sees a brilliant source of light for some time, his eyes would not be able to see things that are less-brilliant. In other words, the fully enlightened and Brahm-realised man becomes 'blind to the world'. The state of enlightened existence narrated in paragraph no. 16 can be likened to entering the august compound where the lantern is illuminated on the terrace. Getting to the terrace and coming closer to this lantern is like knowing what the Tripadvibhut Vaikunth is as described in the present paragraph no. 17. The 'Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan' obviously would then be the flame or the lighted wick present inside the chimney of the lantern that lights up the surrounding area of the world for the spiritual aspirant.]

Inside is an exalted and most holy abode which has the following characteristics—

It is a personified form of the vibrant and glorious virtues of 'Bodh' (spiritual enlightenment and wisdom; realisation of the ultimate Truth) and 'Anand' (the extreme sense of bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity that is experienced upon being 'Bodh').

It is radiant and splendorous; it is self-illuminated and most glorious.

It is an eternal shrine of auspiciousness, divinity and holiness that is perpetual, constant, consistent, uniform and universal.

It is like the nectar or essence known as Consciousness that is derived by churning the ocean to find the Truth that is divine, sublime, eternal and auspicious.

It is an ocean of infinite wonder and astonishments.

[That is, everything associated with it is so wonderful and astonishing that one is left wonder-struck and stunned in astonishment at its greatness, uniqueness, magnificence and grandeur.]

It is like the center of an immensely brilliant source of splendour and dazzling light.

[This can be compared to the core of the Sun or the tip of lighted wick in a lamp.]

It is adorned by endless streams of extreme Anand (the extreme sense of bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity that is experienced upon Brahm-realisation) that drench it from all sides. In fact, it is like an ocean of eternal, infinite and imperishable Anand of the highest magnitude.

[It might also mean that decorative garlands, hangings and festoons symbolising endless streams of Anand adorn it from all sides. In other words, the place is made all the more fascinating, magnificent and charming by the presence of extreme bliss and great happiness in it. Anything that gives Anand is sure to attract one's attention. If this Anand is of high quality and enduring then the attention becomes riveted to it.]

It is 'Nirupam'—i.e. it is peerless, unequalled and unparalleled.

It is 'Nitya'—i.e. it is present always, is eternal, constant, unchanging, steady and perpetual.

It is 'Nirdosh'—i.e. it has no errors, flaws, faults or shortcomings.

It is 'Niratishaya'—i.e. it is the Supreme Being, the Almighty.

It is 'Nissim Tejorashi'—i.e. it is an endless, infinite, boundless and immense treasury of excessive radiance, splendour, glory and dynamism; it has an extreme degree of magnificence.

It is 'Niratishaya Anand Swaroop'—i.e. it is an embodiment of extreme Anand that is associated with the Supreme Being (known as Brahm).

It is adorned (i.e. surrounded and protected) by thousands of walls and parapets.

It is well endowed by countless buildings symbolising pure forms of 'Bodh'—i.e. the best virtues of knowledge, erudition, realisation, enlightenment and wisdom have taken the symbolic form of buildings that are present in the divine abode of Brahm.

[When a man becomes Brahm-realised, all the glorious virtues that are collectively called 'Bodh' become his defining quality. His physical body becomes an image of Brahm.]

It is decorated by numerous gardens and green places symbolising eternal bliss and spiritual ecstasy that comes with realisation of the Truth and becoming aware of the pure cosmic Consciousness.

There is a constant rain of flowers that fall in all the directions of this holy place.

Verily, this is the holy abode known as the 'Tripadvibhuth Vaikunth'.

[That is, it is the abode of the Supreme Being known as Tripadvibhuth Maha Narayan to whom this Upanishad is dedicated.]

This is known as 'Param Kaivalya'—the only destination for a wise spiritual aspirant who wishes to attain the supreme stature and find the ultimate Truth known as Brahm.

[This achievement or attainment would give him eternal Mukti or Moksha—i.e. it would bestow upon his soul eternal liberation and deliverance; it would provide his Atma with eternal emancipation and salvation.] (17).

18. It is what is known as the infinite and eternal ‘Param Tattva’—the supreme essence and the only truth of existence that is universal, uniform, immutable and imperishable.

It is the exalted and supreme state of existence of consciousness that is the subject of research by the numerous Upanishads, and which the spiritual aspirant wishes to seek by studying them.

It is the supreme stature of the soul, or the ultimate truthful destination for it that is so much sought after by Yogis (ascetics) and Mumukshas (those who seek emancipation and salvation, or liberation and deliverance of their soul from the endless cycle of birth and death in this mortal world).

It is ‘Ghanibhuta Satya’—i.e. it is solid Truth; it is unadulterated and pristine pure form of Truth; it is a fount as well as a treasury of the purest form of Truth.

It is ‘Ghanibhuta Chit’—i.e. it is the purest form of truthful Consciousness; it is unadulterated and pristine pure form of Consciousness; it is a fount as well as a treasury of the purest form of Consciousness.

It is ‘Ghanibhuta Ananda’—i.e. it is personified form of dense Ananda (spiritual bliss and ecstasy); it is unadulterated and pristine pure form of Ananda; it is a fount as well as a treasury of the purest form of Ananda.

It is ‘Ghanibhuta Shuddha Bodhi’—i.e. it is a pristine pure, unadulterated and truthful form of spiritual awareness, wisdom, enlightenment and knowledge; it is a fount as well as a treasury of the purest form of these spiritual virtues.

It is an embodiment of the divine form that the eternally blissful Brahma has. It is an embodiment of Consciousness that is known as Brahma. It is the conscious awareness of the existence of the supreme Truth known as Brahma.

It is the foundation and support of all in this creation.

It is the place where the non-dual supreme and transcendental Brahma dwells.

It is an embodiment of supreme and pristine form of Ananda.

It is a ‘Mandal of Tej’—i.e. it is a fount, a treasury or a sphere of extreme brilliance, radiance, splendour and illumination. It has a divine aura of brilliance around it.

[The word ‘Mandal’ literally means an area, a realm, a seat, a domain, a sphere. In the present context, the word would refer to the Tripadvibhuta Vaikuntha where the supreme Brahma resides. The following stanzas outline the grand qualities of this supreme seat of cosmic Authority and the Principal of creation. It is the seat of the Absolute Truth of existence. It is the cosmic Consciousness in a personified form.]

It is the chief ‘Mandal’ (the primary seat of authority and the principal abode) of the supreme transcendental Brahma who is Advaita (non-dual, unique, one of his only kind and unparalleled) and an embodiment of supreme Ananda (extreme bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity).

It is the chief ‘Mandal’ (chief domain, main seat, a treasury, an abode) of personified virtues of supreme bliss and ecstasy that comes with spiritual achievements and Brahma-realisation.

It is the best ‘Mandal’ or a composite image or a symbol of all the excellent images or icons of divinity.

[This refers not only to the images worshipped in temples or other shrines but also to all the animate as well as inanimate entities that have a body. This is because the entire creation is deemed to be an image of the Supreme Being. In other words, when Brahma is realised, the entire creation with its auspicious virtues seem to be concentrated here.]

It is a living 'Mandal' or a dynamic embodiment of the best of divine and sublime qualities or virtues of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, who is supremely blissful and himself an embodiment of immense beatitude and felicity.

It is the best 'Mandal' or a composite image or symbol of all the magnificent experiences and ecstasy of spiritual blissfulness that automatically comes to an aspirant when he attains Bodh (enlightenment, spiritual wisdom and attainment of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation that leads to awareness of the supreme and irrefutable 'Truth' of existence).

It is the best 'Mandal' or a composite image or symbol of all the magnificent and sublime virtues that are associated with the highest form of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity that are associated with the supreme state of being self-realised and Brahm-realised).

It is the best 'Mandal' or a composite image or symbol of the supreme transcendental Consciousness itself that is 'Akhand' (un-breakable, un-divided, uniform, immutable, eternal and perpetual by its inherent nature) and 'Shudha' (most pure, pristine, holy, uncorrupted, unadulterated and sublime).

It is the best 'Mandal' or a composite image or symbol of eternal spiritual Bodh that cannot be visualized or seen by the faculty of speech.

[In other words, the spiritual experiences of the higher state of self-realisation are of such great intensity and magnitude that one cannot describe them in words. The words are limited and they have a limited reach, while the divinity and sublimity of the Spirit and the ultimate Truth that one experiences and realises at the culmination of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation are too profound and enormous in dimension, depth and expanse to be encapsulated in definite words with limited reach. They transcend description and escape from being captured within the limited scope of words.]

It is a combined form or a personification of all the endless oceans of infinite dimensions symbolizing immeasurable and incalculable Anand (spiritual bliss, beatitude, felicity and ecstasy).

It is established in its glory and magnificence by the presence of countless colossus mountains symbolizing infinite Bodh, and equally infinite Anand that comes with this Bodh.

[The place is made all the more charming, awe-inspiring, extremely magnificent and grand, as well as holy, divine and sanctified by the presence of huge mountains that represent the personified forms of all the auspicious accomplishments and grand virtues that accompany spiritual enlightenment, such as its attendant spiritual ecstasy and bliss.]

It is a composite form or a personification of supreme bliss, beatitude and felicity as well as of all forms of auspiciousness, welfares and goodness that exist in creation.

It is like a splendorous and dazzling ball of fire that represents the cosmic energy, dynamism, vigour and vibrancy of the supreme transcendental Brahm who is characterized by the eclectic sublime qualities of being 'Akhand' (one that cannot be portioned, fractured or broken into parts or segments; an entity that is one unified whole; that is immutable and indivisible), 'Advaitya' (non-dual, one of its only kind, unparalleled, unequalled), and as an embodiment of 'Paramanand' (an image of blissful, happiness, joyousness, beatitude and felicity).

It is like an image of the heavenly Sun that is a symbol of Gyan (truthful knowledge, spiritual wisdom, erudition and enlightenment) of the highest order.

The thirty-two primary elements of creation, called 'Vyuha' here, are also established in it.

[The word 'Vyuha' literally means an army formation or a strategic arrangement. The Supreme Being had revealed his mysterious powers of creation by first creating these Vyuhās, and then injecting them with the powers to create life from virtually nothing. If these Vyuhās are analysed independently we will find they that they have no life of their own. They are absolutely inert and lifeless entities, but the magic is that when this creation was moulded from them, the latter became alive and active. The hidden spark of life in each of these elements that together were able to bring forth this most complex structure known as the 'creation' is what is known as 'consciousness', and obviously the creation sans the latter would be dead, inane and worthless. This vital spark of life, the 'consciousness' is the 'gene' of the Supreme Being in this creation. Without this 'consciousness' the world would be nothing but a bunch of dead entities. This consciousness is 'Brahm' residing secretly in a concealed form inside the whole creation, and it is the unifying factor that keeps the independent units of this creation from scattering about, and instead gives it its meaningful, coherent and coordinated existence. That is perhaps why all the units of creation are dependent upon each other like the beads of a rosary threaded together by one single common string, and if this string breaks, or if one bead is lost, the entire rosary comes apart, loses its value and its shape.

So we can say that it was the 'strategy' or 'mechanism' employed by the Supreme Being to fulfil his desire of creation and sustainance of this world. The Lord created it and then left it to operate on its own under the overall supervision of the Lord. He did not wish to involve himself or unnecessarily interfere in its daily affairs, but wished to exercise his overall control. This he accomplished by entering the creation as its activating and binding force called the 'Consciousness'. Without this single factor, neither would the world remain in existence nor would it be alive and working in the way it does.

The Lord thus created the primary building blocks of creation, called the Tattvas, as a strategy or mechanism to construct and give shape to the creation. In their primary form they are available with the Lord just like raw materials are available with a construction engineer or architect.

When we are dealing with something as profound as metaphysics, spiritualism and their eclectic concepts we must understand things in their correct perspective, be able to understand their finer connotations, their symbolisms and metaphors, and intelligently interpret and decipher their hidden meaning instead of blindly taking their words too literally, as that would only create confusion and generate unnecessary vexation and perplexity, and nothing else.

Hence, the meaning here is that the thirty-two primary elements of creation that were initially created by Brahm, the Supreme Being, are strategically located here in the subtle realm of the Lord just like the availability of raw construction material are available with the construction engineer as explained above. These elements are like the building materials in a modern structure. They are not visible when the structure is completed, but they nevertheless form the backbone and the vital constituent part of the entire edifice. They may also exist in a visible form which would be their gross manifestation, their more opaque, solid, denser and darker form. In the case of a contemporary building cited here, the cement, steel, wood, bricks, gravel, mortar and slabs of stones that are used in its construction would be like the thirty-two elements referred to here, while the physical structure itself, its outer shape,

size and design, its arches, balconies, pillars, external facades, floor and terrace, its windows and doors etc. would be the visible manifestation of the primary ingredients.

It is interesting to note here that some of the ingredients used would still be visible even after the building is complete—e.g. the wood used to make doors and windows, but when painted over it would not be possible to know which kind or quality of wood it was. Similarly, in some buildings bricks are left unplastered as matter of design, while in others the entire edifice is covered with cement or lime plaster so as to completely hide the bricks. Therefore, some of the elements are present in both their subtle as well as their grosser forms in this creation. An excellent example would be water and fire—both of them are visibly as well as invisibly present in this world. Taking the instance of water, that form which is in the shape of oceans, rivers etc. are visible, while the underground reservoir of water is invisible. The same water lives as one of the five constituent of the human body as is evident in the fact that the major part of body weight is water in some form, such as blood, mucous, urine, semi-solid wastes, various digestive enzymes etc. but none of them are visible to the naked eye.

In the context of the philosophy of Vedanta, the thirty-two elements are the following—the 5 Bhuts (primary elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth in order of decreasing subtlety and increasing grossness) + the 5 Tanmatras (sense perceptions of smell, taste, touch/feeling, hearing/sound and sight/seeing) + the 10 sense organs (the 5 organs of perception such as nose, tongue, skin, ear, eye + the 5 organs of action such as hand, leg, mouth, excretory, genitals) + the 4 Anthakarans (Mana or mind, Buddhi or intellect, Chitta or sub-conscious, Ahankar or pride and ego) + 1 Pran (vital wind that sustains life) + 1 Atma (the conscious self of the individual Jiva or living being) + 1 Parmatma (the supreme cosmic Consciousness known as Iswar, the Lord) + 1 Prakriti (Nature) + 1 Maya (delusions) + 3 Gunas (basic primal qualities that determine the overall characteristics of any single unit of creation; they are Sata Guna which is the best and the most auspicious, the Raja Guna which is the second and motivates one to sustain and protect the creation, to be involved in the world but with a positive outlook, and the Tama which is the third and the lowest of the three and motivates one to be sinful and pervert) = 32 Tattvas.]

Keshav (one of the names of Lord Vishnu) and other twenty-four Vyuhās (the various incarnations or manifestations of Vishnu)¹, the various Nyas Mantras (Mantras used to invoke the divine powers of Vishnu)² of the divine Sudarshan Yantra, the prayers offered to sanctify the Sudarshan and other Yantras (worship instruments)³, and to give them rest at the end of worship, the eternal attendants of Lord Vishnu such as Garud and Vishwakṣen⁴ etc., and the Param Anand (supreme form of spiritual ecstasy, bliss, beatitude and felicity) with all its Vyuhās (forms, intensities, types, connotations)⁵ are also present here in a personified form. [That is, all the divine accoutrements that are associated with Lord Vishnu are present here.]

[¹In the context of Lord Vishnu, who is also known as *Keshav*, the word *Vyuha* refers to the Lord's various emanations or images or forms that issue forth from one primary source, which would be the Supreme Being known as Vishnu or Lord Narayan himself to whom this present Upanishad is dedicated. Primarily there were only four Vyuhās of Vishnu, and these were the Shankha (conch), the Sudarshan Chakra (discus, his circular saw-like weapon), Gada (mace) and Padma (lotus). The symbolism of these four primary Vyuhās are—(i) Shankha stands for the five primary elements such as earth, water, fire, air and sky; (ii) Chakra stands for the cosmic mind; (iii) Gada stands for the cosmic intellect; and (iv) Padma stands for the evolvment of the creation and all the good and auspicious virtues present in it.

The *twenty-four Vyuhas* of Vishnu or Keshav are the various manifestations of the Lord on different occasions to fulfil his obligations of taking care of the creation. These are called Avataars or incarnations. They are briefly the following—sages Sankaadi, Varaaha (the Boar), sage Naarad, Lord Nar-Narayan, sage Kapil, Lord Dattatreya (regarded as a manifestation of Vishnu who was made into a child by Anusuiya, the devout wife of sage Atri, when the Trinity Gods had gone to her to test her chastity), Yagya or fire sacrifice or the Fire God, Lord Rishavdeo, Prithu, Matsya (the Fish), Kurma (the Tortoise), Dhanvantri (the Medicine Man of Gods and the one who discovered the curative powers of herbs), Mohini (the charming damsel), Lord Nrisingh (half lion and half man), Lord Vaaman (the Dwarf), Lord Hayagriva (the horse-headed incarnation), Sri Hari (who blessed Prahalad, the child devotee), Parashuram (the Brahmin who subdued the haughty Kshatriya class), sage Veda Vyas (the legendary classifier of Vedas, and the composer of the Upanishads and the Purans), Hans (the divine Swan), Lord Ram (of the epic Ramayana fame who killed the demon Ravana of Lanka), Lord Krishna (of the epic Mahabharat fame who preached the famous Gita on the battle-field of the epic war), Lord Buddha (who started Buddhism) and Kalki (the final incarnation that would appear at the end of the present era known as Kali Yug).

A special note is appended to the end of this paragraph which describes all the twenty-four incarnations or Vyuhas of Lord Vishnu or Keshav in detail. It is marked with the sign ‘#’.

There are many versions of Lord Vishnu’s incarnations or Vyuhas. *Srimad Bhagwata* gives three lists having 22 names (1/3/6-22), 23 names (2/7/1 ff.), and 16 names 911/4/3 ff.). It also declares that the Avatars or incarnations are numerous (1/3/26).

From the perspective of Vedanta, the twenty-four Vyuhas of Vishnu would be the various elements that have sprung forth or emanated from the Principal Consciousness called Brahm. They are the following—

The *twenty-four elements* such as 1 Mahat or Maya + 1 Ahankar + the 10 sense organs called the Indris (five organs of perception—ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin, and five organs of action—hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital) + 1 Mana (mind) + the 5 subtle elements called the Tanmatras (the senses of perception—sight, smell, sound, taste and touch) + the 5 gross elements called Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air and sky) + 1 Shakti (cosmic dynamic energy) = 24 Tattvas.

The twenty-four Tattvas have also been described in *Vishnu Puran*, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-51; *Harvansha Puran*, 14840; and the epic *Mahabharat*, xii, 11242. They have also been mentioned in *Atharva Veda*’s *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 2, stanza no. 6; *Shukla Yajur Veda*’s *Mantriko-panishad*, verse no. 15; and *Sam Veda*’s *Mahopanishad*, 1/4 – 69.

²The *Nyas Mantras* are special charm-words or syllables which are applied to empower and energise the worship Yantra (instrument of apparatus) with special mystical powers of the concerned deity, and at the same time are used to invoke the presiding deity of a particular Yantra to grant the worshipper his desired objectives.

³The *Yantra* is an apparatus or an instrument—a ‘Yantra’—of worship of a deity, to offer prayers and oblations to it and to invoke the deity’s mystical blessings to achieve success in any endeavour for which the worship is being offered. The Yantra has a physical form such as a diagram or chart. It can be drawn on a paper or engraved on a metal or stone. It is usually used in occult forms of Tantra worship.

Two Yantras are mentioned in this Canto—one is the *Sudarshan Yantra* (paragraph no. 3, 18) and the other is the *Narayan Yantra* (paragraph no. 22-70). The

Sudarshan Yantra is like the discus of Lord Vishnu, while the Narayan Yantra is also circular in outline and pertains to Lord Vishnu himself.

⁴*Garud* is the celestial vehicle of Vishnu. It is in the form of a divine eagle or heron. An Upanishad named the ‘Garud Upanishad’ of Atharva Veda is dedicated to this deity; it is Chapter 31 of the present volume.

Vishwakshen is the chief of all the attendants of Vishnu, and occupies the same pride of place as Lord Ganesh does amongst other Gods in general. He is the protector of Lord Vishnu’s devotees.

⁵The *Param Anand* refers to the spiritual ecstasy, bliss, beatitude and felicity of the highest order that is attained upon Brahm-realisation and the culmination of one’s spiritual journey. The various degrees of Anand and how one experiences them, how one interprets them, where one finds them—these are the various virtual *Vyuhās* or forms of Anand.] (18).

[Note--#Now we shall see the legends behind the *twenty-four incarnations or Vyuhās* of Lord Vishnu or Lord Keshav.

(i) Matsya or Fish incarnation of Vishnu—In this incarnation as a Fish or Matsya, which is the first of ten divine incarnations of Vishnu, the Lord is said to have saved Manu, the progenitor of mankind, and the Saptarishis (the seven mental sons of the creator Brahma) along with their wives during the dooms-day deluge. They were made to board a boat which was pulled by this Fish and saved from being drowned. They re-populated the world later on. It is a story identical to the Biblical story of the Noah’s Arc.

(ii) Kurma or Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu—It is the second incarnation of Vishnu. The Lord had supported the legendary Mountain called Mandara which had started sinking during the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal and life.

(iii) Varaaha or Boar incarnation of Vishnu—It is the third incarnation of Vishnu in which he killed the demon Hiranyaaksha and lifted the earth from the flood water where it had vanished. According to some versions, this demon had hidden the earth in the bowls of the ocean. This extrication of the earth is a symbolic way of saying that the Lord saves the creation from being submerged in the vast ocean of sins and evil. An Upanishad preached by Lord Varaaha appears in the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition as its 30th Upanishad.

(iv) Nrisingh or half man and half lion incarnation of Vishnu—Lord Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, the half man and half lion incarnation, to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting his own son Prahalad because the child was a devout follower of Vishnu. After having killed the demon, Nrisingh started roaming in the forests, striking terror in the hearts of all the creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of ‘Mahadev’ as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. [Refer Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 8.] Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot (refer Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 19) and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called ‘Rudra’, the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

An entire Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, called the ‘Nrisingh Tapini’, is dedicated to Lord Nrisingh. This is the 7th Upanishad of this Veda.

(v) Vamaan or Dwarf incarnation of Vishnu—This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods of his heavenly kingdom, Vishnu had took the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to

retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a Vaaman or dwarf and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step and for the third step he measured Bali's own head or his crown. He put his third step on Bali's head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called 'Trivikram'—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he not only bestowed to Bali the kingship of the nether world but agreed to be his custodian there.

(vi) Parashuram or Ram with a battle-axe—This is the sixth incarnation of Vishnu. Parashuram was the son of sage Jamdaagni and his wife Renuka. He had subdued the haughty Kshatriya race or the warrior race led by king Kaartavirya who had become tyrannical and were oppressing others. It is the Brahmin incarnation of Lord Vishnu taken to vanquish and subdue the haughty Kshatriya or warrior class.

(vii) Lord Ram—This was the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. Ram was born in the Ikshwaku dynasty belonging to the solar race that ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya as the son of Dasrath and his eldest queen Kaushalya. In this incarnation, Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity who is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, accompanied him as Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram. The epic story of Ramayan in which the Lord slayed the arrogant and cruel demon Ravana is woven around this incarnation. Lord Ram exemplified the grand virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility, propriety and probity, and is therefore lauded as the 'Maryada Purshottam'—the excellent male who always observed the strictest code of proper conduct. Lord Ram's divine name 'Ram' is regarded as a Tarak Mantra—i.e. a Mantra that has the spiritual power to bestow liberation and deliverance to the creature. There are three Upanishads dedicated to the Lord—viz. Ram Purvatapini Upanishad, Ram Uttartapini Upanishad and Mukti Upanishad. The former two belong to the Atharva Veda tradition, and the third to the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition.

Lord Ram manifested himself in the Treta Yug which is the second era of the four-era one cycle of creation according to Hindu philosophy.

(viii) Lord Balraam—This is the regarded as the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. Balram was the strong elder brother of Lord Krishna of the Mahabharat fame. Both Balram and Krishna, being brothers, were born in Dwapar Yug which was the third era of the four-era cycle of creation. At the time of his death, the celestial serpent Sheshnath emerged from his mouth giving credence to the theory that he was an incarnation of Sheshnath who had earlier manifested himself as Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram during the seventh incarnation of Vishnu.

If this is the case then according to some scholars it would not be proper to include Balraam as an incarnation of Vishnu. Therefore, Balraam is excluded from the list and Lord Krishna is regarded as the eighth incarnation.

If this is taken into account, then it is suggested that Lord Buddha who established Buddhism is to be regarded as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu instead of it being Lord Krishna.

(ix) Lord Krishna—Krishna is the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. He is a well known deity and it is he who had pronounced the famous Gita and preached it to Arjun on the eve of the epic Mahabharata war. Krishna's story is narrated in full in Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurana. But according to some accounts, Krishna is the eighth incarnation replacing Balraam. This has been explained above.

(x) Kalki—This would be Vishnu's tenth and last incarnation before one cycle of creation ends. It is predicted that he would be born during the present Kali Yug, which is the fourth and the last era. He is visualized as riding on the back of a white horse, a drawn sword in hand, eliminating evil-mongers and those who are opposed to Dharma or righteous way of life. His main aim would be to restore Dharma.

Besides the above described ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, there are said to be fourteen more minor Avtaars or incarnations of Vishnu, thereby bringing the total number of incarnations to *twenty-four Avtaars* or incarnations of Vishnu.

They are also called the twenty-four *Vyuhas* of Vishnu, and they are the various manifestations of the Lord on different occasions to fulfil his obligations of taking care of the creation. These are called Avataars or incarnations.

Aside of the ten Avtaars described above, the rest of the fourteen other Avtaars are briefly the following—

(i) Sages Sankaadi—*Sanatkumar* and others called *Sankaadi Rishis*—Sage Sanatkumar is considered as one of the four Manas Putras or the mental-born sons of the creator Brahma. The other three are Sanak, Sanatsujaat and Sanandan. They are regarded in a perpetual state of boyhood. Together they are called ‘Sanakaadi Rishis’.

Sanatkumar had taught the greatness of Vishnu to demon Vrittaasur, the enemy of Indra, the king of Gods. He also taught spiritual wisdom to sage Narad, the celestial sage.

Sanatsujaat taught spiritual wisdom to Dhritrashtra who was the blind father of the Kauravas of the epic Mahabharat fame. Sanak is said to an eternal companion of Lord Vishnu. Sanandan is regarded as the ancient preacher of the Sankhya Shastra, even more ancient than Kapil.

Sanatkumar, along with sages Pippalaad and Angira, had approached sage Atharva to ask him about the highest form of meditation, the different aspects of OM and the culmination of spiritual journey by realising Brahm in the form of Shambhu, one of the names of Lord Shiva, in Atharva Veda’s Atharva-shikha Upanishad.

It is narrated in the Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 7, verse no. 8, that he had gone to Lord Kalagnirudra, one of the forms of Lord Shiva and who had first revealed this Upanishad to one sage Bhusund (Brahmans 1-6) to learn about the metaphysical importance and spiritual value of the Rudraksha beads. [Rudraksha beads are the seeds of the tree *Eleocarpus ganitrus*.]

According to Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Sanatkumar was taught how to wear the Tripundra, the three lines marked on the forehead of all Hindus, by Lord Kalagnirudra himself.

The Sharva Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 22 stresses the greatness of Lord Shiva known as Maheshwar by saying that even such great sages as Sankadi and Sanatsujat had praised and prayed to the Lord, implying that if these great sages had worshipped Shiva then the latter must surely be a great Lord.

(ii) Sage Naarad— The celestial sage Narad is said to be a manifestation of the Supreme Being’s Mana (mind and its thoughts, intentions, hopes, desires and wishes, as well as the heart and its emotions and sentiments). The Supreme Being implements his wishes and expresses his intentions and wishes by making Narad his spokesperson. Purans list uncountable instances when Narad has approached people—both the good and righteous as well as the demonic and unrighteous ones—to tell them the path best suited to them, and the wise ones treated this advise as the Lord’s wish while the unwise ones still benefited from it because Narad’s intention was always to turn a living being away from his sinful ways and lead him towards the good.

Since he is a personified Mana, he is as fickle, unstable and transient as the Mana—never staying at one place for more than a fleeting moment, always roaming here and there in the entire creation, having nothing to stop his path as he could go anywhere he wished. And the remarkable thing is that he was never unwelcome anywhere—even the demons welcomed him with the same respect as did the Gods. It is believed that he is born in each Kalpa to carry out the wishes of the Supreme Being. [1 Kalpa is equivalent to 4.32 billion human years.] He was a Gandharva (a semi-God who is a celestial musician) named Upbarhan in the previous Kalpa. He was physically very charming and an expert musician. Once he showed his amorous intentions towards Urvashi, a celestial dancer, in the presence of Brahma the creator

where he was supposed to show exemplary restraint, and this overt show of lust resulted in his being cursed by Brahma that he would become fallen and take birth in the mortal world as a Shudra (a low caste). So, he was born from a maid servant of low caste working as a devoted servant of a learned Brahmin. Under the constant companion of this great Brahmin, Narad developed noble and auspicious virtues in him even though he was a mere child of five years. He was very modest, devoted, pious, noble hearted and diligent.

Since he had the Lord's genes in him, his inclinations were more inclined towards the Spirit than the worldly charms of material sense objects which he detested from childhood. As luck would have it, once some wondering mendicants came to spend the four-month period of the rainy season in the hermitage of this Brahmin. Narad served them with great devotion. Impressed by his service and having some inner vision of his high spiritual stature and the spark of divinity that was lying hidden in him waiting for an opportune moment to leap up and shine through, they blessed him, taught him meditation and contemplation, besides initiating the child into the path of the Lord.

Thus, the dormant fire of renunciation and spiritual awareness was immediately ignited in Narad's little heart and he wished to take to Sanyas (a renunciate's life marks by constant wandering as a mendicant in search of the supreme bliss and Truth), but he did not wish to hurt his mother's emotions. But the Lord had other plans for him, and soon his wish was fulfilled when his loving mother died of snake bite while milking a cow. Instead of grieving at such a loss in human terms, the child Narad felt happy as if the last fetter was broken and he was liberated from worldly obligations.

He immediately headed north towards the mighty Himalaya Mountains to do severe Tapa (penance and austerity) to attain access to the Supreme Being. The little one walked on and on, and finally he was so tired and exhausted that when he saw a cool lake he drank water, ate fruits that he found there, and sat under the shadow of a tree and became lost in meditation. Lord Vishnu revealed himself in his four-arm form in his heart, but Narad was so thrilled and excited with this divine vision that he wished to see the Lord in practical terms with his physical eyes rather than the subtle eyes while he was in deep meditation. But as soon as he opened the eyes, the Lord vanished. Most sorry and overwhelmed with this loss, the child began to cry bitterly. Then a cosmic formless reverberating voice said—'Oh son! Your penance is accepted, and I do love you. Though I bless you with an eternal life and that your memory of me would never be erased, but you would not be able to see me with physical eyes in this world. So go back to the world and carry out my divine mandate for me. Become my messenger and go preach the path of my devotion and holy name to this world so that other unfortunate creatures also can get liberation and deliverance from the fetters in which they have bound themselves with no one to show them an easy and practical way out of their predicaments. Go and preach my message to such people in every corner of the earth; go and preach my devotion and let them have faith in my holy name. Your salvation would come naturally and automatically to you as an unasked reward.'

Narad turned back with this divine mandate of the Lord to be carried out just like the great Apostles of Lord Jesus Christ had went, on the Lord's instructions, to spread his message to the people on this earth. Henceforth, he wandered in the entire creation like a mendicant, with an Indian lute upon which he sang the Lord's glories and his divine name, spreading the divine message of the Lord's mercy, compassion, benevolence and love everywhere, attempting to turn everyone towards the Lord and away from this sinful and mortal world so that each individual creature could get his spiritual liberation and deliverance. Such are the ways of great and holy saints that instead of being selfish to seek his own liberation and deliverance from the Lord as the grant of a boon and letting the rest of the world go to hell, Narad chose to sacrifice his own life, liberation and deliverance at the altar of larger good of creation

and to fulfill the wish of the Lord. Of course there is another twist to this tale—the Lord does not select everyone to carry on his own divine agenda, and a soul who the Lord designates for this purpose is indeed the most favoured and lucky one—because the Emperor chooses only those upon whom he has utmost confidence to carry out his personal task. It is just like Jesus choosing his disciples and ordaining them the task of spreading his glorious Gospel of love and salvation.

Therefore, Narad, the apostle of the Supreme Being, is the most loved disciple of the Lord, and it is evidenced by the fact that he is the only saint who has unrestricted access to the abode of the Trinity Gods (Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation, Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder of this creation) besides every nook and corner of creation without hindrance and even without seeking any previous permission and appointment from anyone, be it a God or a Demon or anybody else. Narad's visit was always for the host's long term good, so he was always welcome and revered.

When the time came and the age of the physical body ended, he left the mortal coil like a serpent leaves its cuticle and went to heaven to sing the Lord's holy and divine name in the presence of Brahma, the old patriarch of creation. At the end of the Kalpa, at the time of Doomsday, he merged and became one with Brahma, the creator.

When the new cycle of creation came into being, he was born again from the Mana (mind) of Brahma the creator after the Sankadi sages were born. That is why, in the present Kalpa, Narad is called the 'Manas Putra' of Brahma, i.e. the son born out of Brahma's mental powers or his wishes. With this heritage and gene running in his blood, it is natural that he is highly respected and regarded as one of the greatest devotees of Lord Vishnu who is the Supreme Being personified. It is from the navel of Lord Vishnu that Brahma, the creator of the visible world, was born atop a divine Lotus that emerged from it while he was reclining on the bed made of the coiled body of the legendary serpent named Seshnath who floated on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk called Kshirsagar.

Narad preached renunciation of this material world and an extreme sense of faith in and complete devotion for Lord Hari (Narayan, Vishnu, the Supreme Being). But this was against the process of creation, because if everyone followed the path preached by Narad and renounced the material world then the process of propagation of the world and its inhabitant creatures along with its development would come to a naught. So, when Narad preached renunciation and detachment from this material world of sense objects that was mortal, transient and never a giver of peace and happiness to the ten thousand mental sons who were created by Daksha Prajapati (the first male from whom the rest of the human race was born and who was assigned the task by Brahma to propagate creation) in order to propagate this human race, Narad obviously annoyed him. These sons were preached by Narad and they all became mendicants, renouncing their attachment with this life and all charms of the material world along with the desire to enjoy it, gratify their sense organs and remain entangled in affairs of this world. Daksha Prajapati was exasperated and he created another set of ten thousand sons. But when Narad again played spoil-sport, Daksha cursed him that Narad would have to remain on the move always and he would not be able to stay at one place for more than two 'Gharis'. [1 Ghari = 24 minutes. In practice the term means a very short period of time; a fleeting moment as small as batting an eyelid.] As a result of this curse, Narad became an ever-wandering mendicant. But this suited the divine mandate of the Lord—for now Narad was forced to keep on the move and reach newer corners of the worldly and celestial realm to preach the Lord's message amongst the mortal creatures on earth and the Gods and Spirits in the heaven.

It is believed that Narad is immortal and is symbolic of the stupendous powers of a man's mind. The mind is ever-wandering like Narad, and the subtle message in the entire lore is that one should tame this restless mind and train it to turn away from this

mortal engrossing material world and instead turn towards the Lord for finding permanent liberation and deliverance from this world. A wise mind would teach (preach) the aspirant about the futility of pursuing this artificial world, and instead seek ways of finding the Truth that gives eternity and brings to an end the endless litany of miseries and horrors, perplexities and confusions, restlessness and agitations that are invariably associated with un-truth, delusions and ignorance.

Narad was the most erudite and scholarly devotee of the Lord. No other sage or saint could match him in his scholarly acumen and profundity of wisdom (ref. Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, section 1, verse no. 2). Narad is also credited with the composition of the great Sutra (formula or key) called 'Narad Bhakti Sutra' which defines the eclectic principles and characteristics of the spiritual practice called Bhakti which is to have a profound and exemplary degree of devotion for and surrender to the Supreme Being. Narad himself epitomizes Bhakti at its most refined and developed form.

(iii) Sage Kapil— He was the celebrated sage who is regarded as the fifth incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Bhagavata, 1/3; 3/24). He is compared to Lord Krishna in Bhagavata (10/26). He was the brother-in-law of sage Vashistha, being the brother of his wife Arundhati, and the only son of sage Kardama and his wife Devahuti. He taught even his mother spiritual wisdom in Bhagavata, and hence this part of this scripture is called 'Kapil Gita' in which the sage has expounded upon the philosophies of Sankhya Shastra, Ashtanga Yoga (the eight-fold path of Yoga) and Bhakti-yoga (the path of devotion for and submission to the Lord) (3/25-33).

Sage Kapil is however renowned for one of the six schools of Indian philosophies known as Sankhya Shastra.

(iv) Sage Veda Vyas, the legendary classifier of Vedas, and the composer of the Upanishads and the Purans— Veda Vyas was the great grandson of sage Vashistha, grandson of sage Shakti, and the son of sage Paraashar and his wife Satyawati, a fisherwoman. Since he had dark complexion, he was also called Krishna, and since he was born on an island, he was called Dvaipayana. Hence his other name was Krishna Dvaipayana.

He is said to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself. The Lord felt that the vast knowledge enshrined in the scriptures were so huge, jumbled up, abstract and complicated that they were beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. Further, till this time, everything was based on memory—hearing and speaking, passing from one generation of disciple to another generation in the oral form. There was a need to sort them out, to codify, systematise and classify this vast ocean of knowledge contained in the Vedas to make them more useful and handy.

So, Vishnu took the form of Veda Vyas to undertake this mammoth, daunting and formidable task. It is believed that Veda Vyas was born at the end of Dwapar Yug during the period of the Mahabharat war.

Soon after his birth, he took permission from his mother Satyawati and went to Badrinath in the Himalayas to do severe penances and austerities (Tapa), and he established his hermitage there. Hence, he was also called 'Badarayana'.

Veda Vyas gathered all the Mantras of the hitherto undivided Vedas, edited them and grouped them according to the use to which they were put during fire sacrifices. He named them according to the class or section of the priests (called Ritwij) who would use them for their ritualistic practices, such as the fire sacrifices. This added another epithet to his name—viz. 'Vyas', the one who knew the Vedas like the back of his hands and was therefore able to classify and divide them into four distinct texts as they now exist; the one who is the best preacher of the subject and made it easy for dissemination and teaching purposes. He classified the Vedas into four basic texts called the Rik, the Atharva, the Sam and the Yajur Vedas.

The four classes of such expert priests and the relevant Vedas were—(i) 'Riks'—they were also the senior most priests who presided over the ritual, and were also called Hota. They chanted the hymns of the Rig Veda. (ii) 'Yajus'—these priests

were junior to the Riks and were also called Adhwaryou, and they chanted the verse categorised as the Yajur Veda. (iii) 'Samans'—these priests were the chanters of the holy hymns in chorus, in a loud, clear and melodious voice. They can be called modern day classical singers who attend any great function or festivity. They were also called Udgata. The Sam Veda was meant for them. (iv) 'Atarvans'—these priests did the actual, physical offerings of oblations in the fire pit of the fire sacrifice. They were called Brahma because they represented the senior most God, and the hymns used by them were classified and collected under the name of the Atharva Veda. So, as we have seen, the basic function of this classification was to facilitate the performance of the fire sacrifice.

But this exercise did not give peace of mind to Veda Vyas. His soul was yearning for something higher than these futile ritualistic exercises. So, as a next step, he further classified the Vedas into various Sanhitas, the Brahamans, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads.

The result of this tireless exercise produced a much vaster tome of spiritual, philosophical and metaphysical literature so much so that Veda Vyas thought it necessary and fit to write the basic tenets and maxims of the Vedas into a single volume for quick referral. This was called 'Vedant Sutra', literally, the key to the Vedas.

The concept of the Vedas was still indigestible and daunting for the masses. So, he rendered the precepts palatable and within the grasp of the common man by resorting to the time-tested and more acceptable method of the story-telling form by writing the eighteen Purans and the eighteen sub-Prans—a stupendous literary achievement of mammoth proportions.

He had also penned the epic Mahabharat besides these eighteen Purans and eighteen sub-Purans. It is said that Ganesh, the most revered and wise son of Shiva who has the head of an elephant, was the scribe who wrote down the dictation of Mahabharat as Veda Vyas narrated it non-stop, a job which is not a child's play. It is also believed that inspite of remaining a chaste saint for life, he had begot the three legendary figures of Mahabharat, viz. Dhritraastra, Pandu and Vidur, from the wives of Vichitravirya at the behest of his mother Satyawati. He gave divine sight to Sanjay, the charioteer who narrated the on going famous battle of the Mahabharat to Dhritraastra who was blind. Being a contemporary sage of the Mahabharat period, he knew almost all the persons of this great epic.

During the reign of Kurus, he was revered by both the Kurus as well as their arch rivals, the Pandavas. Both the heroes of the epic Mahabharat war held him in high esteem. When he decided to write the story of Mahabharat—the documentary narration of the epic story of clan-fight and the devastating war that followed it—he chose Lord Ganesh as his scribe; Veda Vyas had dictated while Ganesh had written the epic. It is said that the site where the epic Mahabharat was written is called 'Vyas Gufa' (Vyas' cave) located near Bharoach while the place where he did his final Tapa is called Vyas Ashram located in the village of Mana two miles from the shrine of Badrinath in the Himalayas. His hermitage during the epic Mahabharat war was located in a village about ten miles north of the city of Ambala in Haryana state. River Saraswati flows nearby. This place is also famous as Vyas Ashram.

Time flew by, but still Veda Vyas did not get peace at heart. Once, while he sat near river Saraswati, full of remorse, unsatisfied and contrite, sage Narad came to him and advised him to write Srimad Bhagwat containing 18000 Slokas. This voluminous work gave him his final peace, so it is said.

His Guru was sage Yagyavalkya. His son was sage Shukdeo, the parrot saint. Veda Vyas chose five chief disciples who were initiated by him in the four Vedas and Purans. They were as follows—(a) He taught Rig Veda to his disciple named Paila; (b) Yajur Veda to his disciple Vaishampayana; (c) Sam Veda to his disciple Jaimini; (d) Atharva Veda to his disciple Sumanthu; and (e) the Purans to his disciple Ramharshan.

It is believed that sage Veda Vyas still lives, albeit in an invisible, intangible and subtle form in the shape of the vast repertoire of spiritual, philosophical and metaphysical literature that he has created for humankind, something which is not possible for any ordinary human being. These fortify the legend that he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and not an ordinary human being, a fact that is extensively covered in Vishnu Puran 3.3.

Summary of His Works :—

Veda Vyas classified the Vedas into four volumes— Rig, Yajur, Sam, Atharva.

Each of the four Vedas had various Sanhitas and Brahmanas as follows—(a) The Rig Veda—Aitareya, Kausitaki; (b) the Yajur Veda—Taiteriyā, Satpath; (c) the Sam Veda—Panchvimansa, Arseya, Vamsa, Talavakara, Daivata, Sadnimansa, Mantra, Chandogya, Samavidhana, Samhitopanishad; (d) the Atharva Veda—Gopath.

Each Veda had a sub-Veda as follows—Rig Veda had Artha-Veda, Yajur Veda had Dhanur-Veda, Sam Veda had Gandharva-Veda, and Atharva Veda had Ayurveda.

Again, the Rig and the Yajur Vedas had different Aranyakas as follows—(a) The Rig Veda—Aitareya, Kausitaki; (b) the Yajur Veda—Taiteriyā, Brhidarankya.

Each of the Vedas further had different Upanishads as follows—(a) The Rig Veda—there are 10 principal Upanishads of the Rig Veda, such as Aitareyaopanishad, Kausitaki Upanishad etc.; (b) the Yajur Veda—there are 19 principal Upanishads of the Shukla Yajur and 32 principal Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda, such as Taiteriyā, Svetashvatra, Katho, Brihdaranakya, Maitri, Ishavasya Upanishads etc.; (c) the Sam Veda—there are 16 principal Upanishads of the Sam Veda, such as Keno, Chandogya Upanishads etc.; and (d) the Atharva Veda—there are 31 principal Upanishads of the Atharva Veda, such as Mundako, Mandukyo, Prasano Upanishads etc.

Veda Vyas also wrote the 18 Purans as follows—Brahma, Padma, Vishnu, Vayu, Bhagwat, Narad, Markandey, Agni, Bhavisiya, Brahmavaivarta, Linga, Varah, Skanda, Vaaman, Kurma, Matsya, Garuda, Brahamanand Purans.

His other contributions to spiritual literature include—Mahabharat, Srimad Bhagwat, Vedant Sutra, Vyas Smriti and Laghu Vyas Sanhita.

(v) Lord Nar-Narayan—As the name suggests, this incarnation of Lord Vishnu was to establish the principle of Advaitya or non-duality of Vedanta which says that the Jiva, the living being, and the Ishwar, the Supreme Being known as Brahm are not two distinct entities but the same cosmic Consciousness existing in two different planes—the former at the microcosmic level of creation and the latter at the macrocosmic level of creation.

The word 'Nar' literally means a man, and 'Narayan' refers to the supreme Lord. At the beginning of creation, the supreme Brahm had revealed himself in two forms called Nar and Narayan. From the angle of the Upanishads and the genesis of creation described in them, the Nar was the primary man, and the Narayan was the Viraat Purush known as Vishnu. The Nar was created as an image of Narayan (refer Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda).

These two images of the Supreme Being, i.e. Nar and Narayan, were assumed by Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush, to establish the importance of Tapa (austerity and penance) as well as Vairagya (renunciation and total detachment from the material charms of this deluding world). They had matted lock of hairs on the head, held a Swan in their hands to indicate purity and wisdom, had the mark of the Chakra (discus of Vishnu) on the sole of their feet to indicate that they have conquered the world, and the sign of the Srivatsa (the foot-print of sage Durbasa) on the chest to imply their grand virtues of extreme humility, forgiveness, fortitude, tolerance, and love for devotees.

After birth, they went to the higher reaches of the northern Himalayas to do severe Tapa in the region now known as Badrikaashram. There they did Tapa for thousands of years. The king of Gods felt jealous of them and tried his best to distract them by employing all the tricks he could—such as luring them with great boons,

sending Apsaras (celestial beauties) and Kaamdeo (the God of lust and passion) to distract them with sexually explicit overtures, singing, music and dance, and so on and so forth. But he failed in all attempts, and had to surrender. The sages neither fell in any trap nor did they become angry or cursing. This incarnation therefore was taken to establish the glorious virtues of Tapa, Vairagya, Kshamaa (forgiveness), Namrataa (humility), Titiksha (endurance, sufferance, fortitude and tolerance), not having Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness and arrogance) etc.

It is believed that Lord Nar and Narayan are personified forms of these grand and glorious virtues, and are still doing Tapa in the Himalayas. Perhaps this is the reason why one finds an extreme sense of spiritual fulfilment and surging exhilaration when one meditates in the Himalayas.

(vi) Lord Dattatreya—He is regarded as a manifestation of Vishnu who was made into a child by Anusuiya, the devout wife of sage Atri, when the Trinity Gods had gone to her to test her chastity.

Lord Dattatreya is a fractional incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord of creation in his cosmic form as the Viraat Purush from whom the rest of the creation, including the creator Brahma himself, was created.

An entire Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition is dedicated to him, and it is called ‘Dattatreya Upanishad’. It is Chapter 30 of our present volume. A detailed note on Lord Dattatreya is given at the end of verse no. 4 of this Upanishad.

(vii) Lord Rishavdeo—King Naabhi had no son, so he did a great fire sacrifice accompanied by his wife Merudevi. As a result, the Yagya Purush—the personified form of the Fire God who is none other than Lord Vishnu because it is also one of the Lord’s many forms—appeared before them and asked them to ask for a boon of their choice. They requested a son in the image of the Lord, i.e. a son who would possess all the divine virtues as possessed by the Lord himself. The Lord granted them their wish and said that since there was no one like him, he would himself incarnate as their son.

Thus was born a divine son whom the king named ‘Rishavdeo’—literally meaning the best one. The child had a magnificent charm around him and was endowed with auspicious virtues. When he came of age, the king handed over the reins of the kingdom to him and himself went to the forest to do Tapa.

Rishavdeo ruled the kingdom very righteously and strictly according to the tenets of Dharma (laws of correct and rightful conduct, ethics and morality, propriety and probity). He was very endeared to his subjects. Once, the king of Gods tested his abilities by stopping clouds from giving rain, so Rishavdeo created rain by his own mystical powers so that the subjects of the kingdom would not starve.

He had a hundred sons, the eldest one being Bharat. It is after him that India is called ‘Bhaarat’. Bharat was an image of his father, and similarly endowed with noble virtues and mystical powers that come with Tapa. His nine younger brothers were Kushavarta, Ielavarta, Brahmavarta, Malaye, Ketu, Bhadrasen, Indrasprik, Vidharva and Kikat established their own kingdoms.

The next ten younger brothers remained Brahmacharis from childhood, i.e. they never married and became great sages who spent their entire life as great devotees of Lord Vishnu, preaching about the Lord and spreading his gospel. They are Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalaayan, Avihortra, Drumil, Chamas and Karbhaajan.

When the time came, king Rishavdeo handed over the responsibilities of the kingdom to his eldest son Bharat and went to the forest. He was so full of Vairagya (renunciation, detachment and dispassion towards this material world) and overwhelmed with Gyan (enlightenment and wisdom) that he became a top-class Sanyasi (a mendicant, a monk or a hermit) of the order of Avadhut as well as a Paramhans. These two states are the highest levels of Sanyas. He roamed around unconcerned with anything, lost in his own blissful thoughts about the Truth and the Consciousness. People regarded him as having become mad, and his behaviour was

so odd and unconventional that sometimes people even insulted him. But Rishavdeo was so engrossed in meditation and contemplation, so focussed on his 'self' known as the Atma that he paid no heed. He was a personified form of Sanyas and the extreme measure of Anand (bliss, ecstasy, joys and happiness) that comes with self-realisation. He epitomised the exemplary state of highest spiritual realisation and achievement of supreme bliss which is the aim of Yoga.

When the time came for him to discard his mortal body, he sat down in deep meditation and was burnt in a fire that lit itself in the surrounding forest of bamboo trees. In the way he led his life, Lord Rishavdeo laid down a sterling example as to how a truly wise man should live a fruitful life, and how he should end it.

(viii) King Prithu— The story of Prithu is a narration of how Lord Vishnu actively takes part in making the earth self-sustaining for its inhabitant creatures, and how the Lord did this by manifesting as a great king to ensure that the creation revealed by him would not suffer for want of daily necessities of life.

In the race of Manu (the first Man) was a Prajapati (the father of a large clan) named Anga. He was married to Sunitha, the mentally-created daughter of Mritu (the God of death). From her he begot a son named Ven who was of a sinful nature, most pervert and an atheist. Sages were so annoyed at him that they killed him by employing the mystical power of their Tapa (penance and austerity). From his dead body they created another king named 'Prithu'.

Prithu was crowned Emperor of the whole earth. He was a wise king and an able administrator who organised the working of the state and established a system of government.

Once there was a great famine and he sternly warned the earth to produce food (crop) from the seeds sown and not to swallow them up, or face action. The earth was terrified and appeared before him as a cow. She apologised and asked him and others to milk her and get what they wanted. So, Prithu and other sages and seers milked her, and thus were produced the agricultural crops, the body of knowledge called the Vedas, the Soma juice for doing fire sacrifices and providing refreshment, the virtues of strength and vigour, music, offerings fit for making oblations to Gods and Spirits of dead ancestors, etc. Prithu also made the earth plain and livable, created villages and towns, provided protection from fears and dangers of all kinds to the earth's inhabitants, and established the tradition of doing fire sacrifices in order to honour the Yagya Purush who is none but Lord Vishnu.

In other words, the barren earth became productive and habitable, and Prithu did the first ground-breaking work and laid the first foundation of a complex infrastructure that would be eventually built on this earth to sustain the needs of increasing population and expansion of civilisation that would eventually take place on the earth.

Hence, the earth came to be known as 'Prithivi'—the daughter of Emperor Prithu to commemorate his contribution to creation.

He performed a hundred Ashamedh Yagyas (Horse sacrifices). Towards the end of his life he preached his subjects and appointed his son Vijitaashwa on the throne. Then he went to the forest with his queen named Archi to do severe Tapa (austerity and penance) to attain Nirvana or final emancipation and salvation.

His story appears in Srimad Bhagvat, 4/15-23, and in Vishnu Puran, 1/13.

(ix) Dhanvantari— He was the Medicine Man of Gods and the one who discovered the curative powers of herbs. He is the incarnation of Lord Vishnu to provide the cure in the form of herbal remedies from the innumerable diseases that the creatures would suffer from in this world. In his role as the sustainer, protector and nourisher of this creation, this role of Vishnu was very vital as otherwise the creatures would suffer and die of so many natural diseases that the agenda of the Supreme Being to make the creation self-sustained and self-propagating would be defeated.

He emerged from the ocean when it was churned at the beginning of creation in the search for Amrit (or the elixir of life) along with other wealth or assets that are necessary to sustain and develop a pleasurable and comfortable life on earth. The pot of Amrit was held by him towards the end of this churning. Since he was a fractional incarnation of Lord Vishnu, he too had four arms and a glowing complexion that was dark with the bluish tinge of the sky.

The kings of Gods, Indra, appointed him as the celestial physician of Gods. Once, severe disease swept through earth. Then Indra requested Dhanvantari to manifest himself to eliminate the suffering of the creature. Dhanvantari was thus born as Divodas, the king of Kashi (Varanasi in the present day India). He was a great botanist and a naturalist, and compiled a *Materia Medica* of herbs. The science of healing with plants and shrubs is called *Aurveda*, and is given a status of a minor Veda. The etymology of the word ‘*Ayurveda*’ means ‘the knowledge (Veda) that makes life enjoyable, disease free and enhances its span and utility (Ayu)’.

There are other names of Dhanvantari—viz. Bhishak and Vaidya. While Dhanvantri is an expert in 300 medicines, Bhishak is in 200, and Vaidya in only 100 medicines.

The medical treatises attributed to Dhanvantari are the following—Chikitsa Dipika, Baal-Chikitsa (medicines of children), Dhanvantari-Nighantu, Vaidya-Bhaskarodaye, and *Ayurveda Saravali* (the key note or essential principles of the science of *Ayurveda*).

(x) Mohini—This is the most charming, bewitching, voluptuous and beautiful incarnation of Vishnu as a lustful enchantress. It so happened that the demons had snatched the pitcher of Amrit produced by the churning of the ocean, depriving the Gods of this ambrosia. So Vishnu had assumed the form of a beautiful and most voluptuous enchantress to deceive the demons and distribute the Amrit amongst the Gods.

This Avtaar or incarnation is meant to convey the spiritual message that one should not fall prey to worldly temptations of passions and lust as well as the charms of the sense organs and their objects in this material world because then Mukti (liberation and deliverance or freedom from the entanglements of the web-like world) would be impossible inspite of the fact that it was almost ready at hand. The demons had already got the pitcher of Amrit, and had they not fallen prey to the tempting overtures of this Mohini they would have drunk it.

(xi) Lord Hayagriva, the horse-headed incarnation—The word ‘Hayagriva’ has two parts—‘Haya’ means a horse, and ‘Griva’ means a neck or head.

There are two main interpretations of this incarnation of Lord Vishnu. According to one, when sage Yagyavalkya was deprived of the knowledge of the Yajur Veda due to the curse of his Guru Vaishampaayana, he went and did severe Tapa (austerity and penance) to please the Sun God. Pleased, the Sun God taught him another version of the same Veda by assuming the form of a deity with the head of a horse. Since the Sun is a visible manifestation of the Viraat Purush, one of the more subtle forms of Lord Vishnu, it was actually Lord Vishnu himself who had taught the sage this Veda. Hence, Lord Hayagriva is regarded as the Lord of knowledge and learning, and is given the same respect as shown to Goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of learning and wisdom.

According to another story, there was a demon with the head of a horse, and he was therefore called Hayagriva—the horse-headed one. He was the son of Diti, the mother of demons. He did severe Tapa (austerity and penance) on the banks of the river Saraswati and offered his worship to Goddess Jagdambika (Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva and the cosmic Mother). The Goddess was extremely pleased by his severe Tapa and asked for a boon, upon which Hayagriva requested immortality. The Goddess told him that all who are born must die, so this grant was practically not feasible. She asked him to ask something else. The demon was cunning, so he re-phrased his request and asked that he be killed by someone who

was exactly like him. He thought that since no two living beings are alike, he would indirectly get immortality. The Goddess granted him his desired boon. Thus armed, he let loose terror in the world, thinking that no one would now be able to kill him.

To get rid of him the Gods designed a strategy whereby Lord Vishnu lost his original head and was grafted with the head of a horse by the medicine men of the Gods named Ashvini Kumars. They are the twin sons of the Sun God. Thus, Vishnu also became a 'Hayagriva'. It was in this form that the Lord slayed the demon. This story appears in Devibhagwat, 1/5.

According to the third story, the Vedas had been stolen by two demons named Madhu and Kaitav who had hidden them in the eastern ocean. Lord Vishnu had assumed the form of Hayagriva to kill them and restore the Vedas.

The legend about the birth of these demon says that at the time Brahma the creator emerged atop a thousand-petal lotus that sprouted from the navel of Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush, two drops of water symbolising the two Gunas (qualities) of Raja and Tama (the medium and the lowest type of qualities) were present on one of the petals on which Brahma sat. Madhu was born from the drop of Raja Guna, and Kaitav from the drop of water representing Tama Guna.

Once they went up to the heaven and saw the Vedas in all their glorious form placed alongside Brahma who was engaged in the process of creation. The duo immediately stole the Vedas and hid them under the water of the eastern ocean. Brahma was confounded and requested Lord Vishnu to retrieve them as the Vedas were the former's eyes as they contained all the knowledge needed for all the aspects of creation. So Vishnu appeared as a deity with a head of a horse—i.e. as Hayagriva. The heaven was his head, the rays of the Sun were his glistening hairs, the sky and the underworld were his ears, the earth was his forehead, the river Ganges and Saraswati were the two halves of his chest, the oceans were his thighs, the Sun and the Moon were his eyes, dusk was his nostril, OM was his ornament, electric was his tongue, the Pittars (Spirits of dead ancestors) were his teeth, the Brahma Loka was his lip, and Kalratri (the night of the doomsday) was his neck.

Lord entered the ocean and went to the ocean bed, the nether world called the 'Patal Loka'. There, he began to neigh melodiously, singing the hymns of the Sam Veda. The two demons were so enchanted by this singing that they came out to hear it. Lord Hayagriva got an opportunity and he immediately took the Vedas and gave them to Brahma. After their restoration, he went back to the ocean and lived there for some time.

When the demons reached the place from where they had heard the sweet singing emanating, they found no one. So they got suspicious and rushed back to where they had concealed the Vedas to find them missing. Then they began frantically to search for the Vedas as well as the miscreant who removed the scriptures from the hiding place. They reached the surface of the ocean and found Lord Vishnu peacefully reclined on the bedstead of the celestial serpent named Sheshnath. They assumed that certainly the Lord was the one who had taken away the Vedas. They shouted and caused so much raucous that Lord Vishnu woke up from his cosmic sleep, and then there ensued a battle between the Lord and the demons which lasted for five thousand years.

Pleased by their valour and ardour, Vishnu asked them to request for a grant of a boon. The haughty demons retorted and sneered at the Lord, asking the latter to ask for a boon instead. The Lord asked that they be killed at his hands. [Markandey Puran, 81/74.] Taken aback, the demons said that they were also entitled for a boon as promised by the Lord himself. The Lord granted them permission to ask, and they requested that they be killed at a place where the earth was not submerged in water. [Markandey Puran, 81/76.] Vishnu immediately spread his thighs on the surface of the ocean, and deluded by the Lord's Maya the demons thought that dry earth has emerged from the ocean. Aside of this, they also found in this happening a chance of their own salvation and so willingly put their heads on it. Vishnu invoked his

Sudarshan Chakra (the sharp weapon of Vishnu which is like a circular saw) to chop off their heads. This episode is described in detail in the Markandey Puran, Chapter 81.

Perhaps this episode describes how the continents and islands came into being during the process of creation.

Iconographically, Lord Hayagriva is depicted as having a human body and the head of a horse. This incarnation resembles the Nrisingh incarnation when the Lord had assumed a body whose lower part was that of human, and the upper part that of a lion. An Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda is dedicated to Lord Hayagriva. It is the 29th Upanishad and bears the same name, i.e. Hayagriva Upanishad. It has only 20 Mantras.

(xii) Sri Hari, the form Vishnu assumed to bless Dhruv, the child devotee—The word ‘Hari’ means one who steals. In the context of Lord Vishnu it means the Lord who eliminates all the sorrows, worries and torments as well as the evil effects of sins and other misdemeanours of his devotees. It was in this form which is munificent and benevolent that he had revealed himself before his child devotee known as Dhruv.

The story of Dhruv is briefly as follows:-- He was the elder son of king Uttanpaad from his first wife Suniti. The king was so charmed by his second wife named Suruchi that he completely neglected Suniti and Dhruv. Once it so happened that the child Dhruv was snubbed by his step-mother for attempting to draw affection of his father. The child was very upset and despondent. He approached his mother for solace. She advised him to accept Lord Vishnu as his eternal and loving Father and protector. For this, Dhruv had to do severe Tapa (austerity and penance). The overwhelmed child was so determined that he immediately proceeded to the forest to do Tapa. He met the celestial sage Narad on the way who instructed him on ways to meditate upon the Lord. The Lord was extremely pleased by Dhruv’s sincerity and devotion and appeared before him. He blessed the child and gave him two boons—one was the restoration of his honour and kingdom of the kingdom, and the other was a permanent place in the heavens, a position so exalted, steady and unwavering that even the God could not match it. So, in due course of time, Dhruv assumed a personified form of a divine God and took up his heavenly abode in the Dhruv Loka. The story related to him is narrated in detail in the Vishnu Puran, section 1, cantos 11-12.

The Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 mentions this Dhruv Loka and Dhruv, the God, when it describes the path taken by a devotee of Lord Vishnu to the latter’s abode in heaven when the former leaves his mortal body. The devotee has taken a ride on the back of the Garud, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu who is represented by the divine ethereal Mantra known as OM in this Upanishad, and has already passed through the Satya Loka where Brahma the creator lives, the Ishan Loka where Lord Shiva lives, the Graha Loka where the different Grahas live, the Saptarishi Mandal where the seven celestial sages live (and which is represented by the Great Bear constellation of stars in the sky), the Surya Mandal which is the realm of the Sun God, and the Chandra Mandal which is the realm of the Moon God. Then he reaches this Dhruv Mandal.

The Dhruv Loka or Dhruv Mandal is represented by the North Star and its immediate environs in the celestial map. The North Star is a personified form of Dhruv. The North Star has a great symbolic importance and value here. This star remains static and unchanging in its position in the sky—it is a metaphor for stability, uniformity, unchanging nature, steadfastness and durability. It is a vital guide for navigation purposes in the night. Hence, if a person is steady in his thoughts and single-mindedly pursues his chosen path, always keeping the aim in sight, he is sure to achieve success and obtain his objective in life. The objective of the spiritual aspirant is to attain his Lord Vishnu and find Mukti. So when he has crossed all hurdles and overcome formidable obstacles in the symbolic form of praises and honours lavished on him en-route to heaven as described above in this narration, it is

only then that he can rupture through this world and reach the exalted abode where Vishnu lives. Now, if the celestial sky is imagined as a huge sphere, then this is the point from where the cosmic traveller has ruptured the solar system and entered the upper reaches of the cosmos where the upper heaven is situated. Since Lord Vishnu's abode is supposed to be unchanging and steady in its glory unlike other worlds, the metaphor of the North Star as a gateway to Vaikunth, the abode of Vishnu, appears to be very appropriate here.

(xiii) Yagya as a manifestation of Lord Vishnu—The legendary story associated with this incarnation is briefly as follows. The daughter of Swayambhuva Manu and his wife Shatrupa was named Aakuti. She was married to Prajapati Ruchi. Lord Vishnu was born as her son who was named 'Yagya'. He was very holy and divine from childhood, and is regarded as the forefather who initiated and established the system of doing fire sacrifices as a means of empowerment and harnessing the dynamic energy and power of Nature. This helped to energise and empower the Gods who represented the various forces of Nature needed for the sustenance, nourishment, development and growth of this creation.

He had also fought the demons who were tormenting his father and mother while they did Tapa, and had vanquished them. His wife was named Dakshina (literally meaning the donation that is given during fire sacrifices), and he had twelve sons from her. The Gods were very obliged with Lord Yagya and anointed him to the throne of Indra, their king in heaven.

In the Purans there are numerous instances when great kings and sages had done fire sacrifices, and the personified form of the sacred fire, the Fire God, had emerged to grant them their desired requests. This glorious revelation of the sacred fire is also Lord Vishnu in his divine form as the Fire God. So we deduce that the Fire God is one of the many manifestations of Vishnu.

(xiv) Hans, the divine Swan—Lord Vishnu had once appeared as a divine Swan to preach the four celestial sages Sankaadi who were the mental sons of the creator Brahma.

Once it so happened that Sankaadi approached Brahma and wanted to know how can someone, who wished to have Moksha (final liberation and deliverance from this material world; freedom from attachment to the sense objects of this world; emancipation and salvation), effectively control his mind and sub-conscious and divert them away from the material charms of the world and its sense objects, and towards the inner self where the Atma, the pure consciousness, resides?

Brahma was confused and did not have the answer. So they meditated upon Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, from whom Brahma was born. Thus Vishnu appeared as a divine Swan. The sages could not recognise the Lord in that form and asked who he was. Then Vishnu, in his form as a Swan, preached the great tenets of metaphysics and Vedanta to Sankaadi. Thus, this revelation of Vishnu as a Swan was an embodiment of the greatest and the most refined form of spiritual knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. Henceforth, Swan came to be known as a synonym for these eclectic and divine virtues. This story appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 11/13.

The Swan is depicted as a vehicle of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. In other words, those who worship Swan ride on the crest of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment.

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 17, 19-20 clearly say that 'Hans' is a term employed to refer both to the Atma as well as Brahm. While the Atma is the pure consciousness that is the 'true self' of the individual creature, Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness represented by the Mantra 'OM' or 'Pranav'. The Hans Mantra is the 'Sutra' or thread that links the Atma to Brahm.

An enlightened and self-realised person thinks of himself as a Swan and feels exhilarated that he is not an ordinary man bogged down by worldly fetters, but an exalted soul that is like a Swan.

The bird *Swan* or *Hans* is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or *Pran* passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature's inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his *Pran* because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

A wise man is expected to pick up the truth and leave aside the non-truths from the basket full of worldly charms of astounding proportions and myriad forms of temptations present in this creation.

Those wise men who have developed the level of wisdom, erudition and sagacity that they can discriminate between what is good and what is not, what is true and what is false, what is liberating and what is ensnaring for their soul are also honoured by the epithet of being a 'Hans' (Swan) because they are just like the Swan which has the legendary ability to pick up pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk leaving behind water and other adulterants in it. Even amongst such wise and enlightened men, those who have realised the 'truth' about their own self in the real sense, i.e. have become 'self-realised' and hence 'Brahm-realised' truthfully, and have consequentially attained the highest level of enlightenment and wisdom are called 'Param Hans'—literally meaning those who have accessed the 'supreme type of enlightenment'. The grand and auspicious virtues and characteristics of such an exalted Sanyasi who is self and Brahm realised has been described in detail in the *Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hans' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hans' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer *Dhyānbindu Upanishad*, verse no. 63).

There are many versions of Lord Vishnu's incarnations or *Vyuhās*. *Srimad Bhagwata* gives three lists having 22 names (1/3/6-22), 23 names (2/7/1 ff.), and 16

names 911/4/3 ff.). It also declares that the Avatars or incarnations are numerous (1/3/26).]

19. In the center of the 'Anand Vyuha' (referred to above) is a grand edifice called 'Chinmaya Prasaad'. It extends to thousands of Yojans (a measurement of distance).

[The word 'Chinmaya' means knowledge, enlightenment, wisdom, erudition, awareness and realisation of the Truth. The word 'Prasaad' refers to a building, a dwelling, a mansion, a fort, a citadel, or a palace which is of a grand proportion. In the present context the inference is that when one becomes perfectly self-realised and Brahm-realised, he attains such a high degree and intensity of bliss and ecstasy that is so profound, spiritually fulfilling and invigorating for him that it is like a huge mansion extending over a large area of land belonging to some very big personality such as a great Emperor. Palaces of Kings and Emperors are known to be extensive in area and colossus in dimension. This metaphor is employed here to give the spiritual aspirant an idea of the extent of his happiness and joy when he would be finally self-realised and Brahm-realised. He would be as contented and happy as an Emperor of the world is.]

This glorious 'Prasaad' has millions of Vimaans (chariots of Gods, shrines, towers and altars), and is endowed with an aura of extreme auspiciousness, divinity and holiness.

It is full of countless orchards, gardens and forests representing the meaning and the doctrines of the eternal Upanishads. [Forest, gardens and orchards represent the beauty of Nature. They stand for such glorious and invigorating virtues of Nature as greenery, life, vibrancy, colour, purity, beauty and charms of the best quality. Without the gardens, the forests and the orchards, the earth would have been a barren stretch of lifeless landscape consisting of nothing else but mountains, hills, rocks, boulders, prickly thorns and deserts. The green coverage of the forest, garden and orchard breathe life into earth. They produce flowers and fruits—which are metaphors for the best, the purest and the most beautiful things that are present on earth. The implication of this analogy of the orchards, the gardens and the forests vis-à-vis the Upanishads is that the latter are the extracts of the best of knowledge that is available to the human race. They present the refined extract of the Vedas in an easy to accept form, a format that is most beneficial for mankind. They are like the honey which is rejuvenating for the soul. They are like the beautiful flower in the garden of scriptures. They are like the fruit without which the orchard of different philosophies, scriptures and schools of thoughts would be useless. By comparing the Upanishads with the life-giving and like-fostering green and vibrant forests, gardens and orchards the teacher means to convey the idea that the Upanishads provide the spiritual aspirant all the best of knowledge that he needs. If he studies the Upanishads and follows their tenets, he would be sure of finding his spiritual goal.

It is made extremely charming and enticing by the echo of sweet melodious voices of divine Hans (Swans) representing the recitation of the Mantras (hymns) of the Sam Veda. This melodious singing of the hymns of the Sam Veda makes the habitat all the more divine and holy, all the more charming and alluring, all the more pleasant and sweet.

[The Sam Veda hymns are special in the sense that they are extremely sweet to sing and hear, are extremely melodious and soulful. The 'Hans' is the bird Swan which is regarded as the celestial vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of learning and speech. She is depicted as holding an Indian lute, symbolizing her association with singing. It is to be noted here that singing requires special skills and

mastery over the fine nuances of the language, its word and alphabets. Singing also entails a sharp memory and a fine-tuned voice because even a minor distraction would completely spoil the process of singing. The Swan itself is regarded as a wise bird which picks up the best and leaves the rest—for instance it picks up pearls and discards all other gems from an assortment of jewels. Hence, the metaphor of the Hans singing the hymns of the Sam Veda is used here to indicate there is a constant singing of sweet and melodious hymns in this heaven.

When this is applied to the self-realised person's own personal life it means that he is constantly engaged in chanting the divine Mantra that pertains to Brahm, i.e. the Mantra 'OM', and remains engrossed in contemplation and meditation so much so that the cosmic music known as the Naad the sound of OM persistently reverberates throughout his inner being. His breath is no longer merely an exhalation and inhalation of air, but it transforms into the sound of 'Ha' and 'Sa' respectively that is tantamount to his becoming a singer of the Sam Veda himself though he may not be aware of it. The constant sound of Naad and OM that echoes in his inner being provides him with spiritual bliss and ecstasy in a sustained and consistent way.]

It is adorned by endless rows of tall towers, steeples, spires and cupolas symbolizing Anand (spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity) of a high order.

It is well endowed with waterfalls representing the exhilarating nectar of Anand that gushes forth when one has reached the spiritual state of highest knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment, when one has become self-realised and Brahm-realised.

It is established inside a glorious realm of dynamic Anand that is eternal, immutable, indivisible, steady and constant.

[That is, Anand—or spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity that comes when one has become self-realised and Brahm-realised, when one has understood the Truth of existence and his own 'self', when one has become acquainted with the cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading and all-inclusive, when one has tasted the nectar of spiritual bliss that brings fulfillment and contentedness in its wake—is so overwhelming and all-encompassing that it surrounds and swirls around the spiritual aspirant from all sides. This instance is cited here to illustrate that the Atma, the pure consciousness and the truthful 'self', when realised, fills the entire being of the aspirant with ecstasy and bliss of an exuberant quality. This Atma, which itself is blissful, fulfilled, and an image of the cosmic Atma known as Brahm, resides inside the gross body of the aspirant. So it can be said that in the state of existence when the aspirant has become self-realised and submerged in surging waves of Anand, when he is completely soaked and drenched in Anand, this internal resident known as the Atma would be surrounded on all sides with Anand. It will be soaked and submerged in Anand.

In the present context when the spiritual aspirant enters the realm of the upper heaven where the Adi-Narayan resides, i.e. when he has reached the climax of Brahm-realisation, he has virtually entered the portals of holiness and divinity that are surrounded on all sides by Anand. Anand lives inside as well as outside of this place.]

This divine abode is an ocean of immense astonishments that have no end.

Inside the inner courtyard of this grand palace (known as the 'Anand Vyuha') is a divine Vimaan known as 'Pranav'.

[Pranav is a synonym for the supreme transcendental Consciousness that exists in creation in the form of ethereal vibrations that give vibrancy, vigour, energy and dynamism to existence. Pranav on the one hand is regarded as a most subtle revelation

of Brahm, and on the other hand it is treated as the cosmic background sound that has been conceptualized in the form of the Mantra OM.

The word Vimaan has been variously used to mean a chariot, a holy shrine, an altar etc. So this word can mean here that the supreme Brahm resides in a place which is surrounded by extreme Anand; there is no misery and grief where there is Brahm. It also means an altar or divine seat where the supreme Brahm is established, and it implies one's inner self. Then it might also mean the Mantra OM which is regarded as the king of all Mantras and is used by all spiritual aspirants who wish to attain Brahm as it is the Mantra of Brahm.] (19).

20. This Vimaan, where Pranav (Brahm) is seated, is as splendorous and radiant as millions of Suns, and has millions of towers, steeples, spires and cupolas symbolizing Anand (spiritual bliss and ecstasy) that is effervescent, bubbling and pulsating.

Inside it is a mountain known as 'Bodhanand' (literally the mountain of bliss obtained upon spiritual realisation), and on its summit is an octagonal pavilion consisting of eight holy alphabets or syllables.

[The eight sides of this pavilion represent the eight alphabets of the Mantra of Brahm.]

In the center of this grand pavilion is an energized altar that radiates Anand in its most effervescent form. It is adorned by vibrant greenery symbolizing lively and exuberant form of Anand.

On it is lighted a flame of immense splendour and intensity. It represents the highest form of pulsating, effervescent and lively Anand (spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity).

In its core is a divine lotus of eight petals representing the eight letters of the divine Mantra. This lotus is like an energized seat of the supreme Divinity (i.e. it is a center that has been empowered with special spiritual and mystical powers).

On this symbolic lotus-seat is a filament representing Pranav. It is made alive by and is energized and glorified with the radiance and splendour that effuses from the brilliant Sun, the magnificent Moon and the dynamic Fire that are located here simultaneously (one above the other in this sequence).

[Just like a consecrated idol is placed on a seat in the temple, the supreme Brahm is present as Pranav on the lotus-like seat consecrated by Mantras. Even as the idol is said to be empowered with all the mystical powers of the deity it represents and it is a visible form of the deity, the most dynamic powers and forceful cosmic energy of the supreme Brahm which are extremely effective, powerful, vibrant, vigorous, brilliant and energetic by nature, but invisible and most subtle, have revealed themselves in the form of the Sun, the Moon and the Fire. It must be noted that all these three entities have one thing in common—they have illumination and brightness that are evident even in the background of darkness. In other words, a wise man can experience the presence of the eternal light of consciousness known as Brahm even in this gross and mortal world which is engulfed in a veil of darkness representing numerous Vikars or faults, Vasanas or passions, Maya or delusions and Agyan or ignorance.]

Inside this splendorous filament representing the brilliant light of spiritual realisation, which is accompanied by Anand (bliss and ecstasy) of an effervescent and bubbly kind, is another subtle seat representing infinite auspiciousness and holiness.

On it is established the divine 'Maha-Yantra' (the great, holy, powerful and potent apparatus used in worship and seeking fulfillment of one's desires, which in the present case is spiritual liberation and deliverance as well as attainment of eternity

and blessedness). It is energized and alive with splendour and energy; it effuses brilliant illumination and radiance (20).

21. This Maha Yantra is like a complex fusion of all the grand virtues and divine qualities of the supreme Brahm, and is therefore a symbol of supreme Anand (bliss, ecstasy, joys and happiness) that is associated with Brahm.

It is an image of 'Chitta' which refers to the dynamic consciousness, the active sub-conscious, and the vibrant mind.

It is 'Nirmal'—i.e. it is pristine pure, clean, uncorrupt and unadulterated.

It is an image of the supreme transcendental Brahm (the eternal cosmic Consciousness, the Absolute Truth, the only entity that can inject life and dynamism to each individual unit of creation, the only entity that is truly eternal and imperishable, from which everything in existence has had its origin and in which it would come to rest at the end but which does not need anything itself to come into existence nor anything upon which to rest, and the one who is therefore truthfully called the Supreme Being as there is no one superior to him).

It is indeed an image of the most esoteric, mystical and enigmatic secret of Brahm which is known as 'Kaivalya'¹.

This 'Maha Yantra' is a representative form, a symbol, a codified instrument that represents in a miniature form of the supreme Vaikunth which is the abode of Lord Vishnu. Hence it is also called 'Narayan Yantra'—the instrument that can help one to reach Lord Vishnu.

[Vishnu and Narayan is the same Lord having two names. The prayer or worship instrument, the Yantra, of a particular deity is deemed to be the latter's temporal habitat, and this is the reason why this instrument has the same mystical powers and importance as the heavenly abode of that deity. Therefore, since the aspirant is a devotee of Lord Vishnu and aims to worship him, the Yantra is called 'Narayan Yantra' and is deemed to be an image of the heavenly abode of Narayan, which is Vaikunth.]

It is invincible and always victorious—i.e. it never fails to provide the spiritual aspirant his much sought after goal of Mukti and Moksha, or to obtain eternal liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation (21).

[Note—¹The word *Kaivalya* has been repeated often in the Upanishads—and put simply it means 'one of its only kind'. Well, if Brahm is one of its only kind then naturally anything related to Brahm would also be unique. Usually the term 'Kaivalya' is used in the context of Mukti or Moksha which is liberation and deliverance of the soul, or salvation and emancipation. When one has attained Brahm-realisation, when he has been wise enough to be enlightened about the Absolute Truth which is always one and not more than one, he is deemed to have accessed the best sort of Mukti or Moksha for himself because then his soul would have known its true parent and become free from all delusions about its destiny and its own identity. Such a wise, self-realised, awakened and enlightened man would see only Brahm, the universal Consciousness that is the only truth in creation everywhere, in each unit of creation. He has realised that all the Gods and all the other living beings are none but this one Brahm playing various roles in different garbs. He realises that the entire cycle of birth and death is only one aspect of Brahm, known as the fourth Paad of Brahm which is dominated by and driven by Avidya—extreme 'ignorance', and Maya—extreme delusions. Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 5, Canto 4, paragraph no. 3-6, 9-13, and Canto 6, paragraph no. 13.

But the irony is that this creation is so dynamic, life-like, vigorous and vibrant that to call it 'Avidya' and 'Maya' is too difficult a proposal to be easily accepted by the mind and the intellect. Hence, the aspirant remains oscillating

between this and that, he is torn between various definitions of Mukti and Moksha. This is implied in the long narrative of this Upanishad which describes his long and most magical journey through layers after layers of heavens and their numerous Gods and Goddesses as outlined in previous Cantos. At every stop en-route he encounters a heaven and a God which is no less divine, grand, holy, sacred, magnificent and marvelous than either the predecessor or the one who would come next. A wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant understands that they are all images of Brahm, and therefore he continues to move ahead.

Since he has actually understood the Truth, he does not waste time anywhere; he is not distracted by the fascinating charms of so many heavens and the numerous types of Muktis or Mokshas. Finally he reaches the citadel; ultimately he finds the glittering gem in search of which he had launched himself on this arduous journey. He realises Brahm, the Truth and the eternal Consciousness. This is 'Kaivalya' state of realisation when there is no notion of duality and dichotomy, when there is no schism and differences, when there is no more than one type of Mukti or Moksha. It is the state of being one with Brahm.

This fructifies simply when the aspirant realises that his own Atma, his 'true self', is none other than this Brahm residing in his own bosom, in the subtle space of his heart. When this realisation dawns upon him, say where is the need to go to so many heavens or seek so many Gods and beg before them? This exalted state of the aspirant is his 'Kaivalya' state. This realisation completely fulfills him; he feels fully contented and peaceful; he is rested and tranquil. Except this 'holy and divine self', nothing matters to him. Therefore, he needs no other form of Mukti or Moksha.]

22. [The disciple asked—] 'What is the shape of this Narayan Yantra?'

When the disciple asked this question, the wise and learned teacher replied—
'It is as follows (i.e. it should be constructed as follows)—

One should first make a hexagon. Inside it is made a lotus with six petals. In the center of this lotus the divine Mantra of Pranav, i.e. OM should be written.

In the center of Pranav (OM) is written the Beej Mantra (the seed or root Mantra which is a syllable with a vowel sound) of Lord Narayan—which is 'Ang' (as in *rum* or *rung*).

This Beej Mantra should be accompanied by a request that the desires of the worshipper be fulfilled. For this purpose, a sentence is written in Sanskrit—'Mum Sarwabhist-Sidhim Kuru Kuru Swaha'. ['Fulfill my expectations and desires successfully; let me achieve success in my endeavours and let my wishes be fulfilled. I repeat it again. I offer my oblations to you.']

[This Beej Mantra is pregnant with the divine mystical powers of Lord Narayan. It can help one to attain not only the Lord himself, but, at the same time, also access his powerful cosmic energy and dynamic potentials. Hence, the request is a way of making a written petition before the Lord.

The way of writing this sentence is as follows—either the word 'Mum' (meaning my or me), or the syllable that relates to the worshipper's own name, i.e. his own Beej Mantra, is written above the Beej Mantra of Narayan. The second word 'Sarwabhist-Sidhim' (meaning let all the desired and expectations be fulfilled) is written below the Beej Mantra of Narayan. To the left of the Beej Mantra is written the twin words 'Kuru Kuru' (meaning do, do), and the last word 'Swaha' (meaning offering of oblations and respects) is written on the right.]

The six syllables or letters of the Mantras of Lord Vishnu and Lord Nrisingh should be written on the six petals of the lotus such that each petal has one syllable. The Mantra for Lord Vishnu is 'OM Vishnave Namaha', and for Lord Nrisingh is 'Aiyen(g) Klin(g) Srin(g) Hrin(g) Kshron(g) Phat'.

[The six syllables or letters of the Mantra for Vishnu are—OM + Vi + Shna + Ve + Na + Maha = 6.

The six syllables or letters of the Mantra for Nrisingh are—Aiyen(g) + Klin(g) + Srin(g) + Hrin(g) + Kshron(g) + Phat = 6.

The way to write these two six-lettered Mantras on the six petals is as follows—one letter of the first Mantra, i.e. of Vishnu, is written inside each petal towards its tip, so that all the six letters are completed when the sixth petal is reached. The six letters of the second Mantra, i.e. of Nrisingh, are written in a similar fashion, but below the letters of the first Mantra and towards the center of the petal.

Hence, each petal has a pair of syllables or letters, one from each Mantra. They are written in a clockwise manner starting from the northern petal.

It should be noted here that the sequence for writing the Mantras of Vishnu and Nrisingh as narrated here is followed at all other places where more than one Mantra dedicated to different deities are to be written. If the sequence has more than two Mantras, then also the pattern would be the same—viz. the first row would be of the letters of the first Mantra, the second row would contain the letters of the second Mantra written below the first row, the third row would contain the letters of the third Mantra which are written below those of the second row, and so on and so forth.

Thus, the sequence presently is as follows—(i) Petal no. 1 = ‘OM’ at the tip, and ‘Aiyen(g)’ in the center. (ii) Petal no. 2 = ‘Vi’ at the tip, and ‘Kling’ in the center. (iii) Petal no. 3 = ‘Shna’ at the tip, and ‘Srin(g)’ in the center. (iv) Petal no. 4 = ‘Ve’ at the tip, and ‘Hrin(g)’ in the center. (v) Petal no. 5 = ‘Na’ at the tip, and ‘Kshron(g)’ in the center. And (vi) Petal no. 6 = ‘Maha’ at the tip, and ‘Phat’ in the center.]

In the spaces between two petals, the six syllables or six letters of the Mantras of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are written. These Mantras are as follows—(i) for Lord Ram it is—‘Rang Ramaye Namaha’, and (ii) for Lord Krishna it is—‘Kling Krishnaye Namaha’.

[The syllable ‘Ran(g)’ is the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, and ‘Klin(g)’ is the Beej Mantra of Lord Krishna. The word ‘Namaha’ has a universal meaning—‘I bow most reverentially before you’.

When the Mantras are written outside the petals, they are written in the bowl-like concave cavity that is formed at the junction point of two adjacent petals. The Mantra is written along this bend and follows its contours. The first one-third part of the given Mantra is written in the descending side of the first petal or the left hand side of the concave cavity formed between the two adjacent petals, the second one-third part of the Mantra is written in the hollow or the trough of the cavity between the two adjacent sides of the pair of petals, and the last one-third part of the Mantra is written on the ascending limb of the second petal.

If the number of Mantras to be written is more than one then the first Mantra is written on the top, the last Mantra at the bottom, and all the rest of the Mantra in between them in the sequence they appear. For instance, if there are four Mantras to be written in the space between the petals, then Mantra no. 4 appears at the bottom and nearest to the outer surface of the concerned petals, followed by Mantra no. 3 and 2 above it, and finally Mantra no. 1 is written on the top of the pile.

In the present instance, first the six letters of the Mantra of Lord Ram are written in the space between two adjacent petals, and below this sequence is written the Mantra of Lord Krishna.

Hence obviously, the sequence in which the pairs of syllables or letters of the two sets of Mantras for Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are written in the space between the petals would be respectively as follows—Ran(g) and Klin(g); Raa and Kri; Maa

and Shnaa; Ye and Ye; Na and Na; and Maha and Maha. The first letter of the pair, the one that relates to Lord Ram, would be placed on the top, and the second that relates to Lord Krishna would be below the first in the sequence outlined above.]

Inside the six corners or cardinal points of the hexagon are written the six syllables or letters of the Mantra of Sudarshan (the divine and invincible weapon of Lord Vishnu which is in the shape of a circular saw having sharp serrated edges; the Discus). This Mantra is the following—‘Sahastraar Hum Phat’. [The word ‘Sahastraar’ means having thousands of sharp serrated edges. Hum and Phat are esoteric words used in occult worship.]

Outside these six corners, in the space between them, is written the six-lettered Mantra of Lord Shiva prefixed by the Pranav Mantra, i.e. by OM. This Mantra is—‘OM Namaha Shivaye’.

[Once again, only one syllable or letter is placed in the space between any two corners of the hexagon.] (22).

23. Outside this central hexagon, the word OM is written continuously around it in such a fashion that an arched ring is formed which encircles the hexagon from all sides.

[OM is written like the long vowel ‘U’ (as in *you*, *broom*) of the Sanskrit language. It is the sixth vowel. When written on paper it is like the English alphabet ‘M’ with all its limbs curved concavely. So, when it is written without lifting the pen the resultant sketch resembles a series of arched pillars that support an ancient building or bridge. The base of this arched structure would be the six tips of the hexagon, and from the perspective of this Yantra it would be like the petals of the lotus drawn inside the hexagon. That is, it would be a circle or ring of continuous arches that encloses the central hexagon.] (23).

24. Outside this ring is made another circle or ring of eight arches to symbolize a lotus flower having eight petals.

Inside its eight petals are written the Mantras of Lord Narayan and Lord Nrisingh having eight letters or syllables each. These two Mantras are as follows—(i) for Narayan it is ‘OM¹ Namoha Naaraayanaaye’, and (ii) for Nrisingh it is ‘Jai Jai Nrisingh’.

[The method and sequence of writing these letters of the Mantras would be the same as described in paragraph no. 22 in relation to those of Vishnu and Nrisingh. The only difference being that now the number of petals and letters is eight instead of six.]

In the spaces between the eight petals would be written the Mantras of Lords Ram, Krishna and Srikar which have eight syllables or letters each. These Mantras are as follows—(i) for Lord Ram it is ‘OM Ramaye Hum Phat Swaha’, (ii) for Lord Krishna it is ‘Klin(g) Daamodaraaye Namaha’, and (iii) for Lord Srikar it is ‘Uttishtha Srikar Swaha’.

[Once again, the method that was used to write the six letters of Lord Ram’s and Krishna’s Mantras in the space between the six petals of the hexagon as described in paragraph no. 22 is also followed here, the only difference being that now the number of letters or syllables of the Mantras as well as the number of petals of the lotus is eight instead of six in that case.

The eight letters of the Mantra for Lord Ram are—OM + Ra + Ma + Ye + Hum + Phat + Swa + Ha = 8.

The eight letters of the Mantra for Lord Krishna are—Klin(g) + Daa + Mo + Da + Raa + Ye + Na + Maha = 8.] (24).

[Note—¹The monosyllable OM refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, and the cosmic Consciousness of creation that is the primary and principal source, and cause, of everything that exists in this creation. When any Mantra is uttered, this principal Lord, Brahm, is first saluted before one pays one's respects to the deity to whom that particular Mantra is dedicated. All the Gods and Goddesses, along with all their manifestations are nothing but the same Brahm playing various roles and displaying his profoundly majestic abilities, his numerous virtues and uncountable characteristics through them. One must first recognise the Principal, pay his respects to him and recognises his superiority before he can hope to please his juniors who are dependent upon this Principal because the latter is also the Lord of these individual Gods and Goddesses. In fact, all the Gods and the Goddesses are primarily the supreme Brahm in these forms who is simply playing out his divine cosmic roles in their forms.

So, Brahm represented by his specific word 'OM' is first saluted before the deity to whom the Mantra is dedicated is showed honours.

For instance, in the Mantra 'OM Namō Narayanaaye', first the supreme Brahm is remembered before one bows to Lord Narayan (Vishnu) who is none but Brahm with this name.

It ought to be remembered that this principle is applicable to all the Mantras in this or any other Upanishad. This is a universal principle applicable to all the Mantras.]

25. Outside this ring or circle of eight petals or arches, another ring or circle is made by continuously writing the OM Mantra as previously described. [This would be the second ring.] (25).

26. Outside this arched circle or ring is made another lotus having nine petals.

Inside its nine petals are written the Mantras of Lords Ram, Krishna and Hayagriva, each Mantra having nine letters or syllables. These Mantras are the following—(i) for Lord Ram it is 'OM Ramchandraaye Namaha OM', (ii) for Lord Krishna it is 'Klin(g) Krishnaaye Govindaaye Namaha', and (iii) for Lord Hayagriva it is 'Hrishon(g) Hayagrivaaye Namaha Hrishon(g)'.

[The nine letters or syllables of the Mantra for Ram are—OM + Ra + Ma + Cha + Ndra + Na + Maha + OM = 9.

The nine letters or syllables of the Mantra for Krishna are—Klin(g) + Kri + Shna + Go + Vi + Ndaa + Ye + Na + Maha = 9.

The nine letters or syllables of the Mantra for Hayagriva are—Hrishon(g) + Ha + Ya + Gri + Vaa + Ye + Na + Maha + Hrishon(g) = 9.

Once again, the same procedure as narrated in the previous paragraphs is followed. Hence, one letter or syllable of each Mantra is written inside one petal. The first one is of Lord Ram, below it is that of Lord Krishna, and below it is that of Lord Hayagriva. For instance, the three letters that would be written in the first petal are as follows—towards the tip or apex of the petal would be 'OM' for Ram, below it would be 'Kling' for Krishna, and then below it, towards the center of the petal, would be 'Hrishong' for Lord Hayagriva.

This sequence would be followed for all the nine petals and the nine letters or syllables of these three Mantras.]

Between these nine petals, i.e. in the space between them on the outside is written the nine letters or syllables of the Mantra for Lord Dakshin Murti (i.e. the south facing Lord; Lord Shiva). This Mantra is 'OM Dakshinaa-murti-rii-shwar-om'.

This is also called the 'Mala Mantra' of Lord Dakshina Murti, i.e. it is a Mantra that is used to turn the beads of the prayer rosary when one meditates upon Lord Shiva in his form as the south-facing Lord.

[The nine letters are written towards the upper side of the space between the petals. The nine letters are OM + Da + Kshi + Naa + Mu + Rti + Rii + Sswar + OM = 9.

There is an entire Upanishad bearing the same name and dedicated to the Lord Dakshina Murti in the Krishna Yajur Veda. It has been included in the fourth volume in this series that deals with the Upanishads of this particular Veda.] (26).

27. Outside it is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Lord Narayan.

[This Beej Mantra is 'Ang' as in *among*. To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the third ring.] (27).

28. Outside this ring is made another lotus having ten petals.

[As in the previous cases, this ten-petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra 'An(g)', and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

Inside the petals, the ten letters or syllables of the Mantra of Lords Ram and Krishna are written. These ten-lettered Mantras are as follows—(i) for Lord Ram it is 'Hun(g) Jaanki-vallabhaaye Swaha', and (ii) for Lord Krishna it is 'Gopijan-vallabhaaye Swaha'.

[The ten letters of Ram's Mantra are—Hun(g) + Jaa + Na + Ki + Va + Lla + Bhaa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10.

The ten letters of Krishna's Mantra are—Go + Pi + Ja + Na + Va + Lla + Bhaa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10.

As outlined earlier, one petal contains one letter of each Mantra, with the one related to Lord Ram written towards the tip, and that of Lord Krishna below it. Therefore, the first petal would have the following combination of letters or syllables—'Hun(g)' for Ram, and below it 'Go' for Krishna; the second would have 'Ja' for Ram, and 'Go' for Krishna, and so on and so forth. This order is followed for the rest of the petals of the entire ring.]

In the space between the ten petals is written the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh having ten letters. This Mantra is 'OM Namo Bhagwate Sri-maha-nrisinghaaye Kaal-danstra-vadanaaye Mum Vighnaan Pach Pach Swaha'.

[This Mantra basically requests Lord Nrisingh, the half lion and half man incarnation of Lord Vishnu to crush and eliminate all the obstacles and hurdles in the path of the worshipper and give him protection. This Lord has teeth which are as sharp as swords and a body which is as strong as the strongest thing ever created. An entire Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Nrisingh in the Atharva Veda, and it is included in our present volume as Chapter no. 7.

It should be noted that in the present case, the ten letters would be as follows—OM + Namo + Bhagwate + Sri-maha-nrisinghaaye + Kaal-danstra-vadanaaye + Mum + Vighnaan + Pach + Pach + Swaha = 10.] (28).

29. Outside the lotus with ten petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Lord Narsingh. This Beej Mantra is 'Kshron(g)'. To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the fourth ring.] (29).

30. Outside this ring is made another lotus having twelve petals.

[As in the previous cases, this twelve-petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra 'Kshron(g)', and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

Inside the petals, the twelve letters or syllables of the Mantra of Lords Narayan and Vasudeo are written. [Both the names are of Lord Vishnu.]

These twelve-lettered Mantras are as follows—(i) for Lord Narayan it is 'OM Namō Bhagwate Naaraayanaaye', and (ii) for Lord Vasudeo it is 'OM Namō Bhagwate Vaasudevaaye'.

[The twelve letters of the Mantra for Narayan are—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Naa + Raa + Ya + Naa + Ye = 12.

The twelve letters of the Mantra for Vasudeo are—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Va + Su + De + Vaa + Ye = 12.

As outlined earlier, one petal contains one letter of each Mantra, with the one related to Lord Narayan written towards the tip, and that of Lord Vasudeo below it. Therefore, the first petal would have the following combination—'OM' for Narayan written towards the tip, and below it 'OM' for Vasudeo; the second would have 'Na' for Narayan, and 'Na' for Vasudeo, and so on and so forth. This order is followed for the rest of the petals of the entire ring.]

In the space between the twelve petals are written the twelve-lettered Mantras of Lords Maha Vishnu, Ram and Krishna. These Mantras are as follows—(i) for Lord Maha Vishnu it is 'OM Namō Bhagwate Maha Vishnawe'; (ii) for Lord Ram it is 'OM Hrin(g) Bharataagraj Ram Klin(g) Swaha'; and (iii) for Lord Krishna it is 'Srin(g) Hrin(g) Klin(g) Krishnaaye Govindaaye Namaha'.

[The twelve letters or syllables are written in a sequential manner in such a way that the ones for Lord Maha Vishnu appear in the space between the two petals towards their tip, below it would be the Mantras for Lord Ram, and below this would be the Mantras for Lord Krishna. One letter or syllable of each Mantra would be placed between two petals in a clockwise manner, starting with the first letter of each Mantra. Hence, the ones written between the first and the second petals would be 'OM', 'OM' and 'Sring' for Maha Vishnu, Ram and Krishna respectively, followed by other letters between other petals, and finally concluding with 'We' (of Vishnawe), 'Ha' (of Swaha) and 'Ha' (of Namaha) which are the last letters for the Mantras of Maha Vishnu, Ram and Krishna respectively.]

31. Outside the lotus with twelve petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Lord Jaganmohan. This Beej Mantra is 'Klin(g)'. To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the fifth ring.] (31).

32. Outside this ring is made another lotus having fourteen petals.

[As in the previous cases, this fourteen-petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra 'Klin(g)', and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

Inside the petals, the fourteen letters or syllables of the Mantra of Lords Laxmi-Narayan, Hayagriva, Gopal and Dadhi-Vaaman are written.

These fourteen-lettered Mantras are as follows—(i) for Lord Laxmi-Narayan it is 'OM Hrin(g) Hrin(g) Srin(g) Srin(g) Laxmi-vasudevaaye Namaha'; (ii) for Lord Hayagriva it is 'OM Namaha Sarvakoti-sarvavidya-raajaaye'; (iii) for Lord Gopal it is 'Klin(g) Krishnaaye Gopal-chudaamanaye Swaha'; and (iv) for Lord Dadhi-Vaaman it is 'OM Namō Bhagwate Dadhi-vaamanaaye OM'.

[As outlined earlier, one petal contains one letter of each Mantra, with the one related to Lord Laxmi-Narayan written towards the tip, followed below by that of Lord Hayagriva, Lord Gopal and Lord Dadhi-Vaaman, with the last ones being at the base of the petals.

Therefore, the first petal would have the following combination—‘OM’ of the Mantra for Laxmi-Narayan written towards the tip, below it is written ‘OM’ for Hayagriva, below it would be written ‘Klin(g)’ for Gopal, and finally at the base would be placed ‘OM’ for Dadhi-Vaaman. This order is followed for the rest of the petals of the entire ring.

The fourteen letters or syllables are as follows—(i) for Lord Laxmi-Narayan = OM + Hrin(g) + Hrin(g) + Srin(g) + Srin(g) + La + Xmi + Va + Su + De + Vaa + Ye + Na + Maha = 14; (ii) for Lord Hayagriva = OM + Na + Maha + Sa + Rva + Ko + Ti + Sa + Rva + Vi + Dya + Raa + Jaa + Ye = 14; (iii) for Lord Gopal = Kling + Kri + Sh + Naa + Ye + Go + Pal + Chu + Daa + Ma + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 14; and (iv) for Lord Dadhi-Vaaman = OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Da + Dhi + Vaa + Ma + Naa + Ye + OM = 14.]

In the space between the fourteen petals, towards their tip, are written the fourteen-lettered Mantra of Goddess Anna-Purneshwari (literally meaning the goddess who gives sufficient food to all; who replinshes all stocks of food). The Mantra is the following—‘Hring Padmaa-vatyanna-purne Maaheshwari Swaha’. [Hrin(g) + Pa + Dmaa + Va + Tya + Nna + Pu + Rne + Maa + He + Shwa + Ri + Swa + Ha = 14.] (32).

33. Outside the lotus with fourteen petals is made another circle or ring using the Pranav Mantra, which is OM. To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the sixth ring.] (33).

34. Outside this ring is made another lotus having sixteen petals.

[As in the previous cases, this sixteen-petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the OM Mantra, and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

Inside the petals, the sixteen letters or syllables of the Mantra of Lord Krishna and that of the Sudarshan Chakra (the divine discus of Vishnu) are written.

The Mantras are as follows—(i) for Lord Krishna it is ‘OM Namō Bhagwate Rukmini-vallabhaahye Swaha’; and (ii) for the Sudarshan Chakra it is ‘OM Namō Bhagwate Maha-sudarshanaaye Hum Phat’.

[As outlined earlier, one petal contains one letter of each Mantra, with the one related to Lord Krishna written towards the tip, followed below by that of Sudarshan Chakra. The fourteen letters would be as follows—(i) for Lord Krishna = OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Ru + Kmi + Ni + Va + Lla + Vha + Ye + Swa + Ha = 16; and (ii) for the Sudarshan Chakra = OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Ma + Ha + Su + Da + Rsh + Naa + Ye + Hum + Phat = 16.]

In the space between the sixteen petals are written the sixteen vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet followed by the thirty-two lettered Mala Mantra of the Sudarshan Chakra. This Mantra is the following—‘Sudarshan-maha-chakraaye Dipta-rupaaye Sarwato Maam Raksha Raksha Sastraar Hum Phat Swaha’. {It briefly means that the great discus of Lord Vishnu is glittering and splendid, has thousands of sharp, pointed edges, is equivalent to thousands of weapons, and it is requested to give its protection to the worshipper.}

[The vowels are written in the first row in the space between two petals, and the second row would contain a pair of letters of the Mala Mantra of Sudarshan written below the row of vowels. Where and how to write the Mantras in the space is narrated in detail in paragraph no. 22 above.

The thirty-two letters of the Mala Mantra are as follows—Su + Da + Arsh + Na + Ma + Ha + Cha + Ka + Raa + Ye + Di + Pta + Ru + Paa + Ye + Sa + Rva + To + Maam + Ra + Ksha + Ra + Ksha + Sa + Ha + Sa + Traa + Ra + Hum + Phat + Swa + Ha = 32.

Therefore, the first pair would be ‘Su + Da’, the second would be ‘Arsh + Na’, and so on and so forth.] (34).

35. Outside the lotus with sixteen petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Lord Varaaha. It is ‘Hum’ or ‘Hun(g)’. [To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the seventh ring.] (35).

36. Outside this ring is made another lotus having eighteen petals.

[As in the previous cases, this eighteen-petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra ‘Hun(g)’ or ‘Hum’, and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

Inside the petals, the eighteen letters or syllables of the Mantras of Lord Krishna and Lord Vaaman are written. The two Mantras are follows—(i) for Lord Krishna it is ‘Klin(g) Krishnaaye Govindaaye Gopijan-valaavhaaye Swaha’; and (ii) for Lord Vaaman it is ‘OM Namō Vishnave Surpataye Mahaabalaaye Swaha’. {Briefly, the first Mantra related to Krishna means ‘I offer my oblations to Govind who is very dear to the milkmaids (of Vrindaavan).’ The second Mantra related to Vaaman means ‘OM salutations! I bow and offer my oblations to Vishnu who is the Lord of Gods, and is most strong and powerful.’}

[The witing is done in a clockwise manner wih the Mantra of Lord Krishna being written towards the tip or apex of the petals, and those of Lord Vaaman below them. One petal has one letter or syllable of each Mantra.

The eighteen letters or syllables of the two Mantras would be as follows—(i) for Lord Krishna = Klin(g) + Kri + Shnaa + Ye + Go + Vi + Ndaa + Ye + Go + Pi + Ja + Na + Va + Lla + Vha + Ye + Swa + Ha = 18; and (ii) for Lord Vaaman = OM + Na + Mo + Vi + Shna + Ve + Su + Ra + Pa + Ta + Ye + Ma + Haa + Ba + Laa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 18.

Hence, the first petal would have the pair ‘Klin(g)’ + ‘OM’ for Krishna and Vaaman respectively, and the process would be followed in a sequential manner till the last petal which would have the pair ‘Ha’ + ‘Ha’ for the last word ‘Swaha’ which appears in both the Mantras.]

In the space between the eighteen petals are written in sequence the following two Mantras—first is written the five-letter Mantra of Garud (the divine vehicle of Vishnu) followed by the Garud Mala Mantra (that is used to turn the beads of the prayer rosary).

The five-letter Mantra of Garud is ‘Kship OM Swaha’, and the thirteen-letter Mala Mantra is ‘OM Namaha Pakshi-raajaaye Sarva-visha-bhut-rakshaha-krityaardi-bhedanaaye Sarweshta-saadhakaaye Swaha’. The five letters of Garud Mantra are as follows—Khi + Pa + OM + Swa + Ha = 5.

Two letters are written in the space between a pair of petals. The writing of the Mantras in the space between the eighteen petals would be as follows—between the first two petals would be written ‘Khip’, between the next two would be written

‘OM’, between the third pair of petals would be written ‘Swaha’, between the fourth pair of petals would be written ‘OM Namaha’, between the fifth pair of petals would be written ‘Pakshi’, between the sixth pair of petals would be written ‘Raajaaye’, between the seventh pair of petals would be written ‘Sarva’, between the eighth pair of petals would be written ‘Visha’, between the ninth pair of petals would be written ‘Bhut’, between the tenth pair of petals would be written ‘Rakshaha’, between the eleventh pair of petals would be written ‘Krityaa’, between the twelfth pair of petals would be written ‘Dhi-bhe’, between the thirteenth pair of petals would be written ‘Danaa’, between the fourteenth pair of petals would be written ‘Ye Sa’, between the fifteenth pair of petals would be written ‘Rweshta’, between the sixteenth pair of petals would be written ‘Saadha’, between the seventeenth pair of petals would be written ‘Kaaye’, and finally between the eighteenth pair of petals would be written ‘Swaha’.] (36).

37. Outside the lotus with eighteen petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Maya. It is ‘Hring’. [To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the eighth ring.] (37).

38. Outside this ring is made another lotus having eight petals.

[As in the previous cases, this eight-petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra ‘Hrin(g)’, and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches. Since by this time the diameter of the circle would have enlarged to a considerable extent than it was when the first ring of eight petals was made as described in paragraph no. 24, the petals would be much larger in size and the span of each petal would be longer.]

Inside these eight petals the eight-letter Mantra of Lord Krishna and Lord Vaaman are written. The Mantras are the following—(i) for Krishna it is ‘OM Namodaamodaraaye’, and (ii) for Vaaman it is ‘OM Vaamanaaye Namaha OM’.

[The eight letters for Krishna’s Mantra are—OM + Na + Mo + Daa + Mo + Da + Raa + Ye = 8.

The eight letters for Vaaman’s Mantra are—OM + Vaa + Ma + Naa + Ye + Na + Maha + OM = 8.

The writing is done in a clockwise manner with the Mantra of Lord Krishna being written towards the tip or apex of the petals, and those of Lord Vaaman below them. One petal has one letter or syllable of each Mantra.

Hence, the first petal would have the pair ‘OM’ + ‘OM’ for Krishna and Vaaman respectively, and the process would be followed in a sequential manner till the last petal which would have the pair ‘Ye’ + ‘OM’ for Krishna and Vaaman respectively.]

In the space between the eight petals are written in sequence the following two Mantras—the three syllables of the Mantra for Lord Neelkanth (the blue-tinged form of Lord Shiva), and the five-letters of the Mantra of Garud (the vehicle of Vishnu), bringing the total to eight letters.

The three-syllable Mantra of Neelkanth is ‘Pren(g) Rin(g) Thaha. The five-lettered Mantra of Gurud is ‘Namo-andajaaye’.

[The three syllables of the Neelkanth Mantra are—Pren(g) + Rin(g) + Thaha = 3.

The five letters of the Garud Mantra are—Na + Mo + Anda + Jaa + Ye = 5.

Each letter or syllable is written in the space between two adjacent petals in the concave cavity formed between them at their junction points, and are written in a clockwise manner.] (38).

39. Outside the lotus with eight large petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Kaamdeo (the God of passions). It is 'Klin(g)'. [To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the ninth ring.] (39).

40. Outside this ring is made another lotus having twenty-four petals.

[As in the previous cases, this twenty-four petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra 'Klin(g)', and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

Inside these petals the following Mantras are written in the way described now. First are written the 'Sharnaagat Mantra' and the 'Narayan Mantra' in a sequential manner. This would form the first row of Mantras and are written towards the tip or apex of the petals, inside them. [The word 'Sharnaagat' means to take refuge in the holy feet of the Lord and seek his all-round protection. The Lord in this case is Narayan.]

Below this row are written the Mantras of Lord Narayan which would form the second row, followed below by the Mantra of Lord Hayagriva which would be the third row.

The two Mantras of the first row are as follows—(i) the Sharnaagat Mantra is 'Sriman-naaraayan Charnou Sharnam Prapadaye', and (ii) the Narayan Mantra is 'Srimate Naaraayanaaye Namaha'. {The meaning briefly is 'I bow most reverentially and submit myself to the holy feet of Lord Narayan.'}

The second row consists of the Narayan Mantra which is 'Naaraayanaaye Vidmahe Vaasudevaaye Dhimahi Tanno Vishnuha Prachodayaat'. {Briefly, this Mantra means 'Lord Narayan is as splendourous and glorious as the electric, he is also known as Vasudeo who is an embodiment of the highest virtues of wisdom, intelligence and erudition, and he has assumed the form of Vishnu. Let me move towards this Lord to seek his blessings.'}

The third row consists of the Hayagriva Mantra which is 'Vaagi-shwaraaye Vidmahe Hayagrivaaye Dhimahi Tanno Hansaha Prachodayat'. {Briefly, this Mantra means 'He is the Lord of speech and wisdom; he is as splendourous and glorious as the Sun; he has revealed himself as Lord Hayagriva, the most wise and intelligent one (who had rescued the Vedas and preached sage Yagyavalkya the Yajur Veda), and who has taken the form of a divine Swan known as Hans. Let me move towards this Lord to seek his blessings.' The story of Hayagriva and Hans, which are amongst the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu, have been described above in note of paragraph no. 18.}

[Now, let us see how their letters are counted and placed in their respective places inside the twenty-four petals.

As said above, the first row consists of the following series of letters belonging to the first two Mantras—(1) for Sharanaagati = Sri + Ma + Nnaa + Raa + Ya + Na + Cha + Ra + Nou + Sha + Ra + Num/Nam + Pra + Padaye = 14; and (ii) for Narayan = Sri + Ma + Te + Naa + Raa + Ya + Naa + Ye + Na + Maha = 10. This brings the total to 24 letters.

The second row would be the letters of the Narayan Mantra as follows—Naa + Raa + Ya + Naa + Ye + Vidma + He + Vaa + Su + De + Vaa + Ye + Dhi + Ma + Hi +

Ta + Nno + Vi + Shnuha + Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa + Ta = 24. These letters would be placed below the letters of the first row.

The third row would be the letters of the Hayagriva Mantra as follows—Vaa + Gi + Shwa + Raa + Ye + Vidma + He + Ha + Ya + Gri + Vaa + Ye + Dhi + Ma + Hi + Ta + Nno + Han + Saha + Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa + Ta = 24. These letters would be placed below the letters of the second row.]

In the space between these twenty-four petals are written the following three Gayatri Mantras—(i) the first row would consist of the letters of the Nrisingh Gayatri which is ‘Vajra-nakhaaye Vidmahe Tikshna-danstraaye Dhimahi Tannaha Singaha Prachodayat’. {Briefly it means ‘The Lord has nails as strong as Vajra (the sturdy weapon of Indra); he is splendid as the electric; his teeth are very sharp; he is an embodiment of knowledge and intelligent; and he is in the form of a lion. Let me move towards this Lord to seek his blessings.’}

[The 24 letters of this Mantra are Va + jra + Na + Khaa + Ye + Vi + Dmahe + Ti + Kshna + Dan + Straa + Ye + Dhi + Ma + Hi + Ta + Nnaha + Sing + Ha + Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa + Ta = 24.]

(ii) The second row would consist of the letters of the Sudarshan Gayatri Mantra which is ‘Sudarshanaaye Vidmahe Hetirajaaya Dhimahi Tanna-schakraha Prachodayat’. {Briefly it means ‘The divine Sudarshan Chakra of the Lord is dazzling and blindingly splendid like the electric; it is most dear to the supreme Lord of creation (Vishnu) and enables him to rule over the entire creation; this Lord is an embodiment of wisdom and skills; and this Sudarshan Chakra is indeed a manifestation of the Lord himself. Let me move towards this Chakra to seek its blessings.’}

[The 24 letters of this Mantra are Su + Da + Rsha + Naa + Ye + Vi + Dmahe + He + Ti + Raa + Jaa + Ya + Dhi + Ma + Hi + Ta + Nna + Scha + Kraha + Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa + Ta = 24.]

(iii) The third row would consist of the letters of the Brahma Gayatri Mantra which is ‘Tatsaviturvarenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayaat’. {Briefly it means ‘That truthful and divine supreme Lord is luminous and splendid as the self-illuminated Sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. I offer my oblations to him. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire my intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that I am purified and move on the righteous and noble path.’}

[The 24 letters of this Mantra are Ta + Tsa + Vi + Tu + Rva + Re + Nyam + Bha + Rgo + De + Va + Sya + Dhi + Ma + Hi + Dhi + Yo + Yo + Naha + Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa + Ta = 24.] (40).

41. Outside the lotus with twenty-four petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Lord Hayagriva. It is ‘Hri-soun(g)’. [To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the tenth ring.] (41).

42. Outside this ring is made another lotus having thirty-two petals.

[As in the previous cases, this thirty-two petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra ‘Klin(g)’, and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

Inside these petals the following Mantras are written in the way described now.

[As in the previous cases, this twenty-four petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Beej Mantra ‘Hri-soun(g)’.]

Inside these thirty-two petals are written the Anushtup Mantras of Lords Nrisingh and Hayagriva in a sequential manner. [One letter of the Mantra of Nrisingh is placed in each petal towards its apex or tip, and below them are placed the letters of the Mantra of Hayagriva. This forms two rows of Mantras, the upper ones are those of Nrisingh, and lower deck are of those of Hayagriva.]

These Anushtup Mantras are the following—

(i) The Mantra of Lord Nrisingh is ‘Ugram Viram Maha-Vishnum Jwalantam Sarvatomukha, Nrisingha Bhishanam Bhadram Mritu-mritum Namaamya-ham.’ {Briefly, this Mantra means ‘I bow before Lord Nrisingh who is very dynamic, terrible, strong and vigorous, who is very brave, valiant and courageous, who is none else but the great Lord Vishnu, who is splendorous and brilliant like blazing fire, who has his mouth everywhere (i.e. who is present everywhere; who knows everything), who is the death of even the Death God, and paradoxically who is also most polite, civil, sobre, soft-spoken and compassionate by nature.’}

[The thirty-two letters of this Mantra would form the first row in this ring of petals. These letters are the following—U + Gram + Vi + Ram/Rum + Ma + Ha + Vi + Shnum + Jwa + La + Ntam + Sa + Rva + To + Mu + Kham + Nri + Sin(g) + Ha + Bhi + Sha + Nam + Bha + Dram + Mri + Tu + Mri + Tum + Na + Maa + Mya + Ham = 32.]

(ii) The Mantra for Lord Hayagriva is ‘Rim-mya-juha Sam-rupaaye Vedaa-haran-karmane, Pranavo-dgith-vapushe Mahaashwa-shirse Namaha’. {Briefly, this Mantra means ‘When the Rig, the Yajur and the Sam Veda were stolen, the Lord who is known as Pranav (Brahm) had recited the hymns of the Sam Veda with a great head of a horse and a melodious voice that reverated in the entire creation. I bow before this Lord (Hayagriva).’}

[The thirty-two letters of this Mantra of Hayagriva would form the second row. These letters are placed below the first row of Mantras pertaining to Nrisingh. One letter would be placed in each of the thirty-two petals. The letters are the following—Rim + Mya + Juha + Saa + Ma + Ru + Paa + Ye + Ve + Daa + Ha + Ra + Na + Ka + Rma + Ne + Pra + Na + Vo + Dgi + Tha + Va + Pu + She + Ma + Haa + Ashwa + Shi + Ra + Se + Na + Maha = 32.]

It ought to be noted here that both these incarnations of Lord Vishnu had the body of a man and the head of an animal. While Nrisingh was in the form of a half-man and half-lion, Hayagriva was a half-man and a half-horse. Perhaps this is indicative of that state of evolution of creation when a transition was taking place when the higher species in the animal kingdom as represented by the lion and the horse were evolving into the species which would eventually become the human race.] (42).

43. In the space between the thirty-two petals are written the Anushtup Mantras of Lords Ram and Krishna in such a way that one letter appears between a pair of given two petals. The letters of the Mantra for Lord Ram are placed above the ones for Lord Krishna. The method for writing the Mantras in the space between two given petals has been outlined in paragraph no. 22 of this Canto no. 7 above.

These two Mantras are as follows—

(i) The Anushtup Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Ram-bhadra Maheshwaas Raghubir Nripottam, Bho Dashaa-syaanta-kaasmaakum Rakshaam Dehi Sriyam Cha Te.’ {Briefly, this Mantra means ‘Gentleman Ram is the great Lord of even the Gods, is the breath of Lord Maheshwar (Shiva), is the great warrior amongst the kings of the Raghu’s race, is an excellent and the best amongst kings, and is the one who brought

about the end of the ten-headed one (the demon Ravana). Let the Lord bestow upon me fearlessness and grant his protection to me; let him give me all 'Sri', i.e. all glories and majesties.' }

[The letters of this Mantra are the following—Raa + Ma + Bha + Dra + Ma + He + Shwaa + Sa + Ra + Ghu + Bi + Ra + Nri + Po + Tta + Ma + Bho + Da + Shaa + Syaa + Nta + Kaa + Smaa + Kum + Ra + Kshaam + De + Hi + Sri + Yam + Cha + Te = 32.]

(ii) The Anushtup Mantra of Lord Krishna is 'Devi-sut Govinda Vaasudeo Jagatpate, Dehi Me Tanayam Krishna Twaamahum Sharanam Gataha.' {Briefly, this Mantra means 'Krishna was born as the son of Devki, is known as Govinda and Vasudeo (which are the divine names of Vishnu as well), and is the Lord of the entire world. Let the Lord give me refuge in his holy feet.' }

[The letters of this Mantra are the following—De + Va + Ki + Su + Ta + Go + Vi + Nda + Vaa + Su + De + Va + Ja + Ga + Ta + Pate + De + Hi + Me + Ta + Na + Yam + Kri + Shna + Twaa + Ma + Hum + Sha + Ra + Nam + Ga + Taha = 32.] (43).

44. Outside the lotus with thirty-two petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Agni (Fire) prefixed with the Pranav Mantra (OM). Since the Beej Mantra of Agni is 'Ramom', the combined Mantra would be 'OM Ramom'. [To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the eleventh ring.] (44).

45. Outside this ring is made another lotus having thirty-six petals.

[As in the previous cases, this thirty-six petal lotus would surround the ring formed by writing the Mantra 'OM Ramom', and its shape would be a circle or ring of continuous arches.]

On its petals are written two Mantras of Lord Hayagriva, the first one has thirty-six letters and the second one has thirty-eight letters. The Mantra with thirty-six letters would form the first row in the petals and its letters would be placed towards their tip or apex, while the second Mantra of thirty-eight letters would be placed below it and form the second row. The writing is done clockwise.

The two Mantras are the following—

(i) The Mantra with thirty-six letters is 'Hansaha Vishwo-ttirna-swarupaaye Chinmayaanand-rupine, Tubhyam Namoh Hayagriva Vidyaaraajaaye Vishnave So-aham.' {Briefly, the meaning of this Mantra is 'Hans (i.e. the Principal of creation; the primal essence of creation that is like a divine Swan which is a symbol of purity, divinity and holiness, and which refers to the Supreme Being known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness) has manifested itself in the form of the extensively vast and measureless world, and it is an image of supreme eternal bliss that comes with true knowledge which leads to realisation and enlightenment. I bow before Lord Hayagriva who is the patron Lord of this truthful knowledge, and is the Lord of the world who is also known as Vishnu. I am that Hans—i.e. that cosmic Being is none else but my 'true self'.' }

[The thirty-six letters of this Mantra are—Han + Saha + Vi + Shwo + Tti + Rna + Swa + Ru + Paa + Ye + Chi + Nma + Yaa + Na + Nda + Ru + Pi + Ne + Tu + Bhyam + Na + Mo + Ha + Ya + Gri + Va + Vi + Dyaa + Raa + Jaa + Ye + Vi + Shna + Ve + So + A-Ham = 36.]

(ii) The Mantra with thirty-eight letters is 'Hrison(g) OM Namoh Bhagwate Hayagrivaaye Sarwa-vaagishwaraeshwaraaye Sarwa-vedamayaaye Sarwa-vidyaam Me Dehi Swaha.' {Briefly, the meaning of this Mantra is 'OM salutations to the divine

Swan (the Supreme Being, Brahm)! I bow before Lord Hayagriva who is the supreme Lord of speech, and who is an embodiment of all the Vedas (i.e. of all knowledge that exists in creation). I beg him to give me all knowledge. For this purpose I offer this oblation to him.’ }

[Since the number of petals is only thirty-six while the second Mantra has two letters in addition to the needed thirty-six letters, the placement of the letters in the petals is done in the following manner—the first petal would have the monosyllables ‘Hrison(g) + OM’, the second petal has the next word ‘Namo’, and then the rest of the remaining thirty-four petals would have one letter of the remaining Mantra as follows—Bh + Ga + Wa + Te + Ha + Ya + Gri + Vaa + Ye + Sa + Rva + Vaa + Gi + Shwa + Re + Shwa + Raa + Ye + Sa + Rva + Ve + Da + Ma + Yaa + Ye + Sa + Rva + Vi + Dyaam + Me + De + Hi + Swa + Ha = 34.

These 34 letters with the previous 4 letters (Hrison(g) + OM + Na + Mo = 4) would complete the thirty-eight lettered second Mantra.

Thus, the first petal would have the pair ‘Han’ + ‘Hrison(g) OM’ pertaining to the first and second Mantras respectively. The second petal would have ‘Saha’ + ‘Namo’ pertaining to the first and second Mantras respectively. The third petal would have ‘Vi’ + ‘Bha’ pertaining to the first and second Mantras respectively. And this process would be followed till we reach the thirty-sixth petal which would have the last letters of each Mantra, viz. ‘A-ham’ + ‘Ha’ pertaining to the first and second Mantras respectively.

The letters of the first Mantra are written towards the tip or apex of the petals, while those of the second Mantra are written below them.] (45).

46. In the space between the thirty-six petals (described in paragraph no. 45) are written the following Mantras in the way described below—

(i) In the space between the first twenty-four pairs of the petals are written the twenty-four divine names of Lord Keshav (Vishnu) with the word ‘OM’ as a prefix and ‘Namaha’ as a suffix. The writing, as usual, is done in a clockwise manner, with one complete Mantra written in the space between two petals. [‘OM’ is a salutary address to imply that the entity to whose name it is prefixed is none but the supreme Brahm himself, while ‘Namaha’ means to bow respectfully.]

These twenty-four Mantras are the following—(1) OM Keshavaaye Namaha. [Briefly, the meaning would be ‘OM salutations to Lord Keshav! I bow before you.’ This meaning would be applicable to all the remaining twenty-three Mantras that follow, the only change would be the name of the Lord that is placed between OM and Namaha.] (2) OM Naranaaye Namaha. (3) OM Madhavaaye Namaha. (4) OM Govindaaye Namaha. (5) OM Vishnave Namaha. (6) OM Madhusudanaaye Namaha. (7) OM Trivakramaaye Namaha. (8) OM Vamanaaye Namaha. (9) OM Sridharaaye Namaha. (10) OM Hrishikshaaye Namaha. (11) OM Padmanaavaaye Namaha. (12) OM Daamodaraaye Namaha. (13) OM Sankarshanaaye Namaha. (14) OM Vasudevaaye Namaha. (15) OM Pradumnaaye Namaha. (16) OM Anirudhaaye Namaha. (17) OM Purushottamaaye Namaha. (18) OM Adhokshajaaye Namaha. (19) OM Naarsinghaaye Namaha. (20) OM Achuttaaye Namaha. (21) OM Janaardanaaye Namaha. (22) OM Upendraaye Namaha. (23) OM Haraye Namaha. (24) OM Sri-krishnaaye Namaha.

Hence, the Mantra that is written between the first and the second petal is ‘OM Keshavaaye Namaha’, between the second and the third petal is ‘OM Naranaaye Namaha’, between the third and the fourth petal is ‘OM Madhavaaye Namaha’, and so on.

(ii) In the space between the remaining twelve pairs of the petals are written the Gayatri Mantras of Lords Ram and Krishna in such a way that two letters of each Mantra occupy the space between any given pair of petals. The ones of Lord Ram are written above the ones for Lord Krishna. The exact pattern to be followed in writing the Mantra between the petals is explained in paragraph no. 22 above.

These two Mantras are the following—

(a) The Gayatri Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Daash-rathaaye Vidmahe Sitaavallabhaaye Dhimahi Tanno Raamaha Prachodayaat.’ {Briefly, this Mantra means ‘Lord Ram had assumed a body to become a son of king Dashrath (of Ayodhya). He is as glorious, splendourous and radiant as the Fire. He is very dear to Sita (his divine consort). He is most wise, erudite, intelligent and enlightened. Let me attain this divine Lord.’}

[The letters of this Mantra are Daa + Sha + Ra + Thaa + Ye + (Vi + Dmahe) + Si + Taa + Va + Lla + Bhaa + Ye + Dhi + Ma + Hi + Ta + Nno + Raa + Maha + Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa + Ta = 24.]

(b) The Gayatri Mantra of Lord Krishna is ‘Daamodaraaye Vidmahe Vaasudevaaye Dhimahi Tannha Krishnaha Prachodayaat.’ {Briefly, this Mantra means ‘Lord Krishna is also known by the name of Daamodar. He is as glorious, splendourous and radiant as the Fire. He has assumed a body as the son of Vasudeo (of Vrindavan). He is most wise, erudite, intelligent and enlightened. Let me attain this divine Lord.’}

[The letters of this Mantra are Daa + Mo + Da + Raa + Ye + Vi + Dmahe + Vaa + Su + De + Vaa + Ye + Dhi + Ma + Hi + Ta + Nnha + Kri + Shnaha + Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa + Ta = 24.]

As noted above, the letters that are written in the space between the twenty-fifth pair of petals would be ‘Daa + Sha’ for Ram, and ‘Daa + Mo’ for Krishna. The letters that are written between the twenty-sixth pair of petals would be ‘Ra + Thaa’ for Ram, and ‘Da + Raa’ for Krishna. The letters that are written between the twenty-seventh pair of petals would be ‘Ye + (Vi + Dmahe)’ for Ram, and ‘Ye + Vi’ for Krishna.

This process is continued till the last pair of petals, i.e. the thirty-sixth pair, which would have the letters ‘Yaa + Ta’ for Ram, and again ‘Yaa + Ta’ for Krishna (46).

47. Outside the lotus with thirty-six petals is made another circle or ring using the Beej Mantra of Ankush (goat) prefixed and suffixed by the Pranav Mantra (OM). Since the Beej Mantra of Ankush is ‘Kron(g)’, the combined Mantra would be ‘OM Kron(g) OM’. [To make a circle, this Mantra is written continuously without break. This is the twelfth ring.] (47).

48. Outside this ring some space is left and another ring is made (which would be the thirteenth) using the same Mantra ‘OM Klon(g) OM’. [That is, now we have two consecutive rings of this Mantra.]

In the space between these two rings or circles made by writing the Mantra ‘OM Kron(g) OM’, twelve semi-circular arches resembling petals are made in such a way that each is separate from the other and there is some space between two arches or petals. The spacing between these twelve arches or petals, and the size of the individual arches or petals should be equal in dimension.

Inside these twelve petals are written the Mantras of Kaustav (a gem worn by Vishnu), Vanmaala (a garland of flowers), Srivatsa (the sign of Bhṛigu’s foot-print on

Vishnu's chest), Sudarshan (Vishnu's divine Discus, his weapon), Garud (Vishnu's vehicle, the legendary heron or eagle), Padma (the lotus), Dwaj (the flag/standard), Aanant (the serpent on whose back Vishnu reclines on the celestial ocean), Sharnaga (a bow held by Vishnu), Gadaa (mace), Sankha (conch of Vishnu), and Nandak (the sacred Bull). Each of these Mantras is prefixed by 'OM' and suffixed by 'Namaha'.

These Mantras are the following—(1) OM Kaustuvaaye Namaha. (2) OM Vanmaalaaye Namaha. (3) OM Srivatsaaye Namaha. (4) OM Sudarshanaaye Namaha. (5) OM Garudaaye Namaha. (6) OM Padmaaye Namaha. (7) OM Dwajaaye Namaha. (8) OM Anantaaye Namaha. (9) OM Shaarangaaye Namaha. (10) OM Gadaaye Namaha. (11) OM Shankhyaaye Namaha. (12) OM Nandakaaye Namaha.

The meanings of all the Mantras are basically the same, and they honour these entities which are special signs of Lord Vishnu. For instance, the meaning of the first Mantra 'OM Kaustav Namaha' is 'OM salutations! I reverentially bow before the Kaustav gem worn by Vishnu'. The same general meaning is also applicable to the other signs of Vishnu with the name of the concerned sign replacing the word 'Kaustav gem' of this sample Mantra. For instance, the second Mantra would mean 'OM salutations! I reverentially bow before the garland known as Vanmaala worn by Vishnu', the third Mantra would mean 'OM salutations! I reverentially bow before the Srivatsa worn by Vishnu', and so on. [These Mantras are written to honour these individual entities that have close association with Vishnu, and hence have acquired a divine status that is no less important than the Lord himself. This has a message for the worshipper—and it is that once he becomes a devotee of the Lord he would acquire the same exalted stature as these entities, and he would become as revered and honourable as them.]

These Mantras are written in such a way that one petal has one full Mantra instead of a part of it as was done earlier. Hence, the first petal has 'OM Kaustuvaaye Namaha', the second has 'OM Vanmaalaaye Namaha', the third has 'OM Srivatsaaye Namaha', and so on and so forth (48).

49. In the space between the twelve arches or petals (drawn as per the guideline in paragraph no. 48) are written the following twelve Mantras. [As in the case of the Mantras written inside the arches which were dedicated to the entities that are specially identified with Lord Vishnu, the following pertain to the chief attendants of Vishnu who are closely identified with the Lord. While the Mantras of the entities mentioned in paragraph no. 48 are placed inside the arched enclosures or petals to indicate their being in direct contact with the Lord, the ones mentioned in this paragraph are being placed outside to indicate that these attendants of Vishnu surround him from the outside and provide the Lord escort like the escorts that surround a King or an Emperor. The first attendant is named Vishwaksen, and he is the chief amongst the attendants. The rest of the twelve attendants are named after the Sudarshan Chakra which is the invincible weapon of Vishnu. On close examination we would observe that each of them stands as a personification of one special quality of this Chakra.]

(1) OM Vishwaksenaaye Namaha. [The meaning briefly is 'OM salutations! I bow reverentially to Vishwaksen'. The same meaning would apply to all the other Mantras except for the change of the name of the attendant.]

(2) OM Aa-chakraaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is 'OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Aachakra'. The Aachakra is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is most astonishing.]

(3) OM Vi-chakraaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Vichakra’. The Vichakra is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is most strange.]

(4) OM Su-chakraaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Suchakra’. The Suchakra is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is most auspicious and holy.]

(5) OM Dhi-chakraaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Dhichakra’. The Dhichakra is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is most wise, intelligent and skilful.]

(6) OM San-chakraaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Sanchakra’. The Sanchakra is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is most auspicious.]

(7) OM Jwaalaa-chakraaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Jwaalaachakra’. The Jwaalaachakra is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is like a leaping flame of fire.]

(8) OM Krudholkaaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Krudha-chakra’. The Krudha-chakra is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is angry and wrathful when it comes to punishing of the guilty.]

(9) OM Maholkaaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Maholka’. The word Maholka consists of two parts—‘Maho’ meaning ‘great’, and ‘Ulka’ meaning a ‘comet’. Hence, Maholka represents the Sudarshan Chakra which is like the comet in the dark sky. It shoots towards its target like a flying comet.]

(10) OM Viryolkaaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Viryolka’. The Viryolka is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is most powerful, virile, potent, sturdy, effective and strong. The word ‘Vir’ stands for strength, courage, vitality, virility, power and potent.]

(11) OM Vidyolkaaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Vidyolka’. The Vidyolka is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is a treasury of Vidya or knowledge.]

(12) OM Sahastrolkaaye Swaha. [The meaning briefly is ‘OM salutations! I offer my oblations to Sahastrolka’. The Sahastrolka is a personification of the special quality of the Sudarshan Chakra that it is like a thousand burning comets as well as the fact that it is like thousand sharp weapons.] (49).

50. Outside this (thirteenth ring made as per instructions given in paragraph no. 48) is drawn another ring by writing the five-lettered Mantra of Garud embellished by the Pranav Mantra. [This would be the fourteenth ring. It is drawn by continuously writing this Mantra without break.]

The Mantra is ‘OM Kship OM Swaha OM’. {It briefly means OM salutations to the divine Bird (Garud). OM salutations! Oblations are being offered to him. OM salutations!}

In the intervening space between these two outer rings (i.e. between the thirteenth ring made as per instructions given in paragraph no. 48, and the fourteenth ring made as per instructions given in the present paragraph no. 50) are drawn/marked twelve Vajras. [The Vajra is the sturdy weapon of Indra, the king of Gods, and is like a bolt of lightening. In iconography, Vajra is depicted as a goad or a spear.]

On the tip of these twelve Vajras are written the following twelve Mantras—

(1) OM Padma-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who holds a lotus in his divine hands.’ The word Padma also signifies one of the heavenly assets that are stored in the treasury of Gods protected by Kuber, their treasurer. Lotus is also a flower that has special importance in the scriptures because it is never dirtied by the surrounding filth in the water where it grows. In other words, Lord Vishnu is the Lord who possesses the best of virtues in this creation, and inspite of him being involved in taking care of this world he is never corrupted or tainted by its negative qualities. An additional interpretation would be that this lotus represents the creation of which Vishnu is the Lord.]

(2) OM Maha-padma-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Great Lord who holds Great Lotus in his divine hands.’ What applies to the ‘lotus’ as described in hymn no. 1 above also applies to this hymn no. 2, only the degree and intensity is magnified by the prefix ‘Maha’ or ‘Great’.]

(3) OM Garud-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who has Garud, the legendary Bird that is the divine vehicle of Vishnu, as one of his assets.’ It refers to the fact that the Lord is the Master of all the creatures that are sky-borne.]

(4) OM Shankha-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who has the Shankha, the divine Conch, as one of his assets.’ It refers to the fact that the Lord has manifested himself as the ethereal cosmic ‘sound’ that reverberates in the background of creation, and which is represented by monosyllable Mantra ‘OM’. This is because the conch produces sound which is reverberating in nature and is caused by the vibrations in the static air when breath is blown inside it forcefully. It is a metaphor for life and knowledge because, one, only a living entity can blow the conch, and second, the faculty of speech symbolised by the sound produced by air as it passes through the vocal cords in the throat is very much like the sound produced by the conch when air is blown into it. The spoken word is the vehicle through which knowledge is disseminated and spread, through which ideas are expressed and explained. The sound made in the throat that is interpreted as the spoken word that spreads far and wide is just like the sound made by the conch that is also heard for long distances. There is another interpretation—viz. the conch is the shell of the snail; hence it symbolises that Lord Vishnu is the Lord of all the assets that are found in water bodies such as the ocean and the sea, and that he gives such humble and lazy creatures as the snail their due importance in the hierarchy of creation.]

(5) OM Makar-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who has the Makar, the celestial alligator represented by the Zodiac sign of Capricorn, as one of his vehicles.’ This refers to the Lord’s control of all the creatures that live in water as well as to establish him as the Lord of all life that is dependent upon water. It also refers to the ‘Makar Sankranti’ when the Sun enters the mansion of the Capricorn marking the onset of the winter solstice. Another connotation is the Lord is as steady and unmoving as the Sun when it is in the region of the Zodiac sign of Makar or Capricorn because the word ‘solstice’ in Latin means ‘the Sun standing still’. Still another is that the Lord is as distanced from the humdrum of life and as detached from it as the Sun when it is in the solstice because the word ‘solstice’ means ‘either of the times in the year when the Sun is furthest away from the equator.’ This hymn also might mean that Vishnu possesses heavenly assets measured in the celestial term represented by the word ‘Makar’.]

(6) OM Kashap-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who has the legendary Tortoise as one of his forms.’ This

refers to the incarnations of Vishnu in the form of the tortoise which supported the Mountain, which was used to churn the ocean by the Gods and the Demons at the beginning of creation in the search for the elusive Amrit, the elixir of life, from sinking. From a wider angle it means that Lord Vishnu supports the entire creation from its bottom, forming the base or foundation upon which it rests. This hymn also might mean that Vishnu possesses heavenly assets measured in the celestial term represented by the word 'Kashap'.]

(7) OM Vidya-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who is a treasury of Vidya—knowledge.']

(8) OM Parmaanand-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who is a treasury of supreme bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity.']

(9) OM Mokshaa-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who is a treasury or an eternal fount of Moksha—i.e. he is the one who can provide the spiritual seeker his final goal of salvation and emancipation.]

(10) OM Laxmi-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord of Laxmi.' Laxmi is the Goddess who presides over worldly prosperity, wealth and material wellbeing as well as more noble assets such as fame, good name, honours, majesty, magnificence, and the like. Therefore, Vishnu is the Lord of all known material wealth and assets in this world.]

(11) OM Brahm-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who is none else but the supreme transcendental Brahm himself.' The Lord possesses all the divine and glorious virtues possessed by the supreme and transcendental Brahm.]

(12) OM Mukund-nidhaye Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow respectfully to the Lord who has assumed the form of a child.' The word 'Mukund' refers to Vishnu in his role as the innocent child who is untainted and pure at heart. This child would grow up to accomplish great tasks in this world. The future of this world is in the hands of a child just like it is in the hands of Lord Vishnu. This hymn also might mean that Vishnu possesses heavenly assets measured in the celestial term represented by the word 'Mukund'.] (50).

51. In the space between the twelve signs of the Vajra (marked as described in paragraph no. 50) are written the following twelve Mantras—

(1) OM Vidya-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the grand virtue of 'Vidya' which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.' The term 'Vidya' means all forms of knowledge, and obviously knowledge is universally empowering and enlightening. It enables one to fulfil one's wishes and aspirations.]

(2) OM Anand-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the great virtue of 'Anand' which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.' The term 'Anand' means bliss, happiness, joys, beatitude and felicity. All efforts of a man are directed towards attaining them. Once one reaches the state when he experiences Anand of the highest order, there is nothing more that he wants. Hence, Anand is like the Kalpa Tree that satisfies all his desires and aspirations; it marks the culmination of all his efforts and endeavours.]

(3) OM Brahm-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means 'OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the great Lord known as 'Brahm' who is like the all wish-

fulling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Brahm’ in this context refers to the attainment of the spiritual stature of Brahm-realisation, and once an aspirant reaches this exalted state of spiritual achievement, nothing more is left for him to achieve. It provides him complete and full satisfaction and contentedness. Hence, it is like the all wish-fulfilling tree called the Kalpa Tree.]

(4) OM Mukti-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the great virtue of ‘Mukti’ which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Mukti’ means spiritual liberation and deliverance. Once a man finds freedom from his bondages and torments, he is indeed very happy and exhilarated. Hence, once he has attained Mukti, which however was the target of all his spiritual efforts, he has found all that he had set out to find.]

(5) OM Amrit-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the grand virtue of ‘Amrit’ which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Amrit’ means a nectar, ambrosia or elixir of eternity, life, happiness, joys, contentedness, bliss, beatitude and felicity. Once a man finds this source that would help him free himself from all worldly worries and problems, he has found the magical lamp that would fulfil all his desires, wishes, aspirations, hopes and expectations. Nothing more is wanted by him. Hence, attainment of Amrit is like the Kalpa Tree that would satisfy all his wishes. This Amrit was the reason why the Gods and the Demons had churned the legendary ocean in search for it, and then fought bitterly over it once it was found and was usurped by the Gods, making them eternal enemies.]

(6) OM Bodh-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the grand virtue of ‘Bodh’ which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Bodh’ means to become enlightened, wisened, knowledgeable, erudite and aware of something. In the present context, this Bodh refers to the enlightenment or awareness about one’s true ‘self’, the pure conscious Atma, the soul, and the fact that this Atma is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, its self personified. This Brahm is an eclectic non-dual entity that pervades uniformly and universally in this creation. There is nothing here that is not Brahm. This is the ‘Bodh’ of the Absolute Truth of creation.]

(7) OM Vibhuti-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the grand virtues that are collectively known as ‘Vibhuti’ which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Vibhuti’ means such eclectic virtues as majesty, glory, pomp, favourable circumstance, magnificence, fame, powers, prosperity, fortunes, grandeur and other noble, praise worthy and divine faculties. Obviously, when one has obtained them, nothing remains to be attained. All things and all honours are easily available to a person who is crowned with Vibhuti. He is remembered with great respect even after his demise, and even by his arch enemies.]

(8) OM Vaikunth-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the grand abode of Lord Vishnu known as ‘Vaikunth’ which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ Obviously, when one has reached heaven, all his wishes are deemed to be fulfilled. He attains such great mystical powers that nothing remains beyond his reach.]

(9) OM Veda-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the great ‘Vedas’ which are like the all wish-fulfilling

evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The ‘Vedas’ are the great repositories of knowledge. When one possesses knowledge, wisdom, skills and expertise, all things become easily accessible by him. The knowledge of the Vedas makes a man wise and erudite about the truth and the reality of the Supreme Being. He gains first hand knowledge of the esoteric and the mystical, though it depends upon him how he utilises this knowledge. An expert of the Vedas can either use his knowledge to acquire worldly prosperity and fame, or achieve the spiritual goal of Mukti. But the Vedas themselves are nevertheless like the all wish-fulfilling tree known as the Kalpa Tree that provides the faithful whatever he wishes or aspires for.]

(10) OM Yog-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the grand philosophy and practice of ‘Yoga’ which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Yoga’ has a wide meaning, but briefly it means meditation and contemplation. Yoga helps to bring about a union of the individual soul with the cosmic Soul. Yoga bestows immense mystical powers, called the Siddhis, to its practitioner, which he is free to use to fulfil all that he wishes. There is nothing that cannot be achieved by the astounding powers of Yoga. In fact, entire Upanishads are devoted to this philosophy and practice. Hence, Yoga is like the Kalpa Tree because it fulfils all the desires and aspirations of its practitioner.]

(11) OM Yagya-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the auspicious institution or system of ‘Yagya’ which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Yagya’ usually means a fire sacrifice, as well as doing anything diligently and selflessly, or with a purpose in mind. In ancient times, the fire sacrifice was deemed to be an embodiment of the Lord, and were said to so powerful in their effects that anything could be achieved through them. Hence, the Yagya is regarded as the Kalpa Tree because it could fulfil any desire, wish or aspiration that a man had. This Mantra has many other connotations as well, such as (a) the fire sacrifice is one of the many forms or aspects of the Lord, and therefore as divine, holy and revered as the Lord; (b) the doing of deeds auspiciously and righteously is also one of the many means of attaining the Lord; (c) like the fire sacrifice, the deeds that are done auspiciously and righteously, and with some noble aim are also as holy, divine and spiritually uplifting as the fire sacrifice itself; (d) the fire sacrifice and other auspicious deeds done righteously are personified forms of the Lord himself, and hence as pure, holy and divine as the Lord; (e) if one cannot have access to the Kalpa Tree because it is in the custody of the Gods, then he can have the same benefits as those provided by this tree by doing Yagya, because the Yagya is also as much wish-fulfilling as the Kalpa Tree.]

(12) OM Padma-kalpakatarave Namaha. [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow reverentially before the grand ‘Padma’ (held in the hands of Vishnu) which is like the all wish-fulfilling evergreen tree of the Gods known as the Kalpa Tree.’ The term ‘Padma’ means the Lotus flower. This hymn pays tribute to the Lotus by comparing it with the Kalpa Tree. In other words, the Lotus in the hands of Vishnu is as divine and wish-fulfilling as the Kalpa Tree. Further, the Lotus stands for such grand virtues as purity, cleanness and immaculacy. This is because though this flower grows in the static water of a pond its petals are untouched by the filth around it. Hence, anyone who has developed such immense degree of dispassion and neutrality towards this world as shown by the Lotus is bound to develop auspicious virtues that are untouched by the corruptions and perversions of this material world, and such a man would find great respect in society because of his neutrality and broadness of vision. Nothing would be impossible for him; all glories and majesties would come

knocking at his door, though of course he would have nothing to do with them. Just like the Lotus flower that is given so much respect even by Lord Vishnu that he deemed it fit to hold it in his hands, such an immaculate and pure devotee is also given the same respect and honour by the Lord. Hence, the Lotus flower symbolically stands for the all wish-fulfilling Kalpa Tree as far as the spiritual aspirant is concerned.] (51).

52. Outside this ring (made according to the instructions of paragraph no. 50) is made another ring or circle using two Mantras, one called the 'Shiv Gayatri Mantra' and the other called the 'Param Brahm Mantra'. [This would be the fifteenth ring or circle. One half of it is drawn by writing the Shiv Gayatri Mantra in a semi-circular manner, followed by the Param Brahm Mantra also written in a semi-circular manner to complete the full circle.]

The Shiv Gayatri Mantra is the following—'Tattpurushaaye Vidmahe Mahadevaaye Dhimahi Tanno Rudra Prachodayat.' [Briefly this Mantra means 'The supreme Purush, the primal Being, is splendorous and radiant like the electric. He is known as Mahadev, being the Lord of all Gods and the greatest amongst them. He is most wise, intelligent and enlightened. That Lord has taken the form of Rudra. Let me receive the blessings of this Lord.']

The Param Brahm Mantra is the following—'Sriman-naaraayano Jyotiraatma Naaraayanaaha Paraha, Naaraayan-param Brahm Naaraayaan Namoastu Te.' [This Mantra means 'Lord Narayan is the enlightened and splendorous cosmic Atma or soul of creation. Narayan is the transcendental Supreme Being. Narayan is the supreme transcendental Brahm. I reverentially bow before Narayan.'] (52).

53. Outside it is made another ring or circle by writing the Beej Mantra for Sri. [This would be the sixteenth ring.]

The Sri Beej Mantra is 'OM Sri-mom.' (53).

54. Outside this ring is made another lotus having forty petals. Inside these petals are written the letters of the following Mantras—(a) the seven Vyharitis (the primary utterances of the creator Brahma), each prefixed with OM, (b) this is followed by the Veda-Gayatri Mantra having four steps or lines with the word OM prefixed to each line, and finally (c) the eight-lettered Mantra of Surya (the Sun God).

The sequence of the Mantras would be as follows—

(a) First would come the seven Vyharitis 'OM Bhuha', 'OM Bhuvaha', 'OM Suvaha', 'OM Maha', 'OM Janaha', 'OM Tapaha', and 'OM Satyam'.

(b) This is followed by the four steps of the Veda Gayatri Mantra which is 'OM Tatsavituvarenyam, OM Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi, OM Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayaat, OM Paro Rajase Saavadam Omaapo Jyoti Rajoamritam Brahm Bhu Bhurvaha Suvoram.' Briefly it means 'OM salutations! That truthful and divine supreme Lord is luminous and splendorous as the self-illuminated Sun. OM salutations! He is excellent, the best, and the most exalted divine Lord who is a destroyer of sins. OM salutations! I offer my oblations to him. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire my intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that I am purified and move on the righteous and noble path. OM salutations! The Lord is the Supreme Creator of creation. He has created the sky, the Vedas, the water, the light and the ambrosia of life called Amrit. He is the Brahm who has created the terrestrial world (Bhu), the world of the sky or lower heavens (Bhurva) and the upper heaven or the

higher reaches of the cosmos.’ [Refer also paragraph no. 40 of this present Canto no. 7.]

(c) The eight lettered Mantra for the Sun God is ‘OM Grihinihi Surya Adityaha.’ [This Mantra means ‘OM salutations to the Sun God who is a treasury of light and radiates it as rays in all the directions. He is known as Surya and Aditya.’] (54).

55. In the space outside the junction points of the forty petals of the lotus (drawn in accordance with the instructions given in paragraph no. 54) are written the Beej Mantras for Sri (Laxmi) and Narayan prefixed by the Mantra for Pranav. This Mantra is ‘OM Srimam Srimoom.’ [The meaning is ‘OM salutations to Lord Narayan. OM salutations to the Goddess known as ‘Sri’.’ This Mantra is written in such a way that it fits in the bowl-like concave curvature formed between two adjacent petals. For instance, the first word ‘OM’ is written in a descending manner along the lower outer surface on the right-hand side of a given petal, the second word ‘Srimam’ on the trough formed between two adjacent petals, and the third word ‘Srimom’ is written in an ascending manner on the left-hand side of the second petal opposite the first. This process is repeated for all the forty petals. In other words, there would be twenty pairs of petals and equal number of Mantras.] (55).

56. Outside the lotus of forty petals is drawn another line called the ‘Bhu-Chakra’. Its circumference is intercepted or cut or punctuated at eight places with the sign of the ‘Shul’ which is either a spike or a spear, or an arrow. [The word ‘Bhu’ means earth, and ‘Chakra’ means a circle. Hence, this ‘Bhu Chakra’ is a circle which is cut or punctuated at eight places by the mark of a spear or an arrow. These eight spots are north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west and north-west.]

Inside the four cardinal points of this ‘Bhu-Chakra’ are written two Mantras. One is for Hans, which is prefixed and suffixed by the Pranav Mantra (OM), and the other is for Narayan, which is only prefixed by the Pranav Mantra. [The four points where these two Mantras are written alongside each other are north, east, south and west.]

The two Mantras are—(1) for Hans it is ‘OM Hansaha So-a-hamom’, and (2) for Narayan it is ‘OM Namō Naaraayanaaye Hum/Hung Phat’.

[Briefly, the first Mantra means ‘OM salutations! The divinity that is known as Hans because of its purity and holiness is none but me. OM salutations to Me who is that Hans (the Supreme Being). In other words, my true self, my Atma which is pure and immaculate consciousness is the same as the one that is known as Parmatma, the Supreme Being.’]

The second Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I bow before Lord Narayan. I destroy or tear away (‘Phat’—to crack, to tear) all my egos and the false sense of individuality instantly.’] (56).

57. Outside this Bhu-Chakra is made a ring with the Pranav Mantra (OM) written continuously in a circle. [This will be the seventeenth ring or circle.]

Outside this ring is made another lotus with fifty petals. Inside these fifty petals, towards their tips, are written the fifty letters of the Maatrikaa—i.e. all the alphabets of the Sanskrit language with the exception of the letter ‘La’.

In the space between the petals are written the Mala Mantras of Lords Ram and Krishna, both prefixed by the Pranav Mantra (OM) and the Sri Beej (Srimam).

The two Mantras are the following—

(1) The Mala Mantra of Lord Ram with the prefix of 'OM' and 'Sri' is as follows 'OM Srimom Namō Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnāvisṭhaaye Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayā-mit-tejase Valāaye Rāmaaye Viṣṇave Namaha Srimom.' {Briefly this Mantra means 'OM salutations to the Lord of Sri (Goddess Laxmi). I bow reverentially before Lord Ram who is also known as Raghunandan (because he had manifested in the clan of king Raghu of Ayodhya). He is the protector from all troubles and remover of all hurdles. He is of a sweet temperament; is of a cheerful disposition; and is an embodiment of extreme Tej (splendour, radiance, glory and magnificence). He is strong, powerful and valiant. He is Vishnu, the Lord of Sri (Laxmi as well as all material prosperity, wealth, wellbeing, majesty, honours, glories and magnificence that exist in this world). It is to Lord Vishnu as Lord Ram, and vice versa, that I bow reverentially.' }

(2) The Mala Mantra of Lord Krishna with the prefix of 'OM' and 'Sri' is as follows 'OM Srimom Namaha Krishnaaye Devki-putraaye Vaasudevaaye Nigallachhedanaath Sarwa-lokaadhipataye Sarwa-jagannmohanaaye Viṣṇave Kaamitaarthadaaye Swaha Srimom.' {Briefly this Mantra means 'OM salutations to the Lord of Sri (Goddess Laxmi). I bow reverentially before Lord Krishna who is also known as Devki-putra as well as Vaasudeo (because he had manifested as the son of Vasudev, the chief of the milkmen community of Vrindavan, and his wife Devki). He had pierced the poisonous hood of the vicious serpent that lived in the river Yamuna. He is the Lord of everything and everyone. He is able to charm and keep the entire world enthralled. Lord Vishnu (in his form of Krishna) is the fulfiller of all desires. I offer my oblations to him. OM salutations to Vishnu who is the Lord of Sri (Laxmi as well as all material prosperity, wealth, wellbeing, majesty, honours, glories and magnificence that exist in this world).' } (57).

58. Outside this fifty-petal lotus, another Bhu-Chakra (ring or circle) is made which has the sign of eight 'Shuls', or spears, spikes or arrows, at eight corners. [Refer paragraph no. 56. The eight spots where the circumference of the Bhu-Chakra is punctuated or marked by the pointed mark of an arrow or spear are north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west and north-west.]

On each of these eight Shuls are written the Mantra for Lord Neelkanth (i.e. Lord Shiva, so-called because of the bluish tinge of his throat) that has been prefixed by the Pranav Mantra (OM). [That is, the Mantra is written longitudinally along the side of the Shul.] This Mantra is 'OM OM Namō Neelkanthaaye OM.' {Briefly it means 'OM salutations! I bow reverentially before Lord Neelkanth who is a manifestation of OM (Pranav; Brahm). OM salutations!'} }

In the points of these eight Shuls are written the names of eight Lokpals¹ which are prefixed with OM as a salutatory address, and suffixed with Namaha as a mark of respect for them. [The eight Lokpals are the custodians of the world.]

The Mantras are the following—

(1) OM Indraaye Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Indra, the King of Gods who is the presiding Lokpal of the east direction).

(2) OM Agneye Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Agni, the Fire God who presides over the south-east direction).

(3) OM Yamaaye Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Yam, the Lord of death who presides over the south direction).

(4) OM Niritiaye Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Nairiti, one of the eight Lokpals who presides over the south-west direction).

(5) OM Varunaaye Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Varun, the God of water, who presides over the west direction).

(6) OM Vaayaveya Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Vayavya, the God of wind, who presides over the north-west direction).

(7) OM Somaaye Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Soma, the Moon God, who presides over the north direction). [According to some versions, the Lord of the north is Kuber, the treasurer of Gods.]

(8) OM Ishanaaye Namaha (OM salutations! I bow before Ish, Lord Shiva, who presides over the north-east direction). (58).

[Note—¹Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse nos. 20-24.]

59. Outside the Bhu-Chakra (described in paragraph no. 57) are made three consecutive rings or circles by continuously writing the Pranav Mantra, i.e. OM, in a circular fashion. [These would be the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth rings.]

Outside these three rings are drawn four 'Bhupurs' having four majestic doorways or gates each. [The 'Bhupur' is a square drawn in the manner of an outer boundary of the Yantra, and resembles the outer walls of a fort or city. The earlier rings were circular in nature.]

The four corners of this Bhupur are adorned by the signs of the Maha-Vajra. [The four corners are north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west. The Maha-Vajra is the great weapon of the Gods and is shaped like a bolt of electric, or sometimes depicted even like a huge mace or a spear.]

The Amrit Beej Mantra is written longitudinally along the side of the Maha-Vajra. This Mantra is 'OM Srin(g) Vam Vam Srin(g) OM.' (59).

60. Along the path that forms the outermost passage of the Bhupur is written the following Mantras—(1) 'Omaadhaar-shaktye Namaha; (2) OM Mool-prakriteya Namaha; (3) Omaadi-kurmaaye Namaha; (4) Omnantaaye Namaha; (5) OM Prithivye Namaha.' {Briefly, these Mantras are meant to pay respect to the Supreme Being as the great support and the primary foundation of this creation. The Lord is the basic foundation of creation (1); he is the primary Nature (2); he supports this world on his back in his incarnation as the primal Tortoise (3), and on his hood in his incarnation as the legendary serpent called Anant (4); and it is he who has also revealed himself as the Earth (5) to sustain and support all the creatures born in this creation.}

[The outermost path is the passage formed between the fourth and the third Bhupurs.] (60).

61. Along the path that forms the middle passage along the Bhupurs is written the following Mantras—

(1) OM Kshir-samudraaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the celestial ocean of milk known as the Kshir Sagar.}

(2) OM Ratna-dwipaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the continent of gems and precious metals.}

(3) OM Ratna-mandapaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the altar of gems and precious metals.}

(4) OM Swet-Chatraaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the white ceremonial umbrella or canopy that covers this altar.}

(5) OM Kalpak-vrikshaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the Kalpa tree, the evergreen tree in the heaven.}

(6) OM Ratna-singhaasanaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the divine throne made of gems and precious metals.}

[The middle path is the passage formed between the third and the second Bhupurs.] (61).

62. Along the path that forms the inner passage along the Bhupurs is written the following Mantras—

(1) OM Dharmaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to Dharma, or the virtues of righteousness, nobility, probity and propriety.}

(2) OM Gyanaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to Gyan, or the virtues of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment.}

(3) OM Vairagyaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to Vairagya, or the virtues of renunciation, detachment, dispassion and non-involvement.}

(4) OM Aishwaraaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to Aishwarya, or the virtues that gives one fame, majesty, honour, respect and magnificence in this world.}

(5) Omadharmaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to Adharma, or the virtues that are the opposite of Dharma. Though it appears incredulous to laud Adharma instead of Dharma but it must be noted that Dharma is highlighted only when there is Adharma just like the importance of light can only be understood in the background of darkness. Hence, Adharma also deserves its honour as it highlights the importance of the virtues that are collectively called Dharma, such as the virtues of righteousness, nobility, ethics, probity and propriety.}

(6) Omagyaanaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to Agyan (ignorance; lack of knowledge), or the virtues that are opposite to Gyan. The logic behind this praise of Agyan instead of Gyan is the same as the one applied in Mantra no. 5 dealing with Adharma. It is in the background of ignorance or lack of knowledge that the virtues of knowledge and wisdom gain their importance and significance.}

(7) Omavairagyaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to A-vairagya, or the virtues that are opposite to Vairagya as described in Mantra no. 3. Once again, the logic behind this praise is the same as applied to Agyan and Adharma. It is in the absence of the eclectic virtues of renunciation and dispassion that these noble virtues are highlighted.}

(8) Omanaishwaraaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to An-aishwarya, or the virtues that are opposite to those that come within the definition of Aishwarya. In other words, all the things that leads to one's infamy, ignominy, degradation, degeneration, demotion etc. The virtues of Aishwarya will be all the more prominent in the face of opposite factors. Hence the importance of An-aishwarya, and its praise in this Mantra.}

(9) OM Sattwaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the virtue of Sata. This is the first of the three basic qualities in creation and is marked by truthfulness, knowledge, auspiciousness and righteousness.}

(10) OM Rajase Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the virtue of Raja. This is the second of the three basic qualities in creation and is marked by desire to create and sustain, to develop and grow.}

(11) OM Tamase Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the virtue of Tama. This is the third of the three basic qualities in creation and is marked

by the desire to be engrossed in enjoying the material comforts of the world and pleasures of the sense organs.}

(12) OM Maayaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the Maya. The Maya is the delusion-creating cosmic power of the Supreme Being. Respects are paid to this dynamic power of Brahm to honour its magical ability of creating everything virtually from nothing.}

(13) Omavidyaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the Avidya (lack of knowledge). This is because Avidya helps to establish and highlight the importance and significance of Vidya or knowledge.}

(14) OM Anantaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to Anant. The word 'Anant' means 'endless and infinite'. Hence, it refers to the eternal Brahm.}

(15) OM Padmaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my obeisance to the divine Lotus. The Lotus is a divine flower and is paid respects because it stands for holiness, cleanliness and purity. The Lotus is held by Lord Vishnu as well as by his divine consort, Goddess Laxmi. The Lotus lives in a pond of dirty water, but the surrounding filth never sticks to its petals. Besides this, it is from the Lotus that the creator Brahma was born, hence its symbolism as the bud from which the creation emerged.}

[The inner path where these Mantras are written is the passage formed between the second and the first Bhupurs.] (62).

63. Moving inwards from the four Bhupurs, we now reach the area of the three rings or circles made by writing OM (as described in paragraph no. 59 above).

In the passage or space that lies between the third ring of OM (which is the twentieth ring as drawn in accordance to the instructions in paragraph no. 59 above) and the second ring of OM (which is the nineteenth ring) are written the following Mantras in a sequential manner—

(1) OM Vimalaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the Goddess Vimlaa, one of the many names of Goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu.}

(2) OM Mutkarshinye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the Goddess Utkirshni. The word 'Utkirshni' refers to all the excellent virtues and qualities of the Goddess.}

(3) OM Gyaanaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the Goddess Gyaanaa. She personifies the virtues of Gyan or truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment.}

(4) OM Kriyaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the Goddess who controls all Kriyaa or actions and deeds in this creation.}

(5) OM Yogaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the patron Goddess of Yoga or meditation.}

(6) OM Pravahaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the Goddess who brings about movement and activity in this creation. She represents the dynamism and energy of the supreme transcendental Brahm.}

(7) OM Satyaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the patron Goddess of Truth; of the Goddess who personifies the eclectic virtues of Truth and Reality.}

(8) OM Ishaanaaye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow to pay my respects to the divine consort of Lord Ishan (i.e. Shiva). Hence, it is a reference to Goddess Uma or Parvati who is regarded as the universal Mother Goddess.} (63).

64. Along the inner passage (i.e. in the circular path between the nineteenth and the eighteenth rings drawn in accordance with the instructions of paragraph no. 59) is written the following Mantras—

(1) Omanugraahye Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow with great respect and submit my self before you (i.e. before Brahm represented by OM).}

(2) OM Namō Bhagwate Vishnawe Sarwa-bhutaatmane Vasudevaaye Sarwaatma-sanyog-yog-pithaamane Namaha. {OM salutations! I bow most reverentially before Lord Vishnu who is the Atma (soul; pure consciousness) of all living beings, is the Lord of Vasus (the primary assets of creation of which there are eight in number), is the Atma or the essence of everything in existence as well as the universal binding force in creation that establishes uniformity in it, is the patron deity of meditation, is established on the altar of mediation and is the subject of all contemplation, and he brings about a union between two erroneously separated units of creation.} (64).

65. [This paragraph is meant to summarise the points to be remembered while constructing the worship Yantra.]

As a general rule of thumb it is a normal tradition that the following entities are placed at the designated places in the spaces between the various rings or circles of the worship Yantra (i.e. the worship apparatus or instrument) to properly empower it and make it active and effective.

These are called the ten Angas or limbs (essential parts, units or aspects) of the Yantra. They are—the Beej (seed or root) of any given Mantra, along with its Pran (life), Shakti (dynamism, energy, vitality, potentials), Drishti (the power to foresee and the ability to decide the course of action), and Vashya (the ability to gain control of a given situation) etc.

The other entities that are to be added are—the name of the Yantra and Mantras, and the Gaayatri (i.e. the various Mantras composed in accordance to the specific style of composition called Gaayatri—e.g. the Gaayatri Mantra as mentioned in paragraph no. 40 of this Canto 7).

Then, proper ‘Pran Prathisthaa’ is to be done, along with ‘Bhut Shuddhi’ and writing the Mantras of the Digpals (Lokpals). [‘Pran Prathisthaa’ is the proper sanctifying and consecrating process of the worship Yantra, and ‘Bhut Shuddhi’ is the purification of the primary elements that make up the body of the worshipper as well as the various units of the Yantra. The various ‘Lokpals’ are the custodians of creation, and they are remembered to provide their protection to the whole exercise. The names of the ‘Digpals’ or ‘Lokpals’ are given in paragraph no. 58 above.]

The above ten units are called the ten Angas or limbs (essential parts or aspects) of the Yantra. [Even as a body which lacks one of its limbs feels handicapped to deliver its best, a Yantra which is devoid of even one single unit as narrated above, or when even one of them is not properly done in the prescribed manner, the effectiveness and potentials of the Yantra as a whole is correspondingly reduced.]

Besides the above mentioned ten units, four additional units are equally essential. They are the following—

(i) The Mool-Mantra (i.e. the primary Mantra of the chief deity worshipped—e.g. the Mantra of Lord Narayan is ‘OM Namō Naaraayanaaye’ as given in paragraph no. 24).

(ii) The Mala-Mantra (i.e. the Mantra used to turn the beads of the rosary, e.g. the one of Sudarshan Chakra given in paragraph no. 34).

(iii) The Mantras for the Kavach (literally meaning an armour, a protective shield, a cover).

(iv) The Mantras for the Dig-bandhan or the great bridle that keeps the Yantra and its various units in place and prevents them from dismantling and scattering about.

A proper and effective Yantra must have all these units in place (65).

66. In this way, the Yantra described in this Upanishad is called the Maha-Yantra, the Great Yantra. It has been adorned and empowered by powerful and most eclectic Mantras by those attained and accomplished ascetics whose Antahakaran (inner self) has become enlightened and empowered enough to have a deep insight into the secret realm of the mystical, the esoteric, the unknown and the enigmatic.

When this Yantra is worshipped properly by following all the sixteen steps needed for ritualistic worship¹, and when it is duly empowered by doing Japa (repetition of Mantras) and Havan or Yagya (fire sacrifices and offering of oblations to the chief deity and all other Gods to please them), it becomes radiant and splendorous like the glorious illumination that emanates from Brahm. It acquires the ability to provide freedom all fears, it becomes the destroyer or eliminator of all sins and their evil effects, it becomes the bestower of all desired things and the fulfiller of all wishes, and it provides Sayujya Mukti (i.e. it enables the worshipper to obtain oneness with the deity worshipped, which in this particular case is Lord Maha-Narayan to whom this Upanishad is dedicated and on whom it is named).

This Maha-Narayan Yantra is, for all practical purposes, a habitat of Lord Maha Narayan or Lord Maha Vishnu, and hence it is like his supreme abode called 'Param Vaikunth'—the supreme heaven called Vaikunth. [That is, one must regard this Narayan Yantra as an easy-to-access abode of Lord Maha Narayan. When one worships the Lord in it, the Lord becomes easily accessible to the worshipper.] (66).

[Note—¹The sixteen steps in formal forms of worship are the following—(1) Aavaahan (invoking or inviting the deity to be worshipped), (2) Aasan (giving of seat to the invited deity), (3) Paadya (offering water to wash the feet), (4) Arghya (offering water to wash the hands), (5) Aachaman (offering water to rinse or clean the mouth; a sip of water to clear the throat), (6) Snaan (giving a ritualistic bath), (7) Vastra (offering of new or freshly cleaned clothes to the deity) and Upavita (offering of the sacred thread), (8) Gandha (literally meaning a fragrance, and implying the offering of fresh sandal paste), (9) Pushpa (offering of flowers), (10) Dhupa (offering of lighted incense sticks), (11) Dipa (offering of lighted lamps), (12) Naivedya (offering of sweets and fruits along with water), (13) Tambul (offering of betel leaves as mouth-freshener), (14) reciting hymns in the deity's honour—called Mantra Pushpa (offering of flowers in the form of Mantras), (15) Pradakshina (circumambulation), and (16) Namaskaar (offering obeisance by bowing in front).]

67. The worshipper should meditate upon Lord Adi-Narayan (the primal Narayan) as being established on this Yantra. He should meditate as follows—

'The Lord is well established in the center of an immense illumination that is soaked in bliss and happiness, or that personifies the virtues of bliss and happiness.

He is beyond the reach of words (i.e. he cannot be described).

He is an embodiment of immense bliss and happiness that shines through him and radiates out from him in the form of brilliant illumination.

He has emerged from the essence known as 'Chaitanya' or pure Consciousness.

He is an image of Anand—i.e. blissfulness and happiness.

He is an image of Bodh—i.e. knowledge, enlightenment, wisdom and realisation of the Truth of the highest order.

He is an ocean of immense beauty, charm, glory, majesty and magnificence of the highest order.

He personifies the grand spiritual states of Turiya as well as Turiyateet (i.e. he represents the two transcendental states of existence of consciousness that goes beyond the mundane world and represents the true nature of the Atma because they bestow blissfulness and peacefulness).

The Lord is Advaitya or non-dual, unique, unmatched and one of his only kind.

He is supremely blissful and happy; he is a personification of the virtues of beatitude and felicity.

He is perpetually in an exalted state of Turiyateet (the higher transcendental state of consciousness), is astoundingly beautiful, charming, glorious, majestic and magnificent, and is an infinite source of high bliss, happiness, joys, beatitude and felicity.

His beauty, charm, elegance, magnificence and majesty resemble the surging waves of a river of these virtues.

His divine form is illuminated with the brilliance of electric.

Indeed, his form (body) is divine, auspicious and holy to the extreme.

He is being served by personified forms of all the auspicious, glorious and holy virtues in creation.

He is adorned by ornaments that are as glittering and splendid as the dazzle and radiance of thousands of Suns shining simultaneously.

He looks glorious with his many weapons which always accompany him. They are the Sudarshan Chakra¹ (the discus), the Panchjanya Shankh² (the conch with five stripes), the Padma³ (the lotus), the Kaumodki Gadaa⁴ (the mace), the Nandak Khang⁵ (the sword), the Shaarnag Dhanush⁶ (the bow), the Musal or the Gadaa (i.e. the mace, the pestle, the hammer, the rammer, the dumbbell), the Parigha (the spear or spike or lancet), and other such divine weapons (67).

[Note—¹The *Sudarshan Chakra*— The ‘Chakra’ (discus) is a weapon of Vishnu that is designed like a serrated wheel and is depicted as being brilliantly illuminated and glowing hot like the fire. It is also ruthless like the fire and destroys everything falling in its path. Hence, it stands for the fire element as well as the power of the Lord to destroy all obstacles. It also signifies that Vishnu is able to reduce to ashes all the corruptions and evil forces of creation. The Chakra also stands for the cosmic mind, because like the restlessness and the tendency of the mind to continuously fly from one subject to another without pause, the Chakra too keeps on revolving and flying off to pursue its targets relentlessly on the instructions of Vishnu. Further, the Chakra also is used as a metaphor for this creation which has been visualized in the form of a cosmic wheel.

This Chakra is called *Sudarshan Chakra*. The word ‘Sudarshan’ means ‘one that is auspicious, pleasing and comforting in appearance or to behold’. The ‘Chakra’ means ‘a circle or ring’ and it refers to a circular weapon which is like a round iron saw with hardened and sharp teeth. It is this invincible weapon that Vishnu uses more often than the rest to overcome the evil forces of creation.

According to legend, it was gifted to Vishnu by Lord Shiva when the latter was pleased by the former’s offering of worship to him at Kashi (Varanasi).

A great chunk of the first half of this Canto 7 is dedicated to this discus—refer paragraph nos. 3-14.

²The *Shankha* (conch) stands for the sky as well as the wind element because the conch is hollow and it makes a resounding sound when air is blown into it. This

sound represents the cosmic Naad, the background sound in ether from which, it is visualized by ancient sages and seers, that the entire creation emerged and derived its primary energy and dynamism. It is this Naad from which all forms of the languages are created, and the sound of the conch is so loud that it is heard for long distances. Hence, the sound of the conch stands for the generation and the propagation of life as well as of knowledge.

It is known as the *Panchjanya Shankha*. There is a legend associated with this *Panchjanya Shankha* (conch). There was a demon named Panchajanya. He lived in a miniscule form inside a conch at the bottom of the ocean. Once he ate the son of sage Saandipani. Lord Krishna had killed this demon, and retrieved the sage's son from the Yamloka, the abode of the God of death known as Yama. Krishna had taken this Shankha then, and it is called 'Panchanjanya' after the demon who lived in it.

The Shankha has a great symbolism when used by Lord Vishnu. It proclaims the presence of the Lord when he blows it. The sound of the conch is heard far and wide. According to some accounts, the conch alone stands for all the five elements of creation—viz. the sky, the air, the water, the fire and the earth. Now, let us analyse how the Shankha or conch stands for the five elements as observed here. The conch is hollow from the inside, indicating the sky or space element. It produces sound when air is blown into it, indicating the presence of the air element. The snail had this as its dwelling, and this snail lives in water. Thus, the conch indicates the fire element because it is this fire that helps a creature to survive even in water. The conch is formed in water and not on dry land like trees and terrestrial animals—indicating its origin in the water element. The body of the conch is hard calcium like the rocks and solid surface of the earth, indicating the presence of earth element as its integral part.

³The *Padma*—The 'Padma' (the Lotus flower) stands for the water element as this flower grows in water and cannot survive without it.

The Padma or Lotus is a symbol of purity and cleanliness amongst the surrounding filth because the dirty water of the pond where the lotus grows does not stick to the petals of the lotus flower. It also signifies the fact that the Lord accepts only the best and the auspicious from amongst all in this creation because the lotus flower grows in dirty water of the pond but is untouched by its filth. So these divine virtues of purity and cleanliness are one of the many glorious virtues of Lord Vishnu.

The word 'Padma' also refers to the origin of creation because the creator Brahma was born atop the lotus that emerged from the navel of the Viraat Purush at the time of creation, as well as the fact that the opening of the bud of the flower is an imaginative way of depicting the unfolding or the emergence of creation from the primeval water. It symbolizes the continuously evolving world because lotus springs forth from water, and this world also springs forth from the causal waters of the cosmos and then grows in the vast ethereal space of the sky.

It also regarded as being closely related to the Sun and that is why it opens up when the Sun rises, and closes at sunset. Since the light of the Sun is a metaphor for wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment and purity of thoughts and actions, the Lotus in the hands of Vishnu indicates the presence of these eclectic virtues in the Lord, or that the Lord symbolises these auspicious and divine virtues and qualities of creation.

The Padma is also a symbol of Goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of good fortunes and wealth. Laxmi is depicted in iconography as being seated on a divine lotus in full bloom.

⁴The bow called *Saarang*—This symbolizes the cosmic senses of the Viraat Purush. This bow of Lord Vishnu is also known as the *Shaankhya Dhanush* (bow). It was made from the bones of demon named Shaankhya-chuda after he was killed by Lord Shiva.

⁵The *Kaumodki Gadaa* (mace)—The Lord's 'Musal' or 'Gadaa' (mace, rammer, hammer, battle-ram, dumbbell) stands for the earth element because it is as heavy and gross as the latter. This Gadaa also stands for the cosmic intellect because the intellect is used to keep a strict control over one's wayward mind and its inherent fickleness,

over one's sense organs and their inherent restlessness etc. This signifies the ability of the Lord to be able to exercise infallible control over all aspects of creation. Being a metaphor for the intellect, the Gadaa also symbolizes the Lord's ability to separate the auspicious and the righteous from the evil and the pervert, or to forcefully subdue the evil, pervert and corrupting forces of creation symbolized by the wayward and restless mind as well as the indulgent organs of the body.

The Gadaa is known as the *Kaumodki Gadaa*. It has the following connotation. The word 'Kaumodki' consists of two parts—viz. 'Ku' meaning 'earth', and 'moda' meaning 'happiness. Hence, the mace of Lord Vishnu gives happiness to all the righteous creatures on earth by protecting them against the evil forces represented by demons.

It is called a 'Gadaa' because it was moulded from the strong bones of a demon named 'Gadaa', and hence bears his name. The demon gave up his bones to respect the wishes of the creator Brahma, who then got a mace crafted out of it at the hand of Vishwakarma, the God's engineer, and kept it with Varun, the Water God. It was given to Lord Krishna at the request of Agni, the Fire God, when the former had got the Khaandava forest consumed by fire.

⁶The *Nandak Khanga* (sword)—The word 'Nandak' means 'one which gives joy and happiness to the Gods'. The Agnipuran, Chapter 245, describes an interesting episode regarding this Nandak sword. Once, the creator Brahma was performing a fire sacrifice on the banks of river Ganges. A demon named Lohaasur (the demon with a body of iron) came to disturb it. Suddenly, a male warrior-like figure emerged from Brahma's body. He got transformed into a sword which was given by the assembled Gods to Lord Maha Vishnu who used it to kill the demon and chop his body into pieces. The Lord then accepted the sword as one of his permanent companions, and named it 'Nandak'—the one that gave happiness and joys to the Gods because it helped to kill the demon who was the cause of their troubles.]

68. The Lord's chest is adorned by the Srivatsa¹, the Kaustav² and the Vanmaalaa³.

He is perpetually in a state of extreme spiritual bliss and profound ecstasy because of the continuous falling of the symbolic flowers of blissfulness and ecstasy that occurs in the forest of Kalpa Trees that stand for the divine realm of Brahm-hood. [That is, Lord Vishnu remains perpetually in a meditative and contemplative state which provides ecstasy and bliss to him. The Kalpa Tree is the ever-green tree of Gods which is all wish-fulfilling.]

In this most beautiful and enchanting forest of Brahm-hood there are countless water-falls of sweet nectar. [This refers to the numerous instances when the spiritual aspirant has an opportunity to quench his thirst for the sense of blessedness, blissfulness, ecstasy, exhilaration, felicity and beatitude that are found upon spiritual realisation when he walks on the path leading to Brahm-hood.]

The Lord is shaded by the ten thousand hoods of the Sheshnaath, the legendary serpent. The Lord's divine form is aglow with the reflection of the glitter that emanates from the numerous self-shining Manis (gems) that adorn these hoods, as also from the glistening body of the Sheshnaath.

He is an embodiment of eternal and extreme Anand (bliss, ecstasy, beatitude, felicity) that comes with Brahm-hood, or that is the characteristic virtue of Brahm. This Anand effuses from his divine form; it drips from him in a natural way because he is saturated with it so much so that it overflows.

He is a composite image of all the auspicious, holy and divine virtues that are collectively characteristic of the supreme Brahm, or which define the exalted state of Brahm-hood.

He wears a new garland of the Tulsi leaves (leaves of the Basil plant) plucked afresh daily. This garland cheers him up and fills him with joy while making him appear fresh everyday.

He is adorned by numerous other garlands of countless varieties of flowers which are symbols of eternal bliss and happiness.

He is illuminated by continues and never-ending waves of dynamic Tej (energy, vibrancy, vitality, vigour, fire and light) that pulsate, flow or swirl around him. He is splendorous and radiant with eternal sources of immense brilliance that revolve or swirl all around him. [He appears to be surrounded by pulsating waves of energy and light that swirl around him in a ceaseless cycle. These waves of energy rotate and counter-rotate, move up and down, move out and retract, and always keep changing in intensity and depth. The Lord appears to simmer in this light, to glow in its illumination.]

He looks extremely charming and magnificent, being surrounded as he is by countless perfume sticks and lighted lamps that symbolise ‘Bodhaanand’—i.e. the bliss that comes with truthful knowledge, self-realisation, wisdom and enlightenment.

He is being served by swaying whisks that symbolise supreme and eternal forms of Anand that pulsate and swirl around the Lord continuously in waves.

All around him are countless heaps of sweet fruits that symbolise the best sort of spiritual Anand (bliss and ecstasy) that is attained upon obtaining the best form of Gyan (wisdom and enlightenment that leads to self-realisation).

He looks divine, majestic and powerful while seated in a beautiful divine Vimaan (chariot, throne, altar, shrine) having ceremonial umbrellas and flags (royal insignia, standard) to indicate his exalted stature (as the Supreme Being and Emperor of creation).

He is self-illuminated with a divine halo of immense intensity that eternally surrounds him and radiates out of his divine self.

He is established or seated in the midst of immense ‘Tej’ (i.e. the Lord is surrounded by a brilliant source of illumination and energy that is dynamic, dazzling, exuberant, vibrant and pulsating).

He symbolises the ‘Ardha Matra⁴’—i.e. the half syllable that follows the Mantra OM which is itself a representative of the supreme Brahm.

He symbolises the ‘Turiya’ (transcendental) state of existence of consciousness.

He is in the sublime form of ‘Ahahat Naad’⁵.

In fact, the Lord symbolises the Turiyateet state of existence. [The Turiyateet refers to the state of transcendental existence that is higher in its spiritual importance. It marks the higher state of Turiya, and represents the stature of extreme beatitude and felicity that comes with attainment of spiritual enlightenment of the highest order.]

He is so enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious that he is beyond description, and nothing can be said about him.

He has many subtle and sublime forms—such as Naad, Bindu and Kalaa⁶.

He is personified Atma (the pure consciousness) and embodies the spirit of the grand virtues of spiritualism with all its divine glories.

He is ‘Nirguna’—i.e. he has no specific attributes and forms; he is without any Gunas or qualities and features.

He is ‘Niskriya’—i.e. he remains aloof from the humdrum activities of this material world and does not get involved in them. [This refers to the state of Turiya as well as Turiyateet when the spiritual aspirant remains oblivious of the surrounding world around him because all the sense organs and the mind-intellect have become

defunct and irrelevant for him. It is the mind and sub-conscious that makes a man aware of any activity that is done by the body, and when the mind stops paying any attention at the inputs of the organs of perception and action of the gross body, it does not matter whether or not the body does anything. This is achieved in the higher states of spiritual progress when the aspirant has reached the Turiya as well as the Turiyateet state of existence which is also known as the transcendental state of existence of consciousness. It is the super consciousness that prevails in this state.]

He is 'Nirmal'—i.e. he is immaculate, clean, pure, holy, untainted and uncorrupted.

He is 'Nirdosh'—i.e. he has no faults, shortcomings or imperfections of any kind. He is guiltless, immaculate and pure.

He is 'Nirajan'—i.e. he is an entity that has no 'Anjan' or darkness or soot of any kind smeared over it to hide its pristine purity and glorious nature. In other words, it is faultless, flawless, uncorrupted, untainted and without any blemishes of any kind.

He is 'Nirakar'—i.e. he has no gross forms and shapes.

He has no support to prop him up; he needs no support or foundation for himself as he is self-supporting and self-founded. In fact, he is the supreme Authority that supports the rest of creation; he is the one who forms the eternal foundation of this creation; he is the base upon which the entire edifice of creation rests.

He is an image of eternal and extreme form of Anand (bliss, ecstasy, beatitude, felicity) that comes with Brahm and self realisation.

He is the supreme non-dual Absolute Truth and the holy Divinity that is known as the Advaitya principle or Brahm.

The spiritual aspirant is advised to meditate and contemplate upon this Adi-Narayan, the primal Narayan or the Maha Vishnu.' (68).

[Note—¹The *Srivatsa*—This is the mark of the foot of sage Bhṛigu which he had caste on the chest of Vishnu ones when he got annoyed upon the Lord. The Lord is so enamoured of his devotees that instead of taking umbrage at this disrespect shown by the sage and punishing him for his misdemeanour, he had blessed the sage that his footprint would always remain on his chest as one of the jewels worn by Lord Vishnu. However, Laxmi was so angry at the temerity of sage Brighu that she cursed that henceforth she, in the form of wealth and material abundance, would always shun a Brahmin; it is believed that this is the reason why Brahmins, who are otherwise of a high birth, are always serving others in the society who are junior to them by birth for their monetary needs.

²The *Kaustav Mani*—This is a glittering gem worn by Lord Vishnu, and it covers the sign of the Srivatsa. It was obtained at the time of the legendary churning of the ocean and automatically got lodged on the Lord's chest. {Mahabharat, Adiparva, 18.}

³The *Vanmaalaa*—This is a garland (mala) worn by Vishnu and is made of flowers of the forest/wild (Van). The flowers are of a wide variety with those of the Kadamba tree (*Nauclea cadamba*) being in the center or the dominant ones. Sometimes, marigold, daisy or xanthium flowers are shown as being used in this garland.

⁴The *Ardha Matras* are the half-syllables used in Sanskrit above, below, before and after an alphabet to give it a proper sound, thereby giving the alphabet a proper form and giving a meaning to the word of which the alphabet with its Ardha Matras is a constituent part. According to the Ram Uttar-Tapininiyopanishad, canto 5, verse no.40, Lord Ram has been viewed as a personification of this 'Ardha Matras'. It symbolises the fact that without him the creation loses its meaning, glory and existence even as a word loses its meaning and impact without the alphabets having proper Ardha Matras.

In the context of OM, the Ardha Matra refers to a half-syllable placed at the end of the third letter 'M' of OM in the form of a 'Halant' or a mark of an oblique line placed below M. In the symbol of OM, it is represented by a horizontal 'S' mark placed to the right groove of the symbol which represents the long vowel sound of 'Ooo' in Sanskrit (like in *boot*). Normally, the letter 'M' of the word OM is to be hummed in a prolonged sound stretching into infinity. But since it is not done and the worshipper becomes silent, it is called 'half Matra' or half syllable. It is tantamount to conclusion of the word OM, and since OM is envisioned as representing the whole gamut of creation, this Ardha Matra is symbolic of conclusion of creation. That is why it is accompanied by the universal fire of destruction called the Samvartak Agni. The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that the Ardha Matra of OM represents the Moon God, the Mantras of the Atharva Veda, the Maruts (the Wind God), the Viraat Chanda and the Samvartak Agni. It is the fourth leg or Paad of Brahm and follows the third letter 'M' of OM.

⁵The *Anahat Naad* refers to the un-struck sound that is self-generated in the cosmic ether and is the one that is represented by the Mantra OM. It is from the energy generated by the waves of this sound in the cosmic ether that the dynamo of creation is powered. This cosmic sound fills up the entire space of the sky, and its presence can be verified during meditation when this cosmic sound is actually heard by the practitioner of Yoga. In the present context of Lord Vishnu it means that the Lord has no physical form with a gross body, but is in the form a subtle element, like the sound element, that is only heard of but cannot be physically seen. Like this sound, the Lord's divine existence is experienced but not seen. And like this sound, the divine form of the Lord is all-pervading, and it subtly fills up the entire space of the creation.

Refer (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6; Canto 5, verse no. 2; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 2-3, 37 and 102; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 20. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Hansopanishad, verse nos. 16-20; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 2. (iii) Sam Veda's following Upanishads—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 80; Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 3-10. (iv) Rig Veda's Naad Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 33-36.

⁶Naad, Bindu and Kalaa—The concept of *Naad* has been explained briefly above. The word *Bindu* literally means a drop of some liquid, for instance a drop of nectar. At an advanced stage of Yoga when the practitioner is able to activate the Kundalini, control his vital winds and successfully implement other aids of Yoga such as correctly and persistently doing various Asanas, Mudras and Bandhas for a prolonged period, he would automatically experience rewards inherent to the practice of Yoga. Therefore, he would experience extreme bliss and ecstasy that would appear to drip upon his inner self and overwhelm him. His mind and heart would be submerged in enjoying this nectar that would drip drop by drop like honey effusing from a ripe and full honeycomb. This concept of Bindu in association with Naad has been used to name a special Upanishad called the 'Naad Bindu' Upanishad. Other Upanishads also deal with this subject, e.g. Dhyani Bindu, Amrit Bindu and Amrit Naad Upanishads etc.

The Varaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 5, verse no. 52 mentions how this Naad is heard and the dripping of Bindu experienced by the practitioner of Yoga when his Kundalini is activated.

The concept of Naad and Bindu has been explained at length in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 105, 167, 178; Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 3, verse nos. 2-3, 11; Canto 4, verse no. 47; Canto 5, verse no. 28; and Canto 6, verse nos. 48-49, 71-73.

The relationship between Naad and Bindu has been elucidated in great detail in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 3, verse nos. 3, 11, and Canto 4, verse no. 47.

The relationship between the Bindu, Naad and the Mana has been described in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 6, verse nos. 71-73.

Naad Shakti or the majestic, dynamic and profound mystical and spiritual energy, powers and potentials of Naad have been expounded in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 105, 178, Canto 6, verse nos. 21, 48, 72.

The Bindu Shakti or the majestic mystical energy and spiritual potentials of the point-source from where the cosmic Naad is envisioned to have had its origin has been described in Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 49, 71, 73.

In the context of the divine Mantra OM, these terms Naad, Bindu and Kalaa mean the following—(i) Naad refers to the crescent moon-like sign marked on top of the geometrical depiction of OM as the long vowel sound of ‘Ooo’ (as in the English word *moon*) in the Sanskrit language. (ii) Bindu refers to the dot placed above this Naad, and represents the focal point of the concave surface of the Naad. (iii) Kalaa refers to the changing nature of the sound that is produced by saying OM. It symbolises the fact that the entire creation, which is visualised as being completely represented by the word OM, is ever changing. Since OM is a Mantra for Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that is also known by another name of Pranav, it follows that the composite structure of creation that is completely represented by the completed form of OM, with its Naad, Bindu and Kalaa, is nothing but the Lord’s cosmic gross body.

The word *Kalaa* means an aspect of anything. The Kalaa in the context of OM—In the geometrical symbol of Brahm which is pronounced as ‘OM’, these three Naad, Bindu and Kalaa appear as a crescent moon or a shallow bowl with a dot at the center placed on the top of the symbol for OM. This Naad is like a big trough and represents the cosmic bowl or crucible in which the primary cosmic gel was placed to initiate the process of creation. The Bindu appears to indicate the pin-point source of heat, radiation or any other activating source placed just above this crucible to inject sufficient energy in to the primary fluid and activate it. It acts like a source of energy directed at the crucible (Naad) set off the chain reaction that would ultimately culminate in the creation. The Kalaa which refers to the various phases of the moon would indicate the different stages through which the entire process passed from the initial stages of creation to its complete closure. But even as the parents of a child do not undergo any apparent change while the embryo develops in the mother’s womb, the Supreme Being remained the same all the while the creation developed and unfolded in the cosmic womb represented by Mother Nature. Another example to explain is the moon’s disc which appears to change every single day but all know that it remains the same, and the apparent change in its shape is only due to the angle with which its lighted or dark surface is viewed from the earth.

The Dhyani Bindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 13 proclaims that OM has eight Kalaas or facets or parts. They are the letters A, U, M, Naad, Bindu, Kalaa, Kalaa-teet and Param.]

69. The ‘Maha Narayan Yantra’ that has been described above in this Canto is a provider of Moksha or final liberation and deliverance. It is a living embodiment of the Supreme Being known as Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan (69).

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Uttar Kand—Canto 8

[This Canto essentially describes the following topics as a sort of summary of the preaching of this Upanishad—(i) the non-dual or Advaitya nature of Brahm (paragraph nos. 1-3), (ii) the four Paads of Brahm (paragraph no. 4), (iii) the proclamation, called the Mahavakyas, of a Brahm-realised person (paragraph nos. 5-6), (iv) the attainment of Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance), (v) the two great forms of Yoga, viz. Saalamba and Niraalamba (paragraph nos. 8-9), (vi) the importance of Bhakti or devotion (paragraph no. 12), (vii) how to have the knowledge of the Param Tattva (paragraph nos. 13-14), and (viii) who a true Guru (teacher) is, and his importance.

This Upanishad concludes by emphasising the profound spiritual benefits or rewards one gets by studying and understanding the great teaching of this Upanishad, and implementing them in practice.]

1. The great grandfather of creation, Brahma, asked Lord Maha Vishnu—‘Oh Lord! How do we reconcile between the two opposite forms of yours—one that says that you are the Advaitya Brahm (the non-dual philosophy of Vedanta that basically states that the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation are unequivocally one and not two, and that Brahm, a term used to encompass both, is therefore also one and not two; this Brahm is indivisible, immutable, all-pervading, invisible, most sublime and subtle, has no forms, characteristic features and attributes, etc., and since everything in this creation is nothing but Brahm in its form, it follows that each unit of creation is fundamentally the same as the other), and the other that describes many Vaikunths (the numerous abodes of Lord Vishnu), Bhavans (buildings; various Lokas or worlds), their surrounding walls, Vimaans (chariots, altars, shrines, spires or steeples etc.) and other such things which have different gross forms, varied shapes and sizes, and a physical existence (as described in the concluding paragraph nos. 15-17 of Canto 5, and the whole Cantos 6 and 7 of this Upanishad)?’ (1).

[Note—In this context, refer to Canto 1, paragraph nos. 4, 6, and Canto 2, paragraph nos. 1-8, 11 which also deal with the same question.]

2. Lord Vishnu dispelled his doubts by replying—‘What you have said is correct. I’ll explain it to you by citing examples.

Just like ‘pure gold’ can have many forms such as a wrist-band, a crown, an arm-band etc. without disturbing the inherent nature and intrinsic quality of the metal known as ‘gold’ (in other words, none of these forms affect the fundamental nature and quality of the metal known as ‘gold’ with the atomic number 79 just because gold has changed its shape and cast into various designs by the goldsmith), just like the ‘water’ present in the ocean assumes so many varied forms such as small and large waves, froth, bubbles, hail that falls from the sky, salty water, ice etc. without changing its own basic nature and characteristic quality (in other words, none of these forms would in any way alter or affect the basic molecular structure of water which essentially consists of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen—H₂O), just like ‘earth’ retains its basic characteristics, its fundamental qualities and its intrinsic value inspite of having so many varied external features as marked by the presence of innumerable mountains and hills of all imaginable contours and dimensions, countless varieties of plants such as large and sturdy trees or the humble grass, shrubs and creepers (in other words, though the earth is punctuated by so many varied external features, though it displays such diversity in its external form, its basic structure of being a round globe made of the element known as ‘earth’ is not at all compromised)—in the same way, all the forms that I take in this creation are basically

the various revelations of my one fundamental universal form which is the non-dual form, the one that is called 'Advaitya Brahm'.

All the myriad forms that are seen in this creation, all the variety that is observed in this creation, all the numerous contours, shapes, sizes, colours and forms that this creation takes are nothing but my own form, simply because the entire creation is nothing but 'me' revealed in its form.

Not a single atom exists that is not 'me'. Or, if it had not been for me, there would have been no creation in existence now. [In other words, even the minutest of things as well as the most colossus of things are nothing but 'me' revealed in these forms. Nothing exists without 'me'. The pronoun 'me' stands for the Supreme Being known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the Atma or true 'Self' of creation.] (2).

3. The great grandfather Brahma asked again—'Oh Lord! It is said that 'Param Vaikunth' (the supreme heaven or the abode of Maha Vishnu) is the 'Param Moksha' (the ultimate goal that the spiritual aspirant strives to reach in order to find final liberation and deliverance for his soul)¹.

Everywhere, in all the scriptures, it is universally said that 'Param Moksha' is only of *one* kind, and hence its Anand (bliss) should also be of one kind. Then how come there are so many Vaikunths and so many oceans of Anand etc. (as described by you in earlier Cantos while you were describing the journey of the aspirant through many heavens as he rose higher and higher to reach the Param Vaikunth)? (3).

[Note—¹The same question has been answered in a different way in Canto 1, paragraph nos. 4-6; Canto 3, paragraph nos. 2-7; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 1-13; Canto 5, paragraph nos. 1-14.

The *Vaikunth* is the abode of Lord Vishnu, and therefore the *Param Vaikunth* is the supreme abode of the Maha Vishnu, Supreme Being. It refers to the divine abode where Maha Vishnu or the Adi Narayan resides. If the Supreme Being is one, and if Vishnu is to be regarded as the Supreme Being, then the question arises why are there so many Vaikunths as narrated in Canto 5, paragraph nos. 15-16, Canto 6, paragraph nos. 1-20, and Canto 7, paragraph nos. 1-14 which describe a number of Vaikunths that the spiritual aspirant crosses before he reaches the ultimate destination of the Param Vaikunth described in Canto 5, paragraph no. 17, Canto 6, paragraph nos. 21-22, and Canto 7, paragraph nos. 16-21.

The reason why there is so much confusion about the truthfulness of Brahm is given in Canto 4, paragraph no. 8-13; and Canto 6, paragraph no. 12-14. Essentially it states that it is the Maha Maya (the great delusion creating powers of Brahm) and Avidya (ignorance or lack of knowledge of the ultimate Truth) that is the root cause of all confusions and perplexities.

The *Param Moksha* is the final liberation and deliverance of the Jiva or the living being, the ultimate salvation and emancipation of the soul. When this spiritual destination is reached, there is no re-birth and its consequential horrors. The Param Moksha has been described in the context of the Param Vaikunth mentioned above in Canto 5, paragraph no. 17, Canto 6, paragraph nos. 21-22, Canto 7, paragraph nos. 16-21, and the Canto 8, paragraph nos. 1-7.

The Param Moksha in the simple terms of Vedanta is that stage in the spiritual journey or search of a man for his final resting place when his individual 'self', his Atma which is pure consciousness, recognises who it is, and then merges with the parent, the cosmic 'Self', the Supreme Atma of creation, the cosmic Consciousness from it had somehow separated out of ignorance and delusions. This removes any distinction between them, and with this merger the individual Atma loses its independent identity to become the universal Atma. The individual Atma becomes one with and inseparable as well as indistinguishable from the universal Atma known

as Brahm. This achievement is Brahm-hood. It is self-realisation that leads to Brahm-realisation.]

4. 'It is alright', said Lord Vishnu, and continued with his explanation. 'Thousands of Brahmaands (universes or worlds) are said to exist in only one Paad of Brahm known as the Avidya Paad. [Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-6; Canto 6, paragraph nos. 2-14. The Avidya Paad is the lowest aspect or limb of Brahm, and as the name suggests, it has a preponderance of Avidya or lack of truthful knowledge. Anything that is based on falsehood is obviously bound to be false itself. This is why this world is characterised by the presence of delusions, confusions, doubts, perplexities, schisms and dichotomies.]

Even as the presence of countless worlds do not affect the basic characteristic of the fourth Paad of Brahm as being dominated by Maya (delusions) and Avidya (ignorance and lack of knowledge of the Truth), the presence of countless Lokas (worlds), numerous Vaikunths (heavens) and as many countless Vibhutis (glorious virtues and magnificent aspects of this creation) in the 'Anda' (the cosmic egg; the greater Universe) do not affect its basic nature and virtue (which is that it harbours the magical spark of life called 'consciousness' that cannot be defined or replicated).

All the Brahmaands have countless Lokas and Vaikunths, and all of them are accepted by the scriptures. [And this is why this present Upanishad has enumerated many Vaikunths and other Lokas in earlier Cantos while it narrates the journey of the spiritual aspirant to the supreme Vaikunth where he would finally find his Param Moksha. The Upanishad unequivocally stresses that Brahm is 'Advaitya' or non-dual, and that there is therefore only one type of 'Mukti' or liberation and deliverance, and it is known as the Kaivalya Mukti. Getting rid of falsehood is tantamount to attaining this Kaivalya Mukti, because then the spiritual aspirant would realise that Brahm is to be found no where in the sky but inside his own 'self' as the pure consciousness known as the Atma. This knowledge is enlightening and 'Bodh' of the highest order. It culminates in self and Brahm realisation. It is true form of Mukti, because then Brahm is attained most easily as this cosmic Consciousness is very close to the seeker as it resides in his own bosom. True Mukti would be the merger of the individual's own soul with the cosmic Soul so as to become one with it. This fact is endorsed and stressed in the present paragraph.]

When this is the state of affairs of only one Paad of Brahm known as Avidya Paad, then one can well imagine the situation of other Paads as well—they would also be the same. [The other three Paads are known as (i) Vidya Paad or Gyan Paad, (ii) Anand Paad, and (iii) Turiya Paad—refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 5; Canto 4, paragraph no. 3, 6.]

The emergence of an extreme sense of vibrant Anand (surging and uninhibited spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity) is the hallmark of Moksha (spiritual liberation and deliverance; salvation and emancipation). [When one reaches one's avowed destination after an arduous journey and great efforts, overcoming numerous temptations, troubles, distractions, hurdles and handicaps en-route, it is natural and obvious that unbound exhilaration and profound ecstasy would overwhelm him when success is finally achieved. So, the spontaneous sprouting of extreme Anand is a sign of the spiritual aspirant having attained Moksha.]

Since extreme Anand is obtained in all the three Paads of Brahm, they are all equivalent to the 'Param Moksha Dhaam'—i.e. to the supreme destination of the soul where it finds freedom from the horrors and torments of this world.

All the three Paads are equivalent in nature to the Kaivalya state of existence. [The word Kaivalya refers to non-dual existence because literally it means ‘one of its kind; the only one’. Since only the Absolute Truth can be ‘Kaivalya’, it follows that these three states of Brahm are the ‘truthful’ form of Divinity. Again, since Brahm is synonymous with ‘consciousness’, it also follows that Anand is the only true state of existence or the natural state of consciousness. Any other state that is not Anand is therefore not the truthful and natural state of existence of consciousness. Since ‘consciousness’ is the ‘true self’ of the spiritual aspirant, when the latter finds Anand he is deemed to have found out who or what his ‘real and truthful self’ is, and then he discovers the universal Atma or soul which is his ‘true self’. This Atma is eternal, imperishable, blissful, enlightened and always liberated. It is a sublime and subtle entity, and not the gross body with which the aspirant had identified himself all along till the time he had made this discovery. It is the body that suffers, that does deeds, gets entangled in the world because it relates to its gross aspects and sense objects, and not the Atma which is distinct from the gross body and separate from it. When the spiritual aspirant thus becomes ‘self-realised’, he is filled with Anand. This ‘self-realisation’ is a metaphoric way of saying that the aspirant has reached the ‘Vidya Paad or Gyan Paad’ of Brahm. Since he is filled with ecstasy and feels exhilarated, he has also reached the ‘Anand Paad’. When he has become firmly established in these two Paads and there is no scope of his ever reverting back to the first Paad of Avidya, it is said that he has reached the Turiya Paad of transcendental existence. Spiritually speaking, he has obtained ‘Moksha’, or he has obtained liberation and deliverance from the troubles that are caused to him due to horrible delusions and ignorance that had swirled around him while he was still in the world and confused about the Truth—i.e. till he was living in the ‘Avidya Paad’ of Brahm.]

In this eclectic higher state of existence of consciousness, everything becomes full of Anand, i.e. the aspirant is so detached from the world in higher states of spiritual realisation that he is oblivious of anything that may be the cause of any kind of misery, pain, grief, agony, distress, tribulation or trouble for him. As a result, he is always submerged in an endless ocean of Anand—or bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity unbound. With this attainment, he is unconcerned with anything else; he becomes oblivious of anything else.

Hence, he always experiences the vast expanse of the eternal and truthful Brahm’s equally eternal and truthful Anand, with its countless shades of ecstasy and bliss that this realisation brings in its wake, spread all around him. In other words, he observes Anant Vaikunths (i.e. Vaikunths that have no end, and are therefore eternal) and Anant oceans of Param Anand (i.e. endless oceans of supreme bliss) flowing endlessly through this Vaikunth. [This stanza basically repeats what has been said above to stress the point in a metaphoric way.] (4).

5. When the spiritual aspirant reaches that divine abode (i.e. the Param Vaikunth as described in paragraph nos. 1-20 of Canto 7) and meditates upon the divine form of the Lord (i.e. of Adi-Narayan as described in paragraph nos. 67-69 of Canto 7), he bows before the Lord, performs circumambulation, worships the Lord in various other ways, and obtains or experiences an extreme sense of bliss, happiness and contentedness.

He sits down calmly and focuses his attention on the primarily Advaitya (non-dual) aspect or nature of the Lord (Adi-Narayan). [That is, he gathers himself to concentrate his attention and mind on one single aim of his life, which is to obtain the Absolute Truth that is always ‘one’ and not more than one. So he tells himself to

forget about all the different types of charming scenes and worlds that he had encountered on his way to this ultimate goal of life. These scenes and worlds were caused by Maya and Avidya, and are equivalent to the different temptations proffered by the Devil to divert the man from his chosen spiritual path]

While specially meditating and contemplating upon this universal and uniform Truth (i.e. Brahm or the Supreme Being; here referring to the cosmic Consciousness also known as the Atma) that is Advitya by nature, he is filled with an immense sense of spiritual fulfilment and bliss. This divine experience that comes with being realised and enlightened is very dynamic and vibrant, and it drowns the aspirant in nectar of 'Bodhaanand'—i.e. fills him with extreme Anand (bliss, ecstasy, beatitude, felicity and joys) that come with Bodh (enlightenment, wisdom and awareness of the Truth). [This is because the spiritual aspirant has finally attained his much cherished dream and objective in life.]

Being thus self-realised, Brahm-realised and enlightened about the Truth, he repeatedly remembers the Maha Vakyas (the great sayings of the Vedas and the Upanishads) and exclaims or proclaims—

'Brahmaasmi' or I am Brahm; 'Ahamasmi' or Indeed it is I/me; 'Brahmahamasmi' or I am indeed Brahm; 'Yoahamasmi' or That is I/me; 'Brahmaamashmi' or Brahm is I/me; 'Ahamevaaham' or I am indeed I/me. [These statements obviously establish the fact that the spiritual aspirant has become steeped in the eclectic philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta which stresses on the non-duality and uniformity between the individual 'self' or the Atma and the cosmic 'Self' or the Brahm. This is because both are 'consciousness' existing in different planes of existence, one is known as the Jiva and the other is called Brahm. Fundamentally there is no difference between the two. Refer Canto 6, paragraph no. 22.]

'I am burning 'Ahantaa' (the false notion of duality and distinction between two aspects of the same thing) by offering it to the sacred fire. Swaha!' [The word 'Swaha' is uttered when one makes offerings to the fire during formal fire sacrifices. Here, the aspirant is eliminating all his doubts and confusions about Brahm by symbolically burning doubts and confusions in the fire.] (5).

6. When the spiritual aspirant is firmly established in the belief that 'I am Brahm', it is then that he is filled with immense Anand, is spiritually cleansed, and is fully contented and fulfilled. In that event, he is naturally attracted towards 'me' and finally merges in 'me' who am the supreme Brahm in the form of Narayan.

Just like the swirling and rapidly flowing water of great rivers gush into the ocean to become one with it, and just like huge dynamic waves that rise from the surface of the ocean with immense force fall back into the same ocean to vanish forever, the self-and-Brahm-realised aspirant enthusiastically exclaims 'I am a personification of Sachiddanand' (i.e. I am the truth, consciousness and bliss personified), 'I am Ajanmaa' (i.e. I do not have a birth as I am eternal and imperishable), and 'I am Paripurna' (i.e. I am fulfilled and fully contented, I have no desires whatsoever left) and sheds his individuality to become one with and indistinguishable from 'me', the supreme Brahm known as Adi-Narayan.

When this comes about, the spiritual aspirant turns into an ocean that is calm and quiet, having no surging waves. He becomes an ocean of peace and tranquillity himself.

He becomes a symbolic base and an endless ocean of Advaitya. [That is, he is firmly established in the eclectic notion of non-duality, and no matter how many surging rivers representing different schools of thoughts and philosophies come

thundering towards him, they cannot disturb his state of spiritual bliss, peace, tranquillity, quietude and serenity. On the contrary, they themselves undergo a change and lose their various independent identities as distinct philosophies to become 'Advaitya' or uniformly 'one' themselves. This can be explained by a simple instance—so many rivers come thundering towards the ocean, but when they fall into it they all become one like the ocean. The ocean does not lose its identity, but the rivers do.]

He becomes an ocean of truth, consciousness and bliss—collectively called 'Sat-Chit-Anand (6).

7. Any person who follows this path as described above and implements its principles in life is certain to become one with Narayan¹. [That is, he would obtain the form of Mukti, or liberation and deliverance from this body and world, by dissolving his own identity and becoming one with the Lord known as Narayan. In terms of Vedanta, he would merge his soul with the cosmic Soul known as Brahm, never to take a new birth again, and thereby getting rid from all the horrors and miseries that are associated with the soul having to reside in a gross body that suffers and dies, as well as the having to deal with the countless delusions and temptations presented by this artificial world of material sense objects.]

All great hermits, ascetics, sages and seers have obtained Mukti (final liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation) by diligently following this hallowed path. Indeed, countless realised ascetics have obtained mystical powers (i.e. have reached higher levels of spiritualism and accessed great mystical authority and potentials which helped them to reach their destination of finding Mukti without hindrance) by following this acclaimed spiritual path.' (7).

[Note—¹Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 6; Canto 2, paragraph no. 12; Canto 5, paragraph no. 17; and Canto 6, paragraph no. 22.]

8. [Lord Vishnu cites an instance of some other disciple asking his Guru some pertinent question, and uses this discourse to explain further to Brahma the doctrines about Brahm that have been elucidated upon in this Upanishad.]

After hearing the above discourse, the disciple asked the teacher—'Oh Lord! What are 'Saalamba' and 'Niraalamba' Yogas?' (8).

[Note—The word *Aalamba* means to take support of, to rely on, a prop, a stay, a reason, a dependence upon something, an object which helps to support some other object.

The word *Yoga* means to bring about a union or to establish uniformity between two separate entities. In the context of the spiritual aspirant's desire to find Mukti by worshipping his chosen deity, Yoga would mean an instrument or exercise that helps him to obtain his cherished aim or goal of obtaining access to or obtaining nearness with the deity he adores and worships. Since the deity worshipped in this Upanishad is Adi-Narayan or Maha Vishnu representing the supreme Brahm, the particular effort or path followed to reach this deity would be by the aspirant's Yoga.

Hence, Saalamba Yoga is defined in paragraph no. 9, and Niraalamba Yoga in paragraph no. 10-12.]

9. [The teacher replied—] 'The 'Saalamba Yoga' is that in which the spiritual aspirant focuses his attention or meditates upon (i.e. takes the help of) an image of the worshipped deity to reach his spiritual destination while remaining aloof from all humdrum activities of the gross world which might be a cause of any kind of

distraction or diversion for him. [The word 'Saalamba' means 'with a help; with an aid'.]

This image of the chosen deity has a certain form, such as the one which has a holy feet and a certain countenance.

So, an aspirant who chooses this path towards his spiritual destination meditates upon an image of the deity he worships and focuses his attention on its holy figure, especially the feet, or even on its divine halo and general countenance. [That is, he takes the help of an image to reach his destination of being close to the Lord he worships. This image is just an 'image' of the principal Lord, and not the Lord himself. It just helps the aspirant to concentrate his faculties on the Divinity he worships; it is like a prop that helps him to stand up and walk up to his desired goal in life, but not the goal itself! This method has been devised by the scriptures to make something that is very enigmatic, mysterious and esoteric to come within reach of and become accessible to an ordinary aspirant.] (9).

10. The 'Niraalmaba Yoga' is that when the spiritual aspirant becomes completely neutral and disassociates himself from all things physical and gross by their nature. Hence, he discards with a large barge-pole all such formal processes of reaching his spiritual destination such as worshipping a deity or its image having a name and form by adopting certain formal forms of activities that are ritualistic, obligatory and mechanical in nature. [The word 'Niraalamba' means the opposite of Saalamba. Therefore, it means 'without a help; without an aid'.]

He even pays no attention to the natural inclinations of his Anthakaran (i.e. his mind, intellect, sub-conscious and ego) that may advise him to the contrary. [For instance, his mind may suggest to him to worship this and that, to go here and there on a pilgrimage, to do this or that deed that can be spiritually beneficial for him, and so on simply because so many people are doing it from immemorial times and therefore logically there must be some benefit in doing so or there must be some truth in it. Then his ego might compel him to do some specified deeds such as holding large religious ceremonies to establish himself as a religious man in society. But a truly wise and enlightened man is he who just smiles and looks the other way from such superficial and hollow activity. He neglects all such prodding of his Antahakran, his inner voice that has unfortunately been influenced by misconceptions and wrong advice, and instead steadfastly follows the path he has fixed for himself after due diligent research and as advised by the scriptures. The point to note here is that the importance of doing proper research in order to choose the correct path is not to be underestimated or undermined by wrongly interpreting this edict of the Upanishad. What is intended here is that once the path is selected after due diligence, once one has devoted sufficient time and energy to select the path to be followed by him that would be most beneficial for his spiritual welfare and provide him with Mukti and Anand, one must then stick to it without dithering, without being uncertain of it or its benefits or where it would lead him. He should not pay attention to so many distractions that come in his way, because if he does he would make himself a breeding ground of utter confusions and bewilderments of immense dimensions. It is this single-minded pursuit of the desired goal that can help the spiritual aspirant to find Mukti or liberation and deliverance from this ocean-like world in the limited time of one life-span he has to his disposal.]

This is called 'Niraalamba Yoga'—or the effort made to reach the spiritual destination without taking any help from any external medium.' (10).

11. [The disciple wondered—] ‘If the Niraalamba Yoga is so difficult or abstract (because it circumvents the need or avoids the use of any physical means to worship the chosen deity), say how can one implement this Yoga with success? Who is eligible or competent to follow this path? What are his special qualities?’ (11).

12. [The Guru removed his doubts by replying—] ‘A person who possesses the noble virtue of not having any trace of Ahankar or false pride and ego in him (i.e. who is humble and simple-hearted), a person who has realised that the Tattva (the essence, the truth) he is pursuing is eternal and imperishable, that this Tattva is the pure consciousness that resides in his own self as the Atma rather than anywhere outside, that this Atma is of a very subtle and sublime nature, that it cannot be physically verified or grasped like the material sense objects of this world but can only be experienced and witnessed at the subtle level of existence, that this Atma is a microcosmic image of the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, whom he wishes to attain, that junking of the delusions created by the numerous misconceptions in this world is the only way to successfully reach this goal, a person who has inculcated other such noble and wise thoughts—such persons are eligible to follow the path of Niraalmaba Yoga. In other words, only a person who has acquired truthful Gyan is eligible and competent to follow and attain success in the path of Niraalamba Yoga. But it is extremely rare to find such a person.

Hence, it is said that the spiritual path of ‘Bhakti Yoga¹’ to obtain Mukti is an excellent and the easiest path to follow irrespective of the fact whether the candidate is eligible or ineligible for following the path of Niraalamba Yoga.

Bhakti Yoga is without any discernible hurdles or big obstacles that may be too difficult to overcome. Bhakti Yoga bestows Mukti—i.e. it helps the spiritual aspirant to obtain liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Devotees or the followers of Bhakti Yoga are able to obtain ‘Tattva-Gyan’ or knowledge of the essential Truth, without much effort or delay.’ [In other words, they can experience the Anand, or the spiritual bliss that comes with awareness of the essential principle of creation, the ‘Tattva’, that becomes known upon self-realisation and Brahm-realisation much easily even without having to unduly exert themselves or follow stern doctrines. When a person reaches the spiritual goal of Brahm-realisation, he enthusiastically proclaims the statements called the Mahavakyas as narrated in paragraph nos. 5-6 of this Canto 8. It marks the culmination of his spiritual journey.] (12).

[Note—¹It is easy to follow the path of Bhakti Yoga, or having devotion for and submission to the chosen deity as a means to attain Mukti, or liberation and deliverance from this world, from the gross body, from the cycle of birth and death, and from the accompanying endless cycle of miseries, pains, sorrows, troubles and torments.

Hence, it is usually prescribed as the general and easy method for obtaining Mukti as it would be effective whether or not the concerned person is sufficiently fine-tuned mentally, intellectually and emotionally to follow the more evolved and powerful, but rather complex and arduous path of Niraalamba Yoga, thinking it to be too abstract and difficult to be followed by them.

On careful examination we see that there is a subtle difference between all the three types of Yogas prescribed in this Upanishad for attaining Mukti. In Bhakti Yoga complete devotion, faith and submission is expected for a single diety of choice of the spiritual aspirant. In this, it is similar to the Saalamba Yoga because it takes the help of some form of deity to whom the seeker of Mukti surrenders himself and has devotion for.

Pure form of Saalamba Yoga involves many sorts of ritualistic practices such as doing fire sacrifices, observing sacraments and chanting of Mantras, undertaking formal forms of worship using Yantras and Chakras described earlier in this Upanishad, honouring a plethora of Gods and Goddesses, doing charities and other noble deeds, and so on and so forth. These follow a set pattern, whereas in Bhakti Yoga the devotee can worship his deity the way he wants—he can treat his God as his son, his friend, his beloved, his life-partner, his Lord, his Guru, etc., and go about devoting himself to the chose deity accordingly. This freedom of approach is denied in the rigourous form of Saalamba Yoga which relies on formalities and strict observance of rules and tenets. Therefore, Bhakti is informal while Saalamba is formal.

The Niraalamba Yoga, on the other hand, does away with all externals completely. It needs no external forms of deities to whom worship is offered, nor does it need formal excercises such as the fire sacrifices. It has the dominant role of Gyan—pursuance of truthful knowledge and the path shown by it. It is mind-centric because it revolves around knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. Here the intellect and the mind play the dominant role instead of the gross body that played the main role in Bhakti Yoga and the Saalamba Yoga. The Niraalmaba Yoga uses Gyan as a tool to achieve Mukti. This is of course the path of meditation and contemplation that leads to self and Brahm realisation.

In practice, a wise man is one who employs a judicious mix of all the three forms of Yoga to reach his spiritual goal. It's like a man employing many modes to reach his chosen destination—he treks, hitch-hikes, rides a horse, takes a boat, at times swims, and may adopt any convenient method that is handy for him. His main objective is to reach the destination.]

13. [The disciple wished to know more about this Tattva Gyan, so he enquired]—
‘How can one have this Tattva Gyan?’ (13).

14. [The learned teacher replied in order to enlighten him—] ‘The Lord who loves all his devotees very much himself ensures that all their spiritual hurdles are effectively removed. He protects them from all the troubles or nuisance created by the numerous obstacles that the devotee might face, and which may cause harm to him or hinder his spiritual progress.

The Lord gives them all that they want; he provides the devotee with Moksha or final and ultimate liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation.

[On close examination, these three statements that the Lord removes all hurdles faced by the devotee, fulfils all his desires, and provides him with Moksha has another meaning. It is that the Lord takes upon him the responsibility of ensuring that the path of the devotee becomes smooth and easy, that he is not subjected to undue harshness and inconvenience, that all his basic needs are taken care of, and that he graduates to reach the spiritual destination of Mukti or Moksha even if he is not up to the expected mark or standard. It is like the doting father taking care of his dear son and ensuring his comfort along with taking care of his future needs in life by giving him proper education and training. If the son is mentally not so smart, the loving father would take a little bit extra care of him as compared to another son who is of first-rate mental capabilities and able to fend for himself. Likewise, if the devotee is less than competent, the Lord holds him by the arm and helps him on along the path leading to Mukti. This is the benefit of following the path of Bhakti Yoga. When the devotee has surrendered himself to the Lord, when he is totally dependent upon the Lord for his well-being, it becomes the moral obligation of the Lord to take care of

him. The devotee henceforth becomes carefree just like a child is in the care of its doting parents.]

As compared to this situation there is the other optional path that leads to Mukti, and it is the path of Niraalamba Yoga wherein the aspirant is left to fend for himself much like the case of an intelligent son who is left to fend for himself by the father who diverts all his attention to the less privileged son.

This is the simple reason why Bhakti Yoga is preferable to the other path of Niraalamba Yoga.]

In the absence of Bhakti for Lord Vishnu, even the exalted and learned Gods such as Brahma (the creator who had produced the Vedas which are repositories of knowledge) can not expect to find Mukti in millions of years or countless births.

Since there can be no 'Kaarya' (affect, development, action leading to some situation, some proceeding or transaction) without a corresponding 'Kaaran' (an inspiration, a cause, reason or motive), it follows that without Bhakti (devotion for the Lord, the Supreme Being; or steady desire to obtain Mukti and Truth) there can be no Brahm-Gyan (knowledge or awareness of Brahm; Brahm-realisation) which is a synonym for 'Tattva Gyan' (knowledge of the essence, the Truth), along with its attendant Anand (or bliss) and Mukti (or spiritual liberation).

[In other words, Bhakti motivates the aspirant to move closer to his chosen and beloved deity to whom he is fully devoted and committed, which in this case is Adi-Narayan or Brahm. When he single-mindedly pursues his spiritual objective, he would discover all about this Brahm because he is determined to do so. He would be able to discover that the Lord whom the world has been searching elsewhere is secretly enshrined in his own subtle heart as the Atma, and that there is no need to make strenuous efforts and exert one self to meet this Lord. The Lord is available at all times even without observing any formalities and time limitations by simply turning inwards and meditating. Why would the man, who has discovered the priceless gem hidden in his own pocket, not exult in joy, exclaiming 'Eureka'. This is exactly what happens with the follower of Bhakti Yoga. He discovers Brahm, and this leads to his Mukti or Moksha much more easily and conveniently. It is Bhakti which is the cause of his attaining Mukti and Brahm-Gyan.

Hence, Bhakti is the 'Kaaran', or the inspiring factor or the cause that leads to the spiritual aspirant attaining Mukti/Moksh. The attainment of Mukti or Moksha would be the effect or the result of having Bhakti. Similarly, Bhakti is also the motivating factor that inspires the aspirant to obtain Brahm-Gyan or knowledge of the truth and the reality of everything that is associated with the term 'Brahm' (the Supreme Being, the cosmic Consciousness, the supreme Atma known as the Parmatma) because he would like to know more about the Lord whom he worships and adores so lovingly. This attainment of Brahm-Gyan would be the spontaneous effect, result, or the 'Kaarya' of Bhakti.]

Therefore, you (the disciple) should abandon all other methods and take the shelter of (i.e. adopt) Bhakti as the chosen path. Be diligent and steady in Bhakti. I (the teacher) repeat—adopt Bhakti as your chosen path, and be steady in it. All the 'Siddhis' (mystical powers and spiritual achievements) are easily and conveniently available by following the path of Bhakti. There is nothing that cannot be achieved or attained by Bhakti.' (14).

15. Hearing this profound discourse from his Guru, being acquainted with the glorious aspects and all the secrets of the Param Tattva (i.e. the supreme Truth about Brahm along with its many esoteric aspects, secrets and doctrines), removing all his doubts

and setting to rest all causes of perplexities and confusions, and fully convinced and determined that he would now easily and very soon find Moksha (final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation), the disciple got up, fully contented and fulfilled.

He performed circumambulation around the Guru, bowed before him with utmost respect and reverence, worshipped him properly, took the Guru's permission and achieved a matured state of existence with self and Brahm realisation. In other words, he obtained matured Vigyan or full fledged knowledge of the Truth and Brahm; he became highly enlightened and awakened.

The disciple soon transformed and became one like Lord Narayan himself when he gained this profound knowledge and enlightenment even without making much effort on his part (15).

16. Lord Maha Vishnu turned towards Brahma and said—‘Oh Brahma! I have told you everything about the Param Tattva. One can find Moksha even by remembering it, by pondering over its profoundness and greatness. By pursuing it, everything that is unknown and secret becomes known and de-mystified.

That by knowing which even the most esoteric and mysterious becomes easily known and accessed, I have disclosed all about this ‘Param Tattva’ to you.’ (16).

17. Brahma asked—‘Who is a Guru¹?’

Maha Vishnu replied—‘The Guru is a personified form of Lord Adi-Narayan. That Adi-Narayan is none but ‘me’. [In this context, refer Canto 5, paragraph no. 11-12.]

Hence, you should take refuge in my holy feet only (instead of exploring so many other avenues for finding your spiritual destination). Be devoted to ‘me’, and be steady and firm in it. Worship me and meditate upon ‘me’. In this way, you would attain ‘me’ (i.e. the Supreme Being; you would attain the holy stature of being truly Brahm-realised or reaching Brahm-hood).

Indeed, anything other than ‘me²’ is to be abandoned; it is a hindrance and an impediment in one's spiritual success, and attainment of glory and divinity. There is nothing except ‘me’ that is truthful and having any essence. [This is because anything except ‘me’ or ‘I’ is un-truth and therefore worth not paying any attention to by a wise man.]

It is ‘me’ who is a personification of eternal and extreme Anand (spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity) that is unique and unmatched in this world.

It is ‘me’ who is complete in all respects.

It is ‘me’ who is the basis of everything in this creation; ‘I’ am the foundation that supports everything in this creation.

It is ‘me’ who am the ‘Nirakar Param Brahm’ (the formless and attribute-less supreme transcendental Brahm) that is beyond the reach and purview of the faculty of speech. [That is, words cannot describe ‘me’.]

Not even an atom exists that is separate, different or distinct from ‘me’. Or in other words, not a single atom or unit of creation can be said to have an existence that is not one of my countless forms.’ (17).

[Note—¹Refer also to Canto 5, paragraph no. 11-12 of the present Upanishad. A detailed note on the concept of the Guru has been appended to paragraph no. 11 of Canto 5.

²The use of the pronoun ‘me’ in the light of what has already been said and explained in this Upanishad earlier, especially in paragraph no. 15, and about the Mahavakyas of paragraph nos. 5-6 of this Canto 8, it obviously follows that it applies

to the ‘true self’ or the pure consciousness known as the Atma. This ‘me’ and ‘I’ become synonyms because they both mean the same Atma. In fact, it is only when the disciple has become self and Brahm realised and enlightened enough that his own Atma, and Brahm, the Parmatma, are the same entities, that he is eligible to declare that I have become one with the Parmatma—which is another way of saying that he has indeed obtained Moksha or Mukti. He has indeed obtained freedom from ignorance and delusions which have been the cause of all his spiritual problems till now.]

18. In this way, the creator and grandfather of creation, Lord Brahma, attained extreme Anand by becoming enlightened with this profound knowledge taught to him by Lord Maha Vishnu.

The Lord touched Brahma, and this touch had a magical effect upon the latter—Brahma instantly attained ‘Dibya Gyan’, i.e. he instantly became enlightened and realised, he obtained the sublime knowledge of the Divine (‘Dibya Gyan’), and whatever doubts and confusions that had still lingered in his mind were instantaneously eliminated. [It is usually experienced in the realm of mysticism that enlightened souls sometimes do wonders by their mere touch and presence than attempting to teach through lectures and lengthy discourses. Herein lie the difference between a scholar and a mystic. While the former relies on the power of words and the dynamic strength inherent in knowledge and learning to transform the other man, the mystic achieves this quietly by transferring a part of his high-voltage spiritual powers, so to say, to the disciple by merely touching him or looking him into the eye, or even by smiling at him. To cite an example, while man-made electricity needs wires to be transmitted from one point to another, the heavenly electric current strikes the earth from the clouds high above in the form of a bolt of lightening which needs no wires, transformers, circuits and poles!]

Being thus enlightened and spiritually empowered, the great grandfather Brahma rose and performed circumambulation of Lord Maha Vishnu, his Guru, bowed before the Lord most reverentially, and offered his respects and worship in various ways. Then Brahma brought his palms together as a gesture of submission and went closer to Vishnu.

Brahma submitted most politely and prayerfully before Lord Maha Vishnu, ‘Oh Lord! Bless me with steady and sturdy Bhakti; bless me that I become firm in Bhakti, and nothing can ever sway me away from it. Oh the merciful Lord! I am inseparable from you (because I and you are ‘one’). Please be kind to protect me, and give your succour to me in every way possible.’ (18).

19. [Lord Maha Vishnu blessed Brahma, exclaiming—] ‘Let it be so, oh holy soul! Let it be as you wish, oh blessed soul!’

Being extremely pleased with Brahma, and blessing and lauding him in the above manner, Lord Maha Vishnu said—‘My devotee and worshipper becomes excellent and most exalted. All things, all situations and all living beings are made holy and auspicious by my ‘Upaasanaa’—i.e. by offering me worship with due devotion, by offering service to me and seeking my intercession, by paying homage to me, by praying to me. My devotee is able to conquer all by his ‘Upaasanaa’ for me.

A person who is my devotee and worships me, who offers prayers to me and serves me, who adores me and honours me, is shown due respect by all in society; he is honoured by all.

All his (spiritual) bondages are completely broken; he is freed from all fetters that had been shackling him (to this material world, and its attendant torments and

delusions) till the time he had not taken my shelter and sought my blessing and intercession, till the time he has not prayed to me and worshipped me.

A righteous, noble and holy man is willingly served by all other men in this world. Similarly, all the Gods also feel privileged to serve (help, oblige) him and be benevolent towards him.

Even personified form of all the grand virtues and qualities, such as all forms of glories, magnificence, fame and majesty, too serve him.

My ardent devotee and sincere worshipper is transformed into the 'Advaitya Paramanand Brahm'. [That is, he is overwhelmed with supreme Anand (spiritual bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity) that is undiluted, purest in form, and one of its only kind, an Anand which comes with realisation of the supreme Brahm, or which comes automatically when one becomes self-realised and Brahm-realised. Such an enlightened man is equivalent to the supreme Brahm himself, and this establishment of uniformity and non-duality between his 'self' and the cosmic 'Self' makes him a living image of Brahm.]

Any spiritual aspirant who follows this path in a comprehensive manner is able to become an image of 'Paramanand Brahm'—i.e. he becomes an image of supremely blissful Brahm (19).

20. Anyone who diligently studies this Maha-Narayan Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition that reveals the secrets of the 'Param Tattva'—i.e. that teaches the most esoteric secrets of spiritualism and metaphysics, is able to free himself from great sins and their evil and negative consequences.

He is absolved from all the sins and their horrible effects, whether they were done willingly or done inadvertently. Verily, he is freed from even the greatest of sins and their evil effects.

He is freed from all sins—whether they were done secretly, or done openly, or done in great intensity over a long period of time.

He is able to vanquish or obtain victory over all the Lokas (worlds).

He is able to develop devotion and dedication for all the Mantras, and inculcate faith in their great powers and potentials. [This happens because he realises that all the Mantras are essentially meant to honour Brahm who is a non-dual and divine Supreme Being who has assumed so many forms simply to carry out varying functions in this creation. He realises that the Mantras are nothing but the different ways of addressing the same Divinity, the same Brahm revealed as so many Gods and Goddesses to whom these individual Mantras are dedicated.]

He becomes well versed in and is deemed to have developed a deep insight into all the esoteric doctrines, profound tenets and mystical philosophies of the Vedas and the Upanishads, thereby becoming a knowledgeable and wise person in the field of spiritualism and metaphysics.

He is deemed to have become a fulfilled or fully contented consumer or enjoyer of all things worth consuming and enjoying. [A man wishes to enjoy this and that object in this world because he is unsatisfied with his current situation. He seems to think, so to say, that the drink in the other person's cup is sweeter and fresher than his own, and this notion perpetuates constant hunger or thirst for more and more of this world. But when he becomes self-realised, he has tasted that unique nectar of bliss and happiness which has no match anywhere in this world. After this experience he would not like to taste anything else. Thus, when an aspirant becomes Brahm-realised he feels satisfied and fully contented so much so that no temptations of the world would be strong enough to ever make him feel distracted, falter or dither from

his chosen path. He remains submerged in an eternal ocean of spiritual blissfulness and ecstasy, and never bothers to think of any other kind of material enjoyments and comforts.]

He is deemed to have acquired the knowledge of all types of Yogas. [Yoga provides Anand or bliss to its practitioner, and its main aim is spiritual liberation and deliverance. When a wise person, who has properly understood the teaching of this Upanishad, is able to experience this Anand first hand, when he has become self-and-Brahm-realised, and has thereby obtained spiritual liberation and deliverance, he is deemed to have attained the same knowledge and enlightenment, called 'Gyan', that comes by doing Yoga and Dhyana, or meditation, contemplation and deep research.]

Since he has become one like Lord Maha Vishnu himself, he is deemed to have acquired special mystical powers that empower him to help others in their spiritual endeavours by showing them the correct path and giving them wise advice.

Indeed, he becomes a personification of 'Advaita Paramanand Brahm'. [Refer paragraph no. 19.] (20).

21. This secret about the 'Param Tattva' (the supreme essence and the great truth about spiritualism) must not be told or divulged or taught to anyone who is not devoted to his Guru, who does not wish to hear it, who is a non-believer (an atheist or an agnostic) and is devoid of Tapa (i.e. who has no control over his sense organs, who is indulgent and lacks the virtue of self-restraint), who is boastful, arrogant and ostentatious, who has no devotion and respect for me, who has the negative quality of being malicious, jealous, and keeping ill-will against others, and who is so ungrateful and thankless that he finds fault with even 'me' (Lord Vishnu) who am so merciful and benevolent towards all (21).

22. On the contrary, anyone who tells, teaches or reveals this profound knowledge to my devotees (so that they can become enlightened about) will be rewarded by greater devotion for me, and become more steadfast in my service, being specially empowered blessed by me. Ultimately, he will attain me. [In other words, I will treat him as my apostle and ensure that he is never far from me, and I am always with him.]

Anyone who attentively hears and studies the secret implications of this conversation between the two of us, i.e. between Brahma and Maha Vishnu as revealed in this Upanishad, would become firmly established in the knowledge and glory of Brahm.

Anyone who hears and studies this conversation between us with firm belief and faith, without harbouring doubts and scepticism, would be able to find Sayujya Mukti—i.e. would be able to attain a divine stature whereby he becomes one like me by merging his self into my divine and cosmic form as the Supreme Being known as Brahm.' (22).

23. Then Lord Maha Vishnu vanished from sight. After that, Brahma went to his own abode (in the Brahma-loka) (23).

24. In the above manner, the esoteric and eclectic form of Mukti known as 'Sayujya' has been outlined in the Maha-Narayan Upanishad. Amen! (24).

Thus ends the Uttar Kand of this great Upanishad.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 12

Ram Rahasya Upanishad

This Upanishad is dedicated to the theme of holiness and divinity of Lord Ram, and unfolds the great detail the metaphysical and spiritual secrets pertaining to the Lord who has been established here as being a visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental divinity known as Brahm. It has a parallel in Ram's other Upanishad, the Ram Tapini Upanishad, with the only difference that this present Upanishad has been preached by Hanuman, who is considered as the greatest devotee of the Lord and the most erudite expert on this theme. The Upanishad has five Cantos.

Canto 1 introduces the subject when different seers and sages approached Hanuman and requested him to preach them the great metaphysical and spiritual truths about Lord Ram and how to worship him to invoke his blessings. This Canto emphasises that the hymns composed by all the great devotees of the Lord have equal importance and effect, and they are equally valuable as the ones appearing in the scriptures. It is stressed that the various Mantras of Lord Ram have the same metaphysical import and divine mystical powers as the Mantras of the Vedas devoted to Brahm for the simple reason that Lord Ram is none but the Supreme Being himself personified.

The different hymns mentioned in verse no. 6 of this Canto are included as Addendum no. 1 at the end of this Chapter. They are the following—(i) Sanat Kumar Sanhita's Ramstavaraj by sage Narad, (ii) Ramashtak by sage Veda Vyas, (iii) Raghunathashtak, (iv) Sita-ram-ashtak, (v) Ram Stotra, and (vi) Ram Stuti.

Canto 2 is a unique section because it elaborately describes all the Mantras of Lord Ram, starting from the one-letter Mantra to the longest ones having forty seven letters, along with how they have been conceptualized and how to worship and meditate upon the Lord with them.

Canto 3 is another fascinating one in which the mystical charm instrument/apparatus called a 'Pooja Yantra', which is like a Talisman, is used for invoking divine intercession to help the worshipper to accomplish astounding feats and acquire stupendous supernatural powers which would have been impossible otherwise. This Yantra is much like any modern-day electronic instrument having an electronic circuit which is used by a man to enable him to acquire tremendous powers and potentials, and achieve successes in numerous exercises which would have been virtually impossible for him to achieve with his mere physical body and mind. This Canto describes how this Yantra is constructed, and how to worship or use it.

Interestingly, two versions of the instrument or apparatus are described, and they are to be compared with the one described in Ram Purva Tapiniopanishad, Canto 4 where another version of the Yantra is described in detail. It is to be noted here that all these instruments/apparatuses are equally effective and powerful just like, for example, the computer made by different companies which have slightly tweaked the main configuration but the technology behind the computer is the same. All these machines would function equally effectively though the company which has made

them, the use to which they are put, and the benefits derived from their usage may vary widely.

Canto 4 elaborately narrates the sanctified process for accepting the different Mantras of Lord Ram along with the strict codes of conduct and rules that are to be followed for their application by the devotee worshipper. These Mantras are used for dual purpose—viz. for doing formal religious rituals during sacrifices as well as for the purpose of doing Japa (repetition of the holy Mantras) for achieving specific aims.

Finally, Canto 5 describes the metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of Lord Ram's Mantras, especially the six letter Mantra (OM Raamaaye Namaha), and what benefits the worshipper can expect by using this Mantra with due faith and reverence. It establishes the supremacy of Lord Ram's Mantra over all other Mantras and espouses the fact that the well known, universal, ethereal, divine and sacred Mantra OM is also the Mantra for Lord Ram. This final declaration by Hanuman winds up this very fascinating Upanishad.

A very unique and interesting aspect of this Upanishad is that it lists the Mantras of Lord Ram, the Tarak Brahm, the manifested form of the Supreme Being, starting from a one-letter Mantra and going upto a long Mantra with forty-seven letters in a step-by-step manner by showing how one letter is added either as a prefix or a suffix to a particular Mantra so as to increase the number of letters from one to forty-seven (Canto 2, verse no. 6-92). To complement this, the basic Mantras dedicated to other divinities associated with the principal deity (Lord Ram) are also given (Canto 2, verse nos. 93-106). In order to present an easy to read reference list of all these Mantras, they are collected and listed in Addendum no. 2 at the end of this Chapter.

Sketches depicting the construction of the worship instrument, called a 'Yantra' as described in Canto 3, have been included at the end of this Chapter as Addendum no. 3.

There are two other relevant Upanishads which deal with the profound metaphysical and spiritual aspects of Lord Ram—viz. the Ram Purva Tapini and Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishads. They appear as sections 1 and 2 of Chapter 13 titled 'Ram Tapini Upanishad' of the present volume. Then there is another Upanishad dedicated to Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram, and a manifestation of Shakti (the dynamism of the supreme Brahm) and Prakriti (Mother Nature). It is called 'Sita Upanishad', and it is included as Chapter 9 of our volume of the Atharva Veda Upanishads.

-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the meaning of this Shanti Paath.

Canto 1

1. OM salutations! Amongst the great sages and seers, who are experts and skilled in the esoteric art, the mystical science and the eclectic philosophy of doing Tapa (doing severe penances, observing of austerities, enduring hardships and undergoing sufferance for a noble cause) in order to attain access to the supreme Lord known as

‘Ram’, are ascetics Mudgal¹, Shandilya², Paingal³ etc. They had attained the pinnacle of this spiritual knowledge and are like the celebrated ‘Shikha’ on the head of a Brahmin⁴. [In other words, these sages and seers were the doyens in their class and formed an exclusive group of enlightened persons who had the highest state of spiritual achievement so much so that they could establish direct communion with the manifested form of the supreme Brahm in the form of Lord Ram.] (1).

[Note—¹Sage *Mudgal*—He is the sage who had pronounced the Rig Veda Sukta 10/102. His wife was known as Mudgalaani. He was a great devotee sage of Lord Vishnu and his incarnation Lord Ram. He had practiced severe Tapa (austerity and penance) at the holy cite known as Kurukshetra. He was the father of Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, and of King Divodas. He was a great host and served his guests well. He understood the importance of Moksha, the final emancipation and salvation of the soul, so much so that he had once spurned an offer of the Gods to go to heaven. This is because those who went to heaven had to return to this world once the good affects of their good deeds wore off; it was not complete deliverance.

He had performed a great sacrifice near the bridge built across the ocean by Lord Ram in order to reach Lanka where the Lord had slayed the demon king Ravana and liberated Sita from his captivity. The epic war fought there is narrated in the ancient classic known as Ramayana. Lord Vishnu was so pleased at this performance of the sacrifice by the sage that he created a huge pond of pure milk secreted by the cow of Gods, known as the Kamdhenu cow, for the purpose of offering oblations in this sacrifice. This pond is known as Kshir-tirtha or a pilgrim site which has the celestial milk in its pond in a symbolic manner.

One of the sub-Purans or Up-purans, known as ‘Mudgal-puran’, is named after him. It is dedicated chiefly to the narration of the nine main incarnations of Lord Ganapati, or Lord Ganesh who is the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati, and is the chief deity who is worshipped first during any religious ceremony or auspicious activity. This Up-puran was probably written between 900-1100 A.D. The nine incarnations of Ganapati mentioned in this sub-Puran are the following—Vakradanta, Ekdanta, Mahodara, Gajanan, Lambodara, Vikata, Vighna-raja, Dhumra-varna, and Yoga. Besides these nine incarnations, it also lists 23 more forms of Lord Ganesh.

The Mudgal Upanishad belonging to the Rig Veda tradition is also ascribed to this great sage. It is like a brief commentary on the ‘Purush Sukta’ of the Rig Veda, 10/7/90/1-16.

²Sage *Shandilya*— The word ‘Shandilya/Shandilya’ means the son of sage Shandila. In ancient scriptures the name of sage Shandilya appears at various places, the earliest reference being in the Shatapatha Brahman (9/4/4/17; 10/1/4/10) which belongs to the Shukla Yajur Veda. It is believed that it was compiled around 3000 B.C.

Shandilya was a great authority of the fire ritual, and in fact the fire which he worshipped has been named after him as Shaandila. He was a pupil of sage Atharvan from whom he learned this present Shandilya Upanishad, and his main disciple was named Kushri. According to other lists of lineage, his teachers included Vaatsayana, Kaishorya, Kashyapa, Vaishtapureya, Gautama etc.

The Chandogya Upanishad also refers to sage Shandilya in its Canto 3, section 14 wherein the sage taught the knowledge of the divine Being known as Brahm which have a clear resonance in Cantos 2 and 3 of our present Shandilya Upanishad.

The great epic Mahabharata mentions sage Shandilya many times as being a sage who attended the court of king Yudhishtira (Sabhapurva, 4/17). He had propounded the laws governing giving of donations (Mahabharata, Anushasanapurva, 65/19).

Sage Shandilya is credited with the composition of the treatise on Bhakti or devotion, called the Bhakti-sutras—the essential principles that govern the attainment of Bhakti. Besides it, the Shandilya Sanhita and the Shandilya Upanishad are also attributed to him. The Shandilya Upanishad, which is the 14th Upanishad of the

Atharva Veda, is dedicated to the philosophy of Yoga. This Upanishad was preached to sage Shandilya by sage Atharva. Since this Upanishad was taught to him by sage Atharva, it obviously follows that the two sages were contemporaries of each other.

³Sage *Paingal*—He was also known as ‘Pingal Kaanva’. The sage was called Paingal probably because he was of a dark brown or tawny complexion as the word ‘Pingal’ refers to these shades of colour.

The Paingal Upanishad, which is the 16th Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur tradition, is ascribed to this sage, and it describes the esoteric secrets of the Kaivalya form of Mukti—i.e. the sort of spiritual liberation and deliverance whereby the soul does not have to take a birth again. Sage Paingal is also mentioned in the Rig Veda tradition’s Kaushitaki Brahman Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2 wherein it is affirmed that the ‘Pran’, the vital winds present in the creature’s body that infuses life in it, is nothing but Brahm, the Supreme Being, in its form. In other words, Brahm gives life to the body of the creature by transforming himself as the Pran that makes the body, which is otherwise gross, inactive and dead, alive and active.

⁴The *Shikha* is the tuft of hair on the head of a Brahmin symbolising his exalted stature in society. It is a mark of seniority in the social hierarchy as well as a symbol of his erudition and learning. The Shikha is like the crown on the head of a king; it is the crown that empowers the king with his authority and sway, the kingdom’s strength and authority lies not in the person of the king but is vested in the crown. Anyone who wears the crown has this authority vested in him. Hence, once the king abdicates the crown he loses all his powers and authority. Similarly, these sages were deemed to be senior amongst their peers as far as the metaphysical knowledge pertaining to Lord Ram was concerned. Lord Ram is not an ordinary God as such, but a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm. In fact, the ‘Beej Mantra’ of Ram, which is actually a monosyllable, that forms the basis of this name of the Supreme Being as ‘Ram’ is regarded as the ‘Tarak Mantra’, or a divine word, letter or syllable that has the powerful potential to provide the final emancipation and salvation to the soul of the creature.]

2. They were accompanied by other ascetics and sages such as Sankaadi¹, as well as devotees of Lord Vishnu (whose incarnation Lord Ram was) such as Prahalad² etc. when they approached Hanuman³ (the greatest devotee of Lord Ram and considered as the wisest and most erudite and scholarly amongst the learned ones in the field of metaphysics, theology and spiritualism who ever took birth on this earth). They said to him—(2).

[Note—¹Sage *Sankaadi*—A note appended to the Atharva Shikha Upanishad, Kandika 1 outlines a pen sketch of sage Sankaadi. This Upanishad is Chapter 5 of the current volume.

²*Prahalad*—Prahalaad/Prahalad—He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. He was the eldest son of the king of demons, named Hiranyakashipu. His mother was Kayaadhu, the daughter of the demon king named Jambhaasur. Both the mother and the son were initiated by sage Narad who had inspired them to become devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The story of Prahalad is narrated in detail in (i) Vishnu Puran, 1/17, and (ii) Bhagvata Puran, 7/4-8.

The father, being a demon, was an inveterate opponent of Lord Vishnu, and so naturally he couldn’t tolerate his own son worshipping his enemy Lord Vishnu. He tried his best to dissuade Prahalad from being devoted to the Lord, but the son had immense faith in the Lord and would not be deterred by his father’s threats and scolding. Hiranyakashipu tried even cruel means to change Prahalad, including an attempt to burn in a raging fire, but the child devotee escaped unscathed. So, finally the demon father decided to kill him personally. Prahalad was tied to a pillar and asked ‘Where is your Lord Vishnu? Is he in this pillar also?’ The child replied in the

affirmative. Then his father swung the sword to kill him, and it was at this instant that Lord Vishnu revealed himself as the famous incarnation known as 'Nrisingh'—the upper half of his body was like a lion and the lower half was like a man. An Upanishad titled 'Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad' of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to this Lord.

Lord Nrisingh snatched the sword and laid the demon father across his laps. He then tore through his abdomen, and yanked out his intestines, thereby killing the demon. He then picked up the child Prahalad on to his laps and lovingly licked and caressed him like a lion does to its cub. But Prahalad prayed to the Lord to provide deliverance to the soul of his father, at which the Lord liberated the demon from all his sins.

Prahalad is credited with enumerating the nine-fold path of Bhakti, the path of devotion for the Lord, in the epic Bhaagvata, 7/5/23.

Lord Dattatreya, one of the manifestations of Lord Vishnu, had preached Prahalad about the eclectic state of Avadhut Sanyasi in the form of a huge python, known as Ajgara. Prahalad had spiritual discussions also with other sages such as Hansa (the divine Swan, an incarnation of Vishnu), and with Indra (the king of Gods).

Prahalad had four brothers, three sons and a daughter. The king of demons known as Bali, who was famous for his charities and donations, was a grandson of Prahalad. The incarnations of Vishnu as Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant, is related to this legendary king.

³*Hanuman*— Lord Hanuman was one of the greatest devotees of Lord Ram. His devotion for Lord Ram had no match. He is regarded as the wisest, the most enlightened and a highly self-realised soul. He is an incarnation of the eleventh form of Lord Shiva that is known as Rudra. When Lord Vishnu decided to manifest himself as Lord Ram in this world, all the different Gods has assumed various forms to serve the Lord. Shiva had taken the form of Hanuman to serve Lord Ram.

According to the Purans (mythological histories), the name of his mother was Anjana who was the wife of the monkey king Kesari. He was born as a grace of the Wind God, also known as Marut. Hence, Hanuman was also known as 'Anjaneya' or 'Maruti'. However, his most common name 'Hanuman' is derived from the fact that once he had been hit by the 'Vajra', the hard weapon of Indra, the king of Gods. The story goes that once, a little time after his birth, the infant Hanuman had felt extremely hungry, and seeing the rising sun he thought it to be some ripe red fruit dangling from the sky. So he leapt to the sky to eat the rising sun. Incidentally, it was the time of the solar eclipse, when, according to mythology, the head of the demon known as Rahu was proceeding to devour the sun. When he saw Hanuman rushing towards the sun, Rahu ran away scared, thinking that Hanuman was some competitor who was out there to grab his food. Rahu complained to Indra, the king of Gods, that he is being denied his regular meal. At this, Indra intervened. When Hanuman saw Indra approaching astride his white majestic elephant known as Eraavat, he thought that it was some other white fruit. So he left sun alone and instead leapt at Eraavat. Indra was shocked, confounded and perplexed, and in order to stop Hanuman he threw his formidable weapon known as Vajra. The Vajra hit him on the chin, thereby causing a dent. The jaw swelled as result. This incident gave 'Hanuman' his famous name.

The word 'Hanu' means the lower jaw, the chin, while 'Maan' means to hit to subdue or defeat. Another interpretation is that 'Hanu' means to crush, to trounce, to take away, to eliminate, and 'Maan' means one's pride, arrogance, haughtiness and ego. So the composite word 'Hanuman' refers to this incident when Indra had subdued the son of the Wind God by breaking his chin-bone as a token punishment for him being extremely arrogant and unnecessarily mischievous.

But when the Wind God saw Hanuman hurt, he became extremely angry as Hanuman was born as his grace, so he stopped the movement of air. This caused suffocation in this creation and all the Gods were on the verge of asphyxiation. So

they appeased the Wind God by blessing Hanuman with invincibility and formidable powers. This made Hanuman immortal and immune to the dangers of fire, water and wind.

Once as a child he was even cursed by sages because of his mischievous nature as he used to play havoc with the trees and plants around the hermitages and forests where they lived, uprooting them, breaking their branches, eating their fruits and littering the place all around. So they cursed him that he would forget his powers till the time someone reminded him about them. As it happened, when the monkeys and bears set out in search of Sita, who had been abducted by the demon king of Lanka known as Ravana, and had reached the shores of the vast ocean, they faced the formidable challenge of having to cross it, face this formidable enemy, and come back alive. It was then that Jamvant, the old patriarch of the bears, had reminded Hanuman about his lost strength. Hanuman regained his old stupendous powers and abilities, and he was the one who not only crossed the ocean but also burnt Lanka before coming back with the news of Sita. These events are narrated in the epic Ramayana in great detail.

Hanuman can be likened to a diamond amongst all the characters in the epic story of Ramayan which deals with Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Ram. In fact, the story of Lord Ram and his conquest of Lanka would not have been what it was without Hanuman. Even Lord Ram had openly accepted his indebtedness to Hanuman.

It is believed that when Lord Ram left this world for his heavenly abode during the final episodes of Ramayana, all those who were close to him as well as the rest of his subjects had also left this world with the Lord. But Hanuman remained behind with the express mandate from the Lord to ensure that the Lord's glory as well as the glory of his divine name can be perpetuated, and to ensure that the devotees of the Lord can be afforded protection.

Hanuman had immense mental and physical agility, strength and prowess. His character was immaculate and his intellect was of high refinement. He had complete, unchallenged and unparalleled knowledge of the scriptures. One of the reasons is that his teacher was the Sun God himself who had taught him all the Vedas and other scriptures. His speech was elegant and scholarly. He is regarded as a treasury of the eight Siddhis (mystical powers) and the nine Nidhis (spiritual assets). He was a renunciate and a celibate since birth.

The eight Siddhis which Hanuman possessed were the following—(i) 'Anima'—means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; to become small like an atom; (ii) 'Mahima'—is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; to become huge like a mountain, thereby standing out and being unique or special in a crowd; (iii) 'Garima'—is to be heavy-weight in any field, to have special qualities that give one's ideas and words a great amount of importance and weight; to have stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) 'Laghima'—is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) 'Praapti'—is to be able to attain, gain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya'—is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa'—is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; to be able to rule over others; (viii) 'Vashitwa'—is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient and subservient.

The nine Nidhis that Hanuman possessed were the following—

Spiritual assets—according to saint Tulsidas' epic Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha 35-36, they are—(i) communion with saints and pious people where the Lord's glories are being sung, (ii) serving one's teacher and elders, (ii) praising the

Lord's glories and doing Kirtan and Bhajan which are community singing of the Lord's glories, (iv) repeating the divine Mantras or holy words of the Lord, i.e. doing Japa, (v) having such virtues as 'Dam' or tolerance, patience, fortitude and resilience, 'Sheel' or good and righteous demeanors, 'Virati' or being renunciate and detached from deeds and to be dispassionate towards the world, 'Sam' or equanimity, looking everything as Brahm, having a non-dual approach of or view of the world, 'Santosh' or contentedness, and 'SaraI' or simplicity and humility, (vi) having no deceit, conceit and falsehoods, (vii) not finding faults with others and criticising them unnecessarily, (viii) to have firm reliance and faith in the Lord, and (ix) not to feel dejected, depressed, despaired, inferior, lowly and condemned under any adverse circumstances, because the great and merciful Lord is always with them.

According to another version, the nine Nidhis are the various special virtues or qualities or attributes that one possesses, and which make him special amongst others. They are the following—(i) Buddhi—intelligence and the power to discriminate, to think sharply, quickly, logically, rationally, deeply and analytically. (ii) Bal—strength, vigour and power of the body and of the mind as well as of the spirit. (iii) Yasha—fame, good reputation and name; majesty and renown. (iv) Dhairya—to have courage, fortitude, resilience, ability to hold on in the face of greatest adversity, misfortune and opposition. (v) Nirbhayataa—fearlessness, courage, bravery and an indomitable spirit. (vi) Aarogyataa—to be freed from diseases and illnesses, both mental as well as bodily. (vii) Ajaadyataa—the opposite of Jadataa; to be free from the negative trait of inertia, lethargy, depression, stagnation, lack of drive, initiative and will power. (viii) Vaakya-patutaa—to be an expert orator; speaking skills, eloquence, diplomacy, and wise and intelligent choice of the spoken word. (ix) Bhakti—to have steady and robust devotion, loyalty, dedication and conviction for one's chosen deity and faith. This quality, of course, comes under the category of spiritual assets also.

Other variations include the following qualities in this list of Nidhis because they are like an asset for a man which stand him in good stead in his life— (i) Sham—having self restraint and control; having peace, tranquility, serenity and quietness; being able to suppress desires, yearnings and natural instincts and impulses. (ii) Dam—tolerance, forbearance, fortitude. (iii) Upriti—renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement. (iv) Titksha—endurance, patience, fortitude, sufferance, equanimity. (v) Samadhan—the ability to find a solution, an answer to even the most vexing problem; lack of confusion or doubts; clarity of thoughts and conception. (vi) Shraddha—having faith, belief, conviction, reverence and devotion. (vii) Sakhya—friendship and the ability to co-exist with even one's adversary. (viii) Daya—kindness, compassion, graciousness. (ix) Atma Bodh—self-realisation and being enlightened about the Atma, the pure consciousness, that resides inside one's inner self as his soul, as his spirit.

Sometimes, the last Nidhi of Atma Bodh is replaced with 'Seva' or the natural habit of serving others selflessly.]

3. They said, 'Oh the strong and brave son of the Wind God! What is that essence which is known to those who are said to be experts in the knowledge pertaining to Brahm? What is the basis tenet, the fundamental teaching and the essential edict of the eighteen Purans (mythological ancient histories of the Hindus) and eighteen sub-Purans as well as the Smritis (Hindu traditional jurisprudence)? (3).

4. The four Vedas, all the scriptures etc. are well known to you because you have been diligently studying them yourself, and they have been taught to you by your teacher who is none other than the Sun God. That is, your knowledge is more complete and comprehensive than that of others. Oh the valiant and brave one! Do tell

us what is the essence of this teaching; what is the fundamental knowledge propounded, expounded and enunciated by them?’ (4).

5. Hanuman replied, ‘Oh the exalted ascetics, sages, seers and devotees of Lord Vishnu! Listen to what I have to say. It has the potential of destroying all sins and cutting through the fetters of this deluding and fearsome world (5).

6. It incorporates the essence of all the scriptural and metaphysical essences, their tenets, their axioms and maxims. Besides this, it is about the ‘Tarak Brahm¹’, i.e. it is about the Brahm who delivers one from the torments associated with this seemingly endless cycle of birth and death, and provides liberation and deliverance to its followers.

Certainly, Ram is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified. Lord Ram is an embodiment of the supreme form of Tapa (doing severe penances, observing of austerities, enduring hardships and undergoing sufferance for a noble cause). Indeed, Lord Ram is that ultimate ‘Tattwa’ (literally the essence, the fundamental or basic element or aspect) you talk about, and indeed Lord Ram is also that ‘Tarak Brahm’ referred to herein above (who provides one’s soul with the ultimate liberation and deliverance from the miseries and torments associated with this deluding and artificial world of entrapments, from the shackles that this gross body represents, as well as from the fetters created by being engrossed in ignorance and delusions pertaining to them both)’ (6).

[Note—¹The *Tarak Brahm* is that divine entity which can provide spiritual emancipation and salvation to the aspirant. It can liberate and deliver the creature from the endless cycle of birth and death and its accompanying torments and miseries. The word *Tarak* means to cause or enable to pass or cross over, to carry over, one that rescues, provides relief and succour, one that can provide liberation and deliverance to the creature from any bondage. Further, the word *Tarak* also refers to the ‘eye of wisdom that liberates one from the darkness of ignorance and delusions’, and it has relevance here because meditation leads to the opening of the inner ‘eye’ of insight that leads to self realisation and enlightenment. ‘Tarak’ also means a meter of 4 x 13 syllables; hence it refers also to the various Mantras used for the purpose of meditation, Mantras that have the power and the potentials to provide liberation and deliverance the soul from the cycle of birth and death.

References: (i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Advai Tarak Upanishad, especially verse nos. 7 and 9; Tarak Upanishad. (ii) Atharva Veda = Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6.]

7. Hearing these reassuring words from the son of the Wind God, the different Yogis (ascetics) as well as the great devotees of Lord Vishnu who had assembled there requested him once again that they wished to hear (learn) about the different branches, the different aspects, and the different parts of the divine and holy form of Lord Ram, as well as about the different systems adopted to know them comprehensively so that proper worship to the Lord can be offered by them, so that they can duly honour and adore the Lord with the utmost reverence, humility, faith and conviction, and also to ensure that firmness of faith, conviction and belief in the supremacy, holiness, sublimity and divinity of Lord Ram can sprout and take firm root in their minds and hearts. [These great sages and seers wished to learn about the different versions of the divine aspect of Lord Ram as envisioned in the different scriptures, as well as about the various methodologies or systems adopted for his worship.]

Hanuman replied, ‘The son of the Wind God (i.e. myself), Lord Ganesh who eliminates all hurdles and misfortunes, Saraswati (the Goddess of knowledge, learning and wisdom), Durga (the great Goddess who rides a lion and who slayed the demon Mahisasur), the different Kshetrapals (the guardians of various divisions or areas, called the ‘Kshetras’, of the world; they are supposed to look after the interests of farmers), the Sun, the Moon, Lord Narayan (another name of Vishnu), Lord Nrisingh (the half lion and half man incarnation of Lord Vishnu to protect his devotee Prahalad from the tyranny of his demon father), the Wind God (Vayu), Lord Varaaha (Vishnu’s incarnation as the legendary Boar to salvage the earth), along with all other companions, compatriots and attendants of the Lord during his sojourn upon this earth—such as his divine consort Sita, his three brothers Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, the demon king-devotee of the Lord named Vibhishan (who was anointed as the king of Lanka after he sought the Lord’s refuge upon being insulted and kicked out by his elder brother, the demon king Ravana who was later slayed by the Lord in the epic battle at Lanka, when he advised the latter to stop being pervert and give Sita back to Lord Ram), the monkey king Sugriv (who was anointed on the throne of Kishkindha after the slaying of his tormentor, his elder brother Vaali, and who had helped the Lord to conquer Lanka with his monkey army), Angad (who was Vaali’s son and was put by Vaali under the protection of the Lord at the time of his death; he was anointed as the prince regent of Kishkindha by the Lord), Jamvant (the old bear king of Kishkindha; one of the senior ministers of Sugriv), and all other wise and self-realised souls who are devoted to Pranav (another name of Brahm in his transcendental and cosmic form, but here implying that they were devoted to Lord Ram because they knew that he was none other but the cosmic transcendental Brahm personified).

Verily, they (the Gods and their manifestations mentioned above) are the ones who have an in-depth and intimate knowledge of the different sublime and divine facets of Lord Ram. This most eclectic, esoteric, mystical and enigmatic knowledge pertaining to Lord Ram is a dispeller of all misfortunes and miseries.’

The assembled sages, seers, ascetics and devotees persisted, and they asked once again, ‘Oh the son of Anjani! Oh the most valiant and strong Hanuman! Let us know how the most esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Pranav (Brahm in his cosmic manifestation as the Naad or the divine sound OM) is made accessible to exalted and learned Brahmins, saints, householders and other eligible persons who are sincerely devoted to and submissive towards the supreme Lord.’

Hanuman answered, ‘Listen, I shall tell you about it. Once I had asked Lord Ram the same question, and he had answered me. I shall repeat it for you all. Listen carefully. At that time, the Lord had said to me—‘Those fortunate ones who are authorized and eligible to have access to my Mantra consisting of six letters or syllables are also the ones who are authorized and eligible to repeat this Mantra which is dedicated to Pranav, i.e. the divine, sublime, ethereal and holy word ‘OM’ which is a monosyllable.

Those who do Japa (constant repetition of a single or group of word(s) or syllable(s) having divine and mystical significance, importance, value and power) with the Mantra of Pranav, i.e. with the three-lettered monosyllable word ‘OM’ complete with its ‘Ardha Matra’ (i.e. the complete Mantra ‘OM’ with its four primary sounds consisting of the letters ‘A’, ‘O’, ‘U’ and ‘M’, followed by the sound of the half-syllable represented by the prolonged sound of ‘M’ after the mouth is closed, and, which in Sanskrit grammar, is represented by the ‘crescent and dot’ that is placed on the top of a letter or monosyllable; the complete Mantra of ‘OM’ is written as the

symbol ॐ), and then add it to my own Mantra consisting of three letters R, A and M—I bless these devotees with an all-round auspiciousness, complete welfare and immense good fortunes.

[So we have the complete Mantra as follows—‘OM RAM’. It will be noted here that if this Mantra is repeated constantly without break, the word OM would automatically prefix and suffix RAM. Hence, when used to do Japa, the above Mantra would become ‘OM RAM OM’.]

That is why, the proper way to do Japa of my divine Mantra in order to attain the highest citadel of spiritualism, or being able to realise or attain access to the supreme transcendental divinity known as Brahm, is this—the aspirant should first properly empower the letters of OM, i.e. A, O, U, M along with the Ardha Matra by honouring them and bestowing upon them the great super-natural, mystical and spiritual powers that comes by showing respect and paying homage to the ancient Rishi (patron sage or seer who had first discovered it) who had first conceptualized or visualized it and established the Mantra’s authenticity and stupendous powers by actually experiencing them and then implementing them in his own spiritual efforts.

In the same manner, the Devta (patron deity) of the Mantra is invoked, and the latter is fully empowered and vested with this deity’s supernatural mystical and spiritual powers. [Since OM is the Mantra for Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness, when duly consecrated and empowered, OM becomes as majestic, potent and powerful as Brahm itself.]

When this consecration and empowerment is done, OM acquires the same mystical powers and spiritual value, the same importance and significance, the same authority and status as that possessed by the Chandas¹ in which the holy verses of the Vedas are composed. [In other words, OM encompasses in itself all the essence and authority of the four Vedas when duly consecrated and empowered. It acts like the ‘Master Key’ to all Vedic hymns.]

Then the four ‘Varnas’ of the Mantra ‘OM’ representing Pranav (i.e. the letters A, O, U and M that constitute the Mantra) and their basic vowel sounds should be entrusted with divine powers symbolizing different powerful forces of Nature that control all aspects of creation².

They should be assigned the powers, the authority and the potentials of the glorious ‘fire element’ (representing energy, vitality, dynamism and purity), the holiness and sanctity of the ‘Vedas’ (the primary scriptures and a repository of all eclectic and sublime knowledge pertaining to existence, life, spiritualism and divinity that exist in creation), and the various unique and characteristic virtues in creation that determine the nature and character of everything in creation that are collectively called the different ‘Gunās’³.

[That is, each syllable or letter or word of any Mantra should be given equal importance and value as being the ‘seed or root’ of the entire Mantra; the composite Mantra would fall apart and lose its significance and mystical powers if even one constituent part is rendered less effective, or even ineffective, or given less importance and attention. So, each letter is complete in its self; each is a wholesome unit in its own right. And therefore, each individual letter or syllable deserves full honour, respect and attention by the spiritual aspirant.]

Now, this Mantra for Pranav, i.e. OM, should be prefixed and suffixed to the Mantra for Lord Ram. A person who does Japa with this complete Mantra, i.e. the Mantra for Ram with OM attached as a prefix and a suffix to it, becomes one like the Lord himself. [That is, he becomes as pure and holy as the supreme Lord himself. He acquires divine and mystical powers and prowess as an especially privileged,

enlightened and empowered soul.] The Mantra for Pranav (i.e. OM) forms an integral part of the complete Mantra for Lord Ram’.

Once, Vibhishan (the demon devotee of Lord Ram and the king of Lanka) said to the Lord, ‘I most reverentially prostrate myself before Lord Ram who is seated upon a throne, and who is the slayer of the evil son of the Pulastya clan (a reference to the evil demon king of Lanka, Ravana).

Oh Lord Ram! I wish to say something; do I have your permission?’ (7).

[Note--¹The *Chanda* is a poetical style of composition in which a particular verse of a Veda is composed. There are many types of Chandas, and their importance as the protector of Gods symbolising all the life-giving and life-sustaining forces of creation have been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition in its Cantos 1 and 2.

In the present context, each of the letters or syllables of the Mantra, i.e. A, O, U and M, is assigned the same ethereal, divine and spiritual importance, significance and value as that given to a complete verse of the Veda. In other words, each syllable of a Mantra is as important as the whole verse of a Veda.

²The *Varnas* are the letters or syllables of a word. In the case of the divine and holy word OM representing Pranav or the supreme transcendental Brahman, they are A, O, U and M representing the four ethereal sounds which this composite Mantra ‘OM’, also known as Pranav, consists of. They are like an algebraic coefficient in mathematics, establishing a link between the various holy and divine facets of the individual units of the composite Mantra OM as represented by each of these four letters, and the cosmic sound called Naad or Pranav that they represent.

At the same time, they act as a constant that enhances and multiplies the value and magnitude of the whole composite Mantra. Each of these letters or syllables is assigned the same ethereal, divine and spiritual importance, significance and value as that given to a complete Mantra. They form an integral part of the whole Mantra, and the Mantra cannot have any value if even one of its parts is de-linked from it. It is like a complex organic chemical formula where each component is an integral part of the whole structure, and has equal value and importance as its next companion to maintain the integrity of the entire structure.

The four components of this spiritual ‘formula’ are represented by the four letters that constitute OM. The first letter ‘A’ represents the conception of the creation; the second letter ‘O’ represents the development of the cosmos; the third letter ‘U’ represents the expansion; and the last letter ‘M’, the fourth, represents the conclusion of the creation. The vowel sound of each of these letters represents the basis foundation upon which that particular aspect rests. This is because whereas the actual pronunciation of the letter symbolizes the external features of that particular aspect of creation as mentioned above, the vowel sound would represent the hidden ingredient that has gone to make this external feature feasible and meaningful.

The concept of OM : Some of the other Upanishads that deal with this esoteric concept are the following—

(a) Rig Veda—Naad Bindu Upanishad.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli (Canto) 1, Anuvak (sub-canto) 8; Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 2, 4, 24-25, 31-32; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 2, 9-18 (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation), 37, 102; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 6; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 136-139; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 2-12, 69-71 ½ which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11—1.34, and Canto 5, verse no. 70; Shuk Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 20 describes how OM is used for the purpose of ritualistic worship according to the Tantra philosophy involving Anga Nyas, Shandanga Nyas etc.; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 42-43 ½ describe how the three states of existence (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) and the three

types of bodies (gross, subtle and causal) came into existence as manifestations of the three letters A, U and M of the word OM; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 38.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Taarsar Upanishad, Canto 2, and Canto 3, verse nos. 1-7; Hans Upanishad, verse nos. 6-17.

(c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad verse no. 74-81, 85-88; Pranavo Panishad which has only 13 verses dedicated to OM.

(d) Atharva Veda—Sita Upanishad, verse no. 9; Ram Tapiniopanishad, canto 3, verse no.5-9; Prashna Upanishad, full Canto 5; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 4,6; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 1, 8-12; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8; Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 5; Canto 4, verse no. 3; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 1-7; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 6, verse nos. 3-4; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4 (which equates OM with the 'Hans' Mantra).

The significance and the relevance of OM vis-à-vis Lord Ram and his divine Mantras have also been stressed in Ram Uttar-Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-9. This Upanishad is Chapter 13 of our current volume.

³There are three basic qualities or *Gunas* which are inherent in all the living beings that determine their nature, habits, temperaments and inclinations which in turn decide the personality and outlook of each individual in this world. These Gunas are—(a) Sata meaning the best quality marked by a predominance of auspiciousness, righteousness and virtuousness; (b) Raja meaning the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, and a desire to create, sustain and remain involved in the affairs of the world; and (c) Tama which the meanest and basest of quality in a creature marked by evilness, perversions and sinfulness. These Gunas, in varying ratios and mixtures, decide the character and personality of any given unit of creation. In modern world we recognize them as the 'gene' special to that individual, the 'gene' which makes each individual so unique in this creation. These Gunas can also be compared to the various shades and hues of colours that a painter uses to paint a picture or a portrait and inject life and uniqueness to it. Even the same painter cannot duplicate exactly a picture again—there is bound to be a difference between any two pictures or portraits no matter how invisible, imperceptible, microscopic and subtle it might be.]

8. 'Oh the strong-armed valiant Lord of the Raghu's race (i.e. Lord Ram)! It is said about you that you accept your humble devotee without much fuss and formalities. How do they get this privilege? Please do tell me' (8).

9. Lord Ram replied to Vibhishan, 'The five types of most horrendous sins, such as the killing of one's (i) mother and (ii) father, (iii) a Brahmin (an elderly, learned and wise person who is the senior member of the society), (iv) a Guru (one's teacher and moral preceptor), (v) or any great sage, seer, ascetic, monk or a friar, and other such horrible and most despicable sins that are normally unpardonable, are remitted or forgiven or pardoned if the sinner who has committed any one or more of these sins or misdeeds repeats my holy divine Mantra thousands of times¹ with sincerity, devotion, faith and conviction.

Not are they only able to overcome the ill effects of such grave and heinous sins and misdeeds, but they also become an image of truthfulness and honesty. They achieve peace and internal bliss that comes with associating oneself with the pure conscious self².

I (Vibhishan) asked once again, 'If one is unable to do this (i.e. repeat the Mantra thousands of time), then say what should he do? Please tell me about it.'

Then the Lord had replied to me (Vibhishan), 'In that case, in order to invoke my divine blessings, one should repeat the various hymns composed in my honour by

my different ardent devotees—such as the son of Kaikasi (i.e. Vibhishan), or the hymns contained in the great Upanishads dedicated to me (viz. the Ram Tapini Upanishad, and the Tarsar Upanishad), or the hymns of the Gita proclaimed by me (which is called ‘Ram Gita’ and is a part of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas; this Gita was preached by the Lord to his brother Laxman in this epic’s Uttar Kand, Canto 5), or repeat the litany of my thousand names (called the ‘Sahastra Naam’ because these names are all divine, holy and spiritually uplifting and liberating by nature, and are indicative of the same essence and holiness that exists in various forms much like the same basic elements of Nature combined in numerous permutations and combinations to form the myriad versions of this creation, or the same universal ‘consciousness’ that has taken the form of thousands upon thousands of forms as countless creatures of all denominations in this world), or the one that has my one hundred names (instead of the thousand names; a sort of abridged version of these one thousand names), or the different ‘Ram Ashtaks’ (verses of eight stanzas; or hymns having eight verses of twin lines each), or ‘Ram Stavaraj’ (a special hymn) composed by the celestial sage Narad, or the great ‘Stotras’ (hymns)³ composed by Hanuman which have astounding mystical powers equivalent to those possessed by divine Mantras of the Vedas, or the hymns composed in the honour of Sita (Lord Ram’s divine consort; an incarnation of Goddess Laxmi), or the famous six-letter divine Mantra ‘Raam(g) Raamaaya Namaha’ (meaning ‘I bow most reverentially to Lord Ram whose Beej Mantra ‘Ram/Raam(g)’ is also the Beej Mantra for the fire element, and therefore the Lord personifies all the glorious, magnificent, powerful and eclectic virtues and qualities of the fire element’.

A person who devotedly, with full conviction and faith, repeats any of these hymns, all of which have equal potentials and powers⁴, is able to overcome the ill effects of his sins and misdeeds, and becomes holy and purified as if he represented these virtues unique to me. There is no doubt about it’ (9).

[Note—¹The repetition of Mantras ‘thousands of times’ is a figure of speech that implies concentration of mind and attention. When one repeats anything so many times he is bound to be focused on it; his sub-conscious would be full of it. When a man sleeps he would be unconsciously repeating these Mantras if he had been repeating them consciously while awake. A time would come when his whole being would be transformed from what he used to be to what these Mantras stand for—i.e. he would be a transformed man who would be personifying the glory and the holiness associated with Lord Ram and his great devotees. While his mind was filled with worldly thoughts and negativity prior to his practicing the Mantras, it would be now full of holy thoughts and positive vibrations after practicing repetition of Mantras.

The various Mantras of Lord that are referred to here have been enumerated in Canto 2 of this Upanishad. Besides them, the other Mantras of the Lord are given in the following Upanishads—(i) Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Cantos 3-4; and (ii) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5. These two Upanishads appear as sections 1 and 2 of Chapter no. 13 of the present volume.

Similarly, the Tripadvibhuti Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph nos. 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 43, 46, and 57 also list some other Mantras dedicated to Lord Ram. This Upanishad is Chapter 11 of the current volume.

²There is clear message here which should be interpreted in the correct perspective. Merely repeating the Mantra would be ineffective if there is no sincerity, and the sin is repeated again and again. In other words, the offender should be sincerely regretful of what he has done and make sincere efforts to atone for his sins, even undergo severe punishment as part of the process of repentance for his misdeeds, for willingness to suffer punishment is a sign of sincerity. This punishment is like doing Tapa or severe penance which has an element of ‘fire’ in it; this ‘fire’ of

regret, of repentance and of grief at the unfortunate event that has tainted the otherwise immaculate purity of the 'self' which is the pure conscious Atma or the soul representing divinity and holiness inherent in a man, acts as a cleansing agent and clears his conscious 'self' of any scars associated with the sins and misdeeds that he might have committed in his ignorance, and for which he is really and honestly regretful and sorry.

There is an old adage that to err is human, so it is not as bad to err as it is to repeat the error. Sincere regret would then inspire the man to find ways to clean his tarnished 'self', and the Lord Ram's divine Mantra would act as a spiritual medicine for him, healing his spiritual wound and helping him recover from its ill effects.

³The different hymns mentioned in this verse are the following—(i) Sanat Kumar Sanhita's Ramstavaraj by sage Narad, (ii) Ramashtak by sage Veda Vyas, (iii) Raghunathashtak, (iv) Sita-ram-ashtak, (v) Ram Stotra, and (vi) Ram Stuti. All these beautiful hymns have been included as Addendum no. 1 at the end of this Chapter.

⁴This shows that it is not necessary to stick to any one school of spiritual philosophy to attain emancipation and salvation even as the same medicine might not be suitable for two different patients. Each individual has his unique problems and therefore what is suitable to one individual may not be appropriate for another. The trick is to select what is most appealing to and proper for one's own self, which path is the most easy to follow, and which Mantra or hymns has a greater mental and emotional healing affect on an individual's psyche. Another point to note here is that the Lord emphasized that any hymn composed by a devotee has the same importance as the traditional sacred verses of the scriptures as long as these are sincere outpourings of the heart and done with utmost humility and devotion.]

Canto 2

1-2. Sage Sankadi and others asked Hanuman, 'Oh the strong and valiant son of Anjani! Lord Ram is famous as Tarak and as Brahm (i.e. he is renowned as the one who provides liberation and deliverance to the soul of a creature, as well as is a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being himself). We request you to preach his divine and holy Mantras for the benefit of all of us.'

Hanuman replied, 'The root or seed Mantra of Lord Ram consists of the Sanskrit consonant 'Ra' (as in 'run') with the vowel sound 'Aa' attached to it (as in 'round') and a 'dot' on the top (to make the entire letter sound as 'Raan(g) or Ram'). This is a monosyllable word 'Raan(g)'¹ which is a holistic and mystical representation of the entire holiness, sublimity and divinity of Lord Ram. The monosyllable 'Raan(g)' is the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram; it is the seed from which all other divine Mantras of Lord Ram sprout and develop into full-fledged Mantras.

It has the same mystical potentials and divine powers, the same importance, significance and value as the Kalpa tree is for the Gods. [This is the evergreen tree in heaven which is considered as all wish-fulfilling. It gives the Gods whatever they desire from it. Similarly, the Mantra of Lord Ram also grants the devotees with everything they want.]

The Rishi² of this Mantra is Brahma, the creator, himself. [That is, the patron sage or seer who had first visualised it, and is therefore given reverence as the father of this Mantra, is Brahma, the creator of the entire creation, himself. So, what can be more sanctified and divine than this Mantra?]

The Chanda of this Mantra is Gayatri. [A Chanda is a poetic style of composition in which the hymns of the Vedas were composed by Brahma. A Gayatri

Chanda is considered as the best type of Chanda and it has three lines of eight letters each, totaling twenty four letters in all.]

Lord Ram is the Devta of this Mantra. [The Devta is the patron deity to whom the particular hymn or Mantra is dedicated.]

The basic alphabet 'Ra' of this Beej Mantra, or the seed or root Mantra of the Lord, is also the esoteric Beej Mantra for the 'fire element'. In other words, the Mantra of Lord Ram has the magnificent and astounding power and potential of the 'fire element' inherently built into it; it is as glorious and powerful, as effective and dynamic as the fire element.

The long vowel sound represented by the second Sanskrit vowel 'Aa' (as in *master*) that is used as a suffix to this consonant 'Ra' implies the infinite and profound metaphysical and spiritual influence, importance and significance that this Mantra has in terms of its energy and potentials, which are multifarious times more than what the fire element would have had if left to own self. The 'Aa' has a multiplying effect on the fire element's dynamic and astounding powers.

Meanwhile, the 'dot' on the top is like the crown jewel, giving the Mantra its divine authority, holiness and sanctity. The dot represents the undefined and compact atom-like beginning of creation from Brahm whose vivid manifestation Lord Ram is. It was from this 'dot' that the entire creation has 'stretched out as a line to infinity', and it is in this dot that this 'line of creation' would withdraw at the time of conclusion.

The invocation of this mystical, all-powerful, holy and divine Mantra has the power to bestow upon the devotee all the benefits and blessings that he seeks; it fulfills all the desires, aspirations, ambitions, hopes and expectations that arise in the Mana (mind) of the seeker (1-2).

[Note—¹The one-letter Mantra of Lord Ram is thus 'Raan(g)'].

²The *Rishi* is the sage or seer who had first visualised a particular Mantra as a divine formula having stupendous spiritual and mystical powers and potentials. He tested it and verified its potentials and powers before prescribing it as a Mantra that could be used for doing Japa (repetition of some spiritual formula that can give the seeker the benefits that he seeks) or during formal sacrificial rituals. Thus, they rendered the otherwise mere neutral letter or group of letters into something divine and sublime, and infused it with supernatural powers, bestowing them with their renowned importance, significance and value. Therefore, the name of this particular sage or seer was invoked along with the invocation of the Mantra to honour his contribution as is the practice even in modern times when chemicals and formulae and various other scientific discoveries such as stars, comets, galaxies, distant black holes etc., or new concepts in physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences are named after the scientist who first discovered them.

The difference between a *Rishi* and a *Muni* is that the latter did not divulge their realisation but preferred to keep their spiritual discoveries to themselves as the word 'Muni' is derived from the root Mana means the subtle mind and heart. On the other hand, the 'Rishis' used to preach and teach others about their astounding spiritual realisation and discoveries.]

3-4. The Beej Mantra of the Lord (i.e. 'Raan(g)') has the same mysterious abilities and astounding dynamism, the magnificent esoteric powers and the divine energy of infinite proportions that enables any seed to bring forth a new life and give rise to a complete new generation; it is like the symbolic cosmic seed known as 'Brahm' or the cosmic Consciousness from which this entire creation has unfolded, has been generated, or has come into being.

An aspirant who wishes to receive the divine blessings of Lord Ram, and consequentially attain liberation and deliverance of the soul, should visualise the divine and holy form of the Lord as follows—‘There is a magnificent platform or dais under the Mandar tree (the coral tree) near the banks of the holy river Saryu (on the north of the city of Ayodhya). Upon it is a seat designed as a lotus flower [3].

On this holy seat is seated Lord Ram, whose complexion is dark, in a seating posture known as ‘Viraasan¹’. The upper part of the Lord’s body is held in a posture known as ‘Gyan Mudra²’, while his left hand rests upon his left knee. Sita (his divine consort) and Laxman (his brother and comrade-in-arm) accompany him [4]. (3-4).

[Note—¹The *Viraasan* is a seating posture in which the right leg is bent at the knees and tucked under the buttock, while the body is supported by the toes of this right foot which are pointed inwards for leverage. Meanwhile, the left leg is bent at a right angle at the knee with the sole of the foot placed flat on the ground. The body is thus balanced on the toes of the right leg and the flat sole of the left leg.

²The *Gyan Mudra* is literally the posture adopted when a teacher preaches his disciples. It basically requires that the head is held in a straight alignment with the spine, the right hand is bent inwards at the elbow, with its palm open and facing outwards, the thumb touches the tip of the first finger to form a ring, and the rest of the three fingers stand erect, touching each other. The left hand is placed upon the left thigh so that the palms rest upon the knee joint.]

5. The Lord is immaculate, incorrupt, divine, holy, radiant and self-illuminated like pure crystal, glowing with a self-generated divine hue of immense intensity effusing from his body. The Lord is looking at me with a benevolent and benign smile’—an aspirant desirous of ‘Moksha’, i.e. of liberation and deliverance of the soul, of emancipation and salvation, should meditate upon this view while doing Japa (repetition) of the holy and divine Mantra of the Lord described above for one lakh times. [1 lakh = 1,00,000.] (5).

6. The devotee aspirant should meditate upon the divine name or Mantra of Lord Ram, i.e. the Mantra ‘Ram’, as being a personification of the Parmatma, the supreme Atma or the cosmic Consciousness that is as glorious and splendid as the celestial Sun. this divine Mantra is used for the purposes of doing Japa, or constant repetition of the holy name.

This Mantra of Lord Ram is also regarded as the Mantra of Lord Narayan (because Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is also known as Narayan, the Supreme Being), and it is as dynamic, powerful and potential as the living fire element. The sound of this Mantra is equivalent to the cosmic ‘Naad’ that is heard during meditation. [The ‘Naad’ is the background ethereal sound of the universe that reverberates throughout the creation, and whose vibrations are heard as the Mantra OM when a person is submerged in deep meditation.]

Success in reaching this exalted state of existence when the spiritual aspirant can hear the Naad is also equivalent to attaining the Kaivalya form of Moksha—i.e. the spiritual liberation that is only one of its kind. [This is because this Naad is heard only in the higher stages of Yoga, and it is attended with experiencing of immense bliss and ecstasy. This is brought about by the tingling of the sensory nerves that is caused by the massaging effect of the high-intensity vibrations of Naad that is heard when the practitioner of Yoga does Japa with the Mantra ‘OM’. Since the Mantra of Lord Ram is treated as being equivalent to OM, the same effect is created when the Lord’s devotee does Japa with it. The calming effect on the nerves gives at once an

immense feeling of bliss, tranquility, ecstasy and joys. This experience is very unique and cannot be matched by any other thing in this world.] (6).

7-8. 'Ram'—this Mantra consists of two Sanskrit letters 'Raa' and 'Ma'¹. It is like a king or emperor amongst the Mantras, and has the potential to bless the aspirant and the spiritual seeker with the boon of fulfillment of all his wishes, desires and aspirations. This divine name of the Lord is the same as the one letter monosyllable Mantra 'Raan(g) or Ram' described earlier, and has the same Rishi and Devta.

To use the name of the Lord, i.e. the word 'Ram' as a Mantra, one should prefix it with the following six letters or monosyllables which represent the mystical and esoteric Beej Mantras (or the root or seed Mantras) of other glorious elements of creation. They act as different genres of glittering gems and jewels placed on the crown represented by this holy and divine Mantra of the Lord, and not only enhance the beauty and charm of the Lord's fame and glory as represented by the individual Mantra but also render the concerned Mantra with a multiplier effect. These six letters or monosyllables are the following—'OM', 'Hring/Hrim', 'Srim/Sring', 'Kling/Klim', 'Aiyang/Aim' and 'Raan(g)/Raam'².

Thus, when each of these monosyllables is added to the word 'Ram', the total number of letters becomes three (e.g. the monosyllable OM + Raa + Ma = 3 letters, making the complete Mantra as 'OM Ram'). Since there are six monosyllable Mantras that can be used as a prefix to Ram, the total number of Mantras that can be formed are also six in number³.

All these Mantras have the same divine potentials and mystical powers, but the use depends upon the system of worship adopted by the aspirant (7-8).

[Note—¹The two-letter Mantra of Lord Ram is thus 'Ram'. (Raa + Ma)

²These six are called seed or root, or the 'Beej' Mantras. They are monosyllables, and are much like the alphabets used in science and mathematical equations to denote other elements or factors. They encrypt great secret powers of creation in themselves, and must be pronounced and used properly even as the different alphabets standing for different atoms in organic chemistry must be properly placed at their designated places to make any sense out of them; otherwise the entire complex chemical compound represented by these single alphabets or a group of alphabets having a monosyllabic sound would be meaningless. Example of a single alphabet standing for an element is say for instance 'O' standing for Oxygen, 'H' standing for Hydrogen. Example of more than one letter standing for a single element is 'Au' for gold, 'Hg' for mercury, and 'Ag' for silver. Since Au, Hg or Ag stand for a single metal, they are like the monosyllable Beej Mantras in metaphysics which might have more than one alphabet but nevertheless stand for only one single element. For instance, OM has four alphabets, viz. A, U, O and M, but the Mantra itself is regarded as a monosyllabic sound because it refers to only one divine entity Brahm.

Even in algebra, we use alphabets to denote certain things, and then go on calculating on the basis of these hypothetical assumptions to arrive at conclusive results. This system is used in all spheres of science. Therefore we conclude that the use of these 'Beej' Mantras during occult practices and ritualistic forms of formal worship to invoke divine powers and seek results is like the time tested scientific method that is now applied in the sphere of metaphysics.

The seed/root monosyllable Mantra *OM* stands for the attributeless and infinite transcendental supreme entity known as Brahm from which everything that has an existence has its origin. According to Canto 5, verse no. 16-17 of this Upanishad, OM is another name of Lord Ram because the Lord is a personification of Brahm.

The seed/root monosyllable Mantra *Hring/Hrim* stands for the 'Maya Shakti' element of creation. This represents the cosmic energy and divine powers of creation

that create delusions. It is therefore used to enable the worshipper to overcome the delusions and its attendant problems that cause numerous hurdles in the spiritual seeker's efforts to find liberation and deliverance as well as the ultimate Truth of creation which would give him peace of mind and soul.

The seed/root monosyllable Mantra *Sring/Sri* stands for the divine qualities which are like valuable assets for the aspirant. The word 'Sri' means all types of fortunes, wealth, prosperity, property, fame, splendour, magnificence, glory, well beings etc. Hence, this Beej is for Goddess Laxmi or Ramaa, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, as well as for Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, as she is an incarnation of Laxmi.

The seed/root monosyllable Mantra *Kling/Klim* stands for 'Kaamdeo' who is a manifestation of the cosmic force of Nature that creates natural desires, passions and yearnings. Hence, this Beej Mantra is regarded as the one for 'Kaam' or the natural tendency of a creature to have various desires, passions, yearnings, wishes, hopes and expectations.

The seed/root monosyllable Mantra *Aiyang/Aim* stands for the 'Vaak Shakti' or the power of speech and its patron Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of learning and wisdom. This is because the faculty of speech and acquisition and dispensing of knowledge and skills are integrated with each other.

Finally, the seed/root monosyllable Mantra *Raan(g)/Raam* stands for Lord Ram as well as for the fire element. Hence, it has all the dynamic potentials of 'fire', and is as radiant, energetic and glorious as this element. It is also called the 'Tarak Beej' or 'Tarak Mantra', i.e. the monosyllable mystical formula that can provide to the aspirant the passage by which he obtains final and ultimate liberation and deliverance from this world of delusions and falsehood, and ensures that his soul gets emancipation, salvation and final rest.

Refer also to Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2. This Upanishad appears as Section no. 2 of Chapter 13 of the current volume.

These root or seed Beej Mantras are used as a prefix or suffix to the main Mantra to have a multiplier effect and enhance the powers of the Mantra.

³The three lettered Mantras for Lord Ram, therefore, are the following—OM Ram; Hring/Hrim Ram; Sring/Srim Ram; Kling/Klim Ram; Aiyang/Aim Ram; and Raan(g)/Raam Ram.]

9. There are two words that are used as a suffix to the divine name of the Lord, and they are a sort of honorable title or honour that is assigned to the concerned Mantra. These two words go to further enhance the dignity, authority, power and honour that the Mantra already possesses. [They are like the various titles and honours that are bestowed in the modern world on people of repute and those who have made some sort of extraordinary contribution to society, literature, sciences etc.—such as the honorary title of 'Doctor' or 'Knighthood' given to some eminent personalities.]

These two words are—'Chandra'¹ and 'Bhadra'².

Thus, now the Mantra 'Ram' has two forms, each having four letters. These two Mantras are the following—'Ram Chandra' (Raa + Ma + Chan + Dra = 4 letters), and 'Ram Bhadra (Raa + Ma + Bha + Dra = 4 letters)',³.

The Rishis and Devtas of these two Mantras are also like the ones as described earlier (9).

[Note--¹The *Chandra* means the moon; it is an epithet indicating that the entity honoured with this title is as beautiful, pleasing, spiritually soothing and enchanting as the celestial moon. The moon is said to be the celestial pitcher of the God's ambrosia which is an elixir that bestows eternity, happiness and bliss. Thus, by suffixing the Mantra of the Lord with this epithet of 'Chandra', it is vested with the special qualities that the Moon God possesses.

²The word *Bhadra* means a gentleman, a courteous and polite person, one who possesses all the noble and auspicious virtues that are expected in someone who is wise, scholarly and learned as well as well cultured and well versed in all the niceties of this world. A person who is exalted, learned, gentle, pious, virtuous, worthy, auspicious and majestic in all his demeanors and thought processes is honoured by this epithet. So this appendage to the glorious name of the Lord adds more shine and sheen to it as if it has been honoured by an additional title. It is not that the Mantra would be of any less value if these epithets were not affixed or suffixed to it—for it has been already emphasized that the very foundation of the Lord's name, called the 'Beej Mantra' which is the consonant 'Ra', is the seed/root Mantra for the fire element also, and nothing in this entire creation is more effective, more potent, more powerful, more purifying, and more dynamic than the fire element. But it has been a convention of honouring great souls with additional titles or epithets just to show one's respect to them.

³The four letter Mantras for Lord Ram are thus—Ram Chandra and Ram Bhadra.]

10-11. The five lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is the following—Raa + Maa + Ya + Na + Maha = 5 letters, making the full Mantra as 'Raamaaye Namaha'*. The patron sage or seer of this Mantra, called its Rishi (the patron sage or seer who had first discovered it as a holy mystical formula) is Vishwamitra; the composition style of this Mantra, called its Chanda, is 'Pankti'¹ [10]; the patron deity to whom it is dedicated is obviously Ram Bhadra (the exalted, learned, gentle, pious, virtuous, worthy, auspicious and majestic Lord known as 'Ram'); and its divine and stupendous powers, potentials, strength and vitality is represented by the fire element encrypted in its Beej Mantra 'Raan(g)'. [In other words, the powers and potent of this Mantra is equivalent to that possessed by the fire element; it is as glorious, as radiant and as splendid as the fire element.]

This divine, esoteric, sublime, mystical and spiritually empowered ethereal Mantra is invoked and trust pledged in its astounding supernatural potentials and powers by reposing it on various important locations of the body and its vital parts, such as the centre of the top of the head or skull (Brahm-randhra), the center of the eyebrows, the heart, the navel, and both the thighs of the two legs². (10-11).

[Note—¹The *Pankti Chanda* is a style of poetic composition having five lines or stanzas, each having eight letters, bringing the total to forty letters. Here the emphasis is on symmetry, because the word 'Pankti' also means symmetry, or a symmetrical line. In other words, all the five letters or syllables of this Mantra—Raamaaye Namahe—have equal metaphysical and spiritual value; none is more or less important or potential or powerful than the other.

²This process is called *Anga-Nyas*. The word 'Anga' means the body and its various parts, and 'Nayas' means to invoke, deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, to keep a thing in mind, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the body are touched and certain Mantras are said. 'Anga-Nyas' also means the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points.

The various locations on the body where Anga-Nyas is done have great metaphysical significance. According to verse no. 43 below, these locations are the following—Brahm-randhra (which is the hair-like slit on the top of the skull), the forehead, the central point of the eyebrows (where the symbolic third eye of wisdom is said to be located), the upper palate, the two earlobes, the heart, the navel and the two thighs = 10 sites.

Verse no. 23 of this Canto 2 specifies the points of the body where Anga-Nyas is to be done. They are Brahm-randhra, the center of the eyebrows, the heart, the navel, the knees, and the feet.

The human body is a microcosm of the cosmos, because according to the genesis of creation the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-inclusive manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, had metamorphosed in the shape of the human body, and therefore this body is a manifestation of the entire creation including all its Gods and all its astounding potentials. {Refer Aiteriya Upanishad of Rig Veda tradition, Canto 1, sections 1-3; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, Brahman 2, verse no. 7; Canto 1, Brahman 4, verse no. 7, 11-13.}

The creation has been visualised as having three divisions which form the so-called three worlds—viz. the heavens represented by the head of the human body where the Brahm-randhra, forehead and the eyebrows are located; the terrestrial world or the earth symbolised by the heart and the navel; and the nether world by the legs and the two thighs. It must be noted that the two earlobes stand for the two extreme directions of the cosmic globe. So, when the aspirant does Anga Nyas with any Mantra on these specific points, he symbolically purifies these points on his body and empowers them with the mystical and ethereal powers of the powerful forces of Nature which these Mantras embody as mystical formulas encrypting astounding energy and forces of creation. This is a perception which implies that the ethereal and mystical powers and potentials of the Mantras representing the stupendous forces of Nature that control creation, right from its conception to its development, growth, expansion, sustenance and conclusion, are invoked and established throughout the breadth and length of this visible creation manifested in the body of the aspirant. In other words, the aspirant hopes that he would be empowered with all the glorious virtues and auspicious powers and stupendous potentials and majestic authority vested in the Viraat Purush at the cosmic level.

*The five-letter Mantra of Lord Ram is 'Raamaaye Namaha']

12-15. The aspirant devotee should invoke the blessings of Lord Ram with the aforesaid Mantras and their especially empowered letters. He should meditate upon the divine and glorious vision of Lord Ram as follows—There is a Kalpa tree (the evergreen all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods) in the center of the Nandan Van (the heavenly garden). Underneath it is a seat made of flowering creepers. [12].

Laxman, Lord Ram's younger brother, is glancing obliquely, from the corner of his eyes, at the Lord's glorious and magnificent bow.

Janki (Sita, his divine consort) is waving the hand held fan for the Lord. [13].

There is a crown of matted hairs on the Lord's head; his complexion is dark, and he is surrounded by sages and seers. Laxman is standing beside him holding the ceremonial umbrella which is adorned by flowers of all kinds. [14].

The Lord, who is the slayer of the demon Ravana, is seated gracefully, with dignity, calmness and contentedly, showing benevolence and cheerful demeanour. He is attended to by his two companions, Sugriv (the monkey king of Kishkindha) and Vibhishan (the demon king of Lanka).

A person who desires victory over any hurdle in this world should meditate upon this glorious and magnificent view of the Lord, and repeat his divine ethereal Mantras for one lakh times. [1 lakh = 1,00,000.] [15]. (12-15).

16. When the Mantra 'Ramye Namaha' is prefixed by any of the following five mystically empowered Beej Mantras (or seed Mantras) of the primary forces of Nature, it becomes a six-lettered Mantra, and of five types¹. These five Beej Mantras are 'Raam(g)' for Lord Ram, 'Kling/Klim' for Kaam Shakti (the power of desires), 'Hring/Hrim' (Maya-Shakti or energy and dynamism of delusions), 'Aiyang/Aim'

(for Vaak or faculty of speech), 'Sring/Srim' (for Laxmi or prosperity and well being).

This cluster of divinely charged and eclectic ethereal Mantras can bestow the aspirant with the four legendary rewards of Artha (financial well being and prosperity), Kaam (fulfillment of all wishes), Dharma (auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety), and Moksha (liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) (16).

[Note—¹The cluster of six Mantras of six letters or syllables each is the following—
(1) Raan(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha (Raan(g)/Raam + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6). (2) Kling/Klim Raamaaye Namaha (Kling/Klim + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6). (3) Hring/Hrim Raamaaye Namaha (Hring/Hrim + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6). (4) Aiyang/Aim Raamaaye Namaha (Aiyang/Aim + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6). (5) Srim/Sring Raamaaye Namaha (Srim/Sring + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6).]

17. When each of the fifty Beej Mantras for the fifty Matrikas¹, such as the Beej Mantras of Laxmi (prosperity; welfare—which is 'Sring/Srim'), Vaak (speech—which is 'Aiyang/Aim'), Manmath or Kaam (natural desires—which is 'Kling/Klim'), etc. are added to the five letters of the Mantra for Lord Ram, viz. 'Raamaaya Namaha', we get a six-letter Mantra.

[For instance, if we use the first Beej Mantra 'Sri', we get the following Mantra—'Sri Raamaaya Namaha'. The six letters are Sri + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6.

Since there are fifty Matrikas, each having a Beej Mantra, we will have a total of fifty such Mantras.] (17).

[Note—¹The Beejnighantu text (Beej = seed Mantra; Nighantu = dictionary) written by Bharirava lists 50 such Beej Mantras and describes what they stand for. Another text known as Beej-vidhaan has 75 lines in the poetical style called the Anushtup Chanda describing the Beej Mantras like Hrim, Strim, Aim, Krim etc. representing different deities such as Aindri, Vaamekshana, Saraswati, Kali etc. respectively. Similarly, the Ekakchar-kosha of Purshottamadeva lists the Beej Mantras of various Gods and Goddesses, such as 'A' for Vasudeo, 'Aa' for Pitaamaha (Brahma the creator of the visible world), 'Pa' for the Wind God called Pawan, 'Saa' for Laxmi the goddess of wealth as well as for Shiva the third God of the Trinity. Another text called Mantraartha-bidhan by Varadaatantra also lists the Beej Mantra such as 'Haum' for Shiva, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, 'Hrim' for Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, 'Klim' for Kaamdeo-cupid, the patron god of love and passion, 'Gam' for Ganesh, 'Kshraum' for Narshingh, the half-lion and half-man incarnation of Vishnu, etc. According to Maatrikaanighantu by Mahidasa, the Beej Mantras and even the word Mantras of certain chief deities are as follows—'A' stands for Shrikantha (Shiva, the one with a blue-tinged throat), 'Keshava' for Krishna, 'Vaata' for the Wind God of Pawan, 'Ka' for Maya, 'Ma' stands both for Vaikuntha, the abode for Lord Vishnu who is the second of the Trinity Gods and is responsible for sustenance of creation, as well as for Mahaakaal, one of the names of Shiva, 'Ya' stands for Yamuna etc.

The *Maatrikaa* of a Mantra are the various Sanskrit letters or alphabets that collectively form the text of the Mantra. The word *Maatrikaa* literally means 'a little mother'. Since the Mantra represents the cosmic divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm in its numerous manifestations known as various Gods, the letters are called the *Maatrikaas* because they empower this Mantra with the stupendous mystical powers that this Mantra possesses much like Brahm employing his cosmic dynamic energy to enable him to initiate and then sustain and develop this creation, and even bring about its conclusion.

Brahm initiated this creation with the help of his cosmic dynamic powers and energy represented and encrypted in the Beej Mantra. But as it happened, the unfolded creation had numerous Gods and Goddesses. These Gods actually symbolise the various aspects of Brahm's cosmic powers and authority, and the Goddesses represent their empowerment and strength to give effect to their mandate. This is a classic case of delegation of authority.

References Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 62-63; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22.]

18. When the Beej Mantra (for Laxmi, which is) 'Srim/Sri/Sring', for Maya (i.e. delusions—which is 'Hring/Hrim'), and for Kaam or Manmath (i.e. desires—which is 'Kling/Klim') are added as a prefix as well as a suffix to the four letter Mantra for Lord Ram, viz. 'Ram Bhadra' and 'Ram Chandra' (as given earlier in verse no. 9 above), we have two sets of six-letter Mantras, one with 'Ram Bhadra' and the other with 'Ram Chandra' in the center¹.

These Mantras are divinely empowered to bless the aspirant devotee with all that he desires. They are all wish-fulfilling (18).

[Note—¹The two sets of Mantra would be as follows—

(a) (i) Sri Ram Bhadra Sri (Sri + Raa + Ma + Bha + Dra + Sri = 6 letters). (ii) Hring/Hrim Ram Bhadra Hring/Hrim (Hring/Hrim + Raa + Ma + Bha + Dra + Hring/Hrim = 6 letters). (iii) Kling/Klim Ram Bhadra Kling/Klim (Kling/Klim + Raa + Ma + Bha + Dra + Kling/Klim = 6 letters).

(b) (i) Sri Ram Chandra Sri (Sri + Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndra + Sri = 6 letters). (ii) Hring/Hrim Ram Chandra Hring/Hrim (Hring/Hrim + Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndra + Hring/Hrim = 6 letters). (iii) Kling/Klim Ram Chandra Kling/Klim (Kling/Klim + Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndra + Kling/Klim = 6 letters).]

19. If any of the six letter Mantras of Lord Ram (as described in this Upanishad)¹ is suffixed by the words 'Swaha', or 'Hoong/Hoom-phat', or 'Namaha', then the total number of these six letter Mantras become one hundred and twenty eight (19).

20. The Rishis of these Mantras (i.e. the patron sages or seers who had first used them in their spiritual practices) are Brahma (the creator), Sammohan Shakti¹ (personification of the magical powers to hypnotize and create an illusion of reality; the delusion creating powers of the creator), Dakshinmurti (the south-facing Lord Shiva), sage Agastya², and Lord Shiva (20).

[Note—¹Refer verse no. 88 of this Canto 2.

²Sage Agastya— Sage Agastya—Sage Agastya is a renowned sage who had composed several of the hymns of the Rig Veda, e.g. Rig Veda Sanhita, 1/166-191. He is known as a 'Brahm-rishi' or a celestial sage tracing his origin to the creator Brahma.

He was born to sage Pulastya and his wife Havirbhuk. During this birth, his other brother was sage Visrawaa. It is also believed that in the Swayambhu Manvantar (age of Manu named Swambhu), he was born as the son of sage Pulastya, but in that birth he was named Dattoli.

According to another version, he was the son of Mitra and Varuna. In this version, he was born in a jar or pitcher known as 'Kumbha'. Hence, he is also known as Kumbhaja (born out of a Kumbha), Kumbhodbhava (rising out of a Kumbha), Kalasi-suta (son born from a Kalas or a pitcher or jar). During this birth, his twin brother was sage Vashistha, the great sage who was the court priest of the kingdom of Ayodhya where Lord Ram was the king.

His wife was a princess of the kingdom of Vidharva, and her name was Lopaamudraa, also known as Kaaveri. The sage had a son whose name was Drudhaasya, also known as Idhmavaaha. His chief disciple was Agniveshya.

Sage Agastya did severe Tapa and had vast knowledge. He is said to have destroyed the two demons named Ilvala and Vaataapi. The sage had stunted the growth of Mt. Vindhya which was growing and expanding endlessly so much so as to obstruct the light of the sun.

Once, when Indra had killed the demon Vrittaasur, other demons named 'Kaaleya' managed to escape and hid themselves under the water of the ocean. From there they began terrorizing the sages and seers. They stayed under water during daytime and came out at night to torment and devour these sages. These demons had not spared even such renowned sages of the time as Vashistha, Chyavan and Bharadwaj, because the demons attacked their hermitages and killed the sages and seers who lived there. It was then that the Gods requested sage Agastya to somehow expose the demons. At this, the sage had drunk the water of the ocean in one gulp so as to expose the demons. The Gods were then able to destroy them.

There is a legendary story how once sage Agastya has converted king Nahush as a serpent. The story goes that once Indra, the king of Gods, was demoted from his exalted stature due to the curse of killing some Brahmins, and king Nahush had taken his place. Nahush lustfully eyed the consort of Indra, named Indrani. To punish him, Brihaspati, the moral preceptor of Gods, devised a stratagem by which Indrani requested Nahush to come to her riding a palanquin that was never used by anyone earlier. Overcome and blinded by passions, Nahush forgot everything about propriety and probity, and he summoned all the great sages and seers of the time to act as carriers or bearers of his palanquin. Humble sages and seers did not mind because Nahush was now elevated to the stature of Indra, the king of Gods. Nahush was so eager to reach heaven as quickly as possible that he kept prodding these sages to walk faster. Enraged, astonished and peeved at this nonsense being perpetrated by the haughty king, sage Agastya had then cursed him to become a great and poisonous snake.

He lived in the Dandakaaranya forest when Lord Ram met him. The sage had then given some invincible divine weapons to the Lord which stood him in good stead during the epic war of Lanka as well as to overcome the demons whom the Lord encountered and destroyed during his sojourn in the formidable forest.

The sage is said to have brought about reconciliation between Indra, the king of Gods, and Maruts, the Wind Gods.

A whole class of people came to be known after him, and in due course the term 'Agastya' became a title and sort of honour given to learned sages and seers who were experts in the philosophy and knowledge that sage Agastya was an expert in and had preached during his lifetime. The sage has been made immortal by finding a place amongst the brightest stars in the sky. He is identified with Canopus, which is the brightest star in the sky of south India. The Canopus has been named after this sage as 'Agastya', and seeing this star in the sky when the sun is in the middle of Virgo (Kanyaa) sign of the zodiac and worshipping him at night is regarded as an auspicious deed. This is a symbolic way of honouring the sage by elevating him to an exalted stature of a 'bright star' and recognizing his stellar qualities.

He is regarded as the one who had created the Tamil language of South India. He is accredited as being the author of several treatises on medicine, mysticism and magic. One of his books is the 'Agastya Sanhita' which elaborately deals with ritualistic forms of worship.

It is said that once sage Agastya and the noble king named Shankha had a divine vision of Lord Vishnu at the banks of river Swami-pushkarni.]

21. The Chanda, i.e. the style in which these Mantras have been conceptualized and propagated, is called Gayatri. [This composition style has three-lined verses having eight letters in each, bringing the total number of letters to twenty four. The implied meaning here is that these Mantras have the same metaphysical and spiritual value as the hymns of the Vedas composed in this particular style.]

The patron deity of these Mantras is Lord Ram.

If the Beej Mantra for Kaam (desires) is added to the six letter Mantras (instead of the suffixes used in verse no. 19), then the resultant Mantra would have sage Vishwamitra as its patron Rishi. [In other words, the six-letter Mantra of Lord Ram with the suffix of 'Kling/Klim', which is the Beej Mantra for Kaam, was first conceptualized and practiced by sage Vishwamitra.] (21).

22. The Chanda of this Mantra (described in verse no. 21) is Gayatri in its primary form. Its patron deity is again Lord Ram. [This is obvious because all the Mantras in this Upanishad are dedicated to Lord Ram and no one else.]

Its Beej and Shakti (the root and the dynamic powers and energy) of this particular Mantra is the same as for those of other six letter Mantras with suffixes.

All the six letter Mantras (as described in verse nos. 16-18) are used to do 'Anga-Nyas'. [The process and concept of 'Anga-Nyas' has been described in verse nos. 10-11 above in this Canto 2.] (22).

23. The six cardinal points of the body which are considered as important as far as mystical form of worship using Mantras are concerned are the Brahm-randhra (the top of the skull), Bhru-madhya (the central point of the two eyebrows), the heart, the navel, the knees and the legs (below the knees).

'Anga-Nyas' is done by these Mantras on these six points. That is, these parts are touched by the fingers and the Mantras are said so as to invoke their mystical powers and make the body purified, holy and empowered. The Mantras and their patron deity, i.e. Lord Ram in this case, are made to take their seat on the body so as to sanctify it and make it a de-facto shrine of the Lord. It's like baptism of the body by using holy Mantras.

Another alternative is to do Anga-Nyas by taking the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, which is 'Raam(g)/Raam', and adding it as a prefix to the six letter Mantras of the Lord (as described in verse no. 16-18 above).

[For instance, one of the six letter Mantras is 'Raam(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha' (Raam(g)/Raam + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6) as mentioned in verse no. 16. Now, while doing Anga-Nyas, the Beej Mantra 'Raam(g)/Raam(g)' is prefixed to each of this Mantra's syllables. Hence, the resultant six Mantras with which Anga-Nyas is to be done are the following—'Raam(g)/Raam + Raam(g)/Raam'; 'Raa + Raam(g)/Raam'; 'Maa + Raam(g)/Raam'; 'Ye + Raam(g)/Raam'; 'Na + Raam(g)/Raam'; 'Maha + Raam(g)/Raam'.] (23).

24. The aspirant devotee should meditate as follows—'I am worshipping Lord Ram who looks eternally enchanting and magnificent with his radiant dark-blue complexion that resemble the hue of the dark rain-bearing clouds. The Lord is seated in the sitting posture which combines two Aasans (meditative sitting postures) known as Viraasan and Gyan Mudra (described in verse no. 3-4). The palm of his left hand rests on his left knee.

The Lord looks most glorious and adorable with numerous beautiful ornaments such as armbands and crown etc. decorating his divine body. It is radiant with a divine halo which effuses from and spreads all around him.

Sita, his divine consort, is seated near him. She holds a lotus in her hands, is as radiant and dynamic in appearance as electric, and is being lovingly looked at by the Lord.

I offer my reverential worship and pay my obeisance to the Lord.' (24).

25. When the two letter word 'Namaha' (Na + Maha)—which stands for showing the greatest of honour and reverence for the deity by bowing before it and literally indicates that the devotee is surrendering before the deity with the greatest of humility and submission—is added as a suffix to the two five-letter Mantras 'Ram Chandraaye' and 'Ram Bhadraaye'¹, the resultant two seven letter Mantras become 'Ram Chandraaye Namaha' and 'Ram Bhadraaye Namaha'².

These two seven letter Mantras of Lord Ram are the fulfillers of all the wishes and desires of the devotee (25).

[Note—¹The five lettered Mantras are as follows—(1) Ram Chandraaye = Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndraa + Ye = 5 letters. (2) Ram Bhadraaye = Raa + Ma + Bha + Draa + Ye = 5 letters.

²The final seven lettered Mantras are as follows—(1) Ram Chandraaye Namaha = Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndraa + Ye + Na + Maha = 7 letters. (2) Ram Bhadraaye Namaha = Raa + Ma + Bha + Draa + Ye + Na + Maha = 7 letters.]

26. If the ethereal universal monosyllable Mantra 'OM' (representing the supreme transcendental Brahm or Pranav) is added as a prefix to these twin seven-letter Mantras (mentioned in verse no. 25), they become eight lettered Mantras. [That is, they become—(1) 'OM Ram Chandraaye Namaha', and (2) 'OM Ram Bhadraaye Namaha'.]¹

Another eight lettered Mantra is 'OM Raamaaye Hung/Hum Phat Swaha'^{2*}. This Mantra uses the Beej Mantra of the fire element as a suffix, and the word 'Swaha' is a universal Mantra pronounced when anything is offered to the sacred fire (26).

[Note—¹The two eight-lettered Mantras of Lord Ram are the following—(i) OM Ram Chandraaye Namaha = OM + Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndraa + Ye + Na + Maha = 8 letters. (2) OM Ram Bhadraaye Namaha = OM + Raa + Ma + Bha + Draa + Ye + Na + Maha = 8 letters.

²The third eight-lettered Mantras of Lord Ram is the following—OM Raamaaye Hung/Hum Phat Swaha = OM + Raa + Ma + Ye + Hung/Hum + Phat + Swa + Ha = 8 letters.]

27-28. The first two eight-lettered Mantras (as mentioned in verse no. 26; note no. 1) have the same patron sage or seer called the Rishi, the same composition style called the Chanda, and the same patron deity called the Mantra's Devta as the other six-letter Mantras (mentioned in verse nos. 16-18).

The third eight-lettered Mantra (as mentioned in verse no. 26; note no. 2) has Lord Ram as its Rishi [27], Gayatri as the composition style called the Chanda, Lord Ram as the patron deity called the Devta, OM as its Beej (basis, foundation, origin), and Sri as its Shakti (dynamic energy) [28]. (27-28).

29. A wise aspirant should do 'Anga-Nyas' on six cardinal points of the body by devoutly pronouncing the divinely empowered Mantra 'OM Sring Raamaaye Namaha' (29).

[Note—The importance and the process of doing Anga Nyas have been described earlier in this Canto.]

30. The next Mantra is also of eight letters, and it is 'Glong Hring/Hrim Namaha Raamaaye Glong',¹

This Mantra includes the root or seed Mantra encrypting the divine energy of Lords Ram and Shiva as well as Uma, the divine consort of Shiva and regarded as the great cosmic Mother. This Mantra is especially empowered to bestow wealth and prosperity to the devotee who uses it for his ritualistic worship (30).

[Note--¹Glong + Hring/Hrim + Na + Maha + Raa + Maa + Ye + Glong = 8 letters.]

31. The patron Rishi of this Mantra is Sada-Shiva (the eternal, truthful Lord Shiva); its composition style, called its Chanda, is Gayatri; its patron deities are Lord Shiva (the third of the Trinity Gods; the concluder of creation), Uma (the divine consort of Shiva, and the cosmic Mother), and Lord Ram himself (31).

32. The monosyllable 'Glong' in this Mantra stands for the worship of Lord Sada-Shiva (the eternal, truthful Lord Shiva); the monosyllable 'Hring/Hrim' stands for the cosmic Maya Shakti or the dynamic powers and energy of the Supreme Being manifested as goddess Uma (or Parvati, the divine female aspect of Sada Shiva; the cosmic Mother); and 'Namaha Raamaaye' is indicative of Lord Ram before whom the devotee has submitted himself, before whom he bows, and to whom he pays his greatest of obeisance, reverence and homage.

While using this Mantra for worship purpose, the aspirant devotee should meditate as follows—'I worship and contemplate upon Lord Ram in the form of Lord Sada-Shiva who has three eyes, and hence called 'Tri-Netra' (two conventional eyes and one eye of wisdom located in the middle-point of the eyebrows), who wears a crescent moon on his forehead, and hence called 'Ardha Chandra Dhaari', who holds a trident in his hands, and hence called 'Trishul Dhaari', and who has his entire body smeared with ash of the sacrificial fire (32).

33. Lord Ram in his divine form as Lord Sada-Shiva is most charming and bewitching in appearance. In fact, he epitomizes the ultimate dimension of magnificence, glory, majesty, beauty and charms. He wears the crescent moon on his forehead, has the sacred ash of the fire sacrifice smeared on his divine body, holds a majestic snare or loop, a goad or a trident or a spear, a bow and an arrow in his (four) hands, and has three eyes. I meditate upon this divine form of the Lord with the greatest of humility and reverence.' (33).

[Note—It is important to note here that the great philosophy of 'non-duality' or 'Advaitya' is being invoked here to establish oneness between Lords Ram, Shiva and Vishnu in this verse. The fact is that only Lord Vishnu has four hands and holds the weapons as mentioned here, and Lord Shiva is well known to have the moon on his forehead, ash smeared on his body, and sport three eyes. The devotee meditates on the cosmic form of Lord Ram here, as he visualizes Lord Ram as being Vishnu and Shiva at once.]

34. Meditating in this way, the aspirant should repeat the letters or syllables of the Mantra (i.e. do Japa) for one hundred thousand times. Then one should offer oblations

of water in a ritual called 'Tarpan', followed by a ritualistic fire sacrifice using fruits of the Vilva tree (wood apple tree), flowers of the lotus plant, sesame seeds, clarified butter (Ghee), etc. (34).

35-36. By doing so, all types of divine and auspicious achievements as well as mystical powers and energy that are much sought after by even the Gods are easily available to the aspirant.

The next eight-letter divine Mantra of Lord Ram is 'Sri Raamaha Sharnam Mam'¹. [The Mantra means 'I seek refuge and take shelter in the divine and august feet of Lord Ram.']

The patron Rishi (sage or seer who had first visualised it and given it the status of a divine mystical formula) of this Mantra is Brahma the creator; its composition style called Chanda is Gayatri; its patron deity known as the Devta is Raghav (another name of Lord Ram because he manifested himself as an incarnation in the race of Raghu kings of Ayodhya); its Beej (seed or root) Mantra is 'Sri' (literally meaning all the auspicious qualities and eclectic virtues that anyone can ever hope to possess, such as having majesty, renown, dignity, glory, honour, authority, fame and splendour that exist in this creation); and its Shakti (i.e. its dynamic energy, powerful force, empowerment and divine authority) is represented by the word 'Mam' (literally meaning 'me', and pronounced as in *come*).

This Mantra is invoked to please Lord Ram (as it involves complete surrender of the devotee at the holy divine feet of the Lord).

The process of 'Vinigyog', i.e. invoking the blessings of Lord Ram and reposing utmost faith in him, should be done by this Mantra (35-36).

[Note—¹This Mantra has the following eight letters—Sri + Raa + Maha + Sha + Ra + Nam + Ma + Um = 8 letters.]

37. The aspirant devotee should meditate and contemplate upon the divine vision of Lord Ram as follows—'I worship and meditate upon Lord Ram whose complexion is glowing with the light that emanates from the wonderful ornaments worn by him. These ornaments, such as a Karnphool (ear ring), Angad (a bracelet worn on the upper arm) and Kankan (a bracelet or ornamental thread worn on the wrists), are studded with priceless gems.

He has a ceremonial umbrella, which is as magnificent and glorious as millions of full moons in its beauty and splendour, over his head.

He is seated in a majestic pavilion having sixteen thousand golden pillars. He is surrounded or attended to by his ardent followers and attendants such as his own brothers Bharat amongst others. And he looks most charming, wonderful and majestic in his dark-complexioned body' (37).

38. This eight-lettered Mantra 'Sri Raamaha Sharnam Mam' is complete and all sufficient in every respect. It can bestow all the benefits that one can ever hope to get by any kind of divine intervention of any God by using any Mantra dedicated to any of the Gods.

This single Mantra has the divine power and glorious potentials to bless the devotee with all the imaginable boons that he can ever hope to have. It gives eternal and everlasting rewards (i.e. the boons that this Mantra grants the aspirant devotee are of a permanent nature) in the form of permanently eliminating all his worldly faults, such as his having greed, yearnings and rapacity for perishable things of the material

and impermanent world (instead of having spiritual leanings and having divine expectations such as the wish for obtaining emancipation and salvation).

What is the use of invoking other Mantras (of any other deity) which require a lot of efforts to be successful, which give rewards or fruits that are not permanent, and which entail a lot of worldly hardships and unnecessary toil, when the same, rather better and more permanent rewards, can be had by invoking this single Mantra of Lord Ram (38).

39. If the six Beej (seed or root) Mantras (which are—OM, Sring/Srim, Hring/Hrim, Kling/Klim, Aiyang/Aim and Raan(g)/Raam—see verse no. 8) are used as a prefix of this eight-lettered Mantra ‘Sri Raamaha Sharnam Mam’, then it acquires seven forms, each of nine letters¹.

If the ethereal universal Mantra OM standing for the supreme transcendental Being (Brahm) is added as a prefix and a suffix to the basic Mantra ‘Raamaha Sharnam Mam’, then the resultant Mantra becomes a nine-lettered Mantra as follows—‘OM Raamaha Sharnam Mam OM’². [The brief meaning of this universal Mantra of submission to the Lord is—‘OM salutations! I seek and take refuge in the holy august feet of Lord Ram who is none other but the supreme Brahm himself.’]

It is invoked in the same way as the eight-lettered Mantra, and its ‘Anga-Nyas’ is also done in the same manner as is done for all other divine Mantras (39).

[Note—¹The seven forms of this Mantra are the following—(1) ‘Sri Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (2) ‘OM Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (3) ‘Sring/Srim Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (4) ‘Hring/Hrim Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (5) ‘Kling/Klim Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (6) ‘Aiyang/Aim Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; and (7) ‘Raan(g)/Raam Raamaha Sharnam Mam’.

²The nine letter Mantra is ‘OM Raamaha Sharnam Mam Om’ = OM + Raa + Maha + Sha + Ra + Nam + Ma + Um + OM = 9 letters.]

40. The nine-lettered Mantra (as described in verse no. 39) is called ‘Mantra Raaj’ or the king amongst the Mantras of Lord Ram. It gives the aspirant all that he desires, besides bestowing upon him greatness and majesty.

The ten-letter Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Janki Vallabhaaye Swaha Hum’¹. [This Mantra means ‘I offer my oblations to the dear Lord of Janki (Sita) who is as powerful as the fire element and its personification.’] (40).

[Note—¹The ten letters of this Mantra are the following—Jaa + Na + Ki + Va + Lla + Bhaa + Ye + Swa + Ha + Hum = 10 letters.]

41-42. This ten letter divine Mantra of Lord Ram (described in verse no. 40) is a bestower of all auspiciousness to the worshipper, and is a fulfiller of all his wishes, desires and aspirations.

The patron Rishi (sage or seer) of this ten lettered Mantra is Vashistha [41]; its style of composition, called a Chanda, is Viraat¹; its patron deity is Lord Ram himself; its Beej (seed or root) Mantra upon which it is based or which forms its foundation is ‘Janki Vallabhaaye’; and its Shakti, or its intrinsic mystical powers, dynamic energy and divine potentials which render this Mantra with its divine glory, authority and powers, is ‘Swaha’ (because this word is pronounced when offerings are made to the sacrificial fire, and therefore the use of this word with the Mantra implies that the stupendous powers of the Fire God are being invoked by the aspirant).

Its ‘Anga-Nyas’, i.e. its invocation and installation on the various parts of the body of the worshipper, is done by employing the Beej Mantra (i.e. the seed/root monosyllable word) for Kaam (meaning fulfillment of desires and wishes), which is

‘Kling/Klim’. [That is, this Mantra has the mystical powers to fulfill all the wishes of the aspirant devotee. With ‘Kling/Klim’, the Mantra becomes—‘Kling/Klim Janki Vallabhaaye Swaha’.] [42]. (41-42).

[Note—¹The *Viraat Chanda* is one in which the verse has four lines, each having ten letters, bringing the number of letters to forty.]

43. Each of the ten letters of this Mantra are used to do ‘Anga-Nyas’, or the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points.

The ten points of the body where this Anga-Nyas is done are the following—the head, the forehead, the middle of the eyebrows, the palate in the mouth, the two ears, the heart, the navel, and the two knees (i.e. upon the two legs) (43).

[Note—The Anga-Nyas with the ten letter Mantra prefixed by the Kaam Beej ‘Kling’ as described in verse no. 42 is done as follows—(1) The letter ‘Kling’ on the head = first place; (2) The letter ‘Jaa’ on the forehead = second place; (3) The letter ‘Na’ on the center of the eyebrows = third place; (4) The letter ‘Ki’ on the palate = fourth place; (5) The letter ‘Va’ on one ear = fifth place; (6) The letter ‘Lla’ on the other ear = sixth place; (7) The letter ‘Bhaa’ on the heart = seventh place; (8) The letter ‘Ye’ on the navel = eighth place; (9) The letter ‘Swa’ on one knee = ninth place; and (10) The letter ‘Ha’ on the other knee = tenth place.]

44. The aspirant devotee should meditate and contemplate upon the divine vision of Lord Ram as follows—‘In the divine city of Ayodhya there is a golden pavilion studded with uncountable precious gems. In it, a special platform has been decked up with the flowers of the Mandaar tree (the coral tree), and it has a magnificent archway decorated with beautiful buntings, hangings and festoons of various kinds (44).

45. Lord Ram is seated on a throne made of (i.e. decorated with) flowers.

Sitting in celestial chariots or magnificent aerial vehicles, the divine attendants of Lord Vishnu as well as other Gods and holy Spirits are in attendance (45).

46. All of them are praising the Lord by singing or chanting his glories by way of sacred hymns.

Great sages, accompanied by the Lord’s ardent devotees such as Prahalad as well as other followers and attendants, are busy serving the Lord.

To the left of the Lord is Sita (his divine consort). His younger brother Laxman is too engaged in serving the Lord along with Sita and others (46).

47. Lord Ram is dark complexioned (like the deep blue sky, or like the dark rain-bearing clouds of the rainy season) with a cheerful face, and is adorned with all possible ornaments and decorations befitting his exalted stature.’

Holding this glorious and divine vision of the Lord in sight, the aspirant devotee should concentrate his mind exclusively upon the magnificent, holy and divine vision of the Lord, and eliminate all sorts of other visions that might be cluttering his imaginative mind. Depending upon the number of letters in the Mantra used to worship the Lord, the aspirant devotee should repeat that Mantra for one lakh times (i.e. for 1,00,000 times) (47).

48-49. The next ten-lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is the following—‘Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha’¹. [This Mantra briefly means ‘I offer my oblations to Lord Ram who holds a bow in his hand’.]

The patron Rishi (sage or seer) of this Mantra is Brahma, the creator of the world [48]; its composition style, called the Chanda, is Viraat²; and its patron deity is Lord Ram who is the slayer of demons (representing all the evil, sinful, corrupt, pervert and negative forces of creation).

This Mantra is invoked and used for meditation purposes when Lord Ram is to be worshipped in his divine form holding a bow and an arrow. [The 'Anga-Nyas' with it is done in the same way as for other Mantras of ten letters as mentioned in verse nos. 40-43.] [49]. (48-49).

[Note—¹The ten letters of this Mantra are the following—Raa + Maa + Ye + Dha + Nu + Shpaa + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10 letters. The word 'Dhanush' means a bow; hence this Mantra honours the Lord who holds a bow to eliminate the evil ones and the enemies of his devotees.

²The *Viraat Chanda* is one in which the verse has four lines each having ten letters, bringing the number of letters to 40.]

50. This ten-letter Mantra becomes an eleven-lettered one when it is prefixed with any one of the Beej Mantras such as OM, Hring/Hrim, Sring/Srim, Kling/Klim, Aiyang/Aim, and Raan(g)/Raam (as described earlier in verse no. 8). These Mantras are called 'Mantra Raaj' or the king amongst the Mantras because they have immense spiritual powers and divine potentials.

Hence, with these six Beej Mantras added to the ten-lettered Mantra, the resultant eleven-lettered Mantras are of six types¹. The process of meditation and doing Anga-Nyas with them are similar to the ones done for a six-lettered Mantra (50).

[Note—¹The six eleven-lettered Mantras are the following—(1) 'OM Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha' = OM + Raa + Maa + Ye + Dha + Nu + Shpaa + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10 letters.

(2) 'Hring/Hrim Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha' = Hring/Hrim + Raa + Maa + Ye + Dha + Nu + Shpaa + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10 letters.

(3) 'Sring/Srim Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha' = Sring/Srim + Raa + Maa + Ye + Dha + Nu + Shpaa + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10 letters.

(4) 'Kling/Klim Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha' = Kling/Klim + Raa + Maa + Ye + Dha + Nu + Shpaa + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10 letters.

(5) 'Aiyang/Aim Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha' = Aiyang/Aim + Raa + Maa + Ye + Dha + Nu + Shpaa + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10 letters.

(6) 'Raan(g)/Raam Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha' = Raan(g)/Raam + Raa + Maa + Ye + Dha + Nu + Shpaa + Na + Ye + Swa + Ha = 10 letters.]

51. Anga-Nyas (invoking these above Mantras and reposing them on specific parts of the body) and Dhyan (meditation and contemplation using these Mantras) are done in the same way as is normally done for six letter Mantras (as described in verse nos. 16-18).

The next Mantra is a twelve letter one. The patron Rishi (sage or seer) of this Mantra is Lord Ram himself (i.e. it was envisioned by the Lord himself and infused with supernatural divine powers in order to honour his younger brother and ardent devotee Bharat) (51).

52. The style of composition of this Mantra, called the Mantra's Chanda, is Jagati¹. Its patron deity or Devta (to whom this Mantra is dedicated) is Lord Ram.

The Beej Mantra (i.e. the seed or root monosyllable Mantra) for Pranav (OM) is used as the primary Beej Mantra (i.e. as a prefix) for this Mantra for Lord Ram (because the Lord is none else but the supreme Brahm himself).

The Shakti of the Mantra (i.e. the word which represents its empowerment, its dynamic powers and potentials) as well as its 'Kilak' (i.e. the mystical post or peg to which a Mantra used in occult forms of worship is hitched or pegged to, or which helps it to derive its mystical powers) is the monosyllable word 'Kling' (52).

[Note—¹The *Jagati Chanda* is a verse of four lines with twelve letters in each line, bringing the total number of letters to forty eight.]

53. This Mantra is used for doing the ritual of Anga-Nyas (described in verse nos. 10-11) and Viniyog¹ is done in the same manner as for six letter Mantras.

The Mantra with which Anga-Nyas and Viniyog are done has the Tarak Mantra 'OM' along with the Beej Mantra for Maya (which is 'Hring/Hrim') and the word 'Bharataagraj' (meaning 'the elder brother of Bharat) for Lord Ram incorporated in it (53).

[Note—¹Viniyog is the process by which a particular Mantra is invoked during a formal form of worship in a ritualistic manner so that desired results are obtained by invoking the blessing of the patron deity or God to whom this Mantra is dedicated. The word 'Viniyog' literally means a humble and prayerful invocation of the patron God and establishing a union between the individual aspirant and this Divinity, thereby investing the aspirant or his body with the stupendous powers, the dynamism, the energy and the potentials of the relevant God, and enabling the worshipper to obtain success in his endeavours and attain his desired objective.]

54. Therefore, this twelve letter Mantra of Lord Ram (constructed according to the principle laid out in verse nos. 52-53) is the following—'OM Hring/Hrim Bharataagraj Ram Kling/Klim Swaha'¹. [The meaning of this Mantra is 'I offer my oblations to Lord Ram who is the revered elder brother of Bharat'.]

Another set of two twelve-letter Mantras of Lord Ram is the following—(i) 'OM Namō Bhagwate Ram Chandraaye'². [The meaning of this Mantra is 'OM salutations! I most reverentially bow before Lord Ram who is as magnificent and divine as the Moon'.] (ii) 'OM Namō Bhagwate Ram Bhadraaye'³. [The meaning of this Mantra is 'OM salutations! I most reverentially bow before Lord Ram who is a thorough gentleman'.] (54).

[Note—¹The twelve letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Hring + Bha + Ra + Taa + Gra + Ja + Raa + Ma + Kling + Swa + Ha = 12 letters.

²The twelve letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Na + Moha + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndraa + Ye = 12 letters.

³The twelve letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Na + Moha + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Raa + Ma + Bha + Draa + Ye = 12 letters.]

55. These two twelve-lettered Mantras have their Rishis (the sages or seers who had first devised them and put them into practice) etc. the same as the first twelve-lettered Mantra. [All the three twelve-lettered Mantras of Lord Ram have been described in verse no. 54.]

Their Chanda (composition style) is also Jagati, and Anga-Nyas and Viniyog etc. with all these three twelve-lettered Mantras are done in the same manner (55).

56. The next Mantra has thirteen letters. It is 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram'¹. [This Mantra means—'Hail Lord Ram; Glory be to him; Cheers for Lord Ram'.]

This Mantra is like the king of all Mantras, and is used by wise ones (56).

[Note—¹The thirteen letters of this Mantra are the following—Sri + Raa + Ma + Ja + Ya + Raa + Ma + Ja + Ya + Ja + Ya + Raa + Ma = 13 letters.]

57. This thirteen letter Mantra is a fulfiller of all the wishes, desires and aspirations of a wise aspirant devotee. The process of meditating upon the Lord using this Mantra is the same as described previously.

The method of doing Anga-Nyas (purification of the body; invoking the powers of the Mantra and reposing them on the specific points of the body) and Dhyān (doing meditation and contemplation) with this Mantra is the same way as the method employed for ten-lettered Mantra (as described in verse nos. 40-43) (57).

58. When the ethereal universal Mantra for Pranav (the supreme Brahm), i.e. the Mantra 'OM', is added as a prefix to the above Mantra (as described in verse no. 56), it becomes a fourteen-lettered Mantra.

This Mantra is now 'OM Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram'¹. [The meaning modifies a bit to mean 'OM salutations! Hail Lord Ram; Glory be to him; Cheers for Lord Ram'. It also means this—'Glory be to Lord Ram who is a manifestation of the supreme Brahm represented by the word OM; Glory be to him; Cheers for Lord Ram as a manifestation of OM'.]

If the thirteen-lettered Mantra (as described in verse no. 56) is suffixed with the two-lettered word 'Ram' (Raa + Ma), the resultant Mantra would have fifteen letters. This Mantra would then become 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram Ram'² (58).

[Note—¹The fourteen letters are as follows—OM + the 13 letters of the Mantra as described in verse no. 56 above = 14 letters.

²The fifteen lettered Mantra has the following letters—the 13 letters of the earlier Mantra as described in verse no. 56 above + Raa + Ma = 15 letters.]

59. The above Mantras (as described in verse no. 58) are like the legendary all wish-fulfilling tree of Gods, called the Kalpa tree. [That is, these Mantras fulfill all the wishes that the devotee of Lord Ram might have.]

The next Mantra has sixteen letters. It is 'Namaha Sitaapataye Raamaaye Han Han Hoong/Hoom Phat'¹. [This Mantra briefly means—I bow to Lord Ram who is the Lord of Sita. Let the Lord protect me from all sides like an impregnable shield.] (59).

[Note—¹The sixteen letters of this Mantra are the following—Na + Maha + Si + Ta + Pa + Tye + Ra + Ma + Ye + Ha + N + Ha + N + Hoong/Hoom + Pha + Ta = 16 letters.]

60-61. This Mantra is used as a shield that gives mystical protection to the worshipper of the Lord who uses this Mantra.

The patron Rishi of this Mantra (i.e. the sage or seer who had first conceptualized this Mantra and put it into practice) is Agastya; its style of composition, called the Chanda, is Brihati¹; its patron deity, called the Devta, is Lord Ram himself [60]; its Beej Mantra (i.e. the seed or root) is 'Raa(n)g'; its Shakti (or its dynamic powers) is encrypted in the Beej Mantra 'Phat'; and its Kilak (i.e. the Beej Mantra which helps the main Mantra to retain its stupendous powers and energy to give protection to the worshipper) is 'Hoong or Hoom'.

The ritual process of doing Anga-Nyas all over the worshipper's body² with this sixteen-lettered Mantra is the same as that employed for doing Anga-Nyas for Mantras with two letters (verse no. 7), with five letters (verse no. 10), with three letters (verse no. 8), and with four letters (verse no. 9). [61]. (60-61).

[Note—¹The *Brihati Chanda* is a style of composition in which the verse has four lines. The first, second and fourth lines have eight letters, while the third line has twelve letters. Thus the total number of letters is 8 + 8 + 12 + 8 = 36 letters in all.

²Thus, the Mantras invoked for the purpose of *Anga-Nyas* are the following—(1) for doing Anga Nyas on the head, the Mantra is ‘Namaha’; (2) for doing Anga Nyas on the forehead/central point of the eyebrows, the Mantra is ‘Sitapataye’; (3) for doing Anga Nyas on the heart, the Mantra is ‘Raamaaye’; (4) for doing Anga Nyas on the navel, the Mantra is ‘Han Han’; (5) for doing Anga Nyas on the one of the legs/thighs, the Mantra is ‘Hoong/Hoom’; and (6) for doing Anga Nyas on the other leg/thigh, the Mantra is ‘Phat’.

There is another version of doing Anga Nyas. According to verse no. 83-85 below, the six points where this ceremonial Anga Nyas can be done are the following—the heart, the forehead, the top of the head where the tuft of hair is located and which is the site of the Brahm-randhra, the body armour, the eyes, and the arms and armaments of the aspirant devotee if he happens to belong to the warrior race. In this case, the Anga Nyas would be respectively as follows—(1) ‘Namaha Hridayaye Namaha’; (2) ‘Sitapataye Shirse Swaha’; (3) ‘Raamaaye Shikhaaye Vashat’; (4) ‘Han Han Kavachaaye Hoong/Hoom’; (5) ‘Hanum Netrabhyam Vaushat’; and (6) ‘Han Hoong/Hoom Phat Astraye Phat’.]

62-63. When OM is added as a prefix to the sixteen-lettered Mantra (as described in verse no. 59), it becomes a seventeen-lettered Mantra of Lord Ram as follows—‘OM Namaha Sitaapataye Raamaaye Han Han Hoong/Hoom Phat’¹. [This Mantra briefly means ‘OM salutations! I bow most reverentially before, pay my obeisance to, and honour the mystical powers and divinity of Lord Ram who is the husband of Sita’.]

The next Mantra having eighteen letters is the following—‘OM Namoh Bhagwate Raamaaye Mahaapurushaaye Namaha’². [This Mantra briefly means ‘OM salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially before, pay my obeisance to, and honour the mystical powers and divinity of Lord Ram who is the supreme Lord God and an exalted noble Purush (literally a great, a highly acclaimed and a noble gentleman)’.]

The patron Rishi (sage or seer) of this eighteen-letter Mantra is Vishwamitra. Its style of composition, called Chanda, is Gayatri. Its patron deity is Lord Ram (62-63).

[Note—¹The seventeen letters of the Mantra are as follows—OM + 16 letters of the main Mantra as described in verse no. 59-61 above.

²The eighteen letters of this Mantra are as follows—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Ra + Ma + Ye + Ma + Ha + Pu + Ru + Sha + Ye + Na + Maha = 18 letters.]

64-65. When the Beej Mantra ‘Kling/Klim’ (for ‘Kaam’) is added as a prefix to it, this Mantra becomes a nineteen-lettered one as follows—‘Kling/Klim OM Namoh Bhagwate Raamaaye Mahaapurushaaye Namaha’¹.

The next Mantra has twenty letters, and it is the following—‘OM Namoh Bhagwate Raamaaye Sarwa Saubhaagyam Dehi Me Swaha’². [This Mantra means ‘Oh Lord God Ram! I reverentially bow before you and pay my obeisance to you. Be kind to bless me with all welfares and good fortunes (‘Saubhaagya’). I offer my oblations to you’.] (64-65).

[Note—¹The nineteen letters are as follows—Kling/Klim + 18 letters of the rest of the Mantra as described in verse no. 62-64 above = 19 letters.

²The twenty letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Ra + Ma + Ye + Sa + Ra + Wa + Sau + Bha + Gya + Ma + De + Hi + Me = 20 letters.]

66. The next Mantra which bestows all desired benefits to the aspirant devotee is of twenty one letters. It is the following—‘OM Namoh Bhagwate Raamaaye

Sakalaapannivaaranaaye Swaha'¹. [This Mantra briefly means 'OM salutations! I reverentially bow before and pay my obeisance to Lord Ram who is the exalted God and a bestower of all desired fruits or rewards. I offer my oblations to you'.] (66).

[Note—¹The twenty one letters of this Mantra are the following-- OM +Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Raa + Maa + Ye + Sa + Ka + Laa + Pa + Nni + Vaa +Ra + Naa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 21 letters.]

67-68. The next Mantra has twenty two letters. It is as follows—'OM Sring/Srim Raan(g)/Raam Daasrathaaye Sitaavallabhaaye Sarwavhistidaaye Namaha'¹. [The brief meaning of this Mantra is 'OM salutations to Goddess Laxmi ('Sring') and Lord Ram ('Raan(g)') in their cosmic form as Brahm! I reverentially bow before and pay my homage to Lord Ram who is the exalted son of king Dasarath and the dear husband of Sita, who is a fulfiller of all desires and wishes, and who grants the boon which bestows everything to his devotee.'](67-68).

[Note—¹The twenty two letters are the following—OM + Sring/Srim + Raan(g)/Raam + Da + Sa + Ra + Thaa + Ye + Si + Ta + Va + Lla + Bhaa + Ye + Sar + Wa + Bhi + Shti + Daa + Ye + Na + Maha = 22 letters.]

69. The next Mantra has twenty-three letters, and has the potential of destroying the enemy of the aspirant devotee. This Mantra is the following—'OM Namō Bhagwate Viram Raamaaye Sakalshatrun Han Han Swaha'¹. [The brief meaning of this Mantra is 'OM salutations! I reverentially bow before and pay my obeisance ('Namō') to Lord Ram ('Raamaaye') who is brave and valiant ('Viram'). Oh Lord! Destroy and crush ('Hun') all my enemies ('Shatru'). I offer my oblations ('Swaha') to you'.] (69).

[Note—¹The twenty three letters of this Mantra are the following-- OM +Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Vi + Ra + Ma + Ra + Ma + Ye + Sa + Ka + La + Sha + Tru + Na + Han + Han + Swa + Ha = 23 letters.]

70-71. The patron Rishi (sage or seer) of this twenty-three lettered Mantra is Vishwamitra. The style of composition, called Chanda, is Gayatri. [70].

Its patron deity is the brave, courageous, valiant and strong Lord Ram. Its Beej Mantra (i.e. the seed or root monosyllable Mantra) etc. are as of the previous Mantras.

For the purpose of doing Anga Nyas, the individual letters of the Mantra should be used independently as single units having full divine potentials as that of the entire Mantra [71]. (70-71).

72. This twenty-three letter Mantra should be worshipped and used to do Japa (repetition of the Mantra) by focusing the mind on Lord Ram in his form as a great, brave and valiant warrior—i.e. as holding a bow with the arrow ready to shoot (at the enemy), and mounted on a chariot in front of the demon king Ravana of Lanka (whom Lord Ram had slayed in the epic war as described in all the versions of the epic story known as the 'Ramayana') (72).

73-74. The next Mantra has twenty-four letters, and it is the following—'OM Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM'¹. [Briefly, this Mantra requests the Lord to bless the aspirant devotee with liberation and deliverance from this world and give his soul final emancipation and salvation. It means—'OM salutations! I bow before Lord Ram. You are the liberating Brahm personified. So be kind upon me and grant me the boon of liberation and deliverance, of emancipation and salvation'.]

The six Beej Mantras that are applicable for the six-lettered Mantra of Lord Ram (as described in verse no. 8 of this Canto above) are also applicable here as well.

In other words, the root or seed Mantra OM can be replaced with other monosyllable Mantras as described in verse no. 8 above.

Thus, we have six Mantras of twenty-four letters each, with OM being replaced by the other Beej Mantras² (73-74).

[Note—¹The twenty four letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Sri + Raa + Maa + Ye + Taa + Ra + Ka + Brah + Ma + Ne + Mam + Taa + Ra + Ye + Na + Maha + OM = 24 letters.

²Therefore, the other five Mantras of twenty-four letters using the Beej Mantras referred to here, besides the one mentioned in these verses, would be the following—

(i) ‘Hring/Hrim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM’.

(ii) ‘Sring/Srim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM’.

(iii) ‘Kling/Klim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM’.

(iv) ‘Aiyang/Aim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM’.

And (v) ‘Raan(g)/Raam Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM’.]

75-76. The next Mantra has twenty five letters. It is called a ‘Vashikaran Mantra’ or the one that can cast a magical charm upon another person so much so that he comes under the command and control of the first person who uses this Mantra upon him. It is like hypnotizing spells which influence the other person and makes him obey the first person’s command obediently even though he might not like to follow them. The submission is absolute, and person to whom the orders are issued does the commander’s bidding without raising any questions or giving second thoughts to it.

This Mantra is the following—‘Kling/Klim OM Namō Bhagwate Raam Chandraaye Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaye Swaha’¹. [Briefly, this Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I reverentially bow and pay my obeisance to (‘Namō’) Lord God Ram Chandra who is the fulfiller of all wishes (as implied by the Kaam Beej Mantra ‘Kling/Klim’). Empower me with mystical powers and charms so that I can exercise influence over and control all those with whom I come in contact, or whom I wish to bring under my command and control (‘Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaye’). I offer my oblations to you (‘Swaha’)’.] (75-76).

[Note—¹The twenty five letters of this Mantra are the following—Kling/Klim + OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Raa + Ma + Cha + Ndra + Sa + Ka + La + Ja + Na + Va + Sha + Ya + Ka + Raa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 25 letters.]

77. When the monosyllabic Mantra OM (which is the Beej Mantra for the supreme Brahm) is added as a prefix to this twenty-five lettered Mantra, it becomes a twenty-six lettered one. This twenty-six letter Mantra is ‘OM Kling/Klim OM Namō Bhagwate Ram Chandraaye Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaye Swaha’¹. [The first word ‘OM’ prefixed to the Kaam Beej ‘Kling/Klim’ pays homage to the desire of the Supreme Being known Brahm to manifest himself as Lord Ram. The rest of the meaning would be the same as the Mantra of twenty-five letters.]

If OM is added as a suffix as well, then it becomes a twenty-seven lettered Mantra. This twenty-seven lettered Mantra is ‘OM Kling/Klim OM Namō Bhagwate Ram Chandraaye Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaye Swaha OM’². [The last ‘OM’ added as a

suffix to the Mantra implies that when oblations are being made to Lord Ram, it is the supreme Brahm who is being worshipped in the form of Lord Ram.] (77).

[Note—¹The twenty six letters of the Mantra are the following—OM + 25 letters of the rest of the Mantra as described in verse no. 75-76 above = 26 letters.

²The twenty seven letters of the Mantra are the following—OM as a prefix + 25 letters of the rest of the Mantra as described in verse no. 75-76 above + OM as a suffix = 27 letters.]

78-79. The next Mantra has twenty-eight letters as follows—‘OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daaye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha’¹. [Briefly this Mantra means ‘OM salutations! I reverentially bow and pay my homage to the Lord God (Ram). Be kind to protect me against all sorts of problems and hurdles in my endeavours. Eliminate all my miseries and causes of my misfortunes and torments. I offer this oblation to you for this purpose’.]

When the monosyllable OM is appended at the end of this Mantra, it becomes a twenty-nine lettered Mantra. This Mantra becomes—‘OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daaye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha OM’². [The last ‘OM’ implies that the worshipper salutes the Lord as a manifestation of the supreme Brahm because ‘OM’ is a Beej Mantra for Brahm.] (78-79).

[Note—¹The twenty eight letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Wa + Te + Ra + Ksho + Gha + Na + Vi + Sha + Daa + Ye + Sar + Wa + Vi + Gha + Naa + Ntsa + Mu + Tsa + Rya + Ni + Wer + Ye + Swa + Ha = 28 letters.

²The twenty nine letters of this Mantra are the following—28 letters of the Mantra as mentioned above + OM at the end = 29 letters.]

80. When the Beej Mantra ‘Raam(g)/Raam’ is added as a prefix to the twenty-nine lettered Mantra (as described above in the second half of verse no. 79), it becomes a thirty lettered Mantra. This Mantra is—‘Raam(g)/Raam OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daaye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha OM’¹. [Here, the Beej Mantra ‘Raam(g)/Raam’ put before OM implies that the very primary form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm is being addressed and honoured in this verse. Since the Beej Mantra ‘Raam(g)/Raam’ pertains to the fire element and Lord Ram, and it is followed by the Mantra for the supreme Brahm, which is ‘OM’, it obviously means that in this verse Lord Ram is being honoured not only as a manifestation of the supreme Brahm but also as the primary energy, the dynamism, the stupendous glory and the immaculate purity of Brahm personified in his divine form. The rest of the meaning would be the same as for the twenty-nine lettered Mantra described in verse nos. 78-79.]

If this monosyllable ‘Raam(g)/Raam’ is added as a suffix as well to the above Mantra of thirty letters, it becomes a thirty-one lettered Mantra. This thirty-one lettered Mantra would be ‘Raam(g)/Raam OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha OM Raam(g)/Raam’². [When ‘Raam(g)/Raam’ is added as a suffix it implies that once again the oblations and homage are being paid to Lord Ram as a personification of the supreme Brahm represented by the Beej Mantra ‘OM’, as well as of the eternal cosmic Fire represented by the Beej Mantra ‘Rang/Ram’ as pronounced in the English word Rung or Run respectively.] (80).

[Note—¹The thirty letters are as follows—monosyllable Raam(g)/Raam + 29 letters of the Mantra described in verse no. 79 above = 30 letters.

²The thirty one letters would be as follows—30 letters of the Mantra as described above + monosyllable ‘Raam(g)/Raam’ at the end = 31 letters.]

81-82. 'Raambhadra Maheshwaas Raghuvir Nripottam; Bho Dashasyaant Kasmaakam Sriyam-daapam Dehi Me' [81]—this is the thirty-two lettered Mantra¹. [The brief meaning of this Mantra is 'The gentleman Ram is present in the breath of Lord Mahesh (i.e. Shiva constantly repeats his divine name Ram). He is the brave and valiant warrior of the clan of king Raghu, and is the most exalted and the best king of that clan. He had brought about the end of the ten-headed one (Ravana, the demon king of Lanka). He is endowed with all the magnificent, divine and sublime virtues and glories. Be kind to give me all kinds of 'Sri' (i.e. bless me so that I can acquire all the majestic glories, fame, wealth and prosperity that are available in this world) as well as 'Yam' (exemplary self-control over the senses)'.]

The patron Rishi (sage/seer) of this Mantra is Anushtuv. Its composition style, called the Chanda, is Anushtup² (named after the sage who first conceived this literary style of composing hymns). Its patron deity, called the Devta, is Lord Ram himself. Its Beej Mantra (or the seed or root monosyllable) is 'Raam(g)' (standing for the fire element as well as Ram). Its stupendous Shakti (dynamism, energy, potentials and powers) are encrypted in the monosyllable word 'Yam'. [The word 'Yam' means exemplary self-control over the senses. Hence, when used in conjunction with the word 'Sri' it implies that Lord Ram has acquired greatness, an exalted stature, all the divine virtues and glories, all sorts of majesty and fame etc. that are obtainable in this creation, collectively called 'Sri', because he practices the virtue of 'Yam'. And therefore he is requested to bless the worshipper with these two virtues of 'Sri' and 'Yam'.]

This mystically empowered Mantra is employed to accomplish one's desires and aspirations, to fulfill one's wishes and hopes [82]. (81-82).

[Note—¹The thirty two letters of this Mantra are the following—Raa + Ma + Bha + Dra + Ma + He + Shwa + Sa + Ra + Ghu + Vi + Ra + Nri + Po + Tta + Ma + Bho + Da + Sha + Syaa + Nta + Ka + Sma + Kam + Sri + Yam + Daa + Pa + Um + De + Hi + Me = 32 letters.

²The *Anushtup Chanda* is a poetical composition style first envisioned by an ancient sage named Anuystuv, and hence it bears his name. It consists of four lines with eight letters to each line, bringing the total number of letters in the verse to 8 x 4 = 32 letters.]

83-85. The process of invoking this Mantra for the purpose of doing 'Viniyog' and 'Nyas' (i.e. humbly invoking the divine powers and dynamic energy that is inherent in the Mantra by worshipping the concerned God or deity of the Mantra, and then establishing the Mantra's glorious potentials upon specific points of the body as well as on other designated objects so that these are duly empowered and sanctified by the astounding powers, the energy and vitality as well as the dynamism of the concerned Mantra) is as follows—

(i) The first stanza or step, called the 'Charan' of the hymn, literally meaning a step or foot of the Mantra, is invoked for the purpose of doing Anga-Nyas on the heart. [This part is the following—'Raambhadra Maheshwaas'.]

(ii) The second Charan is used to do Anga-Nyas on the head (i.e. the forehead). [This part is the following—'Raghuvir Nripottam'.]

(iii) The next five letters, known as 'Varanas', should be invoked to do Anga-Nyas on the tuft of hair on the top of the head, called the 'Shikha', marking the location of the Brahm-randhra. [These five letters or Varanas pertain to the next phrase of the Mantra, i.e. 'Bho Dashasyaant' = Bho + Da + Sha + Syaa + Nta = 5.]

(iv) The next three letters or Varanas should be invoked to do Nyas on the 'Kavach' of the warrior devotee. [The word 'Kavach' literally means a body armour or shield worn or used by warriors. Hence, this part of the Mantra is used to both empower and sanctify the 'Kavach' of the warrior devotee so that it becomes impenetrable and can give him a full-proof protection. These three letters or Varanas pertain to the next phrase of the Mantra, i.e. 'Ka-smaakam' = Ka + Smaa + Kam = 3.]

(v) The next five letters should be invoked to do Nyas on the various 'Astra' of the warrior devotee. [The word 'Astra' means arms and armaments of the warrior devotee. Hence, these five letters of the Mantra are used to empower and energise the different weapons used by him. These five letters or Varanas pertain to the next phrase of the Mantra, i.e. 'Sriyam-daapam' = Sri + Yam + Daa + Pa + Um.]

For this purpose, the aspirant and a warrior devotee should meditate upon the following divine form of Lord Ram—'Lord Ram is holding a divine bow and an arrow. He is accompanied by Sugriv (the monkey king of Kishkindha) and Vibhishan (the demon king of Lanka). The Lord is the protector and sustainer of the three legendary worlds—viz, the nether, the terrestrial, and the heavenly worlds.'

With this divine vision of the Lord, the aspirant should repeat the above Mantra (i.e. the one with thirty two letters as described in verse no. 81) for one lakh times (83-85).

86-87. The next Mantra is renowned as the famous 'Ram Gayatri Mantra'¹. This is the Mantra which provides 'Mukti' or final liberation and deliverance to the worshipper from the cycle of birth and death, or ensures emancipation and salvation for his soul.

This Mantra is the following—'OM Daasrathaaye Vidmahe Sita-vallabhaaye Dhimahi Tanno Raamaha Prachodayaat'². [Briefly this Mantra means 'OM salutations! The supreme Lord Ram is the son of Dasrath, and the beloved husband of Sita. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine Being. May he infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move forward on the righteous and noble path'.] (86-87).

[Note—¹Refer also Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no.

46.

²Refer verse no. 89 below of this Canto 2.]

88. When the two Beej Mantras 'Hring/Hrim' and 'Kling/Klim' standing jointly for 'Maya Shakti' (or the mystical powers that, when acquired, enables the person who has mastered this Mantra to be able to control other persons and make them absolutely obedient to him) are added as a prefix to the 'Ram Gayatri Mantra', and the Beej Mantra 'Sring/Srim' (for 'Sri' or Goddess Laxmi) is added before the word 'Raamaha' (which is the second last word of the Mantra, and stands for Lord Ram), then the resultant Mantra acquires 'magical-charm' properties that act as a hypnotizing instrument or a charm that can subdue one's opponent, make him submissive, and make him obey one's commands. It is therefore called a 'Sammohan Mantra'¹.

This Mantra thus becomes as follows—'Hring/Hrim Kling/Klim OM Daasrathaaye Vidmahe Sita-vallabhaaye Dhimahi Tanno Sring Raamaha Prachodayaat.' (88).

[Note—¹Refer also to verse nos. 18-20 above of this Canto 2.]

89. The process of doing 'Anga-Nyas' using the primary 'Ram Gayatri Mantra' (as described in verse no. 86-87) is being described now.

The six groups of letters should be used for purifying and empowering the various parts of the body with the mystical and divine powers and potentials of the Mantra.

The first group consists of five letters (Daasrathaaye = Daa + Sa + Ra + Thaa + Ye = 5 letters), the second consists of three letters (Vidmahe = Vi = Dma + He = 3 letters), the third consists of six letters (Sitaa-vallabhaaye = Si + Taa + Va + Lla + Bhaa + Ye = 6 letters), the fourth consists of three (Dhimahi = Dhi + Ma + Hi = 3 letters), the fifth consists of four letters (Tanno Raamaha = Ta + Nno + Raa + Maha = 4 letters), and the sixth set consists of four letters (Prachodayaat = Pra + Cho + Da + Yaa { 'Ta' is not regarded as a full letter as it is a silent consonant in this word } = 4 letters) respectively of the main Mantra (89).

90-92. Since this 'Ram Gayatri Mantra' has been visualised as having six components or units (as mentioned in verse no. 89 above), it is regarded as being equivalent to the six-lettered Mantra, and therefore its Beej Mantra (i.e. its seed/root Mantra) and the process of meditating upon it also follows the same pattern as applicable for the six-lettered Mantra (as described in verse no. 16-18 above of this Canto 2).

The next Mantra of Lord Ram has forty-seven letters. It is the following—'OM Namō Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghna-vishadaaye Madhuraraye Prasanna-vadnaaye Amit-tejase Bal-raamaaye Vishnave Namaha'¹. [Briefly, this Mantra means 'OM salutations to Lord Raghunandan (Ram). He is a protector from all miseries and torments that afflict his devotees, and removes all their hurdles. He is of a sweet and pleasant demeanors and temperament. He appears cheerful and contented. He is immensely radiant with a divine splendour effusing as a glowing halo from his holy body. Lord Ram is strong, valiant, valorous, robust and brave. He is Lord Vishnu incarnate. I bow to him in great reverence'.] (90-92).

[Note—¹The forty-seven letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Ra + Ghu + Na + Nda + Naa + Ye + Ra + Ksho + Gna + Vi + Sha + Daa + Ye + Ma + Dhu + Raa + Ye + Pra + Sa + Nna + Va + Da + Naa + Ye + A + Mi + T + Te + Ja + Se + Ba + La + Raa + Maa + Ye + Vi + Shna + Ve + Na + Maha = 47 letters.]

93. The patron Rishi (sage or seer who had first conceptualized this group of letters as a Mantra, and preached it) is Brahma the creator. Its style of composition, called the Chanda, is Anushtup¹. Its patron deity or Devta is Raghav (another name of Lord Ram as he was born in the clan of king Raghu of Ayodhya).

For the purpose of doing Anga-Nyas, it is split into six components as follows—the first group consists of seven letters (OM Namō Bhagwate = OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te = 7 letters), the second group consists of six letters (Raghunandanaaye = Ra + Ghu + Na + Nda + Naa + Ye = 6 letters), the third group consists of seven letters (Rakshoghna-vishadaaye = Ra + Ksho + Ghna + Vi + Sha + Daa + Ye = 7 letters), the fourth group consists of ten letters (Madhuraraye Prasanna-vadnaaye = Ma + Dhu + Ra + Ye + Pra + Sa + Nna + Va + Da + Ne = 10 letters), the fifth group consists of six letters (Amit-tejase = A + Mi + Ta + Te + Ja + Se = 6 letters), and the sixth group consists of eleven letters (Bal-raamaaye Vishnave Namaha = Ba + La + Raa + Maa + Ye + Vi + Sha + Na + Ve + Na + Maha = 11 letters) (93).

[Note—¹The *Anushtup Chanda* is a poetical composition style first envisioned by an ancient sage named Anuystuv, and hence it bears his name. It consists of four lines with eight letters to each line, bringing the total number of letters in the verse to 8 x 4 = 32 letters. Refer verse no. 82 above of this Canto 2 also.]

94. The system followed for doing meditation by the ten-letter Mantra (as described in verse no. 44-48) is also followed for this Mantra. It is to be repeated for one lakh times to be effective. [1 lakh = 1,00,000.]

The six-lettered Mantra for Sita (the divine consort of Lord Ram and an incarnation of Goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity and the divine consort of Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of the world at the macro level) is the following—‘Sring Sitaaye Swaha’¹. [The meaning of this divine Mantra is ‘I offer my oblations to Sita, the divine Goddess who is the controller and bestower of all virtues known as ‘Sri’, i.e. all forms of worldly and spiritual glories, virtues, fame and majesties’.] (94).

[Note—¹The six letters of this Mantra are the following—Sring + Si + Taa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 6 letters.]

95-96. The patron Rishi (sage or seer who had first conceptualized it as having mystical powers) is Janak (her enlightened father). Its style of composition, called the Chanda, is Gayatri¹. Its patron deity is Goddess Sita Bhagwati, the cosmic Mother. Its Beej or root or seed monosyllabic Mantra is ‘Sring’. Its authority and empowerment is represented by the word ‘Namaha’ meaning bowing before her with the greatest of humility and reverence. [This is because a person bows only before one who is senior, authoritative and powerful.]

Its ‘Kilak’, or the group of letters or a word to which the main Mantra is pegged or hooked for its steadiness and everlasting effect, is ‘Sitaaye’. In other words, this Mantra derives its inherent energy, dynamism and powers from the cosmic Shakti revealed in the form of Sita. It is Sita who gives the whole Mantra its authority and power.

This divine and holy Mantra, possessed of mystical powers, dynamic energy and magnificent potentials, is used for fulfillment of wishes of the worshipper.

For the purpose of doing Anga-Nyas, the Beej Mantra for ‘Shakti’ (the cosmic dynamic energy), which is the monosyllable ‘Sring/Srim’, is used (95-96).

[Note—¹The *Gayatri Chanda* is one in which there are three lines of eight letters each, totaling twenty-four letters in all. Sometimes these hymns have four lines, with six letters to each line, and still the total number of letters would be twenty-four.]

97. The aspirant devotee should concentrate upon and meditate on the divine form of Goddess Sita while using the above Mantra for worship purposes as follows—‘I meditate upon the divine and holy form of Sita who is of a golden complexion, holds a lotus in her hands, is ever eager to have a divine sight of Lord Ram, is present at the core or central point of the hexagon present in the central area of the mystical charm instrument used during occult forms of worship of Lord Ram using Beej Mantras, and who is seated by the Lord’s side’ (97).

98-99. Now the Mantra for honouring Laxman (who was the younger brother of Lord Ram in his incarnation as the king of Ayodhya, and who was a manifestation of the legendary Seshnath, the hooded python who forms the bed upon which Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of the visible creation and the grosser form of the supreme Viraat Purush, reclines in the celestial ocean of milk called the Kshirsagar).

This Mantra is the following—‘Lam/Lang Laxmanaaye Namaha’. [The meaning of this divine Mantra is ‘I bow reverentially before Laxman to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is ‘Lam/Lang’’.]

The patron Rishi (sage or seer who had first visualised this Mantra as having divine powers) is Agastya. Its style of composition, called the Chanda, is Gayatri. Its patron deity is Laxman himself. Its Beej Mantra is 'Lam/Lang'. Its powers and authority is represented by the word 'Namaha' (because one bows before one who has authority, who is senior, powerful, holy and divine).

This Mantra is invoked and its blessings sought to acquire the four types of manly achievements or successes¹ (89-99).

[Note—¹The four types of manly achievements are the following—(1) Artha—achieving success in obtaining prosperity, wealth, material well being; (2) Dharma—achieving success in being auspicious, righteous, proper and virtuous; (3) Kaam—achieving success in fulfillment of desires, hopes, expectations, aspirations and wishes; and (4) Moksha—achieving success in obtaining liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, leading to the emancipation and salvation of the soul.]

100-101. To do Anga-Nyas with this Mantra, the long vowel sound 'Aa' is added to the seed or root monosyllable Mantra, called the Beej, of this Mantra (which is placed at the beginning of the Mantra)—i.e. the word used for Anga-Nyas is Lung + Aa = Laang/Laam¹.

During Anga-Nyas (i.e. during the process of worship by using this Mantra), or using it for doing Japa (repetition), the following divine and holy vision of Laxman should be meditated upon—'I concentrate my attention upon and worship Laxman who has two arms, whose body, which is most handsome and charming, has a complexion which resembles the glow of molten gold, whose eyes are like lotus flowers, and who is ever engaged in the service of Lord Ram' (100-101).

[Note—¹The Mantras used for Anga-Nyas are the following—(1) Laam/Laang Shirse Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the head); (2) Laam/Laang Netrabhyaam Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the eyebrows); (3) Laam/Laang Hirdayaaye Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the heart); (4) Laam/Laang Naabhi Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the navel); and (5) Laam/Laang Uru Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the two thighs).]

102. The Mantra to honour Bharat, the second brother of Lord Ram, is the following—'Bham/Bhang Bharataaye Namaha'. [The meaning of this Mantra is 'I bow most reverentially before Bharat to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is 'Bham/Bhang''.]

Its patron Rishi, Chanda, Devta and form of Anga-Nyas are the same as that for Laxman¹. (in verse no. 100-101)¹.

During Anga-Nyas or during the process of worship of the Mantra or using it for doing Japa (repetition), the following divine and holy vision of Bharat should be meditated upon—'I concentrate my attention upon and worship Bharat whose body is dark complexioned (like that of the Lord himself), who is handsome and attractive, who is ever engaged in the service of Lord Ram, and who holds a bow and an arrow. I bow most reverentially before Bharat' (102).

[Note--¹That is, the Rishi is Agastya, the Chanda is Gayatri, the patron deity is Bharat, and the seed/root Mantra used for Anga-Nyas is the word 'Bhaam/Bhaang'. The Mantras used for Anga Nyas are the following--(1) Bhaam/Bhaang Shirse Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the head); (2) Bhaam/Bhaang Netrabhyaam Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the eyebrows); (3) Bhaam/Bhaang Hirdayaaye Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the heart); (4) Bhaam/Bhaang Naabhi Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the navel); and (5) Bhaam/Bhaang Uru Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the two thighs).]

103. Now the worship and the Mantra of Shatrughan, the third brother of Lord Ram, is being described. The Mantra is the following—‘Sham/Shang Shatrughanaaye Namaha’. [This Mantra means ‘I bow most reverentially before Shatrughan to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is ‘Sham/Shang’’.]

Its patron Rishi, Chanda, Devta and form of Anga Nyas are the same as that for Laxman or Bharat¹.

This Mantra is invoked to obtain victory over one’s enemy or opponent (103).

[Note—¹The Rishi is Agastya; the Chanda is Gayatri; the Devta is Bharat; and Beej Mantra used for Anga Nyas is ‘Shaam/Shang’. The Anga-Nyas is done using this seed or root monosyllable Mantra as follows--(1) Shaam/Shang Shirse Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the head); (2) Shaam/Shang Netrabhyaam Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the eyebrows); (3) Shaam/Shang Hridayaaye Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the heart); (4) Shaam/Shang Naabhi Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the navel); and (5) Shaam/Shang Uru Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the two thighs).]

104. For the purpose of worship and doing Anga-Nyas, the following divine and holy vision of Shatrughan should be meditated upon—‘I concentrate my attention upon and worship Shatrughan who has two arms, whose body is of a golden hue, (like that of the Laxman), who is engrossed in the service of Lord Ram, who is the slayer of the demon named Lavanaasur, and who is the dear son of mother Sumitra (the step-mother of Lord Ram)’ (104).

105-106. Now the Mantra for worshipping Hanuman is being described. The Mantra is the following—‘H-ring/H-rim Hanumate Namaha’. [The meaning of this Mantra is ‘I bow most reverentially before Hanuman to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is ‘H-ring/H-rim’’.]

The Rishi (sage or seer who had first visualised this Mantra as having divine powers) is Lord Ram himself. Rest of the elements of the Mantra are as those for Laxman etc.¹

For the purpose of worship and doing Anga-Nyas, the following divine and holy vision of Hanuman should be meditated upon—‘I concentrate my attention upon and worship Hanuman who has two arms, whose body is of a golden hue, (like that of the Laxman and Shatrughan), who is ever engaged in the service of Lord Ram, who wears only a loin cloth and a sacred thread, and who remains silent and ever contemplative. Lord Hanuman should always be worshipped, honoured and admired as an ardent devotee, a faithful follower and a devoted and obedient attendant of Lord Ram’ (105-106).

[Note—¹The Chanda is Gayatri; the patron deity or Devta is Hanuman; the Beej Mantra, or the root/seed monosyllable word used to represent the divinity and holiness of this Mantra is ‘H-ring/H-rim’. When the long vowel sound ‘Aa’ is added to this Beej Mantra, it would sound as ‘H-Raan(g)/H-raam’. The Anga-Nyas is done using this seed or root monosyllable Mantra as follows—(1) H-Raan(g)/H-raam Shirse Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the head); (2) H-Raan(g)/H-raam Netrabhyaam Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the eyebrows); (3) H-Raan(g)/H-raam Hridayaaye Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the heart); (4) H-Raan(g)/H-raam Naabhi Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the navel); and (5) H-Raan(g)/H-raam Uru Namaha (for doing Anga-Nyas on the two thighs).]

Canto 3

[This Canto describes how to construct and worship the worship instrument or apparatus, called the 'Pooja Yantras' or 'Pooja Peeth', which is used as a Talisman or charm to worship and invoke the divine blessings of Lord Ram and seek his intercession to accomplish the desired results, and also to get protection from the Lord. The supernatural powers represented by the astounding forces of Nature are encrypted in the different Beej (or seed/root) Mantras which are incorporated in this Yantra. The Beej Mantra are syllables, individual letters or even monosyllabic words much like we have single alphabets or more than one alphabets representing different elements in the Periodic Table—e.g. the single alphabets such as O for Oxygen, H for Hydrogen, N for Nitrogen, P for Phosphorous etc., and more than one alphabets such as Hg for mercury, Ag for silver, Au for gold, Fe for iron etc. In mathematics and physics, the different alphabets are used as symbols for other entities and factors that are either basic component of the entire setup or like force multipliers or enhancers.

The worship instrument or apparatus can also be likened to an integrated circuit of an electronic instrument or electric gadget which has empowered man with astounding powers and potentials. But the powers of these electronic/electric apparatuses or instruments depend on the correct positioning of the respective components; otherwise they would be ineffective and even be disastrous. In other branches of science, for example chemistry and physics, different chemicals, physical elements, constants, equations and other factors are represented by alphabets and signs of the language. If even one alphabet or sign is wrongly placed, the entire apparatus or instrument becomes worthless. This fact is very evident in organic chemistry and mathematics.

Therefore, the 'Pooja Yantra' or worship instrument or apparatus, when properly made and used, can prove to be the greatest boon that anyone can ever hope for. It has astounding mystical powers and potentials, and if used judiciously and correctly can empower the devotee with supernatural powers, enabling him to achieve astounding successes, both in the terms of material gain as well as in spiritual achievements.

This Canto describes such an instrument, called 'Ram Pooja Yantra'. It is chiefly used during formal forms of worship in which magical charms are used to invoke divine intercession for accomplishing stupendous tasks which are normally not possible for a human being. Besides describing the geometric pattern for constructing it, the Canto also simultaneously described how to worship it.

It must be pointed out here that the original Sanskrit text of this Canto has a continuous narration, with neither verses nor paragraphs. But to facilitate understanding, I have sub-divided the entire Canto into smaller units, numbered according to the English alphabets A to J.

Another interesting thing is that a similar instrument/apparatus has been described in Ram Purva Taponishad, also included in this volume, in its Canto 4. The instrument/apparatus described in this Canto by Hanuman is almost exactly the same as the one described in Ram Purva Taponishad, with some minor alterations or modifications which do not affect the overall structure of the instrument/apparatus even as different companies come out with different models and configurations of the basic instrument known as a computer, and all these computers work on same scientific principles and basic technology.

In the present Canto 3 of this Upanishad, we find that Hanuman has described two versions of the worship instrument/apparatus. Both are equally effective. The first one described from sections A to G is a little bit more complicated as compared to its counterpart described in sections H to J.]

[A.] Sages Sankaadi and others asked Hanuman, ‘Oh the brave son of Anjani! Be kind to tell us how the above Mantras are used to construct the ‘Pooja Peeth’, or the seat or altar where these Mantras are formally installed and then rituals performed so as to invoke their divine and mystical powers that empowers the aspirant to accomplish his desires’.

Hanuman replied, ‘First draw a hexagon. At the centre of it (i.e. at the core of the hexagonal sketch), one should write the two Beej (seed/root monosyllable) Mantras ‘Sring/Srim’ and ‘Raan(g)/Raam’ standing for Shakti (the universal cosmic energy) and Lord Ram (personification of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being) respectively.

Below these two Beej Mantras, one should write the work that has to be accomplished (or the specific purpose for which the entire exercise is being undertaken) in the second case or inflexion of the Sanskrit grammar, called ‘Dwitiya Vibhakti’¹.

[¹This is the objective case in English. For example, in the sentence ‘I eat a mango’, the word ‘mango’ is in the objective case.]

The name of the aspirant should be written in the sixth case or inflexion of the Sanskrit grammar, called ‘Shasthi Vibhakti’² on the top of the Beej Mantras ‘Sring Raan(g)’.

[²This is the possessive case in English. For example, in the sentence ‘It is Ram’s work’, the word ‘Ram’s’ is the possessive case.]

On the four sides of the central Beej Mantra, one should write the Beej Mantras for Jiva (living being, creature), Pran (vital winds, the vital forces that sustain life in a living being, breath), Shakti (energy, potent, powers and strength), and Vashya (the power to control and command).

The ethereal universal Beej Mantra ‘OM’ (which stands for the supreme Brahm) should be written on the top and the bottom.

The six Beej Mantras that are used for doing Anga-Nyas (defined in Canto 2, verse nos. 10-11) on the heart and the various weapons of the warrior who is worshipping this Yantra are written clockwise in the following sequence at the six inside corners of the hexagon—‘Raan(g)’, ‘Ring’, ‘Rung’, ‘Raing’, ‘Raung’, and ‘Raha’.

The two Beej Mantras for Ramaa (Goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu) and Maya (the cosmic power of creating delusions), which are respectively ‘Sri/Sring’ and ‘Hring’, are written near the hexagon, outside each of its six faces.

[That is, these two Beej Mantras are placed in pairs outside the enclosure of the hexagon, facing the lines of each side.]

The Beej Mantra for the Varaaha God (i.e. the boar incarnation of Lord Vishnu), i.e. ‘Hoong/Hoom’, is written opposite the six points of the hexagon. [Therefore, there would be six ‘Hoong/Hoom’ words.]

The Beej Mantra for Kaam (fulfillment of desires), i.e. ‘Kling/Klim’, is written in the space between all the six points of the hexagon and the Beej for Varaaha (‘Hoong/Hoom’) written opposite these points as described above.

[That is, ‘Kling/Klim’ is placed mid-way between each of the six points of the hexagon and the point where ‘Hoong/Hoom’ has been written. Therefore, there would be six ‘Kling/Klim’ words.]

Around this ‘Kling/Klim’, the Beej Mantra for Goddess Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and learning; the Beej for the faculty of speech), i.e. ‘Aiyang/Aim’, is written. (A).

[B.] After this, three concentric circles should be drawn, and eight petals (representing the lotus flower) should be drawn on each of these circles on their outer surface/side.

In the first ring of petals, the letters of the vowels are to be written in a clockwise manner at the bottom end of each petal (i.e. at the base of the petals resting on the surface of the circles) such that one petal has one pair of the vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet.

[That is, each petal would have two *vowel* alphabets. The pairs would be ‘A’ (अ) and ‘Aa’ (आ) // ‘E’ (इ) and ‘Ee’ (ई) // ‘U’ or ‘Oo’ (उ) and ‘Uu’ or ‘Ooo’ (ऊ) // ‘Ri’ (ऋ) and ‘Rii’ (ॠ) // ‘Lri’ (ऌ) and ‘Lrii’ (ॡ) // ‘Ae’ (ए) and ‘Aye’ (ऐ) // ‘O’ (ओ) and ‘Ou’ or ‘Aou’ (औ) // ‘Ang’ (अं) and ‘Aha’ (अः).]

Next, above these vowels, the letters of the consonant of the Sanskrit language are to be written in such a way that each petal has one category of the consonant in it.

[There are eight categories or sets or groups of *consonants* in the language, and each category is placed in one petal. The placement is done clockwise just above the vowels. Thus, the petals would have the following group of consonants—(1) The first group has the following consonants—‘Ka’ (क); ‘Kha’ (ख); ‘Ga’ (ग); ‘Gha’ (घ); ‘Ang’ (ङ); (2) The second group has the following consonants—‘Cha’ (च); ‘Chha’ (छ); ‘Ja’ (ज); ‘Jha’ (झ); ‘Ieyan’ (ञ); (3) The third group has the following consonants—‘Ta’ (त); ‘Tha’ (थ); ‘The’ (द); ‘Dha’ (ध); ‘Na’ (न); (4) The fourth group has the following consonants—‘Tta’ (ट); ‘Tha’ (ठ); ‘Da’ (ड); ‘Dha’ (ढ); ‘Ana’ (ण); (5) The fifth group has the following consonants—‘Pa’ (प); ‘Pha’ or ‘Fa’ (फ); ‘Ba’ (ब); ‘Bha’ (भ); ‘Ma’ (म); (6) The sixth group has the following consonants—‘Ya’ (य); ‘Ra’ (र); ‘La’ (ल); ‘Va’ (व); (7) The seventh group has the following consonants—‘Sha’ (श); ‘Sha’ (ष); ‘Sa’ (स); and (8) The eighth group has the following consonants—‘Ha’ (ह); the mixed sound ‘Hla’ (ह्ल); ‘Ksha’ (क्ष); ‘Tra’ (त्र) and ‘Gya’ (ज्ञ).]

Now, at the top end of the first ring (circle) of the petals, inside each of the petals but above the consonant alphabets, the six lettered ‘Tarak Mantra’ (Raana(g) Raamaaye Namaha; or OM Raamaaye Namaha) is written.

In each of the eight petals of the central ring (i.e. the second circle), the Mantra ‘Sri Raamaha Sharanam Mam’ is written.

[This Mantra appears in verse no. 35-36 of Canto 2 of this Upanishad.]

At the top (i.e. the third) layer of petals, the Mantra ‘OM Namō Naaraayanaaye’ is written in each of the eight petals at their lower end. At their upper end, the Beej Mantra for Shakti and Sita, i.e. ‘Srīng/Srīm’, is written. (B)

[C.] Another circle (i.e. the fourth) is made above (i.e. outside) this layer of lotus petals. This circle has twelve petals on its outer surface. The alphabets of the twelve-lettered Mantra ‘OM Namō Bhagwate Vaasudevaaye¹’ should be written clockwise, starting from the top (northern) petal in such a way that one alphabet of this Mantra is in one petal. These alphabets are written at the base of the petals.

[Since there are twelve petals and twelve alphabets in the Mantra, each petal would have one alphabet.]

Now, the twelve representative letters of the different categories of the alphabets of the Sanskrit language are placed inside the tip of each of these twelve petals, so

that one petal has one alphabet². The alphabets are the following—A (the first vowel pronounced as in *son*, *along*, *bird*; *a* man), E (the third vowel pronounced as in *if*, *nip*), Oo (the fifth vowel pronounced as in *full*, *bull*, *wool*), Ka (the first consonant pronounced as in *kerb*, *kernel*), Cha (the sixth consonant pronounced as in *chain*, *champion*), Tta (the eleventh consonant pronounced as in *ten*, *too*), Ta (the sixteenth consonant pronounced as t-t in French), Pa (the twentieth-first consonant pronounced as in *purse*, *pulp*), Ya (the twenty-sixth consonant pronounced as in *yearn*, *year*), Sha (the twenty-ninth consonant pronounced as in *shawl*), Ha (the thirty-second consonant pronounced as in *hut*, *hung*), and Ksha (the thirty-third consonant which is a combination of ‘Ka’ and ‘Sha’), are placed at the top inside end of each of these ring of twelve petals².

[¹The Mantra has twelve letters or syllables as follows—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Vaa + Su + De + Vaa + Ye = 12 letters.

²The alphabets have a symbolic meaning. Since they cover the entire spectrum of sound, they represent the entire creation from its beginning to its conclusion. Even as we select one sample to depict an entire class of a particular thing, e.g. we take a flowering tree to represent an entire class of the plant kingdom which bears flowers as opposed to those plants which do not bear flowers, these alphabets also act as symbols for all types of creatures in this creation. Further, since every force in Nature has been personified as a particular God, these alphabets also represent the authority, powers and potentials of all these Gods because these Gods do not exist outside the creation.] (C).

[D.] Another circle is to be drawn outside this. This is the fifth ring. On the outer surface/side of this circle, sixteen petals (of the lotus flower) should be drawn. The sixteen-lettered Mantra ‘OM Namō Bhagwate Ram Chandraaye Namaha Hoong/Hoom Phat’¹ is written in these petals in such a way that one petal has only one alphabet.

[Since there are sixteen petals and sixteen letters or syllables in the Mantra, each petal would have one alphabet.

¹The sixteen letters are the following—OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Raa + Ma + Chan + Draa + Ye + Na + Maha + Hoong/Hoom + Phat = 16 letters.]

Above each of these alphabets, the Beej Mantra for Maya, i.e. ‘Hring/Hrim’, should be written.

By the side of this Maya Beej Mantra, the following monosyllable Mantras are to be written such that one petal has only one letter. These Mantras are—‘Hrim/Hring’, ‘Strang/Stram’, ‘Bhrang/Bhrum’, ‘Brang/Bram’, ‘Bhra-mang/mam’, ‘Shroong/Shrum’, and ‘Jram/Jrum’ (D).

[It is to be noted that these Beej Mantras are only eight in number while the number of petals are sixteen. Hence, these Mantras are repeated, a system called ‘Aavriti’. That is, after the eighth letter, i.e. Jram/Jrum, the process is repeated and the first letter Hrim is written in the ninth petal while the eighth letter Jram/Jrum is written in the sixteenth petal.]

[E.] The circle of the sixth layer is drawn outside the fifth ring, and thirty-two petals are made on its outer surface (i.e. on its circumference/periphery).

In each of these thirty-two petals, one Mantra of the thirty-two Mantra hymn dedicated to Lord Narsingh (who was Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as the God who is half-lion and half-man) is to be written.

[This hymn of Lord Narsingh has been elaborately described in ‘Narsingh Purva Tapiniopanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 14 belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition. The hymn of Lord Narsingh has thirty-two stanzas symbolising the Chanda called

‘Anushtup’ which has thirty-two letters, each symbolising one aspect of the cosmic energy, or one grand divine virtue for which Nrisingh God is famous.

It is pertinent here to note that in ‘Ram Purva Tapiniopanishad’, Canto 4, verse no. 54, it has been stated that the Beej Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, which is ‘Kshroung/Kshraum’, is used instead of the thirty-two hymns.]

Above these individual Mantras of the thirty-two Mantras of the Nrisingh God placed in each petal, one alphabet symbolising the Beej Mantra of the following Gods, and representing their divine names, powers and potentials, is written. The Gods whose Beej Mantras are to be written here are the following—the eight Vasus¹, the eleven Rudras², and twelve Adityas³.

[The total number of Beej Mantras would be—8 + 11 + 12 = 31. Since there are thirty-two petals, the divine Beej Mantra OM is added either to the first or the last petal.

¹The *eight Vasus* according to Purans are the following—Dhruv, Dhar, Som, Aapha, Anil, Anal, Pratush, and Prabhas.

²The *eleven Rudras* are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. They are the following--(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugrareta, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taiteriya Brahmin 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparajeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.

³The *twelve Adityas* are the various manifestations of the Sun God. According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata, Arayma, Mitra, Varun, Ansha, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta, and Vishnu.]

The sequence to be followed for writing these Beej Mantras of the above thirty-two Gods is as follows—Om + Beej Mantra of one of these thirty-two Gods + Namaha’.

[For example, OM + Beej Mantra for one of the Vasus + Namaha. The meaning would be

‘OM salutations! I reverentially bow and pay my respects to ‘X’ Vasu.]

On the four cardinal directions, i.e. North, East, South and West, of this instrument/apparatus, the Beej Mantra ‘Vashat’ is written. (E).

[F.] Outside the above structure, a boundary wall of three parallel lines is drawn. This is called a ‘Bhupur Yantra’^{1*}.

[¹The word ‘Bhu’ means land or earth, while ‘Pur’ means a city. Hence, this boundary acts like the outer ramparts of the fort in which the Emperor is seated. The Emperor is ‘Raam(g)/Raam’, i.e. Lord Ram, and his Empress is ‘Sring/Srim’, or Sita.

*The *Bhupur Yantra* has been elaborately described in Ram Purva Tapiniopanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 53-54.]

The twelve signs of the Zodiac are placed in such a way that three of them appear at each inside corner of the Bhupur Yantra. [4 corners x 3 signs = 12 Zodiac signs.]

[The twelve signs of the Zodiac are the following—Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. The zodiac is the belt or band of constellation of stars through which the Sun, the Moon and the planets move across the sky. The twelve signs of the zodiac represent the twelve constellations considered important by astrologers who were ancient astronomers as well as

mathematicians. The twelve cycles of the moon coinciding with the twelve months of the year consisting of one solar cycle was the reason why the figure 'twelve' was chosen because the Sun and the Moon were central to astrological calculations.]

This Bhupur Yantra has four doorways or gateways. There are eight legendary snakes to protect them. Each gateway has one Beej Mantra of one of the legendary snakes called the 'Naagas' on either side of it. [4 gateways x 2 Beej Mantras for the legendary snakes = 8 Beej Mantras.]

[The *eight Legendary serpents* are the following—Anant, Vasuki, Takshak, Karkotak, Padma, Mahapadma, Shankha, and Kulik.]

The Beej Mantra for Nrisingh God, i.e. 'Kshroung/Kshraum', is to be written in the four directions (i.e. north, east, south and west), while the Beej Mantra for Varaaha God, i.e. 'Hoong/Hoom', is to be written in the four corners (i.e. north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west). This last Mantra (i.e. the Beej Mantra for Varaaha) fulfills all the desires of the aspirant along with providing him with Mukti (liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation) (F).

[G.] This Pooja Yantra and its seat or altar, called the 'Peeth', is used to worship Lord Ram and his other manifestations as well as his ardent followers and devotees who had helped the Lord during his incarnation as a human to slay the evil demon king of Lanka, Ravana, who epitomized all the evil, sinful and pervert forces of Nature which had almost eclipsed those that were auspicious, righteous, noble and virtuous. Various Mantras are used for this purpose, such as the Mantra of one letter, i.e. 'Ra(g)/Raam' (mentioned in verse no. 1 of Canto 2 of this Upanishad) till the Mantras having nine letters (mentioned in verse no. 64-65 of Canto 2).

When the aspirant properly activates this worship Talisman, all the different Gods, devotees and followers of Lord Ram make it their responsibility to ensure that the worshipper is given due protection.

The protective shield or covering that they provide him is called the 'Aavaran'. [The word 'Aavaran' literally means a covering or veil that covers anything from all sides.] The different circles or rings where the different Beej Mantras are placed are like the various protective rings around the worshipper, and that is why the worship of these rings and their Mantras is called the 'Aavaran Pooja'.

This worship is actually invoking of the various stupendous dynamic forces of Nature personified as different Gods, and as the different devotees and followers of Lord Ram who are no less powerful than the Gods, to help the worshipper, who himself is a great devotee of Lord Ram, to accomplish all his wishes and to give him due protection.

From the physical perspective, the instrument/apparatus resembles a fort where Lord Ram, the Emperor, is seated in his palace in the central citadel represented by the centrally-placed hexagon. Each ring or circle of petals having the Beej Mantras represents the various protective rings of walls and ramparts of this symbolic fort, with guards and attendants of the Lord who are represented by the different Beej Mantras. They not only guard the fort for the Lord but also ensure that all devotees who have sought the refuge of the Lord are given shelter and protection in this fort. This is the symbolism of this fort-like Pooja Yantra.

When the worshipper uses this instrument/apparatus, he is not only sincerely and devotedly requesting Lord Ram to be pleased with him but also extending the same request to the Lord's other devotees to include him in their ranks and give him their protection and blessing. He beseeches them to let him have access not only to this symbolic mystical fort of the Lord but also to the inner chambers of the palace of

the Lord so that he can come directly in contact with his Lord and have access to the Lord's bountiful treasury of munificence and benevolence.

It ought to be noted here that it is not that the worshipper hasn't had any access to Lord Ram previously—for when he had started worshipping the Lord through this Pooja Yantra where the Beej Mantra for Ram and Sita, i.e. 'Raam(g)/Raam' and 'Sring/Srim' are located at the core of the hexagon, he had already gained direct access to the Lord because for two reasons—one, the very construction of the Pooja Yantra starts from the center by placing this Beej Mantra of the Lord, and second, the process of worship itself is started from the central hexagon and then proceeded outwards. Therefore, it is established that the worshipper has already had a direct access to Lord Ram and has already received the Lord's blessings. But it is expected of him to follow custom and observe curtesy and decency by showing his respects to other Gods and devotees of the Lord who are in attendance. It is essential to keep the Emperor's courtiers and attendants in good humour; so it becomes prudent and absolutely essential for him to worship the various Gods and attendants of the Lord who are represented by the different Beej Mantras in the various circles of the worship instrument/apparatus.

For the purpose of worship, Mantras having one letter to those having nine letters are used. First, the main Pooja Yantra is worshipped. The process of worshipping starts at the center of the hexagon and then progresses outwards, worshipping each layer of petals in succession.

So, to start with, at the central point, i.e. at the center of the hexagon, Lord Raghav (Ram) is to be worshipped. This is the first 'Aavaran'¹ or protective ring or shield.

[¹The word *Aavaran* means a protective ring, a covering, a screen, a shield, an encircling wall or ring, an obstruction. As we have seen in the above discussion, here in ritualistic forms of worship this term applies to the worship of different Gods whose Beej Mantras are used to construct the instrument, and whose divine intercession is sought by the aspirant for his protection and successful completion of his desires.]

At the base of the first ring of eight petals, the forces of Nature which are worshipped as the second 'Aavaran' to give the worshipper their protection, are the Atma (the universal Soul which is pure consciousness) and Vasudeo (one of the thousand names of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic sustainer and protector, and so-called as he is the Lord of all the eight Vasus which are the essential assets provided by Nature for sustenance of life in this creation).

At the base of the second ring of eight petals, Ghristi and others are worshipped as the third 'Aavaran'.

Hanuman and other devotees are worshipped as the fourth 'Aavaran' at the base of the third ring having eight petals.

In the twelve petals, sage Vashistha and others are worshipped as the fifth 'Aavaran'.

Similarly, in the sixteen petals, Neel (one of the chief monkey warriors and one of the two architects of the bridge that Lord Ram had built to cross over the ocean to Lanka) and others are worshipped as the sixth 'Aavaran'.

In the thirty-two petals, Dhruv (one of the greatest devotees of the Lord and who is eternally present in the sky as the polar star, called the 'Dhruv' star), and others are worshipped as the seventh 'Aavaran'.

[Till now, the main instrument/apparatus was worshipped. Now the outer boundary, called the 'Bhupur', is worshipped.] The king of Gods, i.e. Indra, is

worshipped inside the boundary of the Bhupur, the peripheral three-lined wall representing the outer walls of the fort, while his weapon, the Vajra, is worshipped outside the boundary wall.

The above process described in this section is called 'Aavaran Pooja'. Once this is finished, the aspirant devotee should do Japa (repetition of holy Mantras) of the Lord's Mantra having one to nine letters (G).

[The above section describes the worship of Lord Ram's Mantras having one to nine letters, and the magical charm instrument/apparatus, the Talisman, used for this purpose.]

[H.] [Now, the method of worship of the Lord's Mantras having ten right up to thirty-two letters is being described, along with the magical charm instrument/apparatus, the Talisman, needed for this purpose.]

First the hexagon is made. At its center, the two Beej Mantras 'Sring' and 'Raan(g)' are written in such a way that the work to be accomplished or the objective to be achieved is written in between them.

Surrounding them, the Beej Mantra for Kaam (invocation of divine intercession for accomplishment of desired results and fulfillment of wishes), i.e. 'Kling', is written. After this, the nine letters of the nine-letter Mantra are written within the hexagon in order to encircle the above configuration of Beej Mantras.

The six Beej Mantras used to do Anga-Nyas as described in section D above are placed at the six inside corners of the hexagon.

[These Beej Mantras are 'Hring/Hrim', 'Strang/Stram', 'Bhrang/Bhram', 'Brang/Bram', 'Bhra-mang/mam' 'Sroong/Sroom', and 'Jram/Jrum'.]

On the outer side of each surface of the hexagon, the Beej Mantras 'Sring' and 'Hring' are written. The Beej Mantra for 'Krodh' (anger and symbolising Rudra, one of the manifestations of Lord Shiva), i.e. 'Kang', is written outside the hexagon opposite its six corners (H).

[I.] Now one circle is drawn around the hexagon. Eight petals are made on this circle. At the base of these eight petals, the forty-seven lettered 'Mala Mantra' of Lord Ram¹ is written in such a way that one petal has only six letters. [This means that the Mantra would be evenly spread across the eight petals, with each petal having six letters².]

[¹This forty-seven letter Mantra is mentioned in Canto 2, verse no. 90-92. It is 'OM Namō Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghna-vishadaaye Madhuaraye Prasanna-vadnaye Amit-tejase Bal-raamaaye Vishnave Namaha.' This is also called the 'Mala Mantra'.

²Since this Mantra has only forty-seven letters, therefore when six letters are written on each petal, the last would have only five letters. The deficiency is made good by adding OM to this last petal. 8 petals x 6 letters = 48 (47 + 1) letters. These letters have been described distinctly in note to verse no. 90-92 of canto 2 of this Upanishad.]

At the upper end of the eight petals, the sixteen letters of the Sanskrit vowels are written in such a way that each of the eight petals has two alphabets.

[The sixteen letters of the vowels are the following—'A' (अ); 'Aa' (आ); 'E' (इ); 'Ee' (ई); 'U' or 'Oo' (उ); 'Uu' or 'Ooo' (ऊ); 'Ri' (ऋ); 'Rii' (ॠ); 'Lri' (ऌ); 'Lrii' (ॡ); 'Ae' (ए); 'Aye' (ऐ); 'O' (ओ); 'Ou' or 'Aou' (औ); 'Ang' (अं); 'Aha' (अः).]

Outside the ring of petals, the alphabets of the Sanskrit language are written in a circle around it so that they form a girdle.

The 'Bhupur', i.e. the outer periphery wall of the instrument/apparatus, has four symbolic doorways or gateways. On each side of these gate/doorways, the Beej Mantras for the eight Vasus, including Shiva, are written as a holy Talisman. [Refer section F.]

The Beej Mantra for Nrisingh God, i.e. 'Kshroung/Kshroum', is to be written in the four directions (i.e. north, east, south and west), while the Beej Mantra for Varaaha God, i.e. 'Hoong/Hoom', is to be written in the four corners (i.e. north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west).

This completes the construction of the Yantra (worship instrument/apparatus) (I).

[Note—A diagrammatic representation of the Yantra, called the Ram Yantra, is added at the end of this Chapter.]

[J.] Now the process of worshipping the various 'Aavarans' is being described. [Refer section G above.] The first Aavaran consists of Lord Ram at the centre, Sita to his left, his weapons, the bow and the arrow, in the front, and the different manifestations of the divine Goddess represented by the Beej Mantras placed at the six inside corners of the hexagon, as well as on the outer side of the six surfaces and at the six angles of the hexagon as described in section H above.

The second Aavaran consist of Hanuman and others.

The third Aavaran consists of Ghristi and others.

The fourth Aavaran consists of Indra, the king of Gods, and other Dikpals (custodians of the world).

The fifth Aavaran consists of the weapon of Indra, the Vajra, and other weapons.

When one worships each of these elements of the worship instrument/apparatus, it is deemed to have been properly worshipped.

Finally, the worshipper or aspirant who has started this worship for fulfillment of certain desire or wish should do Japa (repetition of holy Mantras) using all the Mantras that start with ten letters and go up to the Mantra having thirty-two letters (J).

Canto 4

1. Great sages and seers, such as Sankadi etc., enquired from Hanuman, 'Please tell us the proper way to accept these different Mantras of Lord Ram for the purpose of doing formal religious rituals during sacrifices as well as for the purpose of doing Japa (repetition of the holy Mantras) for achieving success in specific objectives'.

Hanuman replied, 'One should take the purifying bath three times a day. One should eat only fruits and edible roots, and drink milk (1).

2-3. One should strictly follow the codes of conduct sanctified for the 'Ashram' (the phase of life), such as the Brahmacharya Ashram, to which the aspirant worshipper belongs¹. During this period, he should abstain from such allurements of the senses as the desire to eat tasty things.

The aspirant worshipper should observe strictest codes of self-discipline, and remain steadfast in them. He should remain aloof from and indifferent towards all

worldly attachments and involvements involving any kind of indulgence on the part of his faculty of speech, his organs of action and perceptions, and his mind and intellect. That is, he should strive to remain pure and free from all sorts of corrupting worldly influences which might affect him, that might tarnish his mind and spirit, and generally act as a severe drag on his spiritual progress.

He should have firm faith in his Guru (moral teacher and preceptor). He should sleep on the ground and be without any worldly longings, yearnings, aspirations, hopes, expectations and desires whatsoever.

He should be diligent towards his spiritual aim by strictly following the principles of Brahmacharya, and observing its strict codes of conduct. He should be particular in observing such religious norms as taking purification baths, doing formal worship and spending his time in Dhyana (meditation, contemplation), doing of Japa (repetition of holy Mantras), performing Hom (fire sacrifices) and offering Tarpan (oblations and libations to the Gods and spirits of dead ancestors to invoke their blessings) (2-3).

[Note—¹The life of a Hindu has been divided into four sections called *Ashrams*. The first is called Brahmacharya Ashram when he is a student and observes strict norms of self discipline, spending his time in studying under the guidance of a wise teacher. The second phase is called Grihasta Ashram when he marries and enters the householder's life. After fulfilling his obligations towards his family, he takes to the Vanprastha Ashram when he leaves direct involvement in worldly affairs and instead moves out of the house to go on long pilgrimages. In early times, he used to head for the forest, but it might not be practical in modern times. The last phase is called Sanyas Ashram when he totally renounces the world and its attachments, and prepares for his exit from this world. He is ordained to spend this phase doing meditation, contemplation and studying of the scriptures in order to inculcate a sense of realisation of the falsehood of this material world which is perishable, and the truth about the immortality of the Atma which is the pure self.]

4-5. The aspirant worshipper should follow the instructions of his Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) and divert his mind away from the world, from remaining engrossed in the sense objects of this material world, and instead concentrate it on doing meditation upon Lord Ram.

He should remain in the company of his Guru and a lighted lamp (both symbolising his eagerness to remain close to a source of light representing knowledge that can dispel the darkness of his ignorance) as well as of a cow and a Brahmin (both of whom are regarded as sacred and holy entities, thereby signifying his sincere wish to remain in the company of holy fellow beings, instead of sinful and pervert people).

He should sit with a composed mind, silently and calmly, before Lord Ram (i.e. mentally remain focused on the Lord's image, and be free from all sorts of distractions), contemplating upon the Lord's sublime form as well as deeply pondering upon the meaning of his powerful divine Mantras.

He should sit in the 'Swastik Aasan'¹ posture on a lion's skin for the purpose of doing meditation and repetition of the Mantras (4-5).

[Note—¹The sitting posture called Swastik Aasan is one in which a person sits cheerfully in an erect position, with the sole of one foot lying against the center of the thigh of the opposite leg. Refer Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 35.]

6-7. The aspirant worshipper should sit under or near a Tulsi tree (the Basil plant), or a Parijaat tree (the night jasmine plant) or a Bel tree (the wood apple plant).

For the purpose of doing Japa (repetition of holy Mantras), one should use a rosary made up of beads using the seeds of the Kamal (lotus) plant, the wood of the Tulsi (basil) plant, or the seeds of the Rudraksha plant (the tree called *elcocarpus ganitrus*).

While doing Japa or repeating the holy Mantras of Lord Ram, one should include the Beej names (i.e. the seed or root words) of the different divine Mothers¹.

The best way to do Japa is mental (i.e. silently and without any verbal fuss). The number of times the selected Mantra is to be repeated depends upon the number of letters in it. For each letter, the number of prescribed times is one lakh. Therefore, the repetition is to be done for as many lakhs of times as they are number of letters in the Mantra. [That is, suppose the Mantra selected for doing Japa has two letters then the Mantra is to be repeated for two lakh times.] (6-7).

[Note—¹The Beej Mantras for the cosmic Mothers who represent different forces of Nature, and how to use them with Mantras for Lord Ram have been explained in Canto 2, verse nos. 17-18. For example, the seed/root Mantra for cosmic Shakti or energy behind the creation, sustenance, protection and annihilation of creation is 'Sring', for Maya (the cosmic deluding powers of Brahm) it is 'Hring', for Saraswati (the Goddess of knowledge and learning as well as of speech and wisdom) is 'Aiyang', for Kaam (worldly desires and passions) it is 'Kling', and so on and so forth.]

8. After the completion of repetition of the Mantra, the aspirant worshipper should do the fire sacrifice. The number of offerings of milk or clarified butter that are to be made to the sacred fire using the same Mantra would be one tenth of the number of times the Mantra was repeated during the process called Japa. [That is, if the Mantra was repeated for two lakh times, then one tenth of it is twenty thousand. Hence, the number of offerings should be twenty thousand. 1 lakh = 1,00,000.]

One tenth of the number of offerings is counted for making oblations and libations to the Gods while repeating the same Mantra. One tenth of this number is used for cleaning and purification by offering water to the chosen deity while repeating the same Mantra.

Finally, one tenth of this number is counted for feeding a particular number of Brahmins (8).

[Note—Suppose the Mantra has two letters. For example, if the two letter Mantra 'Ram' (Ra + Ma = 2) is selected for worship, then it has to be repeated for $2 \times 1,00,000 = 2,00,000$ times. The number of offerings to be made to the sacred fire pit is $1/10$ of it, i.e. 20,000 times. The number of oblations and libations made to Gods would be $1/10$ of 20,000 = 2000 times. The number of times washing and sprinkling of water would be $1/10$ of 2000 = 200 times. Finally, the number of Brahmins to be fed would be $1/10$ of 200 = 20.]

9. Then flowers should be duly offered with the greatest of reverence to the worshipped deity (here Lord Ram) with the aid of the basic Mantra used for such worshipping. [That is, the Mantra should be recited while offering flowers to the deity.]

By strictly observing the above steps during the process of repeating the Mantra and worshipping the chosen deity, i.e. Lord Ram in this case, the Mantra, possessing inherent supernatural powers which were hitherto dormant in it, now becomes effective. As a consequence, the worshipper becomes 'Jivan Mukta', i.e. he is liberated from the limiting fetters of this body and achieves dynamic strength and

supernatural powers which enable him to accomplish those feats which he couldn't imagine with his physical gross body (9).

10-11. Even as an excellent bride-to-be wishes to have an excellent groom for herself, all the different 'Siddhis' such as Anima¹ etc. are easily made accessible to the worshipper who follows the rules of worship as outlined in this Upanishad. But it is not advisable to employ the stupendous potentials and powers of the great 'Ram Mantra' to achieve worldly gains and fulfill worldly ambitions, and neither is it desirable to use it to deflect or dispel worldly miseries and troubles. It should be invoked only for the purpose of attaining 'Moksha' (i.e. for achieving success in breaking free from the shackles that tie the man to this entrapping mortal world of falsehoods and delusions, thereby helping him to be delivered from their eternal torments and miseries, and consequentially obtain emancipation and salvation for his soul)².

Nevertheless, if one wishes to accomplish success in attaining some worldly goals and other such humdrum worldly gains, then it is enough for a devotee of Lord Ram to request me (i.e. Hanuman), instead of troubling Lord Ram by invoking the Lord's glorious, all-powerful, most majestic and divine Mantra for such humdrum and ordinary activities (because that would be tantamount to exchanging a precious and priceless piece of diamond for garbage) (10-11).

[Note—¹There are eight *Siddhis* which are divine mystical powers which enables the person to accomplishment astounding feats. They are the following— (i) 'Anima' means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) 'Mahima' is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, knowledge and skills; (iii) 'Garima' is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance, (iv) 'Laghima' is to have simplicity and humility; (v) 'Praapti' is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired; (vi) 'Prakramya' is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa' is to be able to have lordship or sway over others; and (viii) 'Vashitwa' is to be able to control and subdue others.

²That is, these Mantras are so holy and special that they should be employed only for some noble and auspicious causes such as one's spiritual welfare, accomplishment of some most important task that has no trace of selfishness in it, as well as attainment of eternal goals that give permanent peace and bliss to the aspirant rather than to satisfy his desires for sense gratification or obtaining pleasure and comfort from this material world which is, however, perishable, impermanent and transient by nature.]

12. Oh sages and seers! He who reverentially remembers and faithfully meditates upon Lord Ram, daily and diligently, who repeats his holy divine Mantras with the greatest of veneration and conviction, I am always eager and ready to fulfill all his desires and wishes¹ (12).

[Note—¹With reference to what has been said in verse no. 10-11 above, this verse acquires special significance. Hanuman effectively says that such a devotee should not worry about his own welfare or for the fulfillment of his desires. He need not approach the supreme Emperor, i.e. Lord Ram, for his mundane requirements, because I am there to take care of all that. Rather, he should concentrate his energy towards matters that are more important for him, matters only his personal efforts and diligence can provide results with, such as spiritual matters pertaining to his emancipation and salvation as these depend upon his own sincerity and diligence, and not that of others. The fetters that shackle his

soul to the body are due to his own ignorance about the truth of his Atma or his soul which is pure consciousness, and this ignorance can be removed only by him and no one else much like the case when a disease afflicting a patient can only be removed by his taking the necessary medicines and observing strict control over diet and life-style himself, and not by someone else taking the medicine or eating with restraint on his behalf, though his other routine works that are not directly connected with the disease can be taken care of by his attendants.]

13. It's my word of honour (i.e. I promise) that I would be constantly providing fulfillment of desires of all the ardent devotees of Raghav (Lord Ram) and give them whatever rewards they wish to have. This is because I am ever eager and diligent for doing any work that is deemed to be the Lord's work (13).

[Note—If the devotee had requested Lord Ram to fulfill certain desires, the Lord would have definitely done it for him. Now Hanuman says that he does not wish to trouble his Lord with such mundane matters as worrying about simple worldly things that his devotee seeks from him. Hanuman is very competent and efficient enough to do things on the Lord's behalf, so why unnecessarily worry or trouble the Lord? He does not wish that the Emperor (Lord Ram) has to worry for such routine matters, and they be best left to his junior servants and attendants to be attended by them. Hanuman regards even routine job, such as fulfillment of wishes of the devotees of the Lord, as the Lord's own work, and therefore most willingly does them for the Lord. He feels privileged in helping the Lord's devotee and treats it as a great service to the Lord himself. That is why he is so dear to Lord Ram's devotees and is their favourite God.]

Canto 5

1-2. Sages Sankadi and others once again asked Hanuman, 'Please be kind to enlighten us about the meaning and metaphysical as well as spiritual importance and significance of the Mantras of Lord Ram'.

Hanuman replied, 'The best Mantra of Lord Ram is the one having six letters or syllables¹. It is of eight principal types, and even of other types depending upon which word or letter or phrase is added as prefix or suffix to it².

Its real spiritual importance and metaphysical significance, its astounding potentials and supernatural powers, its magnificent spiritual value, holiness and divinity are best known to Lord Shiva (1-2).

[Note—¹The basic six-lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is 'Raam(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha'. Refer Canto 2, verse no. 16.

²All other types of Mantra are described in Canto 2, and have been listed at the end of that Canto.]

3. Now I shall tell you the truthful meaning of this great Mantra of Lord Ram which is like an emperor amongst the pantheon of Mantras—hence it is honoured by the epithet 'Mantra Raaj', the King of Mantras.

In the eight letter Mantra (dedicated to Lord Vishnu, i.e. 'OM Namo Naranyanaaye'—meaning 'I reverentially bow before Lord Narayan who is a manifestation of OM or Brahm'; or 'OM salutations! I reverentially bow before Lord Narayan') and in the five letter Mantra (dedicated to Lord Shiva, i.e. 'Namaha Shivaye'—meaning 'I reverentially bow before Lord Shiva), the only two letters that

are effective and powerful are 'Ra' and 'Ma'. ['Ra' from the first Mantra, and 'Ma' from the second Mantra¹.]

'Ram' is the divine Being and the holy Lord in whom acclaimed and realised Yogis (ascetics) have focused their mind and entire being; it is 'Ram' in whose thoughts they remain submerged; it is 'Ram' upon whom they constantly meditate and contemplate.

The Sanskrit alphabet 'Ra' (as in *run*) is the Beej (seed/root) Mantra of the 'fire element'. Fire has light inherent in it; light effuses from fire as its fundamental characteristic feature. There cannot be fire without attendant light. Illumination and light symbolise knowledge and learning that dispels darkness of ignorance, and they are representatives of the pure consciousness called the Atma. At the cosmic level, this 'light' represents the supreme transcendental Consciousness called the supreme Atma or the 'Parmatma'. The 'illumination' represents self-realisation leading to the knowledge of the ultimate and irrefutable Truth in creation. The entity that is truthful and illuminated would have nothing to do with darkness symbolising ignorance which is the cause of all miseries and torments in this world (3).

[Note—¹This observation has great metaphysical import. Lord Narayan or Vishnu is the Viraat Purush personified. He is the Lord from whom the entire creation has emerged and evolved. He not only created it but also sustains it, protects it and takes care of its development. On the other hand, Lord Shiva represents the other balancing force of Nature which ensures that everything that has come into existence does come to an end to maintain the ecological balance. Otherwise it would be like an uncontrolled nuclear reaction which has gone out of control, creating havoc and horrendous consequences. Now, when the Sanskrit letter 'Ra' is pronounced as in the word 'Right', the mouth has to be opened wide indicating the unfolding of the creation. On the other hand, when 'Ma' is said as in the word 'rumble' or 'mum', the mouth is shut closed, indicating the conclusion or closing of the file of the present creation. Since the unfolding of creation and its closing completes one full cycle of creation and its destruction, the letters symbolically represent the entire cosmos from its beginning right up to its conclusion.

Since creation was initiated by Brahm, the letter 'Ra' stands for Brahm, while the letter 'Ma' stands for Shiva because this God is responsible for its conclusion.

It is a well established principle of metaphysics that the only entity which has this unique distinction of standing for all that exists in this visible creation, from its very origin till its final conclusion and even beyond that, is what is known as the supreme transcendental universal 'Brahm', it follows that the two letters 'Ra' and 'Ma' represents this supreme transcendental universal entity Brahm. Naturally therefore these two letters representing Brahm and which are the two syllables of Lord Ram's divine and holy name are the best of all that is 'there or here or anywhere else' in this existence.]

4. Therefore, the letter 'Ra' symbolises the self-illuminated, unequivocally truthful and eternally blissful supreme transcendental Soul of creation which is also the Lord of creation called the 'Parmatma'. This divine entity is an image of 'Sat-Chit-Anand'—i.e. it is truthful (Sat), it is consciousness (Chit), and it is blissful (Anand).

This Parmatma is Brahm, the divine cosmic entity which is honoured by the epithet 'Niranjan', i.e. one who is absolutely faultless, immaculate and pristine pure.

When the long vowel sound 'Aa' (pronounced as in *rather*, *father*, *barber*) is added to this basic alphabet 'Ra' (as described in verse no. 3 and standing for the Fire), the resultant letter is 'Raa' (pronounced as in *rather*). It then stands for Pran¹ and Maya²—the magnificent virtues of the Parmatma which enabled the latter to infuse life into the otherwise lifeless world, and create necessary delusions so that the

inhabitants of this creation would remain perpetually involved in its sustenance, development and growth, and also to ensure that the wheel of creation set in motion by the Parmatma (the Supreme Being, the supreme Brahm) would continue to go round and round on its own till the time the Lord decides to stop its rotation.

Brahm, the Parmatma, is the one who injected 'Pran' (life) into this creation, and this is symbolized by the long vowel sound of 'Aa' because when we pronounce any word with this sound, the mouth has to be open wide which is an indication of vibrant, dynamic and energetic forms of life.

Similarly, Brahm is the one who created Maya or the numerous delusions that are the hallmarks of this artificial world. In fact, without the interference of delusion-creating powers of Brahm, the creature would not remain involved in this world inspite of being aware of its impermanent and miserable quotient.

It ought to be noted here, and this is a very important observation, that no consonant has any sound of its own without the interjection or infusion of the vowel sound in it. Therefore, this world represented by the pure consonant 'Ra' (pronounced as in *goiter*, *guitar*) would be lifeless and meaningless like the conclusion of creation (as indicated when these two English words are pronounced, and no sound lingers after that and the mouth closes), and not representing a vibrant, energetic, dynamic and chirpy world as it is known today had it not been injected with the long vowel sound 'Aa' (as in *rather*, *father*, *barber*) when the mouth is wide open to indicate signs of active and vibrant life (4).

[Note—¹*Pran* refers to the life infusing vital winds, especially the breath that enables the otherwise inane and lifeless gross body of the creature to get up and move, thereby creating an illusion of life and truthfulness. The easiest example to understand this phenomenon is to observe how an air filled balloon moves on the ground and even lifts above it on its own when it is most subtly pushed by the air around it. Everyone knows that the balloon does not have any life of its own but it is the air/wind element that makes it exhibit the visible sign of life in the form of movement.

²*Maya* is the deluding element of creation that surrounds the creature like a veil and induces it to believe as true what isn't. Under its influence, the creature thinks that what it sees as the visible world is for real. It forgets that all this is perishable and not worth pursuing.

Brahm does not do anything on its own but employs the deluding creating element called Maya to create the gross body of the cosmos represented by the body of the creature. Then Brahm found that this body did not show any sign of life and this made Brahm think of some way that could infuse life into this lifeless body lying in his front. So, Brahm 'breathed' life into this body in the form of the vital wind called Pran, and the body began to show signs of life. Therefore, for the visible world to have any substance two elements are necessary—one is the Pran (synonymous with life giving winds), and the other is Maya (delusions that all this is true and real). It follows obviously that if these two things are removed from the visible world, it would vanish like a figure made of smoke.]

5. It is the conjunction of the consonant 'Ra' with the long vowel sound of 'Aa' that has created Pran or the vital factors of life in all their vibrant forms and dynamism in this world. [In other words, the dormant fire element represented by the alphabet 'Ra' is made to leap up and become active when it is injected with life represented by the vowel 'Aa'.]

This transformation of the simple letter 'Ra' into a symbol of life, dynamism, vibrancy and vitality is achieved by using the basic or fundamental sound of this consonant 'Ra', which is the half-syllable called 'Refa' in the Sanskrit language and it

is depicted as a coma placed on the top of the following alphabet, making it sound as in ‘whirr’ or ‘purr’, followed by the long vowel sound of ‘Aa’ which is added to the resultant letter (as in *rather*).

Since the ‘Refa’ symbolizes the fire element because it is a half-syllable representing the consonant ‘Ra’ which in turn is the Beej Mantra of the fire element, it is deemed to be as brilliant and glowing as the fire element and its patron deity the Fire God. In other words, the ‘Refa’ stands for the supreme Brahman or pure cosmic Consciousness which is secretly present in the entire creation as its vital forces of life and energy as represented by the latent fire element as well as the vital winds called the Pran present universally in all forms of life in this world. Nothing is imaginable without Brahman—i.e. nothing can survive without the presence of the ‘fire element’, the ‘life forces called the Pran’ and the ‘Atma or pure consciousness’ which represents the Parmatma.

[Each consonant of the language symbolizes one or the other aspect of creation, this statement means that it is Brahman in the form of the universal essential spark of life represented by the ‘fire element’ as well as the Pran and Maya Shakti that are also universal symbols of life and creation which is at the core of all that exists in this world. Without Brahman and its dynamism, nothing would exist and have a meaning. Since meaningful words are formed from these basic alphabets of the language, it also implies that anything worthwhile must have Brahman present in it. That is why Brahman is called the universal Truth and one factor that unites the entire creation and threads it into one single garland. Again, since letters would have no meaning if no words are formed from them, it also follows that the mere presence of Brahman or consciousness would not be sufficient to create and infuse colourful life in this creation. Towards this end, Brahman needs to have the support of ‘Maya’—the maverick power of creating delusions that Brahman possesses, besides taking the assistance of the vital winds called ‘Pran’ which inject life, strength, vigour and vitality into the gross world.] (5).

6. The consonant ‘Ma’ (as in *mother*) symbolises development, progress, rising, increment, evolution and enhancement. [This is because when we pronounce this alphabet, the mouth has to be opened, symbolizing awakening after sleep, or the rising of a new dawn in the cosmic horizon in the context of Brahman.]

It also symbolizes ‘Maya’¹ because it was Maya or the delusion creating power of the supreme Brahman that enabled him to expand this creation and ensure that it became self-perpetuating. Hence, it is said that this letter ‘Ma’ is the Beej Mantra for Maya; it is the basis of Maya. Therefore, ‘Ma’ also represents Brahman in the latter’s aspect of creating Maya or delusions. In other words, the letter ‘Ma’ represents Brahman’s stupendous cosmic power to create delusions on the one hand, and to expand, develop and enhance the creation created by him on the other hand (6).

[Note—¹This is because the inhabitant living beings of this creation think that this world is the real thing, that all the comforts and pleasures of this world are meant to be enjoyed and indulged into, that there is nothing beyond this material world and its sense objects, and therefore such creatures do not bother about the welfare of their spirit or soul. They continue to remain engrossed and fully involved in the affairs of the world. They have numerous desires and take birth after birth to satisfy their unending desires. They continue to take birth and die in a never ending cycle to fulfil their aspirations and expectations from this world which continue to evade them like the water of the desert mirage. They do numerous deeds in order to fulfill their wishes, and expect rewards from these deeds, and this in turn sets in motion the endless cycle of deeds and their consequences that trap the creature in its vice-like

grip. All this serves the Lord's purpose because it helps the world to perpetuate its self on its own.]

7. The Beej Mantra 'Raan(g)/Raam' is for Lord Ram. [Refer Canto 2, verse no. 1-2.]

This Beej Mantra is formed by placing a dot '·' on the letter 'Raa' (i.e. by placing a dot on the basic consonant 'Ra' with an added vowel sound of 'Aa'.]

This 'dot' is a symbol of 'Maya Shakti' (refer verse no. 6 of this Canto 5 above) because it is pronounced like the alphabet 'Ma' in its basic, silent form (as in the English alphabet 'M'—because the mouth is closed after one has finished pronouncing this alphabet). Therefore, when this 'dot' is placed on the letter 'Raa' symbolizing Lord Ram, the resultant pronunciation would be something like 'Raam' (which would combine the two letters Raa as in *rather*, and Ma as in the English alphabet *m*).

This is why the supreme Brahm, when associated with Maya Shakti in its incarnation of Sita, is called Lord 'Ram' ('Raa + Ma').

Lord Ram is therefore the 'Purush', or the Male form of Brahm, when the latter is associated with Maya in its incarnation as Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram. [This also refers to the fact that Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush who is the all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm. The divine consort of Vishnu is Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and worldly pomp and prosperity that is a symbol of Maya.]

The 'Purush' is a manifestation of the combined majesty of the three divine aspects of creation—viz. 'Shiva' representing the beauty of eternal truth, auspiciousness and holiness, 'Surya' or the celestial Sun representing eternal source of light, illumination, energy, dynamism and the eternal fire element, and 'Indu' or the celestial Moon representing calmness and the soothing elixir of life called Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss that is supposed to be stored in it.

In the Beej Mantra 'Raan(g)/Raam' pertaining to Lord Ram, the basic consonant 'Ra' stands for the brilliant flame of the fire element, the 'dot' on top stands for 'Naad' (the cosmic ethereal sound that fills the sky, and which is heard as the Mantra 'OM'), and the vowel sound of 'Aa' symbolizing the Maya Shakti or the power of the supreme Brahm to create illusions of reality (7).

[Note—The concept of *Naad* and *dot or Bindu* : In brief, Naad is the background sound of creation which is supposed to be the first step in the process of creation of cosmic energy because the sound waves of this Naad collided with each other to generate stupendous epicenters of bursts of energy of astounding dimensions and intensity that set rolling the process of creation.

In the visible creation, the *Sun* and the *Moon* are the only two lighted entities in the sky which directly effect life on earth and whose presence is visibly verifiable. They are not hypothetical conceptions or figment of imagination.

That is why in the Purans, Lord *Shiva* has been depicted as wearing the moon on his lock of hairs, while the Sun has been depicted as the body of the Viraat Purush. The Sun and the Moon are like the two eyes of Brahm.

8. The complete word 'Raam' (or 'Ram) stands for the two aspects of the supreme Brahm at once. These two aspects of Brahm are the Purush and the Prakriti.

[The 'Purush' is the primordial Male aspect of creation, the provider of the vital spark of life in the form of the cosmic 'sperm' represented by the 'consciousness', 'the fire element' and 'the Pran or the vital winds' that infused life into this creation. The 'Prakriti' is the cosmic female aspect of creation and it represents Brahm's dynamism and creative energy. In other words, the first part of the

Mantra 'Raam', i.e. the letter 'Raa' (pronounced as in *rather*), stands for the Viraat Purush who is a macrocosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm, and whose incarnation is Lord Ram. The second part, i.e. the letter 'Ma' (pronounced as the in *mum*, *rum*, *come* etc.) stands for Prakriti which is Brahm's creative dynamism revealed in the form of cosmic Nature. Hence, the word 'Ram' combines the grand and magnificent virtues of both these two cosmic entities—the Viraat Purush and Prakriti. Therefore, the combined word 'Raam or Ram' stands for the union between Brahm representing the primordial Male aspect of creation and revealed in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Maya Shakti of Brahm revealed in the form of the Prakriti or Nature. This union results in the creation of the visible world even as a union of a man and a woman creates a child. It is the child that carries the name and genes of the parent to the next generation, otherwise the cycle snaps then and there.]

Since the male provides the sperm which acts as the 'nucleus' of life, the Purush is represented by the 'dot' or the Bindu (because the dot is a symbolic representation of the sperm). The fertilized egg is implanted in the womb of the mother, the female aspect of creation. The latter is represented by the 'Naad' or the crescent-shaped crucible placed below the Bindu. That is why 'Prakriti' or Nature is honoured with the title of 'cosmic Mother' as it is the one that nourishes and sustains the creation initiated by the Purush or the supreme Brahm. [It also refers to the practical aspect of creation wherein the male sperm is planted in the womb of the female which acts as the cup or a crucible that first receives this sperm, and then nourishes the fertilized egg that lodges there after the sperm has finished its job.]

The Beej Mantra of Lord Ram is adorned by a 'Chandra-Bindu' on its top. This 'Chandra-Bindu' consists of a Bindu (a dot) placed strategically above a concave crucible shaped like a crescent Moon at its focal point. The concave surface below the Bindu or the 'dot' is also called a 'Naad'. [The word 'Naad' literally means a big vessel shaped like a shallow plate or saucer. In the field of metaphysics, the 'Naad' is the cosmic vibration produced in ether which create the sound encapsulated in the ethereal Mantra OM. It is a sound and subtlest manifestation of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm or Pranav.]

The Bindu (dot) and the Naad (the crescent-shaped sign placed below the dot) are collectively called the 'Chandra-Bindu'¹. It is placed on the letter 'Raa' to form the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram—viz. 'Raam or Raan(g)'.

The letter 'Raa' with the Bindu or dot on top represents the Beej Mantra for the Fire, while the crescent-shaped sign of the moon placed below the Bindu or dot represents the virtues of the Moon. This latter sign represents the various Kalaas of the Moon, and it symbolizes the different aspects of creation that constantly change but do not affect the primary nature of things². [Refer verse no. 9 also.](8).

[Note—¹According to Sharda Tilak, 1/809, the dot represents the Purush, and the Beej Mantra 'Raan(g)' is the Shakti aspect of creation. It is their union that produces the Naad, the cosmic vibrations of sound.

²The word *Kalaa* means aspect or form of anything. The changing face of the moon is indicative of the ever-changing nature of the world. But in spite of these apparent changes in the visible shape of the moon—which are actually visual illusions created because the moon is observed from different angles from the surface of the earth as it moves around it, and therefore its illuminated surface appears to increase or decrease in size and shape over a period of one month during which it completes one full circle of the earth—the actual structure of the moon does not change at all. Similarly, the Viraat Purush had displayed so many varying qualities

and attributes, most of them quite mundane and worldly in nature, even contradictory to each other and at odds to the generally held grand perception of the Supreme Being, in his incarnation as Lord Ram, but all these variations and diversities in his role as a human being do not change the fundamental fact that Lord Ram is the supreme and divine Brahm who is Advaitya or non-dual by nature on the one hand, and that he represents the fundamental elements of creation that are eternal and universal.

Another interesting fact is that the moon is said to have ‘sixteen Kalaas’ which represent the sixteen faces of the moon as observed on different nights of its dark and bright fortnights. These sixteen Kalaas are the basic grand virtues that make a man noble and great. In other words, by placing the crescent moon on the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram it is meant to signify that the Lord is crowned by or anointed with all these sixteen grand virtues and noble character traits that are expected from a highly exalted and honorable man.

The sixteen Kalaas or aspects or facets of creation have been expressly listed in the Prashna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4. These sixteen Kalaas are the following—(i) Pran (life; life consciousness; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life manifested in the form of the vital winds; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (ii) Shraddha (the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) ‘Prithivi’ (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (the mind and heart complex and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one’s self; the sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause) (xiii) Mantra (the key or formula to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advise; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), (xiv) Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), (xv) Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and (xvi) Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature; the good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory that a creature has in this world).

When we refer to the man, the Sanskrit word for him is Purush. Now, this word Purush refers to someone who resides in a ‘Pur’—a city. [Refer—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165; Canto 5, verse no. 2. (b) Atharva Veda’s Prashna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 3.] In the Upanishads, this city is the human body, and the resident is the ‘Atma’ which is the all-pervading and cosmic Consciousness called the supreme Brahm residing inside the individual body of the creature as his ‘true self’, as his true identity. [Refer—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18.]

Now, this man who is being addressed as the 'Purush' is no ordinary human. In order to be rightly called a Purush he must have become pure and cleansed of all sins and evils. [Refer—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 4, verse no. 1.] Therefore, the 'Purush' is the Supreme Being (Brahm) residing in the body of the individual creature as his pure conscious Atma, the entity that is free from all contaminations, corruptions and blemishes. So, in the enlightened view of the Upanishads, the Purush when referred to the 'man' is not his physical body but the Atma.

These sixteen elements or units created by the Supreme Being are the sixteen Kalaas or aspects or fractions of creation. In other words, this visible creation is made up of these sixteen units in different ratios just like a colourful picture in mosaic prepared by an expert artisan from bits and pieces of glass or stone which are independent units in their own right but when incorporated in the mosaic that forms the colourful picture they become an inseparable and an integral part of the latter. Even if one piece is removed, the picture is disturbed.

In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into sixteen parts.

The Kalisantarna Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 2 says that these sixteen Kalaas are like sheaths or veils covering the Atma or 'self' of the man, and he can realise this glorious divinity residing in his bosom only when these Kalaas which are like impediments or hurdles in self and Brahm realisation are removed. When this Upanishad describes them as 'hurdles or impediments' in realising the glory of the 'self' it implies that although all these sixteen qualities are related to achieving glory and majesty in the world, they have nothing to do with 'self-realisation' and 'Brahm-realisation' which is possible only by abandoning everything related to this world as well as the body both in its gross part and its subtle part.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 2 says that the divine entity that exhibits sixteen divine attributes lives in the body itself.

The Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 5, verse nos. 14-15 describes the sixteen Kalaas of Prajapati (the Lord of creation/world) in a symbolic manner by alluding to the phases of the moon. The fifteen nights of the dark or the bright phases of the moon when the disc of the moon continuously changes + one fundamental truth of the moon which is its disc that never changes inspite of its view from the earth that constantly changes.]

9. The Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, which is 'Raam(g)/Raam' (i.e. the alphabet 'Ra' with a long vowel sound of 'Aa' added to it and having a 'dot' or a Chandra Bindu on top as described in the previous verses) is a representative of a combined form of the Fire and the Moon. [The fire in all its splendour and majestic form is represented by the letter 'Raa', while the Moon is represented by the Chandra Bindu on the top.]

In other words, the combined virtues of the fire element called the 'Agni', as well as the essence of bliss and life in the creation represented by the moon called the 'Chandra', are simultanously present in a subtle form in the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, i.e. in 'Raam(g)/Raam', much like the case of the presence of the huge banyan tree in its seed which conceals this tree inside its self in a most secret, subtle and imperceptible form (9).

[Note—This Beej Mantra 'Raam(g)/Raam' having both the signs of the Fire and the Moon at one place symbolizes that Lord Ram represents in his divine form the combined glories and magnicence of both the Fire and the Moon. The fire element stands for dynamism, energy, vitality, vigour, strength and powers, the virtues of purity and the ability to purify any other thing which comes in contact with it, its natural illumination which is a metaphor for knowledge and wisdom, and warmth that is a symbol of life and vitality. The moon is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of

Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss. As compared to the scorch of the raging fire, the rays of the moon are soothing and balm-like. On the face it appears that the Fire and the Moon cannot co-exist because one is very hot and scorching, while the other is cool and soothing. But the fact that a synergy is established between them proves that the supreme Brahm, in his visible manifestation as Lord Ram, can achieve impossible things if he so wishes.

This is why he is the ‘supreme and all-powerful authority’ in creation that can do un-imaginable wonders by employing his powers to create magical delusions, a power called ‘Maya Shakti’. Since the entire creation is a visible and most apparent manifestation of the stupendous maverick powers of this one single Supreme Being acting in various roles, it follows that Lord Ram, for all practical purposes, combines in himself these two apparently opposite virtues of creation—he represents both the fire element as well as the moon.

It means that while on the one hand he is like the Fire, ferocious and unrelenting for the wicked and evil creatures in this world, burning them or punishing them in his fire of wrath, and on the other hand he is most compassionate, comforting and benevolent for his devotees, ameliorating their pains and agonies, destroying their sins and their bad consequences, and giving them eternal bliss and happiness that comes with accessing the elixir stored in the moon, the elixir called Amrit.]

10. The entire movable as well as the immovable world is inherently established in a subtle and imperceptible form, in the Beej Mantra ‘Raam(g)/Raam’ of Lord Ram.

All the virtues and dynamism that are present in the Beej Mantra are also present in the full name of Lord, i.e. in the word ‘Ram’ (10).

11. The first letter ‘Raa’ of the Lord’s name ‘Ram’ represents the supreme transcendental Brahm free from the influences of Maya, while the second letter ‘Ma’ of this name symbolises Mukti or liberation and deliverance of the creature from this mundane world as well as the emancipation and salvation of his soul. This letter ‘Ma’ is the provider of Mukti to the sincere worshipper who adores and understands the spiritual and metaphysical importance of the name ‘Ram’ assigned to the supreme Brahm (11).

12. The second letter ‘Ma’ of Lord Ram’s name ‘Ram’ stands for ‘Maa’ or the universal mother of creation. It provides the same benefits to the worshipper that the mother does to her child. Being appended to Brahm represented by the first letter ‘Raa’, this letter ‘Ma’ enables the worshipper of Lord Ram to enjoy a dual benefit—he has the benefit of enjoying the world as well as of obtaining emancipation and salvation at the same time. In other words, Lord Ram bestows his devotee two benefits—he gets to enjoy the best in this world, and at the same time he ensures his salvation upon death (12).

[Note—The universal mother in this case is Goddess Laxmi as she is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu whose incarnation Lord Ram is. Since the letter ‘Raa’ of the Lord’s name ‘Ram’ stands for the supreme Brahm, this ‘mother’ would be Maya, the ‘other half’ of Brahm. Both Laxmi and Maya are the female aspects of creation, and represent the ‘other half’ of the Supreme Being, called Brahm as well as Lord Vishnu. The fact that Vishnu, or the Viraat Purush, and Brahm are the same Supreme Being with two names has been expounded upon in the Tripadvibhūt Maha-Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 17.

Now therefore this verse means that a wise spiritual aspirant who realises the metaphysical import of the divine name of Lord Ram and understands that he is no one else but the Supreme Being himself in this form is able to reap the benefits of this

awareness or realisation. Blessed by the Lord and his divine Shakti, he is able to enjoy great fame and honours in this world as well as all the comforts and pleasures that this world has to offer to its inhabitants while he lives in it, and upon his death he finds ultimate liberation and deliverance for himself because the Lord's Maya Shakti would not be able to create any hurdles in his path. The latter is made possible because even when he was alive and enjoying the world, he was wise enough to realise the illusionary nature of everything material, and so had just been enjoying them without getting emotionally or mentally attached or involved in anything worldly just like a spectator enjoys a magic or theatre show. This ensures that his 'true self', i.e. his soul, is free from the fetters that shackle an ordinary and non-realised man to this world and its material charms. Consequentially, no worldly attachments dog his soul or his Atma after death, and like an untethered balloon he rises and rises in his spiritual quest to ultimately find the citadel of spiritual bliss and happiness, called attainment of Moksha. This results in his being freed from all the fetters that tie an ordinary creature to this artificial and transitory world of material sense objects, a world that is full of miseries and pain—and this achievement is called his obtaining Mukti.]

13-14. The first letter 'Raa' of the Lord's name 'Ram' stands for the Sanskrit word 'Tat' meaning 'that entity' which refers to the ultimate Truth of creation, which in turn is the pure conscious Atma or soul of creation called the 'Parmatma'.

On the other hand, the second letter 'Ma' of the name 'Ram' stands for the Sanskrit word 'Twam' meaning 'you' which refers to the living creature or the Jiva.

The union between these two fundamentally inseparable units of creation is indicated by the word 'Asi', meaning 'it is'. These three words, i.e. 'Tat', 'Twam' and 'Asi' form the basic tenet of the scriptures, called the 'Maha Vakya'. Hence, the completed Maha Vakya is 'Tat Twam Asi'—that essence is you; or 'that art thou'¹.

That is why those who are experts in this philosophy assert that Brahm represented by the word 'Tat', and the Jiva represented by the word 'Twam' are basically the same universal and uniform non-dual consciousness existing in two different planes, the former at the cosmic level and the latter at the individual level. The bridge between them is established by the third word 'Asi', implying 'it is certainly so'. In other words, the erudite and wise ones unequivocally declare that the individual Jiva (the living being) is no one else but the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, in a microcosmic form.

The word 'Namo', literally meaning 'to bow before', of the six-letter Mantra (Raam(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha—Raam(g)/Raam + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6 letters; refer Canto 2, verse no. 16)² refers to the fact that the wise, erudite, learned, enlightened and self-realised spiritual aspirant offers his obeisance and respects to Lord Ram with this firm conviction that the Lord is none but the supreme Brahm personified, and that he is actually honouring this Brahm when he honours Lord Ram. Further, such a wise man also realises that the divinity he is offering his worship to is none but his own truthful 'self' known as the Atma which is pure consciousness and Brahm personified.

The following points are to be specially noted in this verse—(i) The first letter is the monosyllable 'Raam(g)/Raam' which is the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram, and it is a substitute for the ethereal Mantra 'OM' that is universally regarded as the Beej Mantra for Brahm which is always placed as a prefix of all hymns and Mantras to honour the supreme Brahm first before honouring the deity to whom that particular Mantra is dedicated. Refer verse no. 16 of this Canto 5 below. (ii) The second word 'Raamaaye' consists of three letters—viz. 'Raa', 'Maa' and 'Ye'. The first letter

‘Raa’ refers directly to Lord Ram, the supreme Brahm revealed in his divine form, and therefore it is equivalent to the word ‘Tat’ of the Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’ cited above. The second letter ‘Maa’ is equivalent to the English words ‘me’ or ‘I’. In other words, it refers to the fact that Brahm is ‘me’ or ‘I’. It refers to the fact that the spiritual aspirant has realised the eclectic spiritual truth that Brahm is his own ‘self’, his Atma. Hence, ‘Maa’ is equivalent to the phrase ‘Twam Asi’ of the Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’, meaning ‘I am’ (that Brahm), or (that Brahm) ‘is me’.

By extension it means that the spiritual aspirant has become self-realised and discovered that Lord Ram resides in his own bosom as his Atma, and it would mean that the concerned person is a personified form of Lord Ram, possessing all the auspicious and divine virtues that Lord Ram is famous for. This eclectic realisation, this wisdom and awareness is true realisation, and this leads to his truthful Mukti—freedom from all fetters that ignorance of the truth represent, and which tie down a creature to this world of delusions and deceit. A man who is free from the shackle of delusions and who has realised the ‘truth’ about his ‘self’ is indeed a spiritually freed man.

The realisation of the truthfulness and personal relevance of the Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’ fills him with extreme ecstasy and bliss of the highest order that comes with self-realisation and a discovery of a great secret. It removes his fear of death and its accompanying horrors. This happens because the ‘self’, the Atma, is eternal and imperishable; the Atma never dies like the gross body; the Atma is eternally blissful and happy. This awareness instills in him confidence about his eternal and exalted nature and stature, and enlightens him about the great truth about his real and truthful identity as being the conscious Atma that is a cosmic entity and enlightened. The ‘self’ is not that would die and suffer its horrors.

Therefore, this realisation is deemed to have given him eternal Mukti—i.e. it provides him liberation from all bondages created by ignorance of the Truth and its accompanying delusions; it provides him deliverance from all miseries and torments that are consequential to such ignorance and delusions (13-14).

[Note—¹The great Maha Vakya ‘Tat Twam Asi’ has been expounded in other Upanisads as well—refer (i) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3 and 8; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 30-31. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shuk Rahasaya Upanishad, verse no. 22; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaaro-panishad, verse no. 12-14. (iii) Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, sections 1-16.

²This Mantra has been elaborated upon in Canto 2, verse no. 16 along with other six letter Mantras of the Lord enumerated in verse nos. 16 and 18.]

15. Therefore, this divine, holy, sacred and eclectic Mantra of Lord Ram, i.e. the ‘Raan(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha’, has unique metaphysical values, and it possesses the magnificent potentials to provide the worshipper and devotee of the Lord with the dual benefits of being able to enjoy the pleasures of this world (called ‘Bhog’) as well as the attainment of liberation and deliverance from its fetters and obtaining emancipation and salvation for the soul (called ‘Mukti’).

This Mantra has a greater spiritual significance and metaphysical importance than the great saying ‘Tat Twam Asi’ of the Vedas (as referred to in verse nos. 13-14 above). This is because it is easy to relate to the Mantra for Lord Ram as the Lord’s divine story and all his auspicious deeds are well known in the world. [This refers to the well-known epic ‘Ramayana’.]

[Doing Japa (repetition) with the Lord’s Mantra requires no special metaphysical knowledge, no special skills as that required to do Yoga and Dhyan

(meditation and contemplation), no great efforts such as that required to focus one's attention on Brahm as the latter is an abstract and invisible entity which requires a high level of erudition and mental faculties to make it accessible, and about which even the scriptures have asserted that it is beyond the reach of the mind and words. On the other hand, doing Japa with Lord Ram's Mantra is an easy proposition; it requires no special mental abilities such as high levels of intelligence and erudition or exemplary spiritual wisdom that is required to become 'self-realised' and 'Brahm-realised'. The only requirement is to have a firm faith and complete devotion for Lord Ram.]

All living beings have equal right over this Mantra, i.e. people belonging to all classes of society, people of all denominations, of all social and spiritual stature, people of different mental abilities and varying levels of wisdom, people belonging to all the phases of life, people pursuing all sorts of vocations—in short, all living beings have a right to do Japa (repetition) with this Mantra because all have a right to ensure Mukti or liberation and deliverance of their souls. This Mantra is sufficient to provide this spiritual reward to all the living beings single-handedly without the need for them to seek the help of any other kind of Mantra of any other deity.

[In other words, any person who is wise, erudite and sagacious enough to realise the subtle meaning, the magnificent metaphysical value, the stupendous potentials and powers, and the holiness, divinity and supremacy of this sacred Mantra of Lord Ram with all its varied connotations is deemed to be 'Jivan Mukta'. A Jivan Mukta person is one who has become enlightened enough to realise the truth about his own self as well as the falsehood of the world surrounding him. He therefore does his worldly duties but remains detached from them. He realises that all that he sees is an illusion and perishable, and it makes no sense in pursuing a mirage. On the contrary, he is deemed to have tasted the nectar of eternal bliss and happiness which gives ecstasy and thrill which no material pleasure and comfort of the world can match. Such a man is deemed to have obtained liberation from the fetters that shackle an ordinary creature to the delusions created by this entrapping world of materialistic pleasures which are illusive and temporary as well as the miseries and torments which are equally false and transient. Such a person remains engrossed in contemplation and meditation of the supreme Brahm in the form of Lord Ram, and derives immense eternal pleasure and bliss by remaining submerged in this ocean of bliss and happiness while he is still alive in this world and goes about his daily routine in a normal way. In other words, though he appears to behave normally externally, from the inside he remains detached from and indifferent to his materialistic surroundings and their inherent plethora of miseries and pains as well as pleasures and joys. On the contrary, he remains perpetually submerged in an ocean of bliss that is obtained by meditating upon Lord Ram's divine form using the medium of this Mantra (as well as other Mantras of the Lord). Once he has tested the nectar of ultimate eternal bliss and happiness that fills his heart and being with ecstasy and thrill of self-realisation, he gives a damn to the superficial, temporary and pith-less happiness derived from the sense objects of the materialistic world, as well as is unmoved by its pains and miseries because these only affect his body and not his Atma, which is pure consciousness and his actual and truthful identity.] (15).

16. This six-letter Mantra of Lord Ram ('Raam(g)/Raam Raamaaye Namaha') is deemed to be equivalent to the Pranav Mantra, i.e. the ethereal monosyllabic Mantra 'OM'. Pranav and Brahm are synonyms.

Hence, this six-letter Mantra of Lord Ram is worthy to be honoured and employed as a tool for obtaining Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation) by all those who are sincerely eager to obtain it ('Mumuksha').

All such spiritual aspirants should ensure that they do not fall prey to the alluring entrapments of this deluding artificial world and its temptations; they should renounce this world and its material attractions. Instead, they must follow the path of *Sanyas*¹ (total detachment from the world, complete renunciation, and concentrating on spiritual emancipation and salvation). This tenet is applicable to all the four classes of society and all the four phases in the life of an individual².

This supreme Mantra of Lord Ram which is equivalent to the Mantra for Pranav, i.e. the Mantra 'OM', is the most suitable and potent one for doing Japa (repetition) and Dhyān (contemplation and meditation).

A wise, erudite and sagacious person who understands the eclectic and holistic meaning of this divine, holy and sacred Mantra of Lord Ram with all its various connotations and shades of metaphysical meaning as well as its importance and significance in one's spiritual upliftment along with its astounding ability to help the aspirant to enjoy the dual benefit of enjoying the world while he is alive and in obtaining the ultimate emancipation and salvation of the soul at the time of death, is able to become Jivan Mukta (as defined in verse no. 15 above) (16).

[Note—¹The concept of *Sanyas* has been elaborately described in a number of Upanishads which are especially dedicated to it. Some of them are (a) Rig Veda Upanishad—(i) Nirvano-panishad (Chapter 5). (b) Sam Veda Upanishads—(i) Arunu-panishad (Chapter 3), (ii) Maitreyunu-panishad (Chapter 5), (iii) Sanyaso-panishad (Chapter 10), and (iv) Kundiko-panishad (Chapter 12). (c) Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads—(i) Jabalo-panishad (Canto 4-6, Chapter 3), (ii) Paramhanso-panishad (Chapter 5), (iii) Subalo-panishad (Canto 12-13, Chapter 6), (iv) Niralambo-panishad (Chapter 8), (v) Bhikshuko-panishad (Chapter 13), (vi) Turiyato-panishad (Chapter 14), (vii) Yagyavalkya Upanishad (Chapter 17), (viii) Shatyani-panishad (Chapter 18). (d) Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads—(i) Avadhuto-panishad (Chapter 22), (ii) Kathrudro-panishad, verse nos. 1-11 (Chapter 25), (iii) Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 4 and 37 (Chapter 30). (e) Atharva Veda Upanishads—(i) Narad Parivrajako-panishad (Chapter 8), Paramhans-Parivrajako-panishad (Chapter 15), and (iii) Parbrahmo-panishad (Chapter 20).

²The *four classes* in Hindu society are called the Varnas. The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are— (a) Brahmins*—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras—the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

The *four phases* in the life of an individual are called Ashrams. They are the following—(a) Brahmacharya—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style of a boarding school. (b) Grihasta—when a person has

studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihasta Ashram which is a householder's life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life alongside the dealings with this deceptive world with all its accompanying horrifying problems. (c) Vanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting-off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and meditation, living a life of total renunciation, and begging for food for survival while single mindedly endeavouring for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.]

17. [This verse essentially enumerates the benefits of studying and implementing the teachings of this great Upanishad.]

A person who studies this Upanishad achieves the holiness and purity which is equivalent to that of the fire and the air/wind elements¹.

Even such great sins as drinking wine (getting intoxicated and indulging in it), stealing gold (or any kind of theft, cheating or deceit), and killing of a Brahmin (or committing any such act that harms a living creature in any manner) are pardoned if a man sincerely reads and studies this Upanishad².

A person who worships and honours Lord Ram Chandra with his Mantras, and meditates using them, is able to attain oneness with his Lord in a form of the ultimate Mukti (emancipation and salvation) known as 'Sayujya' wherein the soul of the individual merges with the supreme Soul of the creation, becoming one with it, and this ensures that the person does not have to take birth again.

As it is proclaimed and asserted in this verse, those wise, realised and erudite persons who say or declare 'I am the supreme transcendental Brahm; I am an image of Ram' with truthful conviction and firm faith in what they are saying, and only after having become enlightened about the deep and far reaching import of the fundamental truth of the statement that they make, do not have to come back to this world (i.e. they do not have to take birth again). They are themselves a personification of Lord Ram who is himself Brahm personified. There is no doubt in it.

A wise person should always remain mentally focused upon this great metaphysical truth that his 'true self' (i.e. his Atma, his soul) is a personification of Lord Ram as the latter is none else but the supreme Brahm, and the latter has revealed itself as the 'self' or the Atma of the individual. This is because both the 'self' and 'Brahm' are the same 'Consciousness' existing at two planes of creation—one being as the Jiva or the individual creature at the microcosmic level of creation, and the other being the Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation.

Such self-realised and truth-realised spiritual aspirants become one with and inseparable from Lord Ram (i.e. with the Supreme Being known as the supreme and transcendental Brahm). There is no doubt in it.

'OM is the Truth', i.e. Lord Ram, a manifestation or revelation of Brahm represented by the ethereal divine word OM.

The Lord is indeed the ultimate, unequivocal, irrevocable and irrefutable Truth. This is what this Upanishad says. Amen! (17).

[Note—¹Anything put in *fire* gets purified because the fire would burn all impurities and make the main ingredient pure. That is why it is said that ‘gold is purified by putting it in fire’, and that is also why the colour of gold, the costliest of metals used for making donations and for use during religious ceremonies, and the colour of fire are both alike. Similarly, the *air* or *wind* keep the environment clean and fresh as is evident when we sit in a close room; the entire place starts to feel suffocative and after sometime it even begins to stink. No matter how stinking and offensive smelling might a place be, if a breeze blows for a short time, the place becomes fresh. So metaphorically, the fire and wind are purifying agents in Nature.

²The pardoning comes if the sinner is sincere about atoning for his misdeeds and regrets his actions and deeds. He should not be an imposter, because that would be tantamount to cheating and deceit. How can one expect forgiveness for one crime while committing another?]

Thus ends this Upanishad called ‘Ram Rahasya Upanishad’.

-----Shanti Paath-----

-----THE END---

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Addendum no. 1

Hymns of Lord Ram

This addendum to Chapter no. 12 contains the hymns that are mentioned in Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9.

These hymns are the following—(i) Ramashtak by sage Veda Vyas, (ii) Raghunath-ashtak, (iii) Sita-ram-ashtak, (iv) Sanat Kumar Sanhita’s Ramstavaraj by sage Narad, (v) Ram Stotra by Lord Mahadev (Shiva), (vi) Ram Stotra by Jatayu (the Bird), (vii) Ram Stotra by Indra (the king of Gods), (viii) Ram Stotra by Vibhishan (the noble demon king of Lanka), and (ix) Ram Stuti (prayer) by Brahma (the creator).

We shall take them up one by one. Hence, this addendum is divided into nine sections, each containing one such hymn.

Section 1—Ram-Ashtak (by sage Veda Vyas)

These devotional hymns are called ‘Ashtaks’ because they have eight verses in all. These were composed by the great legendary sage Veda Vyas who had classified the Vedas into their present four volumes, had penned the eighteen Purans as well as authored the epic Mahabharat. His greatest contribution to the theme of devotion and worship of Lord Ram as the visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahman is his magnum opus called ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ (published separately by this humble author) which narrates the epic story of Lord Ram with special stress on the metaphysical and spiritual value of the story, which is of course expected from a prodigiously enlightened man who has worked on the Vedas and the Purans.

भजे विशेष—सुन्दरं समस्त—पाप—खण्डनम् । स्वभक्त—चित्त—रञ्जनं सदैव राममद्वयम् ॥१॥

1. I constantly, consistently and persistently worship, praise, honour and adore Lord Ram who is especially and most attractive and charming, enchanting and captivating (not only for his physical charms but for the eclectic, holy and divine virtues and qualities that he possesses), who is able to smash all the sins and misdeeds of his devotees (as well as the horrendous consequences of such sins and misdeeds), who is the one who gives immense joy and exhilaration to the mind and heart of his devotees, and who is unique, unparalleled and second to none (1).

—
जटा—कलाप—शोभितं समस्त—पाप—नाशकम् । स्वभक्त—भीति—भञ्जनं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥२॥

2. I remember and concentrate my thoughts on Lord Ram, and worship, revere and praise him who is adorned by a matted lock of hairs on his head, who is the destroyer of all the sins, who provides fearlessness to his devotees, and who is unique, unparalleled and without a second (2).

—
निज—स्वरूप—बोधकं कृपाकरं भवापहम् । समं शिवं निरञ्जनं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥३॥

3. I remember and concentrate my thoughts on Lord Ram, and worship, revere and praise him who enlightens the creature about his true and essential form, who is the one who shows benevolence, mercy, kindness and compassion towards all, who is the one who helps to take one across the ocean-like world (of delusions and ignorance which leads the creature to fall in a muddle of miseries, torments and horrors of all kinds), who has equanimity as his natural temperament and is equitable and even towards all, who is known as 'Shiva' because he is the personification of truthfulness, welfare and auspiciousness, of renunciation and detachment, of wisdom and enlightenment, of peace, tranquility, happiness and bliss, and is the supreme Lord of the entire creation¹, who is known as 'Niranjan' (because he is the one having no defects, faults, taints, blemishes, shortcomings and scars of any kind; one who is absolutely immaculate and pristine pure; one whose sublime, subtle, esoteric and mystical form is so microscopic and diffused that it cannot be seen by the naked eyes of the physical gross body, but which can only be perceived by the eye of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment)².

He is matchless, unique and unparalleled. I worship, honour and adore such a Lord Ram (3).

[Note--¹*Shiva* has these qualities, and as such is also known as 'Maha Dev', or the great God. Since 'truth' symbolises all that is beautiful, the word Shiva also stands for things that are beautiful, as opposed to falsehood which is ugly and despicable to say the least. Another interesting name of Lord Shiva is 'Rameshwar'. This word has two connotation—when read forwards, it means the one who is the 'Lord of Ram' or the God whom Ram worships, while when read in the reverse order it would mean the one whose 'Lord is Ram' meaning that Ram worships this particular God. Both are true when applied to Lord Shiva, because he is the only God who is said to be an expert on all the metaphysical and spiritual values of Lord Ram's Mantras as well as it the one who constantly repeats the holy Mantra of Lord Ram himself and preaches it to those dying at Varanasi to ensure their unquestioned emancipation and salvation.

²This is an epithet applied to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is also known as Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross revelation of the supreme and ultimate Lord of creation, i.e. Brahm.]

—

स—प्रपञ्च—कल्पितं ह्यनाम—रूप—वास्तवम् । निराकृतिं निरामयं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥४॥

4. He had assumed a human form, which is illusionary and not his true form, out of his own free will because he is without a name or form as he is attributeless and without any specific qualities that can be quantified and qualified. He is the essential reality and the absolute truth in creation. He is without a physical shape, specific form or delineable contour. He is healthy in the sense that he does not have any shortcomings, blemishes, taints and faults and is above reproach. The Lord is unique, unparalleled and without a second in every respect. I worship, honour and adore such a Lord Ram who possesses these eclectic qualities and virtues (4).

—
निष्प्रपञ्च—निर्विकल्प—निर्मलं निरामयम् । चिदेकरूप—सन्ततं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥५॥

5. He is without any 'Prapanch' (worldly deceptions, delusions, tricks, mischief, maverism, cunning, deceit, conceit, fraud, artificiality, illusions, imposterings, falsehoods and concealments).

He is 'Nirvikalp' (without an alternative and options). He is 'Nirmal' (pure, holy, immaculate, divine, uncorrupt and pristine). He is 'Niramaye' (one who is disease free in the sense that he is without the faults, shortcomings, flaws or blemishes associated with this body or the world). He is 'Chid' personified (i.e. he is the personification of the pure consciousness in the form of the Atma or soul of the individual creature at the microcosmic level of creation as well as the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being at the macrocosmic level).

Along with other sages and seers, I worship, honour and adore such a Lord Ram who possesses these eclectic qualities and virtues (5).

भवाऽब्धि—पोत—रूपकं ह्यशेष—देह—कल्पितम् । गुणाकरं कृपाकरं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥६॥

6. He is like a ship to help one to cross over this ocean-like world. He has assumed this special body (of a human) which is an illusionary form of the Lord's true form (which is without any attributes and features)¹. He is a treasury of all noble, auspicious and righteous virtues and qualities. He is most graceful, merciful, kind and compassionate.

I worship, honour and adore such a Lord Ram who possesses these eclectic qualities and virtues (6).

[Note—¹There is no confusions and contradictions in this statement. We must remember that we are talking about an ordinary man but about the greatest power and force in creation which is mysterious and beyond our comprehension. Have we not seen a magician working at his tricks, and have we ever questioned the authenticity of the mirage that he creates though we all know for certain that it is so when we are watching a magic show? The magician can even vanish himself and even though he is very much present on the stage. If an ordinary man can perform such astounding feats that defy all logics, then can't it be expected from the supreme grandmaster of all magic?]

—
महा—सुवाक्य—बोधकैर्विराजमान—वाक्यदैः । परब्रह्म—व्यापकं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥७॥

7. He is known and understood in the form of the four great sayings of the scriptures (Vedas and Upanishads) called the 'Maha-vakyas' (i.e. whose true nature, form and essence is proclaimed, expounded, enunciated, elucidated, clarified and encapsulated in the form of the four great axioms and maxims of the scriptures). In fact, these sayings as well as all the other hymns and verses of the scriptures are personification

of the Lord in as much as they showcase one or the other glorious and divine virtues of the Supreme Being.

He is the one who is all-pervading, all-incorporating, all-encompassing and omnipresent supreme, transcendental and most exalted Brahm who is unique, unmatched, unparalleled and without a second.

I worship, honour and adore such a Lord Ram who possesses these eclectic qualities and virtues (7).

शिवप्रदं सुखप्रदं भवच्छिदं भ्रमापहम् । विराजमानदैशिकं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥८॥

8. He is the bestower of well-being and auspiciousness as well as peace, tranquility, happiness and bliss to the creature. He is the one who can dismantle the net cast by ignorance and delusions in this ocean-like world which traps the creature in its never ending cycle of torments and miseries associated with death and birth. He is the one who dispels and eliminates all sorts of delusions, artificiality, doubts, confusions, misconceptions and vexations. He resides in an exalted abode which is holy and divine. He is unique, unmatched, unparalleled and without a second.

I worship, honour and adore such a Lord Ram who possesses these eclectic qualities and virtues (8).

फलश्रुति: -

रामाष्टकं पठति यः सुकरं सुपुण्यं व्यासेन भाषितमिदं शृणुते मनुष्यः ।

विद्यां श्रियं विपुल-सौख्यमनन्तकीर्तिं सम्प्राप्य देहविलये लभते च मोक्षम् ॥९॥

-----महर्षि-व्यासविरचितं रामाष्टकं सम्पूर्णम् ।

9. Benefits :- Those who read, recite or hear these auspicious eight-verse Stotra called 'Ramashtak' composed by Sage Veda Vyas, are blessed ones who are granted the boon of immense knowledge, expertise and skills, the boon of immense good fortune, wealth, prosperity and all round welfare, the boon of immense and eternal happiness, majesty, fame and glory as well as of successes and accomplishments in all their endeavours. Not only this, but these blessings go on increasing day by day for him. At the time of death, such persons attain the highest stature of attaining emancipation and salvation, called 'Moksha' of the Atma or soul, for themselves (9).

Thus ends 'Ramashtak' Stotra composed by Sage Veda Vyas.

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Section 2-Raghunath-Ashtak

This devotional hymn narrates the divine story of Ramayan in eight verses.

—
शुनासीराधीशैरवनितलज्जप्तीडितगुणं प्रकृत्याऽज्जातं तपनकुलचण्डांशुमपरम् ।

सिते वृद्धिं ताराधिपतिमिव यन्तं निजगृहे स-सीतं सानन्दं प्रणतं रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥१॥

1. He who is unborn is reality but had taken a birth on the earth to honour the prayers of the Wind God, the Sun God, Indra and the other Gods, who is bestowed with prominent noble and virtuous qualities such as having immense amount of mercy, compassion, kindness, charity and magnanimity, who is essentially invisible and imperceptible but has revealed himself in a visible form having exceedingly brilliant light and splendorous radiance in the form of the Sun in the sky as well as an exalted

member of the solar race, who grew up and regularly developed in the palace of his father at Ayodhya much like the moon during the bright lunar fortnight (when the shining disc of the moon increases with each passing day), and who is worshipped, honoured and revered by all the Gods—I bow most reverentially, devotionally and with joyous abandon before Raghunath (i.e. the Lord of the Raghu race; Lord Ram) along with his divine consort Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and is worshipped by them also (1).

—
निहन्तारं शैवं धनुर्वि इवेक्षुं नृपगणे पथि ज्याकृष्टेन प्रबलभृगुवर्यस्य शमनम् ।

विहारं गार्हस्थ्यं तदनु भजमानं सुविमलं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणतं रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥२॥

2. He (Lord Ram) is the one who had broken the formidable bow of Lord Shiva into three parts in front of all the assembled kings as if he was effortlessly breaking the 'Ikshu-dand' (the sugarcane stem), he had calmed down the furious anger of sage Parashuram who had intercepted him (i.e. the marriage party of Lord Ram while it was on its way back to Ayodhya after his marriage with Sita at Janakpur) with a bow stringed and ready (to avenge the breaking of Shiva's bow), and he had lived like a dutiful and righteous householder—I bow most reverentially, devotionally and cheerfully before such a Lord Ram along with Sita. He is the best amid the Gods and is worshipped by them as well (2).

—
गुरोराज्ञा नीत्वा वनमनुगतं दारसहितं ससौमित्रिं त्यक्त्वेप्सितमपि सुराणां नृपसुखम् ।

विरूपाद् राक्षस्याः प्रियविरहसन्तापमनसं ससीतं सानन्दं प्रणतं रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥३॥

3. He had gone to the forest along with his wife (Sita) and the son of Sumitra (Laxman) after obtaining permission from his Guru (moral preceptor, sage Vashistha), thereby forsaking his right to the throne for the benefit of the Gods¹ even though he had to abandon the comforts and pleasures of kingship of a prosperous kingdom in the process.

There in the forest, he had deformed the demoness (named Supernakha by chopping-off her nose and ears), and had to suffer from the agony of separation from Sita (because she had been abducted by Ravana, the ten headed demon). I bow most reverentially, devotionally and cheerfully to Raghunath (Lord Ram) along with Sita. He is the best amongst all the Gods and is worshipped by them also (3).

[Note—¹The Gods were being tormented by the demon Ravana, and the Lord had taken birth as a human to slay him. This was the work of the Gods for which the Lord had forsaken all kingly comforts.]

—
विराधं स्वर्नीत्वा तदनु च कबन्धं सुररिपुं गतं पम्पातीरे पवनसुत—सम्मेलन—सुखम् ।

गतं किष्किन्धायां विदित—गुण—सुग्रीव—सचिवं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणतं रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥४॥

4. He had granted the unique privilege of having a residence in his supreme and divine abode to the demons Viradh and Kabandh who were enemies of the Gods. After that, he had gone to Lake Pampa and eventually met Hanuman. That meeting gave him immense pleasure. Then he went on to the kingdom of Kishkindha where his fame was established because he had installed Sugriv on its throne after killing (his elder brother) Vali. I most cheerfully, reverentially and devotionally bow before Lord Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (4).

—
प्रियाप्रेक्षोत्कण्ठं जलनिधिगतं वानरयुतं जले सेतुं बद्ध्वा—ऽसुरकुल—निहन्तारमनघम् ।

विशुद्धामर्धाङ्गीं हुतभुजि समीक्षन्तमचलं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥५॥

5. He was eager to search out his beloved (Sita) and so went to the shore of the ocean. Helped by the monkey army, he had constructed the stone bridge across it and had eventually killed Ravana and others like him in the demon race (during the epic war at Lanka).

Thereafter, he had retrieved Sita who had been held captive by the demon, and after having established her purity by the purifying fire, he had accepted her.

I most cheerfully, devotionally and reverentially bow before Lord Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (5).

—
विमानं चारुह्याऽनुज—जनकजा—सेवितपद—मयोध्यायां गत्वा नृपपदमवाप्तारमजरम् ।

सुयज्ञैस्तृप्तारं निजमुखसुरान् शान्तमनसं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥६॥

6. After that he had boarded the magnificent plane called 'Pushpak' along with his younger brother (Laxman), Janki (Sita) and others who had served him (i.e. the monkeys, bears and demons such as Sugriv, Jamvant and Vibhishan respectively). He went back to Ayodhya from Lanka.

There he was crowned a king. He performed many elaborate fire sacrifices to please and honour the Gods. He is of a calm, tranquil and peaceful temperament.

I most cheerfully, devotionally and reverentially bow before Lord Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (6).

—
प्रजां संस्थातारं विहित—निजधर्मे श्रुतिपथं सदाचारं वेदोदितमपि च कर्तारमखिलम् ।

नृषु प्रेमोद्रेकं निखिलमनुजानां हितकरं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥७॥

7. He was the sustainer, protector and guardian of his subjects as well as was a steadfast follower of Dharma (righteousness) and the path sanctified and prescribed by the Vedas and other scriptures. He inspired all his subjects and followers to follow that path also. He infused love and compassion in all the creatures by his sterling example, and was a magnanimous, benevolent and benign benefactor of all human kind.

I most cheerfully, devotionally and reverentially bow before Lord Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (7).

—
तमःकीर्त्याशेषाः श्रवणगदनाभ्यां द्विजमुखास्तारिष्यन्ति ज्ञात्वा जगति खलु गन्तारमजनम् ।

अतस्तां संस्थाप्य स्वपुरमनुनेतारमखिलं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥८॥

8. During the reign of Lord Ram, 'Paap' (i.e. evils, vices, sins, misdemeanors, perversions and misdeeds of all kinds) were not present at all— they were neither heard of or observed anywhere. The Brahmins preached truthful knowledge and wisdom as enshrined in the scriptures, hearing of which the whole world became enlightened and eligible to get liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. All the subjects of Lord Ram achieved his divine abode (or, all the subjects had become so noble, virtuous, auspicious and righteous because of their constant interaction with Lord Ram, constant teachings of learned Brahmins, and constant diligence on their own part in following the tenets prescribed by the scriptures that Lord Ram sent all of them to his divine abode).

I most cheerfully, devotionally and reverentially bow before Lord Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (8).

फलश्रुतिः

रघुनाथाष्टकं हृद्यं रघुनाथेन निर्मितम् । पठता पापराशिघ्नं भुक्ति—मुक्ति—प्रदायकम् ॥९॥

रघुनाथाष्टकम् समाप्तं ॥

9. Benefits:- This Stotra called ‘Raghunathashtak’ has the potential to destroy— by the mere reading and recitation of it regularly—all the treasury of accumulated sins and evil deeds that the devotees of Lord Ram might have ever committed or indulged in, inadvertently or otherwise, as well as their horrible consequences. They enjoy the fruits of this world, and in the end (i.e. at the time of death) they attain the supreme state of emancipation and salvation of their souls (9).

Thus ends ‘Raghunathashtak’ Stotra.

* __* __* __*

Section 3-Sita-Ram-Ashtak

This hymn praises the venerable Lord Ram along with his divine consort Sita as the one who extends all protection to his devotee. The person offering this prayer lauds the Lord’s reputation of accepting even the most downtrodden ones and giving them solace and succour. Marked by great devotion and submission for the Lord, this eight-verse hymn has four lines to each stanza.

—
ब्रह्म—महेन्द्र—सुरेन्द्र—मरुद्गण—रुद्र—मुनीन्द्रगणैरति सेव्यं

क्षीर—सरित्पति—तीरमुपेत्य नुतं हि सतामवितारमुदारम् ।

भूमिभर—प्रशमार्थ—मथ प्रथित—प्रकटीकृत—चिद्धन—मूर्ति

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥१॥

1. Oh Lord Ram! You are most magnanimous, graceful, benign and benevolent as well as a protector of good people. That is why Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, Indra the king of Gods, Maruts who are the different forms of the Wind God, Rudra who is one of the forms of Lord Shiva, and sages and seers etc. honour, revere, adore, praise, worship and pay their obeisance to you on the shores of the legendary ocean of milk called the Kshir-sagar¹.

You had taken birth (i.e. had manifested) on the earth in the form of Lord Ram who followed the righteous and noble path called Dharma and was eternal bliss and enlightenment personified. You had manifested yourself to remove the burden of the earth (which it faced in the form of the demons that symbolised evil, vices, sins, wickedness, tyranny and cruelty).

Oh the treasury and fount of mercy, kindness and compassion! Grant me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (1).

[Note—¹According to Puranic lore, Lord Vishnu reclines on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk on a floating bed made up of the coiled Seshnath, the great hooded serpent. It was Lord Vishnu who had revealed himself as Lord Ram.]

—
पद्म—दलायत—लोचन हे रघुवंश—विभूषण देवदयालो!

निर्मल—नीरद—नीलतनोऽखिल—लोकहृदम्बुज—भासक भानो ।

कोमलगात्र—पवित्र—पदाब्ज—रजःकण—पावित—गीतमकान्तं

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥२॥

2. Oh Lord Ram! You are like a jewel (or an ornamentation) of the Raghu's race (of Ayodhya). Oh the merciful and compassionate Lord! Your eyes are large like the petals of the lotus flower, and your divine and holy body has a complexion resembling the dark hue of rain-bearing dark clouds. You are like the Sun for the development (or enhancement of the pleasure of) the lotus-like heart of the creatures of this world (i.e. your devotees in this world feel exhilarated and fulfilled when they remember you and have an opportunity to witness your love for them).

You have a tender body. You have purified and sanctified the river Saryu and have blessed it with divine powers by the virtue of the few specks of dust particles of your feet which you had washed in its waters as it passes by the city of Ayodhya during its course.

Oh venerable Raghunandan (literally, the son of the Raghu's race)! Grant me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (2).

—
पूर्ण परात्पर पालय मामति—दीनमनाथ—मनन्त—सुखाब्धे!

प्रावृडदध्र—तडित्—सुमनोहर—पीतवराम्बर राम! नमस्ते ।

काम—विभञ्जन—कान्ततरानन—काञ्चन—भूषण—रत्नकिरीटं

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥३॥

3. You are the complete, absolute, supreme and eternal Being; you are a measureless and fathomless ocean of bliss and happiness. Protect me who am most humble, miserable, distressed, wretched and lowly.

Oh venerable Lord Ram who wears a 'Pitambar' (a silk, seamless body wrapping garment worn by Lord Vishnu) which resembles the dazzle of lightening in dark clouds. I reverentially bow before you. You are a destroyer of Kamdeo-cupid (i.e. you vanquish and eliminate lust, passions, greed, amorous tendencies, licentiousness, promiscuity), have a most charming and attractive face/countenance, and you wear a golden crown studded with gems and jewels.

Oh a treasury of mercy, grace and compassion! Grant me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (3).

—
दिव्य—शरच्छशिकान्ति—हरोज्ज्वल—मौक्तिक—माल—विशालसुमौले!

कोटि—रविप्रभ! चारुचरित्र—पवित्र—विचित्र—धनुःशरपाणे

चण्ड—महाभुज—दण्ड—विखण्डित—राक्षसराज—महागजदण्डं

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥४॥

4. You wear a crown and a necklace made up of a string of gems and pearls which are so magnificent that they put the radiance, majesty, splendour and glow of the beautiful moon-light during the nights of winter to shame. Your character and virtues are as glorious, majestic and splendourous as millions of suns. You hold a magnificent and strange bow and arrow in your hands which resemble a massive baton held in your robust arms by which you had trounced and trampled the false pride, haughtiness and arrogance of the demon king (Ravana) even as a strong goad is able to pierce the head (temple) of a great and wild elephant and thereby subdue it.

Oh venerable Raghunandan (literally, the great son of the Raghu's race, i.e. Lord Ram)! Oh a treasury of mercy, grace and compassion! Grant me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (4).

—
दोष—विहिंस्र—भुजङ्ग—सहस्र—सुरोष—महानल—कालकलापे

जन्म—जरा—मरणोर्मि—मनोमद—मन्मथ—नक्र—विचक्र—भवाब्धौ ।

दुःखनिधौ च चिरं पतितं कृपयाऽद्य समुद्धर राम ततो मां

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥५॥

5. In this fearsome and horrifying ocean-like world full of sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations, there are numerous wild and cruel creatures, thousands of poisonous dragons spewing venom in the form of wrathful fire of vengeance, there are swirling and ever changing swift currents representing birth, old age and death, there are terrible and horrifying alligators/crocodiles symbolising 'Kaam' (lust, passions, yearnings, greed, desires, licentiousness, promiscuity etc.), and then there is the hallucinating and intoxicated 'Mana' or the mind-heart complex that creates such circumstances that the man begins to bloat and get puffed up due to such negative trait as 'Mada' (haughtiness, arrogance, pride, ego, hypocrisy etc.).

Oh Lord! I have fallen in such an awesome horrifying ocean of sorrows and miseries, fears and torments. I earnestly request you to liberate and deliver me from it.

Oh venerable Raghunandan (i.e. Lord Ram)! Oh a treasury of mercy, grace and compassion! Grant me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (5).

—
संसृति—घोर—मदोत्कट—कुञ्जर—तृट्—क्षुद—नीरद—पिण्डित—तुण्डं

दण्डकरोन्मथितं च रजस्तम उन्मद—मोह—मदोज्झितमार्तम् ।

दीनमनन्यगतिं कृपणं शरणागतमाशु विमोचय मूढं

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥६॥

6. Even as a thirsty and hungry elephant, who has become wild, agitated and angry due to thirst and hunger, is forcefully brought under control by a goad, you must deliver me, who has sought shelter in your august, holy and divine feet, from the various torments that are constantly tormenting me and causing of much misery for me.

Some of the negative traits and worldly delusions that are causing immense amount of misery for me are the following--'Mada' (arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, pride and ego), 'Moha' (attachments, infatuations, delusions), 'Matsarya' (envy, jealousy, malice, ill-will), and other faults such as 'Raja' (passions, desires, yearnings, greed, selfishness, ambitions, stormy temperament etc. which are collectively called the 2nd quality of a creature) and 'Tama' (the most lowly behaviour producing inertia, sins, evils, vices, perversions etc.) which are associated with this world.

I am most ignorant, foolish, lowly and wretched (and not worthy for you), but I have come to seek refuge and shelter in your holy feet nevertheless (because I have heard of your promise to accept anyone who comes to you with sincere humility and submission). So, oh Raghunandan, have mercy on me.

Oh venerable Raghunandan (i.e. Lord Ram)! Oh a treasury of mercy, grace and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (6).

—
जन्मशतार्जित—पाप—समन्वित—हृत्कमले पतिते पशुकल्पे

हे रघुवीर! महारणधीर! दयां कुरु मय्यतिमन्दमनीषे ।

त्वं जननी भगिनी च पिता मम तावदसि त्ववितापि कृपालो!

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥७॥

7. Due to the sins, evils and misdeeds and their integrated effects accumulated over hundreds of births, my heart has become depraved and degraded to the low level of an animal (i.e. it has become pervert and low like an animal with animal-like instincts, devoid of wisdom and discrimination faculty to distinguish between what is good and what is bad), and I am really very foolish and stupid.

Oh Raghunandan, oh the valiant and steadfast one in the battle-field! Have mercy on me who am of a very low intellect and utterly stupid. You are my mother, my father, my sister and my protector. So, oh Raghunandan, have mercy on me.

Oh venerable Raghunandan (Lord Ram)! Oh a treasury of mercy, grace and compassion! Grant me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (7).

—
त्वां तु दयालुमकिञ्चन—वत्सल—मुत्पल हारमपारमुदारं

राम विहाय कमन्यमनामयमीश! जनं शरणं ननु यायाम् ।

त्वत्पदपद्ममतः श्रितमेव मुदा खलु देव! सदाऽव ससीतम् ॥

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥८॥

8. You are most merciful, kind, gracious, compassionate, benevolent, benign and magnanimous towards the downtrodden underdogs and have-nots.

You wear a garland of lotus flowers, are most gracious and benign. Where shall I go except you who are unique in so many ways? [That is, where will I find someone who is so great, compassionate, merciful, kind, benevolent and magnanimous so as to take care of me who am so wretched, lowly, humble, ignorant and stupid.] Oh Lord! That is why I have taken refuge and shelter in your holy, divine and august feet. Oh Lord! I beseech you, along with Sita, to give me your protection. So, oh Raghunandan, have mercy on me.

Oh venerable Raghunandan (Lord Ram)! Oh a treasury of mercy, grace and compassion! Grant me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you diligently (8).

फलश्रुतिः—

यः करुणामृत—सिन्धुरनाथ—जनोत्तमबन्धुरजोत्तमकारी

भक्तभयोर्मि—भवाऽब्धितरी—सरयू—तटिनीतट—चारु बिहारी ।

तस्य रघुप्रवरस्य निरन्तर—मष्टकमेतदनिष्टहरं वै

यस्तु पठेदमरः स नरो लभतेऽच्युतरामपदाऽम्बुजदास्यम् ॥९॥

सीतारामाष्टकं सम्पूर्णम् ।

9. Benefits :- You are like an ocean of nectar consisting of mercy, kindness, graciousness and compassion. You are a protector, helper and supporter of those who are lowly, distressed, humble and deprived. You are righteous and virtuous, are the remover of the fears and torments of your devotees which engulf them like currents and whirlpools in river Saryu that suck anyone who they manage to trap. You roam on the banks of the river (watchfully looking for an opportunity to save someone who might be drowning in the river of sorrows and miseries represented by the swirling waters of the river), and are the senior most member of the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty.

You are a destroyer and eliminator of the all the misfortunes and adverse circumstances faced by your devotees.

Anyone who reads and recites this ‘Sita Ramashtak’ Stotra with unwavering and unflinching devotion, humility, conviction and faith is able to attain immortality and become eligible to serve your holy, divine and august lotus-like feet forever (9).

Thus ends ‘Sita Ramashtak’ Stotra.

* __ * __ * __ *

Section 4-Sanat Kumar Sanhita’s

Ram-Stavaraj (by sage Narad)

The devotional hymns known as ‘Ram Stavaraj’ dedicated to Lord Ram to pay glowing tributes to him have got their name from the fact that they are considered as the best hymn in praise of the Lord. The name has three parts—(a) ‘Ram’ referring to the patron deity for whom this particular hymn was composed, ‘Stava’ originating from the word ‘Stavan’ meaning to praise, to honour, to laud, to sing the glories of, an eulogy in honour of someone, to pray reverentially to a deity with the object of pleasing it and invoking its blessings, and (c) ‘Raj’ meaning the king or something that is the best and grandest amongst its likes. Therefore, these hymns composed by the celestial sage Narad in praise of Lord Ram are deemed to be the best and the most excellent of prayers offered by him to his Lord, Sri Ram.

Another pertinent point to note is that, as is usual in such compositions, there are a number of words which are generally used as adjectives and epithets to describe various qualities and virtues of the chosen subject, are repeated too often. This is the practice in vogue in compositions which are of the genre of prayers, perhaps to reaffirm one’s statement that what is being said is indeed the truth, and at the same time to emphasize and reassert the gravity, the import, the truth, the importance and the significance of such statements. It is done to ensure that if the worshipper misses them at the first instance, repetition would ensure that these grand virtues of the Lord get firmly and indelibly ingrained in his mind so as to mould his notions, his thinking and approach towards that particular deity. They help to remove any iota of doubts or ambiguity in his mind about the potentials and powers, the divinity and holiness of the chosen deity, resulting in his being steady in the path of worship and faith. Repetition has a psychological effect too, and over time the person begins to believe in the authenticity, veracity and truthfulness of what is being said.

विनियोगः ॐ अस्य श्रीरामचन्द्रस्तवराजस्तोत्रमन्त्रस्य सनत्कुमार—ऋषिः, श्रीरामो देवता, अनुष्टुप्छन्दः, सीता बीजम्, हनुमान् शक्तिः, श्रीरामप्रीत्यर्थं जपे विनियोगः ।

This is the introductory verse called ‘Viniyog’ or invocation of the deity to be worshipped by using Mantras especially dedicated to it. This prayer describes the glory of Lord Ram Chandra, and finally asks the Lord to provide deliverance to the soul and free it from the worldly snare in which it finds itself trapped.

‘OM Salutations! This is the ‘Ramstavaraj Mantra’ dedicated to Lord Ram Chandra which has been culled from the ‘Sanatkumar Sanghita’ (a compendium of devotional hymns composed by the ancient sage Sanatkumar).

This Mantra was first visualized/conceptualized and given divine sanctity and proved to have esoteric and mystical powers and potentials by sage/seer Sanatkumar. Hence he is deemed to be its progenitor Rishi (i.e. the first person who has conceived this Mantra and realised that it had spiritual potentials).

Lord Lord Ram is the patron God who is worshipped by this Mantra; hence he is the 'Devta'. The style of composition adopted for its composition is called 'Anushtup Chanda'¹.

The Beej Mantra for Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram, is used as to worship the Lord and invoke his divine intercession with this hymn².

The enforcing authority who lends his astounding strength and powers to help those who say this Stotra (devotional hymn) and help them attain their goals is none other than Hanuman, the greatest devotee and follower of Lord Ram and who has taken upon himself the duty to fulfill all the desires of those who worship the Lord and protect them against all dangers.

This hymn is most dear to Lord Ram in the sense that it pleases him the most and he becomes extremely obliged and grateful to the person who recites this Stotra. Therefore, anyone who wishes to please Lord Ram should say prayers to him using this hymn known as Ramstavaraj. This hymn should be used to do Japa (constant repetition of the Lord's holy and divine name) in order to invoke Lord Ram's divine intercession³ and to seek his all-wish-fulfilling blessings.

[Note—¹The Gods and the Goddesses have their independent *Beej Mantras* which are like their independent identity tags. These Beej Mantras are the seed or root Mantras, which are monosyllable letters or words infused with mystical supernatural powers used for the invocation and worship purposes of a specific deity during formal worship and sacrifices. These Beej Mantras replace long winding Mantras and are more like coded keys that unlock the vast treasury of spiritual and mystical authority, potentials and powers which can be gotten by worshipping that particular entity to which that Beej Mantra pertains. These Beej Mantras represent all the divine and majestic strength and powers that that particular deity possesses. Hence, their use is a well established practice in the process of invoking intervention of supernatural forces of Nature which have been personified as various Gods by ancient sages and seers.

²An *Anushtup Chanda* is a composition of verses in the poetic style called 'Anushtup' in which there are four 'Charans' or steps or stanzas, and each Charan has eight letters. Therefore, the total number of letters in each verse is 4 x 8 = 32 letters in all.

³The devotee who recites this 'Ramstavaraj' Stotra should purify himself by bath and other sanctified procedures. Then he should sit down calmly with water in his right hand. He should start the recitation of this Stotra by first reciting the words of this verse called 'Viniyog'. Then the water should be poured into some receptacle or left on the ground. Then the recitation should be done from the very first word of verse no. 1 and finished off at the last word of verse no. 98 without any interruption.]

सूत उवाच

सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञं व्यासं सत्यवती—सुतम् । धर्मपुत्रः प्रहृष्टात्मा प्रत्युवाच मुनीश्वरम् ॥१॥

1. Sage Sut said, 'Yudhisthir, the son of Dharma and an exalted soul, said cheerfully to sage Veda Vyas, the son of Satyawati, who was well versed in the meaning and truthful essence of all the scriptures, was very enlightened, erudite and scholarly as well as the most exalted amongst the sages (1).

युधिष्ठिर उवाच-

भगवन्! योगिनां श्रेष्ठ! सर्वशास्त्रविशारद! । किं तत्त्वं किं परं जाप्यं किं ध्यानं मुक्तिसाधनम् ॥२॥

2. Yudhisthir said to Veda Vyas, 'Oh Lord! You are the most exalted amongst Yogis (ascetics) and a scholar par-excellence of all the scriptures. What is that which is called the essential principle, the irrefutable truth and the absolute reality? Which is the best and the most excellent Mantra to do Japa with? What is the method to do meditation and to concentrate upon the supreme Brahm and upon the pure-self? And what is the path to liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation in this world? (2).

वेदव्यास उवाच-

श्रोतुमिच्छामि तत्सर्वं ब्रूहि मे मुनिसत्तम! धर्मराज महाभाग! शृणु वक्ष्यामि तत्त्वतः ॥३॥

3. Please be kind enough to answer these questions'.

Sage Veda Vyas replied, 'Oh Dhramaraj! Oh the most fortunate and great one! I am answering your question; listen to it carefully (3).

यत्परं सद्गुणातीतं यज्ज्योतिरमलं शिवम् । तदेव परमं तत्त्वं कैवल्यं पदकारणम् ॥४॥

4. That which is beyond the three characteristic qualities that mark all the creatures of this creation—such as the qualities called Sata, Raja and Tama¹; that which is an embodiment of divine light of wisdom, eruditions and enlightenment, that which is pure, immaculate and free from all sorts of corruptions, taints and blemishes, that which is the all-welfare bestowing supreme entity which is the absolute Truth and Reality of this existence— such an eclectic, sublime, holy and divine entity is the only one that can bestow the ultimate form of 'Kaivalya Mukti'², or that form of liberation and deliverance for the soul of the creature which has no alternatives and which is unique in the sense that the soul is given final emancipation and salvation so that it does not have to enter the cycle of birth and death again (4).

[Note--¹The three qualities mentioned above are the following— (i) *Sata*— the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristic qualities of a creature, such as possessing good and positive virtuous, righteousness, creativity, propensity for doing noble deeds and having noble thoughts etc.; (ii) *Raja*—the medium characteristic quality marked by worldly ambitions, desires, passions, having expansionist tendencies, etc.; (iii) *Tama*—the base and most lowly of the three characteristic qualities leading to predominance of sin, evil, perversions, vices, misdemeanors, anger, inertia et al.

²The *Kaivalya Mukti* is the salvation of the soul whereby it merges with the supreme soul called Brahm and becomes one with it.]

श्रीरामेति परं जाप्यं तारकं ब्रह्मसंज्ञकम् । ब्रह्महत्यादि पापघ्नमिति वेदविदो विदुः ॥५॥

5. Lord Ram's divine and holy name is the most potent, supreme and excellent Mantra amongst all the Mantras; it is equivalent to and synonymous with the supreme Brahm (the absolute and supreme entity). It has the potential to take the creature across the ocean represented by this mundane, delusory and entrapping world. That is why it is called the 'Tarak Mantra', and that is also why it is the best Mantra that should be used for doing Japa (repetition of the divine name of the Lord by a spiritual aspirant).

Those who are expert in the knowledge propounded by the Vedas positively assert that it has the power and strength to destroy (purge, purify, cleanse, annihilate and exhaust) the horrifying effects of great sins such as, inter alia, the killing of a Brahmin (5).

— श्रीराम रामेति जना ये जपन्ति च सर्वदा । तेषां भुक्तिश्च मुक्तिश्च भविष्यति न संशयः ॥६॥

6. Those spiritual seekers/aspirants who repeat the holy name of Lord Ram constantly and consistently, with due devotion, faith, diligence and sincerity, are sure to get dual benefits of enjoyment of this materialistic world, called 'Bhog', on the one hand, as well as the deliverance from its entrapments and emancipation and salvation of their souls, called 'Mukti', on the other hand (6).

— स्तवराजं पुरा प्रोक्तं नारदेन च धीमता । तत्सर्वं सम्प्रवक्ष्यामि हरिध्यानपुरःसरम् ॥७॥

7. The most erudite and foremost devotee of the Lord, sage Narad was the first sage who had enunciated these Stotras (hymns) called 'Stavaraj' on some previous occasion. I shall repeat it verbatim for the purpose of remembering and honouring my Lord through them (7).

— तापत्रयाऽग्निशमनं सर्वाधौध—निकृन्तनम् । दारिद्र्यदुःख—शमनं सर्वसम्पत्करं शिवम् ॥८॥

8. This holy hymn called 'Ram Stavaraj' is potent enough to destroy the disastrous effects caused by the three types of torments that burn all living beings in their scorching fires—'Adhi-Daihik', 'Adhi-Daivik' and 'Adhi-Bhautik'¹. That is, this hymn acts like a soothing balm to provide solace and succour to the creature who has been literally scorched by the ferocious fire of miseries that engulf all living creatures in this creation.

It is able to also destroy the treasury of all sins and their evil effects. It can calm down or eliminate the troubles and tribulations, miseries and distresses arising out of poverty and various other existential sorrows. It is the provider of all round wellbeing and auspiciousness to the creature. This is an absolute truth (8).

[Note—¹(i) *Adhi Daihik*— torments that the creature suffers due to his body, such as old age and illness; (ii) *Adhi Daivik*— torments that the creature suffers due to the opposed Gods and malignant stars; and (iii) *Adhi Bhautik*— torments that the creature suffers due to other terrestrial creatures such as enemies, thieves, competitors, kings etc. reptiles such as snakes, animals such as lions etc.]

— विज्ञानफलदं दिव्यं मोक्षैकफलसाधनम् । नमस्कृत्य प्रवक्ष्यामि रामं कृष्णं जगन्मयम् ॥९॥

9. After bowing reverentially before Lords Ram and Krishna who uniformly pervade in the entire animate as well as the inanimate worlds, I shall describe this 'Ram Stavaraj Stotras'(hymns) which provide the divine fruit of true knowledge and enlightenment as well as represent the only easy path to emancipation and salvation (Mukti) of the soul (9).

— अयोध्यानगरे रम्ये रत्नमण्डपमध्यगे । स्मरेत् कल्पतरोर्मूले रत्नसिंहासनं शुभम् ॥१०॥

10. The seeker/aspirant should visualise a gem-studded throne in Ayodhya. This throne is under the shadow of the 'Kalpa Tree' (the evergreen, wish-fulfilling tree of Gods) in a gem-studded pavilion (10).

तन्मध्येऽष्टदलं पद्मं नानारत्नैश्च वेष्टितम् । स्मरेन्मध्ये दाशरथिं सहस्रादित्यतेजसम् ॥११॥

11. On that gleaming and magnificent throne, in the center of it, the spiritual seeker/aspirant should visualise that there is 8-petal lotus fully embellished with glittering gems. On it is seated the son of Dasrath, Lord Ram, who is as splendid and radiant as thousands of suns (11).

पितुरङ्गतं राममिन्द्रनील—मणिप्रभम् । कोमलाङ्गं विशालाक्षं विद्युद्वर्णाम्बरावृतम् ॥१२॥

12. He (Lord Ram) is seated on the lap of his father. He is dark complexioned like the Indra's gem called 'Indraneel Mani'. He has a tender (soft, delicate) body and large eyes, and he is wearing clothes which resemble the dazzle and glitter of lightening (12).

भानुकोटिप्रतीकाशं किरीटेन विराजितम् । रत्नग्रैवेयकेयूर—रत्नकुण्डल मण्डितम् ॥१३॥

13. He has a divine radiance equivalent to millions of suns effusing from his holy body. He is adorned by a magnificent crown with a tiara, and is wearing a gem-studded necklace as well as ear-rings which are also studded with gems (13).

रत्नकङ्कणमञ्जीर—कटिसूत्रैरलङ्कृतम् । श्रीवत्सकौस्तुभोरस्कं मुक्ताहारोपशोभितम् ॥१४॥

14. He is adorned with gem-studded bracelets, anklets and a waist-band. He wears a necklace of pearls, has the mark of 'Sri Vatsa' and also wears the 'Kaustav jewel' on his chest (14).

[Note--The *Kaustav gem* is worn by Vishnu; *Sri Vatsa* is the mark of sage Brighu's footprints on the chest of Vishnu.]

दिव्यरत्नसमायुक्तं मुद्रिकाभिरलङ्कृतम् । राघवं द्विभुजं बालं राममीषत्—स्मिताननम् ॥१५॥

15. This form of Lord Ram is as pleasant and charming as that of a child. He is also adorned with finger-rings studded with beautiful gems. He has a pleasant, bewitching and sweet smile on his face. He has two arms (15).

[Note--Lord Vishnu is depicted by legend as having four arms. His incarnation Lord Ram has only two arms because Vishnu has assumed the form of a human being. A man has two arms and not four.]

तुलसी—कुन्द—मन्दार—पुष्पमाल्यैरलङ्कृतम् । कर्पूरा—ऽगुरु—कस्तूरी—दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ॥१६॥

16. He is adorned by garlands made up of Tulsi (basil), Kund (jasmine/lotus flower), Mandar (flowers of the coral tree) and similar flowers. His body is smeared by (or rubbed by) a scented paste consisting of camphor, aloe-wood and powdered musk which emanates a pleasant fragrance (16).

योगशास्त्रेष्वभिरतं योगीशं योगदायकम् । सदा भरत—सौमित्रि—शत्रुघ्नैरुपशोभितम् ॥१७॥

17. He is involved in the study and practice of the science of Yoga (meditation). Lord Ram is the lord of Yogis (ascetics). He is able to bestow the knowledge and benefits of Yoga to others (i.e. he is well-versed in the knowledge of the science of Yoga and is able to teach others about it). He is attended by (literally, adorned by) Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan. [That is, the presence of these three brothers adds majesty and glory to the Lord because their presence makes Vishnu in the form of Lord Ram complete with all his parts.] (17).

विद्याधर—सुराधीश—सिद्धगन्धर्व—किन्नरैः । योगीन्द्रैर्नारदाद्यैश्च स्तूयमानमहर्निशम् ॥१८॥

18. He is always praised, honoured and adored by Vidyadhar (a category of semi-Gods who are more exalted than Gandharvas and Kinnars but are not full-fledged Gods), Indra (the king of Gods), Siddhas (mystics; the attained ones), Gandharvas (semi-Gods; celestial musicians), Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers; legendary semi-Gods with the head of a horse), as well as by Narad and other exalted sages and seers (18).

— विश्वामित्र—वसिष्ठादि—मुनिभिःपरिसेवितम् । सनकादि—मुनिश्रेष्ठैर्योगिवृन्दैश्च सेवितम् ॥१९॥

19. He is being served by the exalted sages and seers such as Vishwamitra, Vashistha etc., as well as by Yogis and celestial sages such as Sankadi etc. (19).

— रामं रघुवरं वीरं धनुर्वेद—विशारदम् । मङ्गलयतनं देवं रामं राजीवलोचनम् ॥२०॥

20. Lord Ram is the best and the most exalted king in the race of kings belonging to the line of Raghu. He is brave, valiant and courageous. He is an expert archer and proficient in the use of the bow. He is an image/embodyment of auspiciousness, and has lotus-like (beautiful and enchanting) eyes (20).

— सर्वशास्त्रार्थ—तत्त्वज्ञमानन्दकर—सुन्दरम् । कौसल्यानन्दनं रामं धनुर्बाणधरं हरिम् ॥२१॥

21. He knows the essential and sublime truth as expounded by all the scriptures, and has a deep insight into their true meaning. He also knows all of them by heart. He is charming and beautiful to look at, and is the bestower of bliss, happiness and joy to all. He provides delight to Kaushalya (his mother), and he is famous as the one who holds a bow and an arrow (21).

— एवं सञ्चिन्तयन् विष्णुं यज्ज्योतिरमलं विभुम् । प्रहृष्टमानसो भूत्वा मुनिवर्यः स नारदः ॥२२॥

22. Remembering Lord Vishnu who has revealed himself as Lord Ram possessing all the above peerless, eclectic and divine holistic qualities which are sublime and unique, the Lord who is uncorrupt and immaculate, having no taints and blemishes of any kind whatsoever, who is omnipresent, all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing, and who embodies the splendour and radiance of light¹ that is divine and sublime, sage Narad felt extremely cheerful and exhilarated (22).

[Note--¹Light here represents the eclectic virtues of divinity, holiness, sublimity, enlightenment, wisdom and erudition; it is a metaphor for that which is the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality.]

— सर्वलोक—हितार्थाय तुष्टाव रघुनन्दनम् । कृताञ्जलिपुटो भूत्वा चिन्तयन्नद्भुतं हरिम् ॥२३॥

23. Narad folded his hands in reverence and prayed to Lord Ram who enhances the bliss, joy and happiness of the world. He prayed for the welfare and auspiciousness of the entire world (23).

— यदेकं यत्परं नित्यं तदनन्तं चिदात्मकम् । यदेकं व्यापकं लोके तद्रूपं चिन्तयाम्यहम् ॥२४॥

24. Narad prayed, 'I remember that form of Lord Ram which is unique, unparalleled and without a second; which is eclectic, holy, divine, supreme and transcendental; which is perpetual, constant, consistent, eternal, truthful, permanent, ceaseless, immutable, invariable, steady and unchanging; which is without an end, eternal, everlasting, infinite, measureless and fathomless; which is pure consciousness, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment personified; which is the best and the most exalted of all the forms in which Lord Vishnu (or the Viraat Purush representing

Brahm) has ever manifested; and which is omnipresent, all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing (24).

विज्ञानहेतुं विमलायताक्षं प्रज्ञानरूपं स्वसुखैकहेतुम् । श्रीरामचन्द्रं हरिमादिदेवं परात्परं राममहं भजामि ॥२५॥

25. I worship, honour and adore that Lord Ram who is the essence of all sciences, i.e. he represents the factor that is at the base of all knowledge; he is the essence which is the root from which all forms of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, enlightenment and truthful knowledge about the ultimate reality sprout; he is the object and aim of all metaphysical and spiritual research and study.

He possesses a divine sight which is blessed with the sublime and glorious virtues of having long foresight and deep insight. He is an embodiment personification of Pragyan (enlightenment, wisdom, erudition, sagacity).

He is the cause of supreme bliss arising out of self-realisation (because he is the pure consciousness called the Atma of the creature personified, and this Atma is characterised by inherently possessing the grand virtue of blissfulness).

He is the most ancient Lord (or is the first amongst all the Gods), and is the most exalted and most superior amongst them all' (25).

—
कविं पुराणं पुरुषं पुरस्तात् सनातनं योगिनमीशितारम् ।

अणोरणीयां समनन्तवीर्यं प्राणेश्वरं राममसौ ददर्श ॥२६॥

26. When sage Narad had prayed as above, he had a divine vision of Lord Ram who is an honoured, well-lettered and a learned One.

The Lord has been lauded by the ancient Purans as the Viraat Purush (the macrocosmic gross body of creation and another name of the all-pervading supreme Lord of creation known as Vishnu)¹.

He represents all the primeval essential elements of creation (i.e. Lord Ram personifies all the five basic elements earth, water, fire, air and space from which the whole creation has evolved).

He is eternal, perpetual, everlasting, primeval, ancient, traditional and absolutely truthful (a reference to Brahma and Vishnu).

He is the most exalted amongst the Yogis (realised ascetics and hermits) on the one hand, and provides emancipation and salvation to them on the other².

He pervades uniformly and universally in the entire creation—right from the minutest forms of creatures to the most colossus ones, and in both the two types of worlds—the animate and the inanimate.

He is the almighty, omnipotent and most powerful force of creation. He is majestic, stupendous, magnificent and glorious in his microcosmic as well as macrocosmic forms. He is of an immeasurable strength, force, prowess, potent and valour.

He is indeed the 'Lord of Pran' which is the vital wind that is at the core of all forms of life in this creation. [That is, Lord Ram, as the Supreme Being, controls all the factors of life including the vital winds such as Pran or breath and is the Lord of the creature's soul.] (26).

[Note—¹The phrase 'Puran Purush' can be interpreted differently to mean the Lord who is most ancient, traditional and primeval. He is the ancient Lord who has been honoured by ancient traditional histories of Hindus as the most virtuous and powerful Lord of all creatures as well as the cause and essence of the entire creation. Thus, Lord Ram personifies this macrocosmic Viraat Purush in a microcosmic form.

²Lord Ram, as a human being, is like an enlightened ascetic or hermit who remains detached from all worldly involvements, is a renunciate par-excellence, and ever engrossed in meditation and contemplation. On the other hand, as the supreme transcendental Brahm personified, he is the liberator and deliverer of the creature's soul, he is the Supreme Being who bestows the boon of emancipation and salvation to the creature.]

नारद उवाच

नारायणं जगन्नाथमभिरामं जगत्पतिम् । कविं पुराणं वागीशं रामं दशरथात्मजम् ॥२७॥

27. Sage Narad paid his humble obeisance to Lord Ram, saying, 'Oh Narayan (Vishnu), Oh Jagganath (Lord of the world)! You are the one who is the enhancer of happiness, joy, delight and bliss of all; you are the master and Lord of the entire world; you are an expert in languages and a wise, erudite, sagacious and learned One; you are an embodiment of the Purans (i.e. you personify all the divine and eclectic values and virtues propounded, expounded, enunciated and espoused by ancient religious mythological histories); you are the most exalted amongst wise and realised ascetics and hermits called Yogis (i.e. you are like an emperor amongst them); and you have taken birth, or revealed yourself as the son of king Dasrath of Ayodhya—I most reverentially bow before and pay my respectful obeisance to such an exalted and divine Lord known as 'Ram' (27).

राजराजं रघुवरं कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनम् । भर्गं वरेण्यं विश्वेशं रघुनाथं जगद्गुरुम् ॥२८॥

28. Oh King Lord Ram, the emperor amongst kings, the most exalted one amongst the kings of the Raghu dynasty, the enhancer of the joys and pleasures of mother Kaushalya, the personification of Lord Shiva (standing for such virtues as auspiciousness, truthfulness, purity, wisdom, enlightenment and renunciation) and Lord Brahma (standing for such virtues as knowledge, erudition, sagacity, scholarship and wisdom because Brahma had created the Vedas which are metaphors for these qualities, as well as for the authority to create the world), the most revered, the most senior, the most exalted and the chief amongst all the manifestations of Brahm in this creation as well as its Lord, the Lord of the Raghu's race, and the Guru (moral preceptor, teacher and guide) to the entire creation. I bow before you most humbly and reverentially (28).

सत्यं सत्यप्रियं श्रेष्ठं जानकीवल्लभं विभुम् । सौमित्रिपूर्वजं शान्तं कामदं कमलेक्षणम् ॥२९॥

29. You are an embodiment/image/personification of the grand virtue of truthfulness; you are the lover of truth and honesty; you are the most excellent and exalted being; you are the beloved of Janki (Sita); you are honoured by the epithet of 'Vibho'¹; you are the elder brother of Laxman; you are tranquil, serene, calm and peaceful by temperament; you are the fulfiller of all the desires and wishes of the creature; you are lotus-eyed—I bow before Lord Ram most reverentially and devotionally (29).

[Note—¹The word *Vibho* means 'one who is omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, almighty, majestic and powerful Lord of all'. It is an epithet usually used to describe the virtues of Lord Vishnu who is regarded as being synonymous with both Brahm, the attributeless and infinite Supreme Being who had manifested as Narayan, as well as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of this creation. He is also called the 'Chief Purush'.

Another interpretation of this verse is that 'Vibho' refers to Brahm while the word 'Chief Purush' refers to Lord Vishnu in the form of

Viraat Purush. It is due to the joint efforts of Brahm and the Viraat Purush that this creation has come into being.]

—
आदित्यं रविमीशानं घृणिं सूर्यमनामयम् । आनन्दरूपिणं सौम्यं राघवं करुणामयम् ॥३०॥

30. You are ‘Aditya’ (the sons of Aditi— the Gods, the Sun, Indra, Vaman the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu, the 8 Vasus), ‘Ravi’ (the Sun, the Fire, the leader), ‘Ishan’ (Lord Shiva; the flag bearer of Dharma or righteousness, probity, propriety and auspiciousness), ‘Grihini’ (the one who accepts everything, or the one to whom all oblations, libations, worships and sacrifices are offered), ‘Surya’ (the Sun God; as splendid as the celestial Sun), ‘Anamaya’ (healthy, without any faults or blemishes, without any reproach), ‘Anand Roop’ (an embodiment/personification/image of bliss, joy and happiness), ‘Saumya’ (sober, dignified, graceful and modest), as well as ‘Karunamayam’ (full of mercy, kindness and compassion). I bow before such a Lord Ram, most humbly and reverentially (30).

—
यामदग्निं तपोमूर्तिं रामं परशुधारिणम् । वाक्पतिं वरदं वाच्यं श्रीपतिं पक्षिवाहनम् ॥३१॥

31. For all practical purposes, you are like the son of sage Jamdagni, i.e. sage Parashuram, who is a living image or an icon of Tapa (one who observes severe austerities and penances; one who undergoes hardships and sufferance for some noble cause and spiritual upliftment). In that manifestation (as Parashuram), you hold an axe.

You are the Lord of speech, the thing or subject that is spoken about in words, as well as the object of speech or the words spoken. You are a granter of boons. You are the Lord of Laxmi (i.e. you are Lord Vishnu) who rides the legendary bird known as Garud (the legendary eagle/heron)—I bow before such a Lord Ram, most reverentially and devotionally (31).

—
श्रीशार्ङ्गधारिणं रामं चिन्मयानन्दविग्रहम् । हलधृग्—विष्णुमीशानं बलरामं कृपानिधिम् ॥३२॥

32. Oh Lord Ram! You hold a bow called ‘Shaarang’ (a bow held by Lord Vishnu). You are an image or personification of profound wisdom and enlightenment as well as eternal and truthful beatitude and felicity.

You hold a plough i.e. you are Balraam, the elder brother of Lord Krishna. You are Vishnu (the sustainer and protector of creation) and Ishan (Shiva the concluder of creation and considered an exalted ascetic, most wise, auspicious, truthful and an image of bliss).

You are a treasury of mercy, kindness and compassion. I bow before such a Lord Ram, most reverentially and with utmost humility (32).

—
श्रीवल्लभं कृपानाथं जगन्मोहनमच्युतम् । मत्स्य—कूर्म—वाराहादि—रूपधारिणमव्ययम् ॥३३॥

33. You are the beloved Lord of Goddess Laxmi, also known as ‘Sri’. You are the Lord who has such noble virtues as compassion, mercy and kindness. You are the one who keeps the entire world enthralled. You are imperishable and indestructible; you never fall from your exalted stature or get demoted and tarnished in anyway.

You have assumed various forms, such as the legendary fish, the tortoise and the boar etc. on different occasions—I bow before such a Lord Ram with the greatest of reverence and devotion (33).

—
वासुदेवं जगद्योनिमनादिनिधनं हरिम् । गोविन्दं गोपतिं विष्णुं गोपीजनमनोहरम् ॥३४॥

34. You are also called the son of Vasudeo (i.e. Lord Krishna). You are the creator of the world, are without a beginning or an end, and are the Lord of the cows as well as the one who has enchanted the heart of the cowherd maids (of Vrindavan). Your name is Govind as well as Vishnu—I bow before such a Lord Ram, most reverentially and with humility (34).

[Note--By calling Lord Ram as Krishna, the composer of these hymns tries to establish that there is no difference between Lord Ram and Krishna.]

—
गो—गोपालपरीवारं गोपकन्या—समावृतम् । विद्युत्पुञ्जप्रतीकाशं रामं कृष्णं जगन्मयम् ॥३५॥

35. Surrounded by cows, cowherd boys, girls and their families in your manifestation as Lord Krishna, you effuse a divine radiance and are as splendid and glorious as the dazzle of electric. You pervade uniformly and universally throughout the whole world (because you are omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing). Conversely, the entire creation is nothing but your image. I bow before such a Lord Ram with utmost reverence and devotion (35).

—
गो—गोपिका—समाकीर्णं वेणुवादन—तत्परम् । कामरूपं कलावन्तं कामिनी—कामदं विभुम् ॥३६॥

36. Oh Vibho (omnipotent, almighty, omnipresent Lord; an epithet for Lord Vishnu)! Being surrounded by cows and cowherd maids (during your manifestation as Lord Krishna), you expertly play the enchanting music of the flute.

You are as beautiful and enchanting as Kamdeo-cupid. You embody all the different 'Kalaas' that form the texture of a man's character and personality (i.e. the various auspicious and noble qualities and virtues that a man possesses are all personified in your divine form). You fulfill the desires of charming women (36).

—
मन्मथं मथुरानाथं माधवं मकरध्वजम् । श्रीधरं श्रीकरं श्रीशं श्रीनिवासं परात्परम् ॥३७॥

37. You are the personification of 'Manmath' (Kamdeo-cupid) and are the Lord of Mathura (i.e. Lord Krishna). You are known by the names of Maadhav, Makardwaj, Sridhar, Srikar, Srisham and Srinivaas.

You are the supreme and the most exalted transcendental Lord of the entire creation— I bow before such a Lord Ram, most reverentially and with utmost devotion (37).

—
भूतेशं भूपतिं भद्रं विभूतिं भूतिभूषणम् । सर्वदुःखहरं वीरं दुष्टदानववैरिणम् ॥३८॥

38. You are the Lord of the five basic elements (earth, water, fire, wind and space which are the building blocks of creation). You the Lord of the earth (i.e. you are the emperor of all living beings on the earth). You are a righteous, noble, civilized, dignified, learned and properly groomed gentleman.

You are one who is dignified, majestic, glorious, magnificent, stupendous and almighty, being a fountainhead of all such virtues which are collectively described as 'excellent', and one who possesses supernatural powers¹. Being graced with these holistic and glorious virtues, you are like an 'ornament' of the world (i.e. your noble virtues are like an ornament which adorns the world).

You are the vanquisher of all the sorrows, distresses, miseries, troubles and tribulations (that afflict your devotees in this world). You are brave, courageous, valiant, valorous and strong. You are the slayer of evil demons representing evil forces in the world—I bow before such a Lord Ram, most reverentially and devotionally (38).

[Note--¹The word *Vibhuti* also means richness and prosperity. Hence, a person who is rich with these virtues and qualities is a 'Vibhuti'.]

श्रीनृसिंहं महाबाहुं महान्तं दीप्ततेजसम् । चिदानन्दमयं नित्यं प्रणवं ज्योतिरूपिणम् ॥३९॥

39. You had assumed the form of 'Narsingh' (half lion, half man incarnation of Vishnu to protect his child-devotee Prahalad from the torments of the latter's demon father).

You have long arms (a metaphor for being able to extend all help to your devotees, no matter what happens). You are most exalted and revered, and the ultimate refuge and shelter for all (your devotees)¹.

You are aglow with a radiant splendour that is divine and holy as well as brilliant and dazzling as the light of a burning fire.

You remain perpetually in a state of utmost bliss and tranquility, of peace and happiness. You are characterized by being perpetual, constant, consistent, eternal, permanent, ceaseless, immutable, invariable, steady and unchanging.

You personify 'Pranav'² at the macro level of existence. You are an embodiment of light (symbolizing the energy of fire and the enlightenment that comes with truthful knowledge). I reverentially bow before Lord Ram to pay my deepest respect and homage (39).

[Note—¹The word *Mahaant* has the following connotations—(a) An abbot of a monastery, implying that Lord Ram is the chief-in-command who takes care of all those who reside in the monastery of righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility of thoughts and deeds, religiosity, truthfulness and uprightness. (b) The word also means the 'great end', implying the final emancipation and salvation of the soul of the creature from where it does not have to come back again to enter the cycle of birth and death.

²The word *Pranav* refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm recognised by the ethereal primary monosyllable word OM.]

आदित्यमण्डलगतं निश्चितार्थ—स्वरूपिणम् । भक्तप्रियं पद्मनेत्रं भक्तानामीप्सितप्रदम् ॥४०॥

40. You are present in the subtle sky like the Sun is in the physical sky¹. Or, you shine in this world like the Sun shines in the sky; the Sun shining brilliantly is your representative in the sky.

You have no ambiguity and confusions surrounding yourself, as you are an embodiment of the absolute, unequivocal, irrefutable and irrevocable Truth and Reality in creation.

You are very endearing to your devotees and are the fulfiller of their wishes, desires, aspirations, hopes and expectations. You have eyes that resemble the beautiful flowers of the lotus plant. I bow before such a Lord Ram with most reverence and devotion (40).

[Note--¹That is, your divine and ethereal form is as glorious, magnificent, majestic, splendorous and radiant as the Sun in the sky. This Sun lights the entire length and breadth of the visible world even as Lord Ram lights up the inner-self of the creature as its pure consciousness and the eclectic virtues of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, self-realisation and enlightenment which help the creature to overcome the darkness of ignorance.

Further, according to various Upanishads, the Viraat Purush, or Lord Vishnu whose manifestation Lord Ram is, is visualised as being present in the Sun, the latter being the Viraat's visible form.]

कौशल्येयं कलामूर्तिं काकुत्स्थं कमलाप्रियम् । सिंहासने समासीनं नित्यव्रतमकल्मषम् ॥४१॥

41. You (Lord Ram) are the son of Kaushalaya and born in the clan of king Kukustha. You are the maverick Lord who does mysterious deeds sportingly, and at the same time you are an image of (i.e. you personify) all the different virtues in creation which are collectively called 'Kalaas' that characterize the personality and bearing of a living being. You are dear to Kamlaa (another name of Goddess Laxmi because she holds a lotus in her hands).

You are seated on a throne in a meditative posture of Samadhi (accompanied by Kamlaa/Laxmi who has manifested herself in the form of Sita).

You are constantly, consistently and persistently steadfast in following the chosen path of righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility, religiosity and uprightness; you uphold your righteous words, vows and promises.

You are sinless and without any reproach; you are without any blemishes and taints. I reverentially bow before Lord Ram to pay my deepest respect and homage (41).

—
विश्वामित्रप्रियं दान्तं स्वदारनियतव्रतम् । यज्ञेशं यज्ञपुरुषं यज्ञपालनतत्परम् ॥४२॥

42. You are very dear to sage Vishwamitra, are self-restrained, and are faithful and committed to your wife (Sita).

You are the Lord for whom the offerings are made in the fire sacrifice, and you a personification of the fire sacrifice itself. [That is, you are both the Lord to honour whom the fire sacrifice is done as well as the Fire God himself who is worshipped in the form of the sacred fire of the sacrifice.] You are very eager to protect and uphold the sanctity of such fire sacrifices; at the same time, you do them diligently yourself. I reverentially bow before Lord Ram to pay my deepest respect and homage (42).

—
सत्यसत्त्वं जितक्रोधं शरणागत—वत्सलम् । सर्वक्लेशापहरणं विभीषणवरप्रदम् ॥४३॥

43. You are committed to truthfulness, are without a trace of anger and vengeance (or are the conqueror of this negative trait), are the protector of those who have come to take refuge/shelter in your feet, are the eliminator and destroyer of all sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations, and are the one who had blessed Vibhishan (even though he was a demon and a betrayer of his own brother Ravana). I bow before such a Lord Ram with great humility and respect (43).

—
दशग्रीवहरं रौद्रं केशवं केशिमर्दनम् । बालिप्रमथनं वीरं सुग्रीवेप्सितराज्यदम् ॥४४॥

44. You are the slayer of the 10-headed Ravana. You are Rudra personified. [That is, you represent the angry form of Shiva for the express purpose of killing sinful monsters who represent all the evil forces and negativity in creation. You have to eliminate them in order to restore the balance in favour of goodness and righteousness.]

You are known as Keshav because you had slayed a most terrible ogre known as Keshi.

You had also killed the brave Vaali (the monkey king of Kishkindha) and had bestowed the kingdom to Sugriv (the younger brother of Vali who had taken refuge with Lord Ram and sought the Lord's help to retrieve his wife and kingdom usurped by his elder brother). I reverentially bow before Lord Ram to pay my deepest respect and homage (44).

—
नर—वानर—देवैश्च सेवितं हनुमत्प्रियम् । शुद्धं सूक्ष्मं परं शान्तं तारकं ब्रह्मरूपिणम् ॥४५॥

45. You are served by men, monkeys as well as by the Gods. You are very dear to Hanuman.

You are pure, immaculate and without any blemishes and taints of any kind whatsoever. Your real form is subtle and sublime like the microcosmic Atma as well as the microscopic, all powerful Atom.

Your form is an image of tranquility, serenity, peace, calmness and placidity. You are the 'Tarak Brahm' personified. [Refer Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 5-6. That is, you provide liberation and deliverance to those who seek shelter with you, and ensure emancipation and salvation of their souls.]

I bow before such a Lord Ram, most reverentially and humbly (45).

—
सर्वभूतात्म—भूतस्थं सर्वाधारं सनातनम् । सर्वकारणकर्तारं निदानं प्रकृतेः परम् ॥४६॥

46. You are present in all the creatures as their Atma (the pure consciousness soul), are the very foundation on which everything rests, and are the truthful, infinite, eternal and absolute reality of creation.

You are the root of all causes and reasons, their results and effects, as well as their answers and remedies¹. You are beyond the realm or reach of Maya (delusions) and are the Supreme Being personified—I bow to such a Lord Ram, most reverentially and devotionally (46).

[Note—¹For example, if there is a certain problem, there must be a cause for it, and a remedy for it. This verse implies that the Lord is not only the cause of everything that exists, being the primary creator of creation, but the very conception of anything existing itself, as well as the means to understand what that particular thing is all about, to unravel its secrets, and also to find remedies for any problems created by that thing. In fact, the entire circle—from the conception of anything right up to its conclusion is overseen by the Lord of creation.]

—
निरामयं निराभासं निरवद्यं निरञ्जनम् । नित्यानन्दं निराकारमद्वैतं तमसः परम् ॥४७॥

47. You are Niramaye (one who is free from any kind of diseases—spiritual, mental, physical, psychological, moral, etc. that may taint one's character and personality). You are Niravhas (un-manifest, invisible, imperceptible, and without any physical attributes and qualities that can be quantified). You are Nirvadyam (one who is so divine, holy, graceful, exalted, sublime, great and majestic that his virtues and glories simply cannot be narrated in words). You are Niranjan (one having no defects, faults, taints, blemishes and scars of any kind; one who is immaculate and pure).

You are eternally blissful and remain perpetually in a state of joyous abandon. You are without any attributes, forms and specifics. You are non-dual and a unique entity that has no parallel, no match or comparison. You have no darkness of ignorance, called 'Tamas', ever affecting your holy, pure and divine self; you are indeed the supreme transcendental Being who is beyond the reach of the dark long shadow cast by delusions and ignorance. I pay my deepest of respects, and bow myself most reverentially before such a Lord Ram who has these unique eclectic qualities and virtues (47).

—
परात्परतरं तत्त्वं सत्यानन्दं चिदात्मकम् । मनसा शिरसा नित्यं प्रणमामि स्मृतम् ॥४८॥

48. You are the first among equals and the best amongst the exalted ones; you are an embodiment of the essence of truth knowledge; you are the absolute, irrefutable and universal Truth as well as the bliss obtained with this realisation (or you are a true

image of beatitude and felicity); and you are the pure conscious enlightenment Atma or soul of the creature.

I bow my head most reverentially and on a daily basis, with my mind and heart fully devoted to his Lordship who is the most exalted and the best king in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty (of Ayodhya). [That is, I give my heartfelt respects and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Ram with my mind, intellect and heart committed to what I say; my whole being is devoted to the worship of and honouring the Lord who is the best Lord in the line of kings of the Raghu dynasty of Ayodhya.] (48).

—
सूर्यमण्डलमध्यस्थं रामं सीतासमन्वितम् । नमामि पुण्डरीकाक्षममेयं गुरुतत्परम् ॥४९॥

49. Lord Ram along with Sita is symbolically established in the centre of the world just like the Sun is established as the focal point of the visible world¹.

I bow most reverentially, devotionally and faithfully to the Lord who has (beautiful and enchanting) eyes resembling the lotus flower, and who is the most learned, wise and enlightened Guru (moral preceptor, teacher and spiritual guide), well-versed in the essence of all the scriptures, of all the living beings in this creation (49).

[Note--¹That is, even as the world revolves around the Sun and no life is expected to survive in this world without the existence of the celestial Sun in the sky as its focal point, you too are at the core of all life forms in this myriad, multifarious and varied creation as its Atma or soul which is present in the bosom of all living beings as their pure consciousness, as well as the Pran which is the vital wind that infuses life into them. The Lord has a magnificently divine splendour radiating out in all the directions from his holy body much like the Sun which gives out light to illuminate the entire visible world. In this verse, the Sun has been treated as a metaphor for Lord Ram, and the light of the Sun is the divine halo surrounding the Lord's holy body which illuminates the entire creation by injecting life and consciousness into it.]

नमोऽस्तु वासुदेवाय ज्योतिषां पतये नमः । नमोऽस्तु रामदेवाय जगदानन्दरूपिणे ॥५०॥

50. I bow most reverentially and with greatest of humility to Vasudeo who is the Lord of light. [Here, 'light' refers to the glow of pure consciousness as well as enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge, erudition and sagacity that effuses from the Lord like divine effulgence and illuminates the entire creation.]

I bow again before Lord Ram who bestows happiness and joy to the world and is an image of happiness and bliss himself (50).

—
नमो वेदान्तनिष्ठाय योगिने ब्रह्मवादिने । मायामयनिरासाय प्रसन्नजनसेविने ॥५१॥

51. I bow most reverentially before the Lord who is an expert in and a strict follower of the tenets, axioms and maxims enunciated in Vedant (Upanishads); who is a Yogi (ascetic and hermit) par excellence; and who is an expert in the truthful knowledge about the supreme transcendental Brahm (i.e. he is well-versed about the ultimate, supreme, absolute, irrefutable, incontrovertible Reality and the universal unequivocal Truth in this creation) and an erudite exponent of that knowledge.

The Lord is an embodiment of Maya (the powerful forces of worldly delusions and ignorance that are at the core of creation of this imaginary, artificial and hallucinating world of allurements that traps the creature in its mirage-like charm) as well as beyond its purview (because Maya is generated by the Lord himself in order

to carry on with the process of creation and destruction in an endless cycle, and therefore Maya cannot neither deceive him nor supersede him; the Lord is free from the deluding effects of Maya).

The Lord protects his devotees, or those who have taken refuge and shelter with him, most cheerfully and gladly (51).

वन्दामहे महेशानं चण्ड—कोदण्ड—खण्डनम् । जानकीहृदयानन्द—वर्द्धनं रघुनन्दनम् ॥५२॥

52. I praise and honour Raghunandan (literally a son belonging to the race of Raghu kings of Ayodhya) who had broken the strong and sturdy bow of Lord Shiva (at Janakpur in order to marry Sita), and had thereby enhanced the pleasure and happiness of Sita's heart by doing so¹ (52).

[Note—¹This is because Sita had wished to marry Lord Ram but was bound by her father's vows that stipulated that anyone who lifted and stringed the bow of Shiva would have her hands in marriage, even if that meant that it was against her wishes. It was a very damning situation for Sita, and she had prayed frantically to Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati to make it so happen that the vow was fulfilled by none but Lord Ram. So when the Lord broke the bow, it was natural that Sita's heart was filled with unbound exhilaration.]

उत्फुल्लामल—कोमलास्वतकलदल—श्यामाय रामाय ते कामाय प्रमदामनोहरगुणग्रामाय रामात्मने ।

योगारूढ—मुनीन्द्र—मानससरो हंसाय संसारविध्वंसाय स्फुरदोजसे रघुकुलोत्तंसाय पुंसे नमः ॥५३॥

53. I reverentially and most respectfully bow before Lord Ram who has a dark complexion and looks as enchanting and attractive as a fully blooming lotus flower, who is as attractive, enthralling and enamouring as the alluring God of love known as Kamdeo-cupid who enchants and captivates the heart and mind of beautiful women, who is a treasury and fount of all noble and righteous virtues and qualities, and who is the pure conscious Atma/soul of all the living creatures.

I reverentially and most respectfully bow before him who is ever engrossed/involved in doing/practicing Yoga (mediation and contemplation upon the Truth), who is like a swan floating in the lake-like heart of sages and seers, who has revealed himself as the brave, courageous, valiant, gallant and strong Lord Ram—who is the most exalted one in the race of kings of the Raghu dynasty—for the destruction of evil forces in this world (53).

भवोद्भवं वेदविदां वरिष्ठमादित्यं—चन्द्रानलसुप्रभावम् ।

सर्वात्मकं सर्वजगत्स्वरूपं नमामि रामं तमसः परस्तात् ॥५४॥

54. I most reverentially and with the greatest of respect bow before Lord Ram who is the source or fount from which the entire creation has come into being; who is the best amongst those who are experts in the knowledge of the Vedas, who is as majestic, stupendous, splendid, radiant, potent and powerful as the Sun, the Moon and the Fire; who is present in the form of the pure conscious Atma/soul of all the individual creatures as well as of the world at large (i.e. he is the soul of the entire creation, both at the micro as well as the macro levels), who embodies the entire world or whose image the entire visible world is.

I do so with proper awareness of the truth and reality, devoid of any darkness cast by ignorance or delusions; I honour him with full realisation of his most divine, sublime, holy, eclectic and ethereal form (54).

निरञ्जनं निष्प्रतिमं निरीहं निराश्रयं निष्कलमप्रपञ्चम् ।

नित्यं ध्रुवं निर्विषयं स्वरूपं निरन्तरं राममहं भजामि ॥५५॥

55. Lord Ram is 'Niranjan' (one having no defects, faults, taints, blemishes and scars of any kind; one who is absolutely immaculate and pristine pure; an epithet applied to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation). He is without any specific image or form (because the supreme Lord has no specific and delineating attributes). He is without any worldly aspirations, expectations, desires or wants (as he is fully contented and fulfilled). He is without any need for taking refuge, shelter or help from anyone else (because he is the one who provides these to others instead of requiring them for himself). He is without any fraction or part (because he is wholesome, indivisible and immutable) as well as free from all worldly deceptions, tricks, cunning, conceit, fraud, artificiality, illusions, falsehoods and concealments.

I constantly, consistently, persistently and steadfastly worship and most reverentially adore and honour Lord Ram in the image of his divine 'self' which is Nitya (one who is perpetual, constant, consistent, eternal, absolute, permanent, ceaseless, immutable, invariable, steady and unchanging); which is Dhruv (steady, unchanging, unmoving, consistent, constant, eternal, everlasting and imperishable like the Polar Star); and which has no 'Vishaye', i.e. has no attachments towards and attractions for any of the worldly allurements and material comforts and pleasures pertaining to the sense organs and their gratifications in this materialistic, artificial, entrapping and deluding mundane world (that generally enthrall all living beings and keep them trapped, except the self-realised and enlightened souls) (55).

भवाब्धिपोतं भरताग्रजं तं भक्तप्रियं भानुकुलप्रदीपम् ।

भूतत्रिनार्थं भुवनाधिपत्यं भजामि रामं भवरोगवैद्यम् ॥५६॥

56. He who resembles a ship or boat to help the creature (i.e. his devotees) to cross over this world which is like a vast and fathomless ocean, who is the elder brother of Bharat and most dear to his devotees, who is like a brilliant lighted lamp in the Solar race; who is the Lord of the three categories of creatures classified on the basis of the three class of characteristics possessed by them (called Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas respectively), who is the master and Lord of all the Bhuvans (all inhabitable worlds of which there are said to be fourteen in number), and who is like a doctor for the treatment of the diseases represented by all the insurmountable problems and miseries, spiritual and bodily, associated with this world of artificiality, delusions, illusions, ignorance, hallucinations and their ilk.

I worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who has these magnificent qualities (56).

सर्वाधिपत्यं समराङ्गधीरं सत्यं चिदानन्दमयं स्वरूपम् ।

सत्यं शिवं शान्तमयं शरण्यं सनातनं राममहं भजामि ॥५७॥

57. He is the Lord of the entire creation—both the animate as well as the inanimate worlds. He is bold, unrelenting, serious and steadfast during war and never turns his back in the face of adversities (i.e. who never shirks from his responsibilities and obligations). He is an embodiment of the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality. He is a personification of eternal and supreme bliss, joy and happiness. He is the truthful Lord Shiva (representing such glorious virtues as truth and auspiciousness, peace and tranquility, wisdom and enlightenment, renunciation of and detachment from all worldly attachments, etc.) personified. He accepts anyone who comes to seek his (Lord Ram's) refuge and protection, as he is renowned as the benevolent,

magnanimous and benign benefactor of all those who have taken his refuge (irrespective of who that person is and what are his misdeed and sins). He is called 'Sanatan' (because he is eternal, perpetual, everlasting, primeval, ancient, traditional and absolutely truthful—a reference to Brahma the creator and to Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector of creation).

I reverentially worship and most respectfully adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and qualities (57).

कार्यं क्रियाकारणमप्रमेयं कविं पुराणं कमलायताक्षम् ।

कुमारवेद्यं करुणामयं तं कल्पद्रुमं राममहं भजामि ॥५८॥

58. He personifies the cause of all actions and deeds, as well as the reward of such actions or deeds undertaken by a creature. He is boundless, limitless, measureless and without any parameters, as well as is the one who cannot be proved by worldly logics and rationales. He is a 'Kavi' (a poet) par excellence¹. He is the most ancient and primary Lord mentioned in the Purans (the legendary ancient mythological histories of Hindus). He is the one with enchanting broad lotus-like eyes.

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is worthy to be honoured, adored and revered as well as contemplated and meditated upon by exalted sages and seers such as Sanat Kumar and others, who is like an image or personification of the grand virtue of mercy, grace, kindness and compassion, and who is like the Kalpa-tree (the ever-green, all wish-fulfilling tree of Gods) for the purpose of fulfillment of all my wishes as well as the wishes of other devotees (58).

[Note—¹The word *Kavi* literally means a poet, but it implies anyone who is well-lettered, scholarly and erudite; one who is well spoken and an expert with words; one who is learned in the scriptures because the latter have been composed in poetry form comprising of verses called Chandas. These Chandas are poetical forms of composition, having a fixed pattern of lines and the number of letters or words to each line. The Vedas and other scriptures have all been composed in this form.]

त्रैलोक्यनाथं सरसीरुहाक्षं दयानिधिं द्वन्द्वविनाशहेतुम् ।

महाबलं वेदनिधिं सुरेशं सनातनं राममहं भजामि ॥५९॥

59. He is the Lord of the three worlds (i.e. the terrestrial, the celestial and the subterranean worlds; or the entire creation). He is lotus-eyed. He is an ocean of mercy, grace, kindness and compassion. He is the destroyer of all confusions, perplexities, doubts and confoundedness pertaining to the artificial and deluding world.

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is the most gallant, valiant, strong and powerful Lord in creation, who is like a treasury of the knowledge contained in the Vedas (i.e. he is an expert in the tenets, axioms, maxims and precepts of the scriptures), who is the Lord of Gods, and who is the Sanaatan Being (i.e. one who is eternal, perpetual, everlasting, primeval, ancient, traditional and absolutely truthful in this creation marked by delusions and falsehoods) (59).

वेदान्तवेद्यं कविमीशितारमनादिमध्यान्तमचिन्त्यमाद्यम् ।

अगोचरं निर्मलमेकरूपं नमामि रामं तमसः परस्तात् ॥६०॥

60. He can be realised, known and understood only through the knowledge given by Vedanta (Upanishads). He is a poet par excellence (i.e. he is most erudite, scholarly, wise and well-lettered). He is endowed with grand virtues and qualities that bestow him with a matchless fame, majesty, power and glory. He is without a beginning,

middle or an end (being eternal, infinite and imperishable). He is beyond the scope of comprehension (i.e. he is beyond the imagination, reach and grasp of the mind and intellect). He is the most ancient, first and primary Purush (i.e. the first male aspect of creation known as the Viraat Purush). He is not the object that can be visualized, understood, grasped or perceived by the creature through any of its sense organs. He is pure, immaculate, uncorrupt and without any blemishes and taints of any kind. He is one, non-dual and without a parallel or comparison. He is the one who is without any hint of darkness caused by ignorance and delusions (i.e. he is most wise, sagacious, erudite, knowledgeable and enlightened).

I most devotedly bow and reverentially honour Lord Ram who has these eclectic and noble virtues and qualities in him (60).

अशेष—वेदात्मकमादिसंज्ञमजं हरिं विष्णुमनन्तमाद्यम् ।

अपासंवितासुखमेकरूपं परात्परं राममहं भजामि ॥६१॥

61. He has no remainders or fractions (because he is unfractionable, immutable and indivisible whole). He is an image or a personification of all the Vedas and other holy scriptures. He has the unique attribute of not having any beginning or a birth (because he is eternal, imperishable, infinite, everlasting, and present even before and after everything that exists came into being or would end). He is known by different names such as Hari and Vishnu and numerous other names; (in fact, all names of all the creatures in this world are but the different names of the same Lord). He is the primary Purush (who was there even at the beginning of creation, and in fact was the creator of this creation as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme creator known as Brahm). He is fathomless, measureless and infinite, having no end (i.e. it is not possible to see his 'other end'). He is an image of truthful knowledge, erudition and wisdom, as well as of beatitude and felicity. He is the best amongst those who are exalted ones, and is the Supreme Being in the creation.

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and divine qualities (61).

तत्त्वस्वरूपं पुरुषं पुराणं स्वतेजसा पूरितविश्वमेकम् ।

राजाधिराजं रविमण्डलस्थं विश्वेश्वरं राममहं भजामि ॥६२॥

62. He is the essence of metaphysics and spiritualism, and personifies these virtues. He is the first and most ancient male, called the Purush (or the Viraat Purush), mentioned in the Purans (mythological histories). He is the one who illuminates the whole world by his astounding glory and the splendour of the divine light radiating out from him much like the celestial Sun lighting up the entire world with its brilliant light. [Here, 'light' represents consciousness, knowledge, intelligence and wisdom as well as the various noble, righteous and auspicious virtues that the Lord stands for.] He is the supreme Lord and Emperor of all the creatures (i.e. of the entire creation). He is irrefutably and unambiguously present in the entire world, forming its core and around whom all life forms revolve, much like the Sun in the sky which forms the axis around which all the planets revolve and on which the life in this visible world depends. He is the Lord of the world as well as of its patron Gods.

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and divine qualities (62).

लोकाभिरामं रघुवंशनाथं हरिं चिदानन्दमयं मुकुन्दम् ।

अशेषविद्याधिपतिं कवीन्द्रं नमामि रामं तमसः परस्तात् ॥६३॥

63. He grants happiness and joys to the world, enchants it and keeps it enthralled by his stupendous and magnificent beauty and charm (i.e. not the physical one so much as his uncountable glories, auspicious virtues and noble qualities which are matchless and most astounding). He is the Lord of king Raghu's race. He is known as Hari (one of the numerous names of Lord Vishnu) who is an image of eternal and perpetual bliss and happiness as well as pure and holy as the lotus flower. He does not leave behind any remainders or fractions, as he is whole, complete and indivisible. He is an exalted 'Kavi', literally a poet but implying that the Lord is well-lettered, scholarly and erudite; one who is well spoken, an expert orator and an expert with words; one who is learned in the scriptures (because the latter have been composed in poetry form comprising of verses called Chandas which are poetical forms of composition, having a fixed pattern of lines and the number of letters or words to each line; the Vedas and other scriptures have all been composed in this form). He is free from the darkness induced by ignorance and delusions.

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and divine qualities (63).

योगीन्द्रसङ्घैश्च सुसेव्यमानं नारायणं निर्मलमादिदेवम् ।

नतोऽस्मि नित्यं जगदेकनाथमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥६४॥

64. He is the best amongst Yogis (ascetics and hermits). He is served (i.e. worshipped and honoured) by great and noble souls (such as sages, seers, hermits, ascetics, friars and monks). He is known as Narayan, the ancient and primeval Lord of creation. [Narayan is one of the numerous names of Vishnu]. He is immaculate, pure and uncorrupt. He is the ancient and traditional Lord of creation who was present in the very beginning of it. He is the one who is perpetual, constant, consistent, eternal, absolute, permanent, ceaseless, immutable, invariable, steady and unchanging. He is the only Lord of the world and has a radiant countenance and splendorous glory which resembles the splendour and radiance of the Sun. He is beyond the reach of the shadow of darkness represented by ignorance and delusions.

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and divine qualities (64).

विभूतिदं विश्वसृजं विराजं राजेन्द्रमीशं रघुवंशनाथम् ।

अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तमूर्तिं ज्योतिर्मयं राममहं भजामि ॥६५॥

65. He bestows 'Vibhuti' (majesty, glory, pomp, favourable circumstance, magnificence, fame, powers, prosperity, fortunes, grandeur and other noble, praise worthy and divine faculties) to his devotees. He is the creator and progenitor of the whole cosmos. He is the final resting place for the creature and its soul. He is the Emperor of kings, and is the Lord of Raghu's clan. He is beyond the imagination and thought processes of the mind and intellect; the latter cannot fathom and understand him. He is an entity that is beyond description or narration (i.e. the faculty of speech is too incompetent to describe or tell anything about him), and this entity has no end (being infinite and eternal). He is self-illuminated and self-radiant (i.e. he is a holy image from which effuses an ethereal light of divinity, holiness, sublimity and piety)

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and divine qualities (65).

अशेष—संसार—विकारहीनमादित्यगं पूर्णसुखाभिरामम् ।

समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तान्नारायणं विष्णुमहं भजामि ॥६६॥

66. Nothing remains in this world if he is removed from it. [That is, if the Lord is removed from this world, it becomes lifeless and useless, because the Lord is the soul and life of this world.] He is free from all the faults, shortcomings, blemishes, vices and evils associated with this world. He is like the glorious and splendorous Sun. He is the one who bestows all kinds of happiness, joy and bliss to the creature (or his devotees) in this world. He is the eternal and truthful witness for all and for all that is happening. [That is, it is impossible to hide anything from him; no one can deceive the Lord.] He has no stain of darkness symbolizing ignorance and delusions or any other faults associated with this artificial and deluding world. He is an incarnation of Lord Narayan Vishnu.

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and divine qualities (66).

—
मुनीन्द्रगुह्यं परिपूर्णकामं कलानिधिं कल्मषनाशहेतुम् ।
परात्परं यत्परमं पवित्रं नमामि रामं महतो महान्तम् ॥६७॥

67. He is so mysterious, subtle and enigmatic that only senior and scholarly sages and seers, who are sufficiently wise, erudite and enlightened, are able to know him, are able to realise him and experience his presence, as well as witness his truthful metaphysical essence, divine nature and ethereal sublime form. He is fully contented and fulfilled himself as well as the fulfiller of all the wishes, desires, expectations and aspirations of his devotees. He is a treasure of all arts, crafts, skills and expertise that exist in this creation. He is the destroyer or causes the destruction of all sins and their integrated accumulated effects. He is the best amongst the most exalted ones, and the one who is supreme and transcendental. He is most pure, immaculate, uncorrupt and holy. He is the greatest amongst the great, noblest amongst the noble, the best amongst the good, and first amongst equals. He is a great, most exalted, supreme, transcendental, ethereal, holy, eclectic and divine being who is a Supreme Being in this creation and greater than the greatest of Lords

I devotedly worship and most reverentially adore Lord Ram who is endowed with these eclectic virtues and divine qualities (67).

—
ब्रह्मा विष्णुश्च रुद्रश्च देवेन्द्रो देवतास्तथा । आदित्यादि—ग्रहाश्चैव त्वमेव रघुनन्दन! ॥६८॥

68. Oh Raghunandan (Lord Ram)! It is you who are present in myriad forms such as that of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer and protector), Shiva (the annihilator and concluder), Indra (the king of Gods), all other Gods, the Sun and other planets of the solar system, and etc. (68).

[Note—This verse implies that all the Gods are none other but Lord Ram who has assumed as many in order to carry on with the myriad functions of creation.]

—
तापसा ऋषयः सिद्धाः साध्याश्च मरुतस्तथा । विप्रा वेदास्तथा यज्ञाः पुराण—धर्मसंहिताः ॥६९॥

69. You are a personification of those who do severe Tapa (austerities and penances) as well as of the ancient Rishis (sages and seers) and Siddhas (mystics, the expert ones, the attained ones). You are the object of worship and contemplation. You personify the various Maruts (i.e. the vital life giving wind forces), the Brahmins (the learned and wise class of people), the Vedas (representing the scriptures), the Yagyas (religious sacrifices), the Purans (the ancient mythological histories), the various other treatises called 'Sanghitas of Dharma' (i.e. the explanatory volumes which elaborate

upon the numerous doctrines of righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct as enshrined in the different scriptures) (69).

[Note—There is nothing astonishing in it because Lord Ram is Brahm personified, and everything in this creation is governed by Brahm; everything in this creation has Brahm as its integral part; everything in this creation is one or the other manifestation or revelation of Brahm and his astounding powers and potentials.]

—
वर्णाश्रमास्तथा धर्मा वर्णधर्मास्तथैव च । यक्ष—राक्षस—गन्धर्वा दिक्पाला दिग्गजादयः ॥७०॥

70. You have revealed yourself in myriad of forms in this creation, such as in the form of the four ‘Varnas’¹ (i.e. the four segments in which the society has been classified by the scriptures; these classes are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras), the four ‘Ashrams’² (i.e. the four periods of life in which a person’s age is divided into; Brahmacharaya, Grishastha, Vaanprastha and Sanyas) as well as in the form of ‘Dharma’ (i.e. the eclectic virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct and thoughts), in the form of the ‘Yaksha’ (a form of semi-God who is the guard of the celestial treasury of Gods), in the form of ‘Raakshas’ or demons, in the form of ‘Gandharva’ (a semi-God who is the celestial musician of the Gods and considered to be great at playing tricks), in the form of ‘Digga’ (the eight mythological elephants who hold the earth aloft at eight strategic points; the word refers to one who is matchless in his stupendous valour, strength, courage, steadfastness and prowess), and in the form of the ‘Digpaals’ (the custodians of the corners of the world) etc.

All of them are but various manifestations of your one, indivisible, single self, i.e. they are none other but you in all these myriad forms that you have chosen to assume (70).

[Note—¹The four *Varnas*—The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are— (a) Brahmins—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras —the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

These four classes of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped as well as feels the pain equally if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his

arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain. The four classes had specific jobs cut for them so that the society could function smoothly.

The Brahmins have their origin from the mouth of Brahma the creator. Since the mouth is used to give advice and teach others, the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guide to their brethrens. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exist, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas, who were created from the arms of Brahma, were those sons of his who would give the needed protection and security to their other brethrens. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour to provide for the maintenance and financial and material well being of the society for merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life. So he created the Vaishyas from his thighs, symbolising labour, to pick up the mantle of mundane affairs of life. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras created from Brahma's feet symbolising service.

None of these classes were meant to be inferior or superior to one another; they were all parts of the body of the same Brahma. In fact, the leg bears the burden of the body; just imagine what would have happened if Brahma had not created anyone from his legs? How would the Brahmin walk, how would the Kshatriya fight, and how would the Vaishya do his commercial activities if he could not walk? Similar arguments can be applied to other classes. See also Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/11-15, and Aitereyo-panishad, 1/1/4.

²The four *Ashrams*—The life of a Hindu man is divided into four segments or Ashrams—(a) Brahmacharya —this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style, (b) Grihastha —when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihastha Ashram which is a householder life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life and dealings with this deceptive world with all their accompanying horrifying problems, (c) Vanprastha —this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas —this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and meditation, living a life of total renunciation and begging for food, and single mindedly aiming for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the

aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.

These four Ashrams, their characteristic features and virtues are described in detail in an Upanishad called 'Ashramo-panishad' belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition.]

सनकादि—मुनिश्रेष्ठास्त्वमेव स्युपुङ्गव! । वसवोऽष्टौ त्रयः काला रुद्रा एकादश स्मृताः ॥७१॥

71. Sages Sankadi and others who are the best amongst the sages, the eight Vasu¹, the three Kaals² and the eleven Rudras³ are none other but you in those forms (71).

[Note--¹The eight *Vasus* are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

These eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following-. Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv, Dhar, Som, Aap, Anil, Anal, Pratush, and Prabhaas.

See also Chapter 2, Canto 5, verse no. 31.

²The three *Kaals* are the three periods of time—the past, the present and the future.

³The eleven *Rudras* are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva; the literal meaning of the word Rudra is 'anger, wrath, vengefulness, vehemence, furious, rage'. These eleven Rudras are the following—(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugraretaa, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahmin 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparajeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyaadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.]

तारका दशदिक् चैव त्वमेव स्युनन्दन! । सप्तद्वीपाः समुद्राश्च नागा नद्यस्तथा द्रुमाः ॥७२॥

72. Oh Raghunandan (Lord Ram)! The stars, the ten directions, the seven continents, the oceans, the mountains, the rivers, the trees, the snakes and other reptiles—all of

them are your varied forms (or you have revealed yourself in all these myriad forms) (72).

—
स्थावरा जङ्गमाश्चैव त्वमेव रघुनायक ! । देव—तिर्यङ्—मनुष्याणां दानवानां तथैव च ॥७३॥

73. Oh Raghunayak (literally, the leader of the king Raghu's race)! The animate as well as the inanimate world, the Gods, the animal and the birds, the demons, the humans—all of them are nothing else but your various forms (73).

माता पिता तथा भ्राता त्वमेव रघुवल्लभ ! । सर्वेषां त्वं परं ब्रह्म त्वन्मयं सर्वमेव हि ॥७४॥

74. Oh the dear Lord of the Raghu's race (i.e. Lord Ram)! You are the father, the mother, and the brother of all. You are the supreme transcendental Brahm personified. The whole world is pervaded by you and you encompass it from all the sides (i.e. you are omnipresent and you uniformly pervade in this world, being present both inside it as well as outside it) (74).

[Note--To understand this latter concept, we can visualise a sponge or a ball of fluffy cotton in water. The water is present both inside as well as outside the sponge or the ball of cotton.]

—
त्वमक्षरं परं ज्योतिस्त्वमेव पुरुषोत्तम ! । त्वमेव तारकं ब्रह्म त्वतोऽन्यत्रैव किञ्चन ॥७५॥

75. You are the imperishable One who does not decay, disintegrate, crumble or come to an end at any point of time. You are the supreme transcendental Being who is self-illuminated and self-radiant. You are indeed the best and most exalted Male (Purushottam) in creation. [This is a reference to the Viraat Purush, or the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme Brahm from whom the rest of the visible creation was revealed.]

You are the 'Tarak Brahm' (i.e. the supreme transcendental Being who provides liberation and deliverance to the soul of the creature from this humdrum, artificial, deluding and ignorant ridden world of miseries and torments associated with an endless cycle of birth and death, and provide it with emancipation and salvation). There is nothing in this creation that is not you; you pervade throughout the length and breadth of this creation (75).

—
शान्तं सर्वगतं सूक्ष्मं परं ब्रह्म सनातनम् । राजीवलोचनं रामं प्रणमामि जगत्पतिम् ॥७६॥

76. He who is calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil by temperament, is all-pervading, all-incorporating and omnipresent, is minute, subtle, esoteric, enigmatic and mystical in nature and form, is the traditionally and universally truthful, eternal, perpetual, primeval, and most ancient supreme transcendental Brahm, is lotus-eyed, and is the Lord of the whole world—I most reverentially and respectfully bow and pay my obeisance to Lord Ram who has these eclectic virtues and qualities' (76).

व्यास उवाच—

ततः प्रसन्नः श्रीरामः प्रोवाच मुनिपुङ्गवम् । तुष्टोऽस्मि मुनिशार्दूल ! वृणीष्व वरमुत्तमम् ॥७७॥

77. Sage Veda Vyas said, 'When Narad had prayed to Lord Ram as above, the latter was very pleased with him and said—'Oh the most exalted sage (Narad), oh the lion amongst sages (i.e. one who is like a king amongst his peers)! I am very pleased with you. Ask for the boon that you desire' (77).

नारद उवाच—

यदि तुष्टोऽसि सर्वज्ञ! श्रीराम करुणानिधे! । त्वन्मूर्तिं दर्शनेनैव कृतार्थोऽहं च सर्वदा ॥७८॥

78. Sage Narad replied, 'Oh Lord Ram! You are all-knowing, omniscient, merciful, kind, graceful and compassionate. If you are indeed pleased with me then I am grateful and privileged in having your 'Darshan' (i.e. having a divine, holy, august and auspicious view or sight) (78).

—
धन्योऽहं कृतकृत्योऽहं पुण्योऽहं पुरुषोत्तम! । अद्य मे सफलं जन्म जीवितं सफलं च मे ॥७९॥

79. Oh Purushottam (the best and the most exalted amongst men—i.e. Lord Ram)! By having your 'Darshan' today, I feel extremely thankful, honoured, privileged, grateful and fortunate. I feel that my birth has been fully rewarded, and my life has been successful (79).

—
अद्य मे सफलं ज्ञानमद्य मे सफलं तपः । अद्य मे सफलं कर्म त्वत्पादाम्भोज—दर्शनात् ॥८०॥

80. By having you're the 'Darshan' of your august and holy feet today, all the virtuous deeds that I have done, all the knowledge and education that I have acquired, all the severe sufferance, austerities and penances etc. that I have done, are duly rewarded and deemed to be fully successful. [That is, the best reward that one can ever expect by doing anything auspicious and holy is to have a communion with the supreme Lord Ram, which has been made available to Narad. No reward can match this privilege. There is nothing more that he expects.] (80).

—
अद्य मे सफलं सर्वं त्वन्नामस्मरणान्नता । त्वत्पादाम्भोरुहद्वन्द्वं सद्भक्तिं देहि राघव! ॥८१॥

81. Oh Raghav (Lord Ram)! Everything is successful for me and I am amply rewarded today for having remembered your holy name. I do not want anything more except having steady and true devotion and submission for your holy and august feet. Hence oh Lord, if you are indeed pleased with me, then grant this boon to me' (81).

—
ततः परमसम्प्रीतः स रामः प्राह नारदम् ।

श्रीराम उवाच

मुनिवर्य्य! महाभाग! मुने! त्विष्टं ददामि ते । यत्त्वया चेप्सितं सर्वं मनसा तद् भविष्यति ॥८२॥

82. Thence, Lord Ram was extremely pleased with Narad and said to him, 'Oh the most exalted sage, oh the most fortunate one! I grant you your desired boon—whatever you wish now, or will ever wish in future, shall be made available to you (i.e. all your desires will be fulfilled)' (82).

नारद उवाच

वरं न याचे रघुनाथ युष्मत्पादाब्जभक्तिः सततं ममाऽस्तु ।

इदं प्रियं नाथ! वरं प्रयाचे पुनः पुनस्त्वामिदमेव याचे ॥८३॥

83. Sage Narad replied, 'Oh Raghunath (Lord Ram)! I do not ask you for any boon except that I must have sincere, unfaltering and steady devotion in your lotus-like holy feet. Oh Lord! This is the only boon that I repeatedly seek from you' (83).

व्यास उवाच

इत्येवमीडितो रामः प्रादात्तस्मै वरोत्तमम् । वीरो राम महातेजाः सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः ॥८४॥

84. Sage Veda Vyas said, 'In the above way, when Narad had prayed to Lord Ram who is most valiant and brave, most glorious, majestic, radiant and splendorous with his divine holiness, and who is an image of truthful and eternal bliss and felicity,

granted Narad with the excellent boon that the latter desired to have granted (which was to have steady and unfaltering devotion for the Lord and submission in his holy and august feet) (84).

—
अद्वैतममलं ज्ञानं त्वन्नामस्मरणं तथा । अन्तर्दधे जगन्नाथः पुरतस्तस्य राघवः ॥८५॥

85. After blessing Narad with the divine awareness of the ethereal supreme and transcendental entity called Brahm, and granting him the boon of having eternal devotion for his holy and divine name, Lord Ram vanished from sight of Narad (85).

—
इति श्रीरघुनाथस्य स्तवराजमनुत्तमम् । सर्वसौभाग्य—सम्पत्तिदायकं मुक्तिदं शुभम् ॥८६॥

86. This excellent hymn dedicated to the Lord who is the most exalted One in the race of king Raghu (of Ayodhya), a hymn known as ‘Stavaraj’, has the stupendous and mystical potential of bestowing all sorts of imaginable good fortunes and prosperity, all round welfare and auspiciousness, as well as emancipation and salvation to the devotee (86).

—
कथितं ब्रह्मपुत्रेण वेदानां सारमुत्तमम् । गुह्याद् गुह्यतमं दिव्यं तव स्नेहात्प्रकीर्तितम् ॥८७॥

87. This divine and holy Stotra (Ram-Stavaraj) was pronounced by none other than the son of Brahma (i.e. sage Narad). It contains the essence of all the Vedas and their secret knowledge. I have brought it to light out of affection for you (87).

—
यः पठेच्छृणुयाद्वाऽपित्रिसन्ध्यं श्रद्धयाऽन्वितः । ब्रह्महत्यादि—पापानि तत्समानि बहूनि च ॥८८॥

स्वर्णस्तयं सुरापानं गुरुतल्पगतिस्तथा । गोवधाद्युपपापानि अनृतात् सम्भवानि च ॥८९॥

88-89. Benefits—Those faithful devotees who will read, recite or hear this Stotra (i.e. Ram-Stavaraj) three times in the day (i.e. in the morning, during the noon and in the evening hours), shall be freed from the evil effects of all small or big sins and misdeeds committed by them, such as the killing of a Brahmin, theft of gold, drinking wine, sitting on the seat of the teacher, killing of a cow, and telling a lie. All such sins, misdeeds and misdemeanors and their incumbent punishments shall be remitted or pardoned or literally destroyed or eliminated by the good affects of this Stotra (88-89).

[Note—It is a standard practice in ancient literature that such blanket pardoning is prescribed for all sinners who have devotion for a particular chosen deity to whom a specific hymn is dedicated. This does not give them the license to commit murder and slaughter of innocents, felony and larceny, indulgence and debauchery, and sins of all other imaginable kinds, with the assurance that forgiveness is easy, automatic and round the corner. No, never. The idea is that if one had committed these sins and sincerely regrets for them, then some avenue must be open for their redemption, for to err is human. If a man sincerely wishes to repent and mend himself, then he should be given a chance, otherwise he would go on committing the same horrific act over and over again because there is no way to undo his mistakes.]

—
सर्वैः प्रमुच्यते पापैः कलायुत—शतोद्भवैः । मानसं वाचिकं पापं कर्मणा समुपार्जितम् ॥९०॥

90. In a similar way, a person is able to get rid of all his sins committed over numerous ‘Kalpas’ (eras; a long period of time) by his body, mind or speech along with their accumulated punishments (if he follows the directions given above and has devotion for Lord Ram) (90).

[Note—1 *Kalpa* is equivalent to 1 day in the creator Brahma's total life span of 100 years. Each *Kalpa* consists of 1000 four-Yug cycles, called the 'Chatur Yugs'. The visible creation's one life-span consisting of this four-Yug cycle called the 'Chatur Yugs' is this one day of Brahma. At the end of this Chatur Yug, there would be dissolution or the so-called 'dooms-day' when everything would be submerged in water. Then the next phase of life consisting of the next four-Yug cycle would start.

Each *Kalpa* (i.e. 1 day of Brahma's life) is also divided into 14 *Manvantars*, and each such *Manvantars* is ruled by one Manu, the first male. Therefore, 1 Manu rules over 71.42 (1000/4) four-Yug cycles.

We are now passing through the 51st year of Brahma's life, and our present Kaliyug belongs to the 7th *Manvantar* out of the 14 *Manvantars*, and its Manu is called Vaivasvata, and it is 28th Kaliyug of the four-Yug cycle.

In human years, 1 *Kalpa* is equivalent to 4.32 billion (4.32×10^9) years.]

— श्रीरामस्मरणेनैव तत्क्षणान् नश्यति ध्रुवम् । इदं सत्यमिदं सत्यं सत्यमेतदिहोच्यते ॥९१॥

रामं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म रामात् किञ्चिन्न विद्यते । तस्माद्रामस्वरूपं हि सत्यं सत्यमिदं जगत् ॥९२॥

91-92. All the sins and their accumulated bad effects will be immediately destroyed by the mere remembrance of Lord Ram's holy and divine name (with sincerity, earnestness and devotion). This is undoubtedly an absolute, truthful and irrefutable certainty.

Besides this, it is also an absolute truth that Lord Ram is the eternal, truthful, supreme, transcendental and the ultimate Brahm. There is nothing that is not Lord Ram (or there is nothing in this creation that is besides Lord Ram, or which is not pervaded by Lord Ram, or which is not an image of Lord Ram, or which is different from and independent of Lord Ram). Hence, this world appears to be true because of the fact that Lord Ram is the ultimate Truth, and this world is a manifestation of this Lord known as Brahm¹ (91-92).

[Note--¹That is, we can see the world as a reality because Lord Ram, who is none else but the Tarak Brahm himself, is real, and this world is only a manifestation of that reality. For example, we see the tree because it is there, it is real. And it is real because it is another manifested form of Brahm who is real and true. Had it not been so, we wouldn't have seen the tree because it wouldn't have been there in existence in the first place. In short, the very existence of the visible world is because of Brahm whose manifestation is Lord Ram. This world is a visible proof of the existence of Brahm represented by his personified form as Lord Ram.]

सूत उवाच _

श्रीरामचन्द्र रघुपुङ्गव राजवर्य! राजेन्द्र राम रघुनायक राघवेश! ।

राजाधिराजरघुनन्दन! रामचन्द्र! दासोऽहमद्य भवतः शरणागतोऽस्मि ॥९३॥

93. Sage Sut said, 'Oh Lord Ramchandra, oh the most exalted in the race of king Raghu, oh the most exalted king, oh the Emperor amongst kings, oh Lord Ram the leader of Raghu's race, oh the King of kings, oh an exalted son of the Raghu's race Lord Ram! I am your humble servant (i.e. your devotee) and have taken refuge/shelter in your holy feet (93).

— वैदेही—सहितं सुरद्रुमतले हेमैर्महामण्डपे मध्ये पुष्पकृतासने मणिमये वीरासने संस्थितम् ।

अग्रे वाचयति प्रभञ्जनसुते तत् त्वं मुनीन्द्रैः परं व्याख्यातं भरतादिभिः परिवृतं रामं भजे श्यामलम् ॥९४॥

94. Accompanied by Vaidehi (Sita), Lord Ram is seated on a throne covered with flowers under the Kalpa tree (the evergreen celestial tree of Gods) in a golden pavilion. Hanuman is standing in front of him singing the sacred hymns which have been composed by erudite sages and seers and highlights the knowledge of the supreme Brahm. Lord Ram is surrounded by Bharat and other brothers. He is dark complexioned. I adore and worship Lord Ram in this form (94).

रामं रत्न—किरीट—कुण्डलयुतं केयूर—हारान्वितं सीताऽलङ्कृत—वामभागममलं सिंहासनस्थं विभुम् ।

सुग्रीवादि—हरीश्वरैः सुरगणैः संसेव्यमानं सदा विश्वामित्र—पराशरादि—मुनिभिः संस्तूयमानं प्रभुम् ॥९५॥

95. I praise and honour Lord Ram who has a crown and a tiara made of precious stones/gems on his head, wears ear-rings, and has arm-bands on his arms and a necklace around his neck. Sita adorns (i.e. is seated on) his left side. He is seated on a magnificent and gleaming throne, is known by the name of Vibho (an epithet of Vishnu meaning omnipresent, magnanimous, eternal, almighty and majestic Lord), is served by Sugriv and other monkeys, and is praised and honoured by sages such as Vishwamitra and Parashar (95).

सकल—गुण—निधानं योगिभिः स्तूयमानं भुज—विजित—समानं राक्षसेन्द्रादिमानम् ।

महितनृपभयानं सीतया शोभमानं स्मर हृदय विमानं ब्रह्म रामाभिधानम् ॥९६॥

96. Lord Ram is a treasury of all auspicious virtues and noble characters, is revered, honoured and praised by the Yogis (ascetics/hermits), was able to vanquish and crush the pride, haughtiness and arrogance of the demons by the dint of his matchless valour, stupendous strength and astounding powers, is privileged to have Sita by his side, is the one who trounces the pride of kings, is the one who humbles the heart of Kamdeo-cupid (i.e. he makes Kamdeo feel shy and humiliated when the latter compares himself with Lord Ram's enchanting spell), and who is the supreme Brahm himself with the divine name of 'Ram'. I bow before such a Lord Ram most reverentially and devotedly (96).

रघुवर! तव मूर्तिर्मांसे मानसाऽब्जे नरकगतिहरं ते नामधेयं मुखे मे ।

अनिशमतुलभक्त्या मस्तकं त्वत्पदाब्जं भवजलनिधिमनं रक्ष मामार्तबन्धो! ॥९७॥

97. Oh Raghuvar (Lord Ram)! Let your enchanting and bewitching image be permanently enshrined in my heart, let your holy and divine name which has the potential to destroy the chances of going to hell be ever present in my mouth (i.e. let me constantly, persistently and consistently chant or repeat your august name), and let my head always remain bowed at your holy lotus-like feet with devotion and humility. Oh Lord and friend of the distressed, wretched and miserable ones! By fulfilling my above mentioned wishes, be kind and gracious enough to deliver me from this entrapping, artificial and deluding world in which I find my self trapped and engrossed (97).

रामरत्नमहं वन्दे चित्रकूटपतिं हरिम् । कौशल्याभक्तिसम्भूतं जानकीकण्ठभूषणम् ॥९८॥

इति श्रीराम—रहस्ये सनत्कुमार—संहितायां नारदोक्तश्रीरामस्तवराजं सम्पूर्णम् ।

98. I honour, revere, worship and praise the jewel called Ram who is the Lord Hari, the king of Chitrakoot¹. He is born because of the devotion of Kaushalaya (his mother), and is like a symbolic ornamentation for the neck of Janki² (98).

[Note—¹*Chitrakoot* is the place where Lord Ram had spent considerable time during his time in forest exile, and it was here that Bharat, his younger brother, had gone to try to persuade him to come back to Ayodhya. It is said that the Lord always stays in the forests surrounding this holy place.

²He is like an invaluable and precious necklace which adorns the bosom of Sita. The allusion to a necklace signifies that even as a woman's beauty and charm is enhanced by her jewelry, chiefly her necklace because it is the central piece of all her ornaments, lying prominently around her neck and placed on her bosom to show off her beauty and charm, and this piece of ornamentation has a pride of place on her body because it symbolically lies close to her heart as it is placed right above it on the chest, Lord Ram too is the greatest and most valuable possession that Sita has. Without him, she would be bare of any honour and decoration.]

Thus ends Ram Stavaraj Stotra sung by Narad in Sanatkumar Sanhita.

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Section 5-Ram Stotra (by Mahadev or Lord Shiva)

This Stotra of Lord Ram pronounced by Lord Shiva or Mahadev appears in the Adhyatma Ramayan, Uddha (Lanka) Kand, Canto 15, verse nos. 51-63.

51. 'I bow in honour of Sri Ram together with his 'Shakti' (literally, Lord's cosmic energy; but here referring to Sita). He is dark complexioned and tender like a blue lotus, is decorated with a crown, a tiara, a garland or necklace, arm band etc., is seated on a throne, and is full of divine and brilliant radiance (51).

52. Oh Lord! You are without a beginning, middle and an end, and are the only one of your kind. You create, sustain and annihilate the entire creation using your Maya (delusory power as well as the cosmic infinite creative energy), but are not involved in, attached to, affected or influenced by it because you are always established in a blissful, contented, happy and tranquil state of consciousness, and are absolutely faultless, without any blemishes and shortcomings, beyond reproach, and are uncorrupt and pristine pure (52).

53. Surrounding (or investing/infusing) yourself willfully with the deluding characteristics of your Maya (i.e. you voluntarily allow yourself to be veiled in your Maya, you willingly invest yourself with its characteristics), you use it to carry out your wishes to take/assume various forms such as that of different Gods, humans and others. Then in those forms or incarnations, you do different types of deeds in order to show the righteous path of Dharma (i.e. path of righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, noble conduct etc.) to your devotees and followers who have taken shelter and refuge with you. At that time (i.e. during those incarnation or manifestation periods), only the wise and enlightened ones are able to recognize you (53).

[Note—In other words, you reveal yourself in different forms and lead a stellar life of righteousness and auspiciousness amongst your devotees to show them in practical terms how to behave and live in the world in the scripture-sanctioned way and consequentially attain emancipation and

salvation. These devotees or followers are those who have submitted themselves to you and look forward to you for protection, guidance, example and precedence, who treat you as their moral preceptor and guide, as their Lord whom to look up to for succour and solace, as well as for their emancipation and salvation or deliverance from this mundane and entrapping world. When you reveal yourself as an incarnation or as a manifestation, your devotees do not have to look anywhere else for their guidance and example, for your own life acts as a beacon for them. They might not be scholarly enough to benefit from the study of scriptures, but they sing your glories and see your example in their day to day lives and easily attain that rare stature that is available by hard study of scriptures and doing severe penances and keeping austerities. The path of Bhakti is easier to follow for ordinary creatures as compared to the arduous path of knowledge that has its own pitfalls.]

54. You create the entire creation out of your own fraction and then take good care of it by bearing it or holding it aloft from below by becoming (assuming the form of) Sheshnath (the legendary, many-hooded serpent who holds the earth on its hood), and sustaining it from above by becoming the sun, the wind or air, the moon, the various herbs (medicinal products), and the rain. (54).

[Note—In other words, you not only create anything but also ensure that it is well taken care of. This is expected of a wise creator who is benevolent, munificent and magnanimous towards his creation. This verse implies that when one creates anything, he should provide for its maintenance and sustenance. One should not leave his responsibilities to others.]

55. You assume the form of digestive powers of the creature, and with the help of the five vital airs, you digest and assimilate the food taken in by the creatures, thereby sustaining and nourishing the whole world (55).

[Note—The five vital wind forces that regulate life are the following—Pran, Appan, Vyan, Udaan and Samaan.]

56. Oh Lord! The splendour, radiance, dazzle, brilliance, majesty, magnificence and the potential powers that the moon, the sun and the fire possess, the pure, truthful and eternal consciousness that is the characteristic feature of all living creatures, and the virtues of tolerance/patience/fortitude/forbearance, of valour/valiance/bravery/courage, and the glory and fame that one acquires during a long life that seem evident in those who possess a gross physical body—all of them are nothing else but your majestic and stupendously versatile powers and potent on display (56).

57. It is you who appears in different forms such as Brahma (the creator), Shiva (the annihilator) and Vishnu (the sustainer) etc. as well as Kaal (the God of death, time and circumstance), Karma (the theory of deeds and rewards), the Moon and the Sun (the celestial bodies) etc. depending upon the beliefs and faiths of followers of different schools of thought and philosophy. But there is no doubt in the fact that you are one and the same supreme Brahm reflected, as it were, in all those separate and distinct forms or entities in which people of different denominations worship and recognize you (57).

58. Even as you are described by the Vedas, Purans, time honoured traditions and folklore as having existed in myriad forms such as the huge legendary fish etc. whatever true or false that appears in this world—in other words, all the twin appearances in which the world is divided or separated into, viz. those things or perceptions that appear to be true and those that appear to be false—is nothing else but only your manifestation or image; there is nothing separate, different or distinct from you (58).

59. Whatever that has been produced, shall be produced in future and is being produced (or happening) in the present in this vast, measureless and endless creation which consists of both the inanimate, immovable, inert and dead as well as the movable, active, alive and animate (i.e. dual) aspects of the artificial, delusory and deceptive mundane world, are all myriad images of you, and there is nothing that exists and is visible which is separate from you. Hence, you are beyond all comprehension, measures, yardsticks and definitions (59).

60. All people do not understand your essential and true nature or your fundamental form as the one who is ‘Parmatma’ (the transcendental, supreme, macrocosmic, all-pervading, omniscient Soul which is beyond definitions and attributes), because they are under the influence and spell of your deluding powers called Maya. Only those whose internal being (or their mind-intellect discriminating apparatus) have been purified due to the good influences of the services done by them toward your devotees and followers, are the ones who are able to perceive, experience or realise your true form, nature or essence as being the Parmatma (60).

61. Those who regard the external, illusionary world of material comforts and artificial sense objects as being real or truthful do not know or realise your true and real form and essence as being the pure, eternal and truthful consciousness, even though they may be as exalted and superior as the creator Brahma himself¹. Hence, in order to avoid consternations, perplexities, confusions, dilemmas and doubts of all kinds, wise and sagacious persons worship you in this manifest and visible dark-complexioned form (as Sri Ram) with due and sincere devotion and dedication. As a result, they easily overcome sorrows, distresses, agonies and torments associated with this mundane, deluding and entangling world, and attain deliverance, emancipation and salvation (61).

[Note--¹That is, even Lord Brahma from whom the four Vedas have emerged, cannot know your true form if he is not realistic enough to realise or recognise the fact that the creation which he calls his own product is, in fact, not what he thinks it to be—that is, a creation created by him (Brahma). It is an illusion/deception created by you which Brahma takes erroneously to be for real, and as his own product, forgetting in the process that the powers to create that he possesses have been delegated to him by you. In fact, even Brahma the creator has been created by you. So if such exalted and attained souls can be under the magical and misleading spell of your delusions creating powers, then what can one say of lesser souls.]

62. Being extremely thankful and grateful, feeling highly contented and fulfilled by constantly chanting your name, I live in Kashi (Varanasi) day and night. There I pronounce your divine and holy name ‘Ram’ which is called the ‘Tarak Mantra’ for

the benefit of all those who die there and wish to achieve emancipation and salvation, to help them in fulfillment of their wishes (62).

[Note-- The 'Tarak Mantra' of Lord Ram is elaborately described in Uttar-Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in Tarak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation.

The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical and divine powers that can achieve miracles, and one of them is the ability to give liberation and deliverance to even sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikha Upanishad, 2/1,49; Advaitarak Upanishad, verse no. 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme, transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advaitarak-2,3).

According to Ram Uttar-Tapini Upanishad, the Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is 'OM RAN(G) RAAMAAYE NAMAHA' (Ramottartaponishad, 2/3). However, the Atharva-shikha Upanishad, verse no. 44 says that 'OM' is that Tarak Mantra.]

63. (Now I pray to you that—) Those who regularly listen, recite, preach or write this Stotra (i.e. these prayerful verses or hymns) enunciated by me, with the greatest of devotion and sincerity, should, by your grace, be rewarded with complete blissfulness, happiness, peace, contentedness as well as with the privilege of attaining your supreme, holy, divine and august feet. That is, they should find oneness with you (63).

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Section 6-Ram Stotra (by Jatau, the Bird)

This Stotra (hymn) by Jatau appears in Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, Canto 8, verse nos. 44-53.

44. Jatau said (prayed), 'I remain perpetually bowed in great reverence before Sri Ramchandra who has (possesses, is endowed with) immeasurable auspicious virtues and good characteristics, who is boundless, measureless, limitless and without any parameters, who is the original cause of creation, its sustenance and its ultimate annihilation, who is an embodiment of supreme peace, tranquility and serenity, and is the most exalted and supreme Soul in the creation, called the Parmatma (44).

45. I bow most reverentially day and night before Sri Ram who is an embodiment (or treasury, an abode) of and remains submerged in measureless bliss, happiness and joys, who is the object of affectionate side ways (oblique, askance) glances of Laxmi, who is the remover of the miseries, grief, troubles and tribulations of the Lord of Gods (Indra) as well as of the four-headed Lord (Brahma) and other Gods, who is the

best among humans and bestows boons, and who holds a bow and arrows in his hands (45).

46. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Raghunandan (Sri Ram) who is the most beautiful, astoundingly attractive, enchantingly captivating and stupendously charming in the whole of the three worlds (subterranean, terrestrial and celestial), who is worthy of being praised, revered and honoured by all, who is as splendid, radiant and glorious as hundreds of Suns taken together, who bestows (gives, grants) all the desired or deserved fruits or rewards (to his devotees), who constantly, day and night, gives shelter and refuge in his holy feet to those who seek it, and who resides in their affectionate and loveable hearts (46).

47. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Hari (Sri Ram) whose potent holy name resembles a powerful wild fire for the purpose of destroying this world which is like a dense and impenetrable forest, who is the supreme God who is revered, honoured and worshipped even by Lord Shiva and other Gods, who is the crusher and vanquisher of crores (millions) of demons and their kings, who is dark complexioned like the waters of the holy river Yamuna, and who is most gracious, kind, benevolent, merciful and compassionate (47).

48. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Raghunandan (Sri Ram) who is perpetually far away from the reach of and sight of (i.e. inaccessible to) those who are regularly, as a matter of habit, natural inclination and temperament, passionately involved with, are infatuated with, are emotionally attached with, are insatiably attracted to, have an unsatisfied yearning for, are madly running behind and seeking wistfully this material world of artificiality and its illusive comforts. On the other hand, he is always easily visible (accessible, attainable) to those exalted sages, seers, hermits, ascetics and other exalted, realised and holy ones who are detached, uninterested, indifferent and dispassionate towards this world (i.e. who have renounced their link with this artificial and elusive ensnaring world. The holy and divine feet of the Lord are like a ship (or boat) to take one across the ocean of this mundane, deluding, artificial and ensnaring world (48).

49. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Sri Raghunayak (literally, the exalted leader of Raghu's clan; Sri Ram) who resides in the temple-like heart of Lord Shiva and Parvati and is their well-wisher. His character, nature, conduct, behaviour, general demeanours, habits and temperaments, both the worldly as well as the heavenly, are extremely enchanting and pleasant (besides being stellar examples of divinity, holiness, piety, righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics and morality of the highest order). His holy feet are served (worshipped, adored, honoured) both by the most exalted Gods as well as the king of demons. He is that supreme authority that grants boons even to the Gods (49).

50. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of the lotus-eyed Raghubar (Sri Ram) who is being constantly served by those great noble souls who keep far away from (abhor, detest, never think of, or eye) the wealth, property and women of others. On the contrary, they feel very glad, happy and contented at the virtues, excellence, goodness, glory, prosperity, well-being and success of others, and are always eager for their welfare and well-being (50).

51. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Sri Raghupati (Sri Ram) who is the great Guru (moral preceptor) of Lord Shiva! His charming and attractive face is like a fully blossomed lotus flower and is adorned with a bewitching smile that is most attractive, endearing, genteel and charming for the heart, who is most easily accessible to his devotees, the radiant glow of whose body (i.e. his complexion) is beautifully tinged with a bluish hue like that of the 'Indra Neel Mani' (sapphire worn by Indra), and whose enchanting eyes are as adorable, fascinating, magnificent and charming as a white lotus (51).

52. It is you who appear in the three forms of Hari (Vishnu, the sustainer), the one who was born atop a divine lotus (Brahma, the creator), and Shambhu (Shiva, the concluder of creation) due to the predominance of any one of the three 'Gunas' over the others, even as the same sun appears to be different and numerous when it is reflected in a number of pans filled with water.

I sing a hymn in your honour who are worthy of being praised, revered and honoured even by Indra (the king of Gods), and are a personification of the supreme transcendental Lord (52).

53. Your divine body is more stunningly and magnificently charming, attractive, handsome, magnificent, radiant and endowed with a divine glow than that of crores (millions) of Kamdeo-cupids (literally the husband of Rati) taken collectively. You are very far away from or inaccessible to those who are confused and perplexed by, or remain entangled in, the web representing pursuit of hundreds of paths or means leading to attainment of emancipation and salvation, instead of concentrating on the righteous and correct path leading to the awareness of your truthful and real form (as described in the Shathpath Brahman of the Shukla Yajur Veda and expounded and elucidated in the Brihad Aranykya Upanishad of that Veda). [That is, you are attainable by realising your true form by following the righteous path of self realisation and devotion as affirmed in the Upanishads.] You are always present and experienced by exalted ascetics in their hearts. I bow most reverentially at the holy and venerated feet of great Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) who is such a benevolent and unparalleled eliminator of miseries, grief, distress, agonies, troubles and tribulations of all kinds' (53).

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Section 7-Ram Stotra (by Indra, the king of Gods)

This Stotra (hymn) by Indra appears in Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas, Uddhya (Lanka) Kand, Canto 13, verse nos. 24-32.

24. Indra said—'I always worship, honour and adore Sri Ram who looks most elegant, dignified, majestic and beautiful with a blue countenance like that of a blue-lotus, whose name is like a wild forest fire for the purpose of burning or destroying this materialistic, delusory, artificial and ensnaring mundane world which is like wild and dense forest (i.e. his holy and powerful name can burn the allurements and entrapments that this world presents to the soul diverting, it from its real goal of emancipation and salvation), whose blissful, most cheerful, enchanting and tranquil image/form is meditated upon by Bhavani in her heart (in other words, the blissful and pleasant image/form of Sri Ram resides in the heart of Parvati, the consort of

Lord Shiva), and who is the liberator from the fetters that shackle a creature to this world (consisting of a vicious, never ending cycle of birth and death; he is a medium by which one can free oneself from this world and its shackles). I bow reverentially before Sri Ram who is the refuge or shelter for Lord Shiva and other Gods (24).

25. He is the only medium by which all the miseries, distresses, sorrows and torments of the Gods etc. are destroyed or eliminated. He is presently in the form of a human, though he is primarily without a form and is worthy of being praised and honoured through the medium of prayers. I worship, revere and adore that Lord Sri Ram who is the supreme Lord and the one who removes the burden of the earth, who is an image of supreme, eternal and immutable bliss, happiness, joy, peace and tranquility, who is worthy of being praised, honoured, revered and worshipped, and is Lord Hari (Vishnu) himself personified (25).

26. He who is the shelter and provider of eternal happiness and succour of all kinds to those who seek refuge with him; he whose name removes or destroys all types of miseries, sorrows, torments, tribulations, anguish and their likes of those humble devotees who have sought his shelter; who is the object of severe penances and austerities (Tapa), of deep meditation, concentration and contemplation (Yoga), and of thought and search by great and attained Yogis (ascetics); and who is a friend of the king of monkeys etc. (i.e. Sugriva and his ministers)—I adore, worship, honour and revere that Sri Ram who is a true and loyal friend personified (i.e. he is a sincere friend of all, or I worship him as my true and sincere friend because he has given me succour from the horrible torments that I was being subjected to by Ravana as a true and loyal friend) (26).

27. He keeps far away from people who are always indulgent and engrossed in pleasures of the sense organs and the objects of the materialistic world, while residing in the proximity and easy reach of those who are always firm in Yoga and self-restraint. He is an eternal and everlasting treasury or a root of eternal beatitude and felicity. He is an image and source of happiness, joy and delight for the daughter of Vaideha (i.e. Sita). I always worship, revere, honour and adore Sri Ram who has been born in the clan of king Raghu (27).

28. You appear like a human being (or are in the form of an ordinary man) out of your own wish and just for the sake of fun or playful activity. While assuming this form, you have also assumed the characteristics and attributes of a human that you seem to possess by virtue of your own great deluding powers called Maya. That is, you have joined hands with your Maya, and this company has created an illusion that you are a human being and have all the attributes of a human being.

Those people whose ears get constantly filled by hearing your divine stories which bestow them with happiness and joy as well as bliss and peace, are the ones who become images or stellar examples of constant, persistent and consistent contentedness, joy, bliss, peace, tranquility and happiness (28).

29. Oh Lord! I had become intoxicated, haughty, proud, boastful and arrogant due to honours, respect, stature and privileges that I had as the king of Gods as well as by indulgence in drinking Soma (which is the elixir like drink offered to Gods during fire sacrifices). I cared for none due to my arrogance, pride and haughtiness of being all in all (or the Lord) of the entire world. Now, with the grace and kindness of your lotus-

like divine and holy feet, my haughtiness, arrogance and vanity of being the master and Lord of the three worlds has been eliminated and destroyed. [The three worlds are— the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds.] (29).

30. He who is adorned with glittering gem-studded arm bands and necklaces and looks most magnificent, handsome, elegant, enchanting and beautiful in them, who is like a wild fire for the destructions of demons who are a burden for this earth, whose auspicious face and countenance resembles a full Moon of a winter night, and whose eyes are as beautiful, enchanting, enamouring and attractive as a beautiful lotus flower, and whose beginning or end is most difficult to ascertain—I adore, worship, honour and revere such a Raghav (Sri Ram) (30).

31. He whose body has the ethereal radiance and divine glow resembling that of the 'Indra Neel Mani' (a blue sapphire worn by Lord of Gods, Indra, as a crown jewel) and is as dark as the (rain bearing) cloud, who had protected all the creatures by slaying the demon Viradh etc. to establish peace, tranquility and order in this world, who is adorned by a crown and a tiara etc., and who is the valuable asset and a valued treasure of Lord Shiva—I adore, worship, honour, praise and revere such a Sri Ramchandra who is the Lord of the clan of Raghu (31).

32. He is sitting on a magnificent throne which is as glorious, splendourous, radiant and marvelous as millions of moons shining together with Sita by his side. She has a complexion as glowing and radiant as pure gold, and as splendourous, brilliant and dazzling as lightening. I adore, worship, honour, praise and revere such a Sri Ramchandra who is beyond the purview of any sorrows, anguish and distress as well as is without any sluggishness, inertia, indolence, lethargy, careless and apathetic attitude (i.e. he is most vigilant, alert, active and agile)' (32).

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Section 8-Ram Stotra (by Vibhishan, the noble demon king of Lanka)

This Stotra (hymn) by Vibhishan appears in Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas, Uddha (Lanka) Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 17-32.

17. Vibhishan said, 'Oh the King of kings, Sri Ram! I bow before you (to pay my respects and honour). Oh the one who resides in the heart of Sita! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the invincible and formidable archer holding an invincible and formidable bow! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the one who is compassionate, benevolent, munificent, benignant and endearing towards his devotees! I bow reverentially before you (17).

18. I bow before Sri Ram who has no end, is tranquil, peaceful and serene, is unique and matchless in divine splendour, radiance, brilliance, glow of divine energy and majestic powers, is a friend of Sugriv, and is the leader of king Raghu's clan (18).

19. I repeatedly bow reverentially before you who are a great and exalted soul, are the cause (source) of the creation as well as annihilation of the world, are the Guru (a wise and enlightened teacher, a moral preceptor, an erudite and learned guide, and the one who is the most wise and enlightened) of the Triloki (the three worlds consisting

of the subterranean, terrestrial and celestial worlds), and are a householder since time immemorial (19).

20. Oh Sri Ram! You are the cause of creation and existence of this world, and at the end of it you are the place where it goes back (i.e. merges into or coalesces into) at the time of annihilation (the doomsday). You move around as per your own wish (20).

21. Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! You pervade both inside and outside the whole creation consisting of the five elements (space, air, fire, water, earth). [That is, you encompass as well as are encompassed by all the animate as well as the inanimate world which is made up of the above elements.]

As a result, the whole universe appears to be a manifestation of your own self, or it is an image which reflects you (21).

22. Those foolish, lowly, stupid and ignorant persons, whose wisdom, intelligence and discrimination powers have been eclipsed by your deluding and illusive force called Maya, are constantly and repeatedly arriving and departing, i.e. take birth and die repeatedly in this mundane, artificial, deluding and entrapping world depending upon their righteous or unrighteous deeds, thoughts and demeanors (22).

23. As long as (i.e. till the time) a person does not concentrate his mental faculties and realises and understands your true form representing pure enlightenment, wisdom and knowledge as well as the pure consciousness, he continues to regard this world as being true just like one mistakenly thinks that there is silver that glistens inside an oyster shell. [The moon or sun light reflects from the oyster shell's inner layer and it appears to simmer with a silvery light, but it is only an optical illusion.] (23).

24. Oh Vibho (omnipresent, almighty, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal Lord)! It is because the people are ignorant of you and your true form that they are engrossed in and infatuated and attached with their worldly ties such as their sons, wives and homestead etc., and try to find happiness and peace in the objects of this materialistic but perishable world which ultimately give them sorrows and anguish in return (24).

25. Oh the most exalted and the best among males ('Purshottam', an epithet for Vishnu)! You are Indra (the king of Gods), the Fire, Yam (the patron God of death), Raksho (literally, the one who protects; also means God, 'good luck' personified), Varun (the patron God of water), the Wind God, Kuber (the treasurer of Gods) and Rudra (one of the eleven forms of Shiva; synonymous with annihilation of the creation) (25).

26. Oh Lord! You are minute than an atom and larger than the greatest of creation. You are the father, the mother and the nourisher as well as the bearer of the entire creation (26).

27. You are without a beginning, middle or an end. You are always uniformly complete, eternal and imperishable, and infinite and limitless. You have no physical organs such as hands and legs or eyes and nose (because you are formless and without attributes) (27).

28. But still, oh the slayer of the demon Khar, you are the one who hears all, sees all, accepts all and are very swift, rapid moving, diligent and agile. You are free from the encumbrances pertaining to the '5-Koshas'.

You are Nirgun (formless, invisible, without any defining characteristics or attributes called 'Gunas' which is so typifies this world). And you have no abode as such (i.e. you are not fixed or localised to any specific location or habitat, because the whole universe is your abode by the virtue of the fact that you are present in all the five elements that constitute the world) (28).

29. You have no parallel, no match and no alternatives. You are without any faults, blemishes, shortcomings and taints. You have no form, no attributes, no names and no qualifying qualities defining you. You are inspired by none and are self driven; you have no Lord above you who can order you to do anything. You are free from the so-called six faults, shortcomings, blemishes or taints associated with this creation and its creatures¹. You are beyond Nature, called Prakriti. You are the eternal Purush who has no beginning or end. [Here 'Purush' means the male aspect of nature or the Viraat Purush that existed even prior to the whole creation coming into being) (29).

[Note :- ¹The six Faults mentioned in verse no. 29 are the problems associated with this gross world that has a physical origin, takes a birth and ultimately ends or dies. Naturally they are not applicable to the supreme Lord who does not take birth and does not die. These so-called 'Vikars' are the following—(1) problems associated with birth, (2) problems associated with growth, (3) problems associated with consequences of deeds done and actions taken by a creature in this world, (4) problems associated with gradual decay and decline of the body and its functions, (5) problems associated with old age and its attendant horrors, and (6) problems associated with the ultimate destruction and end of everything that relates to the creature. One will observe that the life of a creature is a continuous graph of sorrows and pains of one or the other kind. It is only when the creature realises the truth of existence and who he really is that he begins to disassociate himself from the body and the world, and thus is able to break free from this seemingly interminable cycle of horrors.]

30. You appear to be like an ordinary human being because of the illusion created by your Maya (the delusion creating powers of the Lord). The Vaishnavs (those who worship Lord Vishnu and treat him as the supreme Lord who manifests in the form of various incarnations to rid the world of evil and vices) attain emancipation and salvation by realizing that, in reality, you as are that supreme Lord who is called 'Nirgun', i.e. one who has no Gunas (no attributes and qualifying virtues, either good or bad) and 'Ajanma', i.e. one who has no birth (because he is eternal and imperishable) (30).

31. Oh Raghav! I wish to climb up the stairs (or steps of the ladder) representing sincere, steady, everlasting and pure 'Bhakti' (i.e. firm devotion, faith, conviction and belief, having reverence and adoration, worshipping and honouring) in your lotus-like holy feet, in order to reach the pinnacle of the royal palace called 'Gyan Yog' (enlightenment and wisdom acquired through truthful knowledge of the supreme reality) (31).

32. Oh Sita's dear Lord Sri Ram who is the best among those who are merciful, munificent, benevolent and compassionate! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the slayer or vanquisher of Ravana! I repeatedly bow reverentially before you. You should save me from being submerged and getting drowned in the ocean-like mundane world' (32).

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Section 9-Ram Stuti (prayer) by Brahma (the creator)

This Stuti (prayer) by Brahma appears in Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas, Uddha (Lanka) Kand, Canto 13, verse nos. 10-18.

10. Lord Brahma, the creator said, 'Oh Lord! I pray to you who are Lord Vishnu personified; you are the cause of the very existence of all the creatures; you are enthroned in the heart of self-enlightened or self-realised persons; you are free from the confusions, uncertainties, dilemmas and consternations arising from whether to leave and abandon anything or accept it; you are beyond everything and are without a parallel and match, i.e. you are unique and one like yourself alone; you are the only supreme authority and majesty in the whole world; you reside in the heart of all (in the form of the microcosmic soul); and you are the witness to all that exists (10).

11. Sages and hermits who are without any worldly attachments, who exert/exercise control over their two vital wind (life) forces—'Pran and Apaana'—and restrain or check them in their hearts with a firm determination, a concentrated mind and a focused intellect, and who, at the same time, are able to cut through (puncture, destroy, smash, overcome, vanquish, conquer, spike, break or crush) all the shackles representing uncertainties, doubts, confusions and perplexities, as well as overcome the numerous tugs and pulls exerted by various types of infatuations, yearnings and desires for self gratifications and obtaining pleasures of the sense objects pertaining to this materialistic world, which are, however, nothing but harmful poisons—only such sages and hermits can have a divine view of the Lord in their hearts. I bow and pray most reverentially to such a Lord Sri Ram who is adorned by a jewel studded glittering crown with a tiara, and is as majestic, splendorous, radiant and glorious as the Sun (11).

12. He who is beyond the influence, spell and reach of Maya (delusions, ignorance, hallucinations and illusions), who is the divine consort of Laxmi (i.e. who is Lord Vishnu himself), who is the original cause of the creation of the world, who is beyond the requirement of visible proof of existence (i.e. who cannot be measured by or compared to any known worldly yardsticks, standards or benchmarks to establish his authenticity and truthfulness), who destroys all Moha (attachments, infatuations, attractions, yearnings and desires) that exist in the world, who is praised by sages, seers and hermits, who is worthy of being meditated upon by the Yogis (ascetics), who is the founder, teacher, author and judge for the path of Yoga (meditation and concentration on the Lord), and who is complete in all respects—I bow most reverentially and humbly pray to that Lord known as Sri Ram who gives happiness, bliss, joy and delight to the whole world, and is most charming, pleasing, enthralling, beguiling and beautiful in every way (12).

13. He who has no emotions of any kind whatsoever, i.e. who is perpetually neutral and equitable, being unmoved and unwavering, constantly remaining indifferent and dispassionate under all circumstances, whether favourable or unfavourable; whose lotus-like twin holy feet are worshipped, revered and honoured by the Lord who is the chief amongst the Yogis (i.e. Lord Shiva) and others as well, who is eternal, perpetual, permanent, immutable and everlasting, who is pristine pure, absolutely uncorrupt, without any shortcomings, blemishes or faults, who is most wise, realised, knowledgeable, erudite, sagacious and enlightened, who is without an end and conclusion, and who is like a wild fire for the multitudes of demons (representing evil and vile forces in this world)—I bow most reverentially and humbly pray to such a valiant and valorous Lord known as Sri Ram who represents the divine, ethereal cosmic sound called ‘OM’! (13).

14. You are my Lord; you are the one who completes and implements all the proposals and prayers made by me (i.e. I propose but you are the one who puts them into practice; or in other words, the success of all my endeavours are dependent upon you). You are beyond any established standards or benchmarks, any dimensions and measurements, any generalities and scales that are usually applicable to all other entities in this world. You are a personification of Madhav (another name of Narayan, Vishnu, the sustainer of creation and the consort of goddess Laxmi). You are the bearer, sustainer and nourisher of the whole world. You are attainable or accessible only by firm faith, sincerity, devotion, dedication, belief and conviction. You can remove the fears arising out of this mundane, entrapping, deluding and artificial world by remembering your form which is divine, ethereal, sublime, subtle and eclectic but esoteric and mysterious. You reside in, literally move about and remain ensconced in, the mind-intellect complex which has been purified by the practice of Yoga (meditation and contemplation) (14).

15. You are the beginning and an end of this traditional world; you are the supreme Lord of all the worlds. You cannot be understood, measured, comprehended, proved, derived at or deduced by any standard, yardstick, measurement, scale, method or experiment known to this world. You are the Lord who is worthy to be adored, worshipped, honoured, revered and praised by those who have sincere devotion, dedication, faith, conviction, belief and reverence for you and have spiritually inclined emotions and outlooks—I bow humbly in reverence to Sri Ram who is as beautiful and enchanting as a blue-lotus (15).

16. You are beyond the need of any visible proof or evidence to establish your existence, majesty, divinity and authority (i.e. no proof or evidence is required to establish your existence or authority). You are without any pride, ego, haughtiness, vanity and arrogance. Which creature, who is surrounded by, under the influence of and engrossed in Maya (i.e. shrouded by delusions arising out of ignorance and misconceptions about the actual reality about this materialistic world), is capable or proficient and adept enough to know who you really and truthfully are?

Oh Madhav (literally meaning the divine consort of Laxmi; another name of Vishnu)! You are the revered and venerable one for the great sages, seers and hermits. Though you had praised, honoured and adored all the Gods in Vrindavan (during your manifestation as Lord Krishna), you are yourself praised, honoured and adored by all of the Gods themselves as well as by Lord Shiva in the form of Sri Ram. I bow and

pay my obeisance to Sri Ram who is a root (treasury, fount) of bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility (16).

17. You are proved beyond doubt, confusion or uncertainties, and are the one who is being invoked, expounded upon and enunciated by the various scriptures along with by the Vedas (i.e. you are ascertained, proclaimed, demonstrated and established without any confusion by them) which unequivocally proclaim you as being eternal, immutable, truthful, unchanging and perpetual, as being an image of beatitude and felicity, as being without any alternatives and one of your only kind, as being an embodiment or an image of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity and realisation), and as being without a beginning and an end.

You have assumed a human form just in order to accomplish my pending work (that is, to protect the creation from the tyranny of cruel demons and other evil mongers). I bow in honour and reverence to Sri Ram who is blue-complexioned like the Markat Mani (blue sapphire), and are the Lord of Mathura (the city where Lord Krishna had slayed the demon Kansha) (17).

[Note :- The reference to Lord Krishna as being the Lord of Mathura while praying to Sri Ram indicates that Brahma, the creator, sees no difference between Sri Ram and Sri Krishna, which indeed is the fact.]

18. Those wise and thoughtful persons in this mortal world who would read and recite this prime and eternal Stotra (prayerful hymns)—which were first conceived and enunciated by Lord Brahma, the creator, and which are imbued and infused with the essential tenets pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm—with full devotion, faith, conviction, respect and honour, are sure to be liberated/freed from all the shackles and entanglements representing the evil effects pertaining to their sins, misdeeds and misdemeanors of all kinds. Such recitation or reading should be done by invoking Sri Ram who is of a dark complexion and is the fulfiller of all the wishes and desires of his devotees. This Stotra proclaims and establishes the reality and essence about the supreme Brahm (18).

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-----श्री राम रहस्य उपनिषद्-----
अथर्ववेदीय 'श्रीराम रहस्य उपनिषद्' के आधार पर श्री राम के मन्त्र

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| पद ६—८ | मन्त्र में लगने वाले बीज मन्त्र (१) ॐ, (२) ह्रीं, (३) श्रीं, (४) क्लीं, (५) ऐं, (६) रां |
| पद १—२ | १ अक्षर का मन्त्र रां |
| पद ६ | २ अक्षर का मन्त्र राम |
| पद ७—८ | ३ अक्षर का मन्त्र |

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| | (१) ॐ राम, (२) ह्रीं राम, (३) श्रीं राम, (४) क्लीं राम, (५) ऐं राम, (६) रां राम |
| पद ९ | ४ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) रामचन्द्र, (२) रामभद्र |
| पद १०—११ | ५ अक्षर का मन्त्र रामाय नमः |
| पद १६ | ६ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) रां रामाय नमः, (२) श्रीं रामाय नमः, (३) क्लीं रामाय नमः, (४) ऐं रामाय नमः, (५) ह्रीं रामाय नमः, (६) ॐ रामाय नमः |
| पद १७—१८ | ६ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ राम चन्द्र ॐ, (२) ॐ रामभद्र ॐ, (३) श्रीं राम चन्द्र श्रीं, (४) श्रीं राम भद्र श्रीं, (५) क्लीं राम चन्द्र क्लीं, (६) क्लीं रामभद्र क्लीं, (७) ऐं रामचन्द्र ऐं, (८) ऐं रामभद्र ऐं, (९) ह्रीं रामचन्द्र ह्रीं, (१०) ह्रीं रामभद्र ह्रीं |
| पद १९ | ६ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ रामाय स्वाहा, (२) श्रीं रामाय स्वाहा, (३) क्लीं रामाय स्वाहा, (४) ह्रीं रामाय स्वाहा, (५) ऐं रामाय स्वाहा, (६) रां रामाय स्वाहा, (७) ॐ रामाय नमः, (८) श्रीं रामाय नमः, (९) क्लीं रामाय नमः, (१०) ह्रीं रामाय नमः, (११) ऐं रामाय नमः, (१२) रां रामाय नमः, (१३) ॐ रामाय हुँ फट्, (१४) श्रीं रामाय हुँ फट्, (१५) क्लीं रामाय हुँ फट्, (१६) ह्रीं रामाय हुँ फट्, (१७) ऐं रामाय हुँ फट्, (१८) रां रामाय हुँ फट् |
| पद २५ | ७ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) राम चन्द्राय नमः, (२) राम भद्राय नमः |
| पद २६—२८ | ८ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ राम चन्द्राय नमः, (२) ॐ राम भद्राय नमः, (३) ॐ रामाय हुँ फट् स्वाहा |
| पद २९—३० | ९ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ग्लौं ॐ ह्रीं नमः रामाय ग्लौं |
| पद ३५—३६ | ८ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) श्री राम शरणं मम् |
| पद ३९ | ९ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ श्री रामः शरणं मम ॐ |
| पद ४०—४२ | १० अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) जानकी वल्लभाय स्वाहा हुम |

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| पद ४८—४९ | १० अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) रामाय धनुषपाणये स्वाहा |
| पद ५० | ११ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ रामाय धनुषपाणये स्वाहा, (२) ह्रीं रामाय धनुषपाणये स्वाहा, (३) श्रीं रामाय धनुषपाणये स्वाहा, (४) क्लीं रामाय धनुषपाणये स्वाहा, (५) ऐं रामाय धनुषपाणये स्वाहा, (६) रां रामाय धनुषपाणये स्वाहा |
| पद ५१—५४ | १२ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ ह्रीं भरताग्रज राम क्लीं स्वाहा |
| पद ५४—५५ | १२ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ नमो भगवते राम चन्द्राय, (२) ॐ नमो भगवते राम भद्राय |
| पद ५६—५७ | १३ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम |
| पद ५८ | १४ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम |
| पद ५८ | १५ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम राम |
| पद ५९—६१ | १६ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) नमः सीतापतये रामाय हन हन हुँ फट् |
| पद ६२—६३ | १७ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ नमः सीतापतये रामाय हन हन हुँ फट् |
| पद ६२—६३ | १८ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय महापुरुषाय नमः |
| पद ६४—६५ | १९ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय महापुरुषाय नमः |
| पद ६४—६५ | २० अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय सर्व सौभाग्यं देहि मे स्वाहा |
| पद ६६ | २१ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय सकलापन्निवारणाय स्वाहा |
| पद ६७ | २२ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ श्री रां दाशरथाय सीतावल्लभाय सर्वाभीष्टदाय नमः |
| पद ६९ | २३ अक्षर का मन्त्र (१) ॐ नमो भगवते वीररामाय सकलशत्रुन् हन हन स्वाहा |
| पद ७३—७४ | २४ अक्षर का मन्त्र |

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| पद ७५—७६ | (१) ॐ नमो भगवते श्री रामाय तारक ब्रह्मणे मां तारय नमः ॐ २५ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ७७ | (१) क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते रामचन्द्राय सकलजनवश्यकराय स्वाहा २६ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ७७ | (१) ॐ क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते राम चन्द्राय सकलजनवश्यकराय स्वाहा २७ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ७८—७९ | (१) ॐ क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते राम चन्द्राय सकलजनवश्यकराय स्वाहा ॐ २८ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ७८—७९ | (१) ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षोघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्तसमुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा २९ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ८० | (१) ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षोघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्तसमुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा ॐ ३० अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ८० | (१) रां ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षाघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्तसमुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा ॐ ३१ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ८१—८२ | (१) रां ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षाघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्तसमुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा ॐ रां ३२ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ८६—८७ | (१) रामभद्र महेष्वास रघुवीर नृपोत्तम भो दशस्यान्तकास्माकं श्रियंदापम देहि मे राम गायत्री मन्त्र |
| पद ८८ | (१) ॐ दाशरथाय विद्महे सीतावल्लभाय धीमहि तन्नो रामः प्रचोदयात् सम्मोहन मन्त्र |
| पद ९०—९२ | (१) ह्रीं क्लीं ॐ दाशरथाय विद्महे सीतावल्लभाय धीमहि तन्नो श्री रामः प्रचोदयात् ४७ अक्षर का मन्त्र |
| पद ९५—९६ | (१) ॐ नमो भगवते रघुनन्दनाय रक्षोघ्नविशदाय मधुराय प्रसन्नवदनाय अमिततेजसे बलरामाय विष्णवे नमः सीता जी का मन्त्र |
| | (१) श्रीं सीतायै स्वाहा |

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| पद ९८—९९ | लक्ष्मण जी का मन्त्र (१) लं लक्ष्मणाय नमः |
| पद १०२ | भरत जी का मन्त्र (१) भं भरताय नमः |
| पद १०३ | शत्रुघ्न जी का मन्त्र (१) शं शत्रुघ्नाय नमः |
| पद १०५—१०६ | हनुमान जी का मन्त्र (१) हं हनुमते नमः |

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Addendum no. 2

Mantras of Lord Ram

This section lists all the Mantras of Lord Ram as they appear in Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2.

Verse nos. 1-2 = The *one-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is 'Raang/Raam'.

Verse no. 7 = The *two-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is 'Ram' = Raa + Ma = 2 letters.

Verse no. 8 = The six *three-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram are the following—OM Ram; Hring/Hrim Ram; Sring/Srim Ram; Kling/Klim Ram; Aiyang/Aim Ram; and Raang/Raam Ram.

Verse no. 9 = The *four-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is Ram Chandra.

Verse no. 10 = The *five-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is Raamaaye Namaha.

Verse no. 16 = The *six-lettered Mantras* of Lord Ram are the following—(1) Raang/Raam Raamaaye Namaha. (2) Kling/Klim Raamaaye Namaha. (3) Hring/Hrim Raamaaye Namaha. (4) Aiyang/Aim Raamaaye Namaha. (5) Sri/Sring Raamaaye Namaha.

Verse no. 18 = Another set of *six-lettered Mantras* of Lord Ram are the following—

(a) (i) Sri Ram Bhadra Sri. (ii) Hring/Hrim Ram Bhadra Hring/Hrim. (iii) Kling/Klim Ram Bhadra Kling/Klim.

(b) (i) Sri Ram Chandra Sri. (ii) Hring/Hrim Ram Chandra Hring/Hrim. (iii) Kling/Kling Ram Chandra Kling/Kling.

Verse no. 25 = The *seven-lettered Mantras* of Lord Ram are as follows—Ram Chandraaye Namaha; Ram Bhadraaye Namaha.

Verse no. 26 = The *eight-lettered Mantras* of Lord Ram are the following—

(i) OM Ram Chandraaye Namaha. (ii) OM Ram Bhadraaye Namaha. (iii) OM Raamaaye Hung Phat Swaha.

Verse no. 30 = Another *eight-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Glong Hring Namaha Raamaaye Glong.

Verse no. 35 = Another *eight-lettered Mantras* of Lord Ram is—Sri Raamaha Sharnam Mam.

Verse no. 39 = There are two versions of the *nine letter Mantra* as follows—

(a) One is adding as a prefix the seven Beej Mantras to the base Mantra of Lord Ram—viz. (i) ‘Sri Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (ii) ‘OM Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (iii) ‘Sring/Sri Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (iv) ‘Hring/Hrim Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (v) ‘Kling/Klim Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; (vi) ‘Aiyang/Aim Raamaha Sharnam Mam’; and (vii) ‘Raang/Raam Raamaha Sharnam Mam’.

(b) By adding OM as a prefix and a suffix to the base Mantra as follows—‘OM Raamaha Sharnam Mam OM’.

Verse no. 40 = The *ten letter Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Janki Vallabhaaye Swaha Hum.

Verse no. 48 = The next *ten-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha.

Verse no. 48 = The six *eleven-lettered Mantras* are the following—

(1) OM Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha. (2) Hring/Hrim Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha. (3) Sring/Sri Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha. (4) Kling/Klim Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha. (5) Aiyang/Aim Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha. (6) Raang/Raam Raamaaye Dhanushpaanaye Swaha.

Verse no. 54 = The *twelve letter Mantras* of Lord Ram are the following—

(i) OM Hring/Hrim Bharataagraj Ram Kling/Klim Swaha. (ii) OM Namoha Bhagwate Ram Chandraaye. (iii) OM Namoha Bhagwate Ram Bhadraaye.

Verse no. 56 = The *thirteen-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram.

Verse no. 58 = The *fourteen-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram.

The *fifteen-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram Ram.

Verse no. 59 = The *sixteen-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Namaha Sitaapataye Raamaaye Han Han Hum/Hung Pha.

Verse no. 62 = The *seventeen-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Namaha Sitaapataye Raamaaye Han Han Hum/Hung Phat.

The next Mantra having *eighteen letters* is—OM Namoh Bhagwate Raamaaye Mahaapurushaaye Namaha.

Verse no. 64-65 = The *nineteen-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Kling/Klim OM Namō Bhagwate Raamaaye Mahaapurushaaye Namaha.

The *twenty-lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Namō Bhagwate Raamaaye Sarwa Saubhaagyam Dehi Me Swaha.

Verse no. 66 = The *twenty-one lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Namō Bhagwate Raamaaye Sakalaapannivaaranaaye Swaha.

Verse no. 67-68 = The *twenty-two lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Sring/Srim Raang/Raam Daasrathaaye Sitavallabhaaye Sarwavhistidaaye Namaha.

Verse no. 69 = The next Mantra *twenty-three lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Namō Bhagwate Viram Raamaaye Sakalshatrun Han Han Swaha.

Verse no. 73-74 = The *twenty-four lettered Mantras* of Ram are six in number, and they are the following—

(i) OM Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM.

(ii) Hring/Hrim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM.

(iii) Sring/Srim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM.

(iv) Kling/Klim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM.

(v) Aiyang/Aim Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM.

And (vi) Raang Namō Bhagwate Sri Raamaaye Taarak Brahmane Mam Taaraye Namaha OM.

Verse no. 75-76 = The ‘Vashikaran Mantra’ is—Kling/Klim OM Namō Bhagwate Raam Chandraaye Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaye Swaha.

Verse no. 77 = The *twenty-six lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Kling/Klim OM Namō Bhagwate Ram Chandraaye Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaye Swaha.

The *twenty-seven lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Kling/Klim OM Namō Bhagwate Ram Chandraaye Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaye Swaha OM.

Verse no. 78-79 = The *twenty-eight lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daaye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha.

When the monosyllable OM is appended at the end of this Mantra, it becomes a *twenty-nine lettered Mantra*. This Mantra becomes—OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daaye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha OM.

Verse no. 80 = The *thirty lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Raang/Raam OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daaye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha OM.

The *thirty-one lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Raang/Raam OM Namō Bhagwate Raksho-ghna-vish-daye Sarwa-vignaantsamutsaarye Niwaaraye Swaha OM Raang/Raam.

Verse no. 81 = The *thirty-two lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is—Raambhadra Maheshwaas Raghuvir Nripottam; Bho Dashasyaant Ka-smaakam Sriyam-daapam Dehi Me.

Verse no. 86-87 = The next Mantra is renowned as the famous ‘Ram Gayatri Mantra’. This Mantra is the following—‘OM Daasrathaaye Vidmahe Sita-vallabhaaye Dhimahi Tanno Raamaha Prachodayaat.’

Verse no. 88 = The ‘Sammohan Mantra’ of Lord Ram is—Hring/Hrim Kling/Klim OM Daasrathaaye Vidmahe Sita-vallabhaaye Dhimahi Tanno Sring Raamaha Prachodayaat.’

Verse nos. 90-92 = The next *forty-seven lettered Mantra* of Lord Ram is the following—OM Namo Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghna-vishadaaye Madhuaraaye Prasanna-vadnaaye Amit-tejase Bal-raamaaye Vishnave Namaha.

Verse no. 94 = The *six-lettered Mantra for Sita* is—Sring/Srim Sitaaye Swaha.

Verse no. 98 = The *Mantra for honouring Laxman* is—Lung/Lum Laxmanaaye Namaha.

Verse no. 102 = The *Mantra to honour Bharat* is—Bhung/Bhum Bharataaye Namaha.

Verse no. 103 = The worship and the *Mantra of Shatrughan* is—Shung/Shum Shatrughanaaye Namaha.

Verse no. 105 = The *Mantra for worshipping Hanuman* is—H-ring/H-rim Hanumate Namaha.

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There are two other Upanishads of the Atharva Veda tradition where we find Lord Ram’s divine Mantras. These are (i) the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, and (ii) the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

(i) Now, first let us see what the Mantras are according to the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad—

The six lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Raam(g) Raamaaye Namaha’. [Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 22.]

The eight lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘OM Raamaaye Hum Phat Swaha’. [Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 24.]

The nine lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘OM Ramchandraaye Namaha OM’. [Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 26.]

The ten lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Hung/Hum Janki-vallabhaaye Swaha’.
[Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 28.]

The twelve lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘OM Hring/Hrim Bharataagraj Ram Kling Swaha’.
[Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 30.]

The Anushtup Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Ram-bhadra Maheshwaas Raghubir Nripottam, Bho Dashaa-syaanta-kaasmaakam Rakshaam Dehi Sriyam Cha Te.’
[Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 43.]

The Gayatri Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Daash-rathaaye Vidmahe Sitaavallabhaaye Dhimahi Tanno Raamaha Prachodayaat.’
[Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 46.]

The Mala Mantra of Lord Ram with the prefix of ‘OM’ and ‘Sri’ is as follows ‘OM Srimom Namō Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnavishdaaye Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase Valaaye Raamaaye Vishnave Namaha Srimom.’
[Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 57.]

(ii) The next set of Mantras appear in the Ram Uttar-Tapini Upanishad, in its Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-4/46. This Upanishad is Section 2 of Chapter 13 of the present volume.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 13

Ram Tapini Upanishad

The Ram Tapini Upanishad supplements and compliments the Ram Rahasya Upanishad. It consists actually of two Upanishads—viz. *Ram Purva Tapini* which is the preceding Upanishad and makes up the first half, and *Ram Uttar Tapini* which is the subsequent Upanishad and makes up the second half. Both are included in this Chapter as Sections 1 and 2.

There is no basic difference between the ‘Purva’ and the ‘Uttar’ Ram Tapini Upanishads except the fact that they are like the fore and hind parts of the same scripture. Besides this, the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad lays stress on ritualistic forms of worship as it describes elaborately the worship instrument known as the Ram Yantra which is used in mystical and ritualistic forms of worship. This instrument is like a geometrical diagram and it contains all the esoteric Mantras of Ram and other Gods incorporated in it, thereby standing for the creation and all forms of divinity in a miniature form. On the other hand, the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad is based on the principles of Vedanta and lays stress on meditation upon Lord Ram using his divine and all powerful Mantras.

Both these Upanishads however emphasise that Lord Ram is known as the ‘Tarak Brahm’, i.e. he is a personification of the Supreme Being whose blessing provides the creature Mukti and Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul), and that the Lord’s Mantra is therefore known as the ‘Tarak Mantra’ as it enables the creature to attain this spiritual goal.

Section 1—The ‘Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad’ is composed in the ‘Anushtup Chanda’ style of verses, and there are in all five elaborate Cantos in it.

Briefly, Canto 1, Canto 2 and Canto 3 till verse no. 15 describe the esoteric secret meanings and different connotations of the various names and Mantras, including the Beej Mantras, of Lord Ram, along with their spiritual significance and the relevant prayers that are employed to honour and worship the Lord. To highlight the great importance and significance of the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, Canto 2, verse no. 2 asserts that it is the seed from which the whole universe has emerged like a huge banyan tree that is born from its seed. The Beej Mantra is the root or seed from which the rest of the Mantra is constructed, and it is like a formula in any field of science that helps one not only to understand and unravel the secrets of that particular field but also to implement these unique principles of science in practice—the only difference being that the field of study and practice here is spiritual and metaphysical.

The story of Ramayan, which is a sort of biography of Lord Ram, from the Lord’s forest sojourn till his victory over the demons at Lanka and his return to his capital at Ayodhya to be crowned its King-Emperor, is outlined in Canto 4, verse nos. 16-31.

The next phase of this great Upanishad begins from Canto 4, verse no. 32 and lasts till Canto 5, verse no. 6 wherein the worship Yantra of Lord Ram, called also as the ‘Bhupur Yantra’, is described in graphic detail in a step-by-step method as how to construct it, the placement of various Mantras in it, and the steps involved in formal forms of worship using this Yantra.

The worship ‘Yantra’ of Lord Ram is in the shape of a geometrical diagram that is made to accommodate various divine Mantras that are charged with cosmic energy and dynamism that helps this creation to survive on its own steam. The Yantra is a sort of magical Charm or Talisman used to harness the dynamic cosmic powers that remain beyond the reach of ordinary men, and which, once tapped, can empower the person with supernatural powers and authority. Like any other modern-day gadget or machinery, it has a complex structure with numerous components, and to make it effective it is of paramount importance that the art and skill of its construction and usage be thoroughly mastered. Otherwise it is as useless as any other electric, electronic or mechanical gadget or machine that is either not properly made or is not properly operated. But once correctly made and used, the Ram Yantra, also called the Bhupur Yantra, can prove to be a panacea for all problems faced by the Lord’s devotee and spiritual aspirant. It is an instrument or apparatus in the pattern of a geometrical diagram used for formal forms of worship of the Lord, and is regarded as the whole universe in a miniature form.

The Upanishad concludes by outlining the immense pecuniary and spiritual rewards obtainable by having sincere devotion for and diligent worshipping of Lord Ram in Canto 5, verse nos. 7-10.

Section 2—The ‘Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad’ is in the form of a dialogue between sage Yagyavalkya and some sages led by Brishapati, Bharadwaj and Atri. It has six Cantos. Its major part is in the form of prose as it is a dialogue. The subjects covered in this Upanishad are the following—

Cantos 1 and 4 describe the spiritual and metaphysical importance of the ‘Avimukta Kshetra’—the site that provides spiritual Mukti (liberation and deliverance) to the soul of a creature. Two sites have been given this honour—one is in the terrestrial world in the city of Kashi or Varanasi located on the banks of river Ganges, and the other is in the body of the spiritual aspirant itself. The latter location is in the forehead, between the two eyebrows and situated at the root of the nose. These facts are narrated in Canto 4 in detail. While Canto no. 1 is revealed as a dialogue between Yagyawalkya and sage Bharadwaj, Canto no. 4 is in the form of a dialogue between Yagyawalkya and sage Atri.

Canto 2 narrates the metaphysical importance of the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’ and its similarity to the Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram. The eclectic and spiritually empowered ‘Tarak Mantra’ of Lord Ram is compared with and treated as being a synonym of the Pranav mantra OM that relates to the supreme transcendental Brahm. This Tarak Mantra is powerful and potent enough to give the creature his final Moksha (emancipation and salvation) by ensuring that he crosses this vast ocean-like world of a continuous cycle of birth and death and their attendant miseries and torments in which he had been trapped for generations. This Canto is revealed as an answer that sage Yagyawalkya gave to sage Bharadwaj when the latter wished to know about the Tarak Mantra.

Canto 3 is an exposition on the four divine Paads or aspects of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, by way of description of the four states in which the consciousness exists in this world—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, Sushupta or deep sleep state, and Turiya or the state that transcends the the Sushupta state. Another interesting aspect of this Canto is that it asserts that Lord Ram and his brothers Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan are none but the four letters or aspects of the ethereal Mantra OM manifested in their forms. Then it goes on to assert that Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, is a manifestation of Mother Nature known as the primordial Prakriti. This Canto is an extension of the discourse Yagyawalkya was giving to Bharadwaj.

Canto 5 lists the forty-seven great Mantras of Lord Ram which have the potentials of ensuring a man’s all-round spiritual welfare. They were taught by Lord Ram to the creator Brahma, and were revealed for the benefit of sage Bharadwaj by sage Yagyawalkya.

Finally, Canto 6 winds up this Upanishad by highlighting the immense spiritual benefits of pursuing it diligently and honestly. Once again, this Canto is an extension of the question-answer session between sages Yagyawalkya and Bharadwaj. This Canto lauds the stupendous spiritual powers and greatness of the Mantras of Lord Ram which are described as being superior to and far more powerful than any other Mantra dedicated to any other deity.

-----Shanti Paath-----

Please refer to appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Section 1—Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad

Canto 1

[This Canto describes the meaning, the spiritual significance and metaphysical importance of the name of the Lord as 'Ram'. It establishes the divinity of Lord Ram as the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, and the cosmic super Consciousness itself personified.]

1. Om salutations! When the great Lord Vishnu, also known as Hari—who is an embodiment of the divine virtues of 'Sat-Chit-Anand' or pure truth, pure consciousness and pure bliss—took birth as an incarnation in the household of king Dasarath (the king of Ayodhya) in the clan of king Raghu, he was known by the name of Ram.

The Lord's name 'Ram' is derived by taking the first letter of the two words 'Raati' and 'Mahisthita'. The word 'Raati' means one who is deeply submerged, engrossed or involved in something. Here it refers to Lord Vishnu who is perpetually involved in taking care of this creation. The other word 'Mahisthita' has two parts—'Mahi' meaning earth, and 'Sthita' meaning to be established or be present in. Hence, the word 'Ram' refers to Lord Vishnu who is present on earth to take care of it and its inhabitants, and is formed by taking the first letter of each of these two words—i.e. 'Raa' (pronounced as in *rather*) from Raati, and 'Ma' (pronounced as in *mother*) from Mahisthita.

Hence, the etymological significance of the word 'Ram' is as follows—Ram is the great Lord Vishnu who stays on this earth, or the Supreme Being who has revealed himself on this earth as an incarnation, and lives here to fulfill all the desires of his devotees as well as to take good care of them. To live up to his role and carry out his obligations as a benevolent care-taker and munificent benefactor of this world, he lives here as a king-emperor (because a 'king-emperor' is naturally responsible for the all round welfare of the subjects under him, and is also the 'Lord' of the realm, thereby possessing and wielding sufficient power, authority, strength and ability to first plan for the welfare of his subjects and then actually implement it in practice). [Lord Vishnu is the sustainer and protector of this creation. He is actually the Supreme Being known as Brahm playing this role, amongst his various other roles, as the cosmic care-taker, sustainer, nourisher and protector of this creation. In this particular role, Brahm is called Vishnu at the macrocosmic level of creation, and as Lord Ram at the microcosmic plane of existence.] (1).

[Note—It ought to be noted here that as a noble, righteous and conscientious king-emperor, it is obligatory for Lord Ram to take care of all the subjects of his extended vast kingdom, which implies the entire earth and all its creatures, with equal love and affection, and not limiting his benevolent grace and kindness only to those who are close to him such as his devotees, or the subjects of his terrestrial kingdom of Ayodhya where Lord Ram had manifested himself as its king, his close attendants etc., because that would be too selfish for him and absolutely un-behooving of a great King and Emperor of the whole world who is morally bound and traditionally obliged to treat all the inhabitants of his entire extended kingdom and empire equally, and with the same love and affection as that extended to his favourite attendants. The fact that Lord Ram has been remembered and revered as one such great King-Emperor who was ever born on this earth proves that he did indeed live up to his role as the care-taker and protector of the entire earth and its inhabitants.

While the Supreme Being bestowed bliss, happiness and joys to all around him when he lived and roamed on this earth in his incarnation as Lord Ram, the Lord's divine name keeps on providing solace and succour to all the devotees from time immemorial and would continue to do so till the end of creation.

For spiritual purposes, however, the word 'devotee' is used to motivate the general populace to imagine the immense rewards that they can reap if they become

devoted to such a kind and benevolent Lord who takes care of even those who are not devoted to him. This is because it is not necessary that each and every single individual subject of his vast empire was devoted to him and faithful to him, for surely there must have been some black sheep in the flock somewhere, but the Lord never discriminated against them or showed disrespect to them. He loved his detractors as much as he loved his faithfuls.

Besides this, since Ram is an incarnation of the Supreme Being, he is not an ordinary King or Emperor. And every single creature born in this creation is expected to honour and show his respects to the great Father from whom he has been born and who takes care of all his needs and welfare in life. To serve the supreme Lord selflessly, to be obliged to him, and to thank him for all that he has done for the creature, to honour him and pay tribute to him for his magnanimity, benevolence, munificence, mercy, grace and kindness, is tantamount to having devotion for the Lord. It is the basic courtesy and civility expected from all living beings to honour their benefactor and protector.

When a creature suffers some misfortune he blames the Lord for his sufferings, that the Lord is not taking good care of him and neglecting him, but he does not realise that these miseries are the result of the evil deeds done by him because a man reaps what he sows, and that instead of blaming the Lord he should take remedial steps so that the future is bettered.]

2. This is how experts have highlighted the importance of the Lord's name as 'Ram'.

Other connotation of the name 'Ram' is that it refers to the Lord who causes the extinction or elimination of demons representing sinful, evil and pervert forces in creation that cause immeasurable miseries and unnecessary pain to the rest of the creatures of the Lord's creation. [In other words, Lord Vishnu reveals himself as an incarnation of Lord Ram whenever evil, negative and demonic forces become ascendant on earth.] (2).

[Note—The first letter of the Lord's name 'Ram', i.e. the letter 'Raa', is taken from the first letter of the word 'Raakshash' meaning the demons, and the second letter 'Ma' comes from the word 'Maranam' meaning death. Hence, the word 'Ram' means the one who causes the death of the demons, or the one who was the slayer of demons. These demons were symbols of evil, pervert, negative and sinful qualities in the world. These qualities, which are called 'Tam', are present in smaller or greater quantities in all the creatures because they are an integral part of creation, but when they become dominant and go beyond control, almost eclipsing the good and virtuous qualities, they become a problem for the rest of the creatures. It is then that the Lord has to come and restore the balance in the favour of good qualities, and redeem his solemn vow that he would protect his subjects and look after them well.]

3. Since Lord Ram enchants and captivates the Mana (mind and heart) of all the living beings in this world (by his kindness, grace, benevolence and mercy, by his giving of protection and succour and solace to all creatures), since the Lord is so endeared to all the living beings that he finds a permanent and respectful place in their Mana, he is called 'Ram'. [The word 'Ram' means in this context 'one who enchants and captivates the Mana of all the creatures, finding a permanent place in their hearts and inspiring respect and devotion in their minds'.]

Another interpretation is that he is called 'Ram' because he stuns the demons, vanquishes them, and virtually nullifies or overcomes their astounding power and strength just like the 'Rahu' who effortlessly eclipses the Moon during the lunar eclipse¹ (3).

[Note—¹The legend of *Rahu* is that he was the eldest son of the demon Viprachitti and his wife Shinghikaa. His younger brothers were Ilvala, Vaataapi, Narak amongst

others. When Lord Vishnu, disguised as the beautiful Mohini, was distributing the ambrosia of eternity called Amrit to the Gods during the episode of the churning of the ocean as told in the Purans, Rahu assumed the form of a God and surreptitiously entered the lines of the Gods to take this Amrit. When his cheating was discovered, Vishnu cut off his head with his weapon called the Chakra Sudarshan (a circular saw-like discus). But it so happened that before the head was severed Rahu had already drunk some Amrit, and so did not die. His head and torso became two independent entities. The former was called 'Rahu' and the latter 'Ketu'.

Since the Moon God and the Sun God had betrayed him, Rahu takes revenge by devouring them periodically to satisfy his hunger. He devours them when they are in their full glory—viz. he devours the Moon God during the full moon night, and the Sun God only during the day time, either when the sun rises or during its journey across the sky, but never at sunset when the sun is already losing its radiance and is on the decline.

Again, since the head of Rahu was severed from the neck, hence both the Moon God and the Sun God re-emerge from the lower end of the head after they have been devoured by the mouth of Rahu. This is why the moon and the sun appear to be getting gradually cut-off from view from one end of their discs, symbolizing their gradually entering the mouth of Rahu as the latter begins to devour them. Then for some time they remain dark or obstructed from view symbolizing the period when they remain inside the mouth of Rahu. Finally, they gradually regain their original shape symbolizing their ejection from the lower end of Rahu's neck where it was severed from the trunk.

Actually however, the phenomenon of the lunar eclipse is due to the earth's shadow falling on the moon's surface when it comes in the path of this shadow during its revolution around the earth. This scientific fact was known to the great Rishis (sages and seers) who had preached the Upanishads, and it is clearly mentioned in Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which says "When the moon is said to be devoured by the demon Rahu (the severed head of a demon) during the lunar eclipse, people start offering worship, making sacrifices, doing penances, taking purifying baths, giving alms and making charities, observing austerities etc. so that the Moon God is freed from the demon's curse, but all their deeds are a waste of effort and done in utter ignorance because there is no such event, and the darkness on the moon's disc is actually a shadow of the earth falling upon it. This shadow would go away on its own when the time comes even if no such hue and cry is raised by worried worshippers. So it is a height of stupidity and profound ignorance to even think that the Moon God has been cursed or is being devoured, and by doing so many religious deeds it can be freed from its torments."

Similarly, the solar eclipse is caused when the moon comes in between the shiny surface of the sun and its view from the surface of the earth, thereby blocking the former's view from the latter's surface.

The elongated torso of Rahu came to known as 'Ketu' and it is recognized as the comet in modern science. That is why sighting of the comet is regarded as a bad omen.

Both Rahu and Ketu are placed amongst the nine planets. They represent the two nodal points where the celestial equator cuts the ecliptic.

In iconography, Rahu is depicted as just a head or even as a snake's hood.]

4. Lord Ram sets an example of high ethics, morality, probity, propriety, righteousness and auspiciousness for other kings and emperors who might have gone astray from their designated noble path marked by these eclectic virtues behooving of a king, kings who might have become morally corrupt and spiritually fallen and therefore have lost their right to an exalted stature, kings who might have not lived up to their noble obligations and high expectations, who might have forgotten their moral

duties towards their subjects and have consequentially forfeited their right to glory, majesty and fame, but who sincerely wish to re-establish and re-attain their high stature and regain their lost glory, majesty and fame as noble kings and emperors.

The Lord shows them the correct path by way of his own example and his own life. He shows them how to follow a righteous and an auspicious way of life, inculcate exemplary virtuous character, and observe the noble and eclectic principles of probity, propriety and nobility in practice—in brief, to observe the tenets of ‘Dharma’—by observing them personally, and proving beyond doubt that they are indeed possible and feasible. His life serves as a beacon for others to follow; it serves as an inspiration for others.

[Lord Ram not only shows them the path of ‘Dharma’—i.e. the path of righteousness, nobility, propriety, probity, auspiciousness and nobility, but also sets for them high standards of ‘Charitra’—i.e. high moral character, excellent levels of ethical behaviour, exemplary levels of personal virtues and positive traits, and a stellar example of an ideal life that is worth emulating, honouring and adoring.]

Those who repeat his divine name ‘Ram’ are blessed with the virtue of ‘Gyan’—i.e. they inculcate true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment which leads to their becoming self-realised and Brahm-realised.

[This is because the name of the Lord, i.e. ‘Ram’, is no ordinary name but has profound spiritual and metaphysical importance and significance which is described in this Upanishad as well as in the Ram Rahasya Upanishad. The name ‘Ram’ is a synonym for the supreme transcendental Brahm, and hence stands for the pure conscious Atma, the soul, which is the truthful ‘self’ of the spiritual aspirant. This realisation leads to his spiritual Mukti, or liberation and deliverance from the bondage of ignorance and delusions which had hitherto shackled him to this artificial world of material sense objects that are perishable and the cause of all his miseries and torments, as well as to the gross body which he had been erroneously thinking to be his ‘self’. Once the light of Gyan is shown in the worshipper’s inner-self, all darkness arising out of A-Gyan, or ignorance of the truth that leads to delusions, is dispelled.

In other words, Lord Ram shows the world that he is called ‘Ram’ because he has strictly followed and established these eclectic tenets or auspicious principles of life, and if they do so they too can be similarly honoured.] (4).

5. He bestows the spiritual virtues of ‘Vairagya’—i.e. renunciation, dispassion and detachment towards this material world and its sense objects, in the heart of those who do ‘Dhyan’—i.e. those who remember, contemplate and meditate upon the Lord’s divine and glorious virtues, his being as the personified form of the supreme transcendental Brahm, his teachings, and the truth of the pure conscious Atma, the ‘truthful self’, by meditating upon it.

For those who worship his divine form, he provides them with abundant ‘Aishwarya’—i.e. fame, glory, majesty, magnificence, authority and powers.

[Only a person who possesses exclusive right on something can give it to others. So, when it is said that the Lord bestows some largesse to his devotee, whether in the form of Dharma, Gyan, Vairagya or Aishwarya, it follows that the Lord has an undisputed sway, lordship and command over these virtues in this world. That is why he is called a ‘King’ and ‘Ram’. ‘King’ because he is very liberal with his largesse, and ‘Ram’ because he is ever ready to take good care of this world.] (5).

6. Great Yogis (acclaimed and realised ascetics) spend their time contemplating perpetually upon Lord Ram who is ‘Anant’—i.e. who is eternal and without an end,

who is 'Nitya-Anand'—i.e. who is always blissful and full of happiness, and who is 'Chid-Atma'—i.e. who is an enlightened soul, the pure consciousness that is the 'true self' of the entire creation, the soul that is unqualified supreme Consciousness, pure and uncorrupt. In other words, Lord Ram is a personification of the supreme Soul (Parmatma or Brahm) who possesses the eclectic virtues of being Anant, of being Nitya-Anand, and of being Chid-Atma.

Hence, Lord Ram is personified Supreme Being known universally as Parmatma or Brahm. This divine Lord had manifested as a human being specifically on the prayers of Lord Brahma. [That is, the unqualified, un-manifest and attribute-less Divinity called Brahm had revealed himself in the form of Sri Ram, who is an image or personification of that Brahm, on the prayers of the creator Brahma. This refers to the episode in the Purans wherein all the Gods and mother Earth, in the form of a holy cow, had approached Brahma and requested him to find a way to protect them from the horrors unleashed by the demons led by their king Ravana¹. At that time, they had prayed to Lord Vishnu who promised to come to earth as a human being to eliminate the demons. His incarnation or manifestation on this earth is called 'Ram'.]

Hence, the manifested divine Being known as Ram, and the un-manifest divine Being known as Vishnu are one and the same (6).

[Note—¹The story of the demon king Ravana has been elaborately described in Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas, in the epic's Uttar Kand, Cantos 1 and 2. An English version of this great epic has been published separately by this humble author.]

7. The supreme transcendental Brahm is 'Chinmaya'—i.e. an embodiment of enlightenment, wisdom and pure super-consciousness.

Brahm is 'Advitiya'—i.e. he is unique, matchless and without a parallel, being non-dual or 'Advaitya' by nature.

Brahm is 'Nishkal'—i.e. he is without any faults, shortcomings, taints and blemishes of any kind whatsoever.

Brahm has no 'Sharir'—i.e. he has no physical gross body with definite attributes and characteristic features, because essentially Brahm is a sublime, subtle, unqualified, attribute-less, formless and ethereal entity which has no grossness, no physical shape, no inhibitions and limitations that are imposed by a physical structure such as a gross body made up of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air/wind and sky).

But for the sake of those who worship and adore him as well as to fulfill their wishes and accomplish certain tasks for them, the same supreme transcendental invisible Brahm who has no qualifications, attributes and gross body manifests himself in a divine visible form which has physical qualities and attributes. [In other words, the invisible becomes visible; the attribute-less becomes one with attributes; the un-qualified assumes certain qualities; the sublime and subtle becomes gross. The transcendental Brahm becomes a human being. But in spite of this transformation, Brahm retains his inherent immaculacy, supremacy, divinity and sublimity much like the fire element that retains its grand virtue of being pure itself and being able to burn all impurities to make an entity pure (such as the case of purifying gold by putting it in fire), and its ability to illuminate its surroundings with its inherent light even if it has to reveal itself in such gross, degrading, demeaning and ignominious conditions as those needed to burn a huge mound of garbage or to cremate a dead body. In the case of the fire burning the dead body, it is actually the liberation that the Fire God provides to the soul by helping it to reduce to ashes its prison-like body and set its self

free from its snare. But it must be remembered that this instance of the fire that burns garbage, reduces even the costliest things to ashes, and even burns dead bodies represents the destructive force of creation, but it does not in any way affect the inherent goodness of the fire element as being the harbinger of life by providing this creation with warmth, heat, energy and light, as being a universal purifier and cleanser, as being immaculate and pure itself, and as being the most sacred entity in creation. This is why all offerings intended for the Gods are offered to the fire during the fire sacrifice instead of them being offered to the other elements of creation such as sky, air, water or earth.

In the same way, even though Lord Vishnu (who is regarded as Brahm's manifestation at the macrocosmic level, and also known as the Viraat Purush in this form) had to manifest himself as a human being in the form of Ram, the Lord did not lose his basic divinity and holiness. If he acted like an ordinary human at times, it was only to play his part in the cosmic drama or worldly theatre perfectly. All of Lord's works are done to perfection, so how can he not play his role as a human being to perfection? But those who are wise and enlightened realise that Lord Ram's worldly activities, such as his child-hood pranks or his running around in the forest frantically in search of his lost wife Sita who had been abducted by the demon Ravana, his miseries and wailings in her memory, or even his dependence upon the monkey army to overcome the ferocious demons, are only an illusion and do not tell the truth about the 'real' Ram. The knowledge of the 'real' Ram comes from the study of the Upanishads and understanding the profound import of his name 'Ram' as described in them.[To illustrate, a man plays different roles on stage as a member of a theatre group, but his personal life is quite different from his stage personality. A competent actor is he who plays his role to perfection, and therefore it is no wonder that the Supreme Being had played his role to perfection as a human being in the form of Lord Ram when he wailed and lamented for his wife Sita, or had to fight like an ordinary warrior to rescue her from the clutches of the demons!] (7).

8-9. The supreme Brahm who is the Supreme Being has revealed himself in various forms at different times, such as in the form of various Gods and Goddesses who are actually the same divine Lord (Brahm) assuming and playing different roles according to the needs of the creation and varying circumstances.

All the divine virtues and cosmic powers of the supreme Brahm have revealed themselves as various Gods and Goddesses. All these manifestations have different forms or bodies (sublime and subtle as well as gross and physical), different virtues and characteristics, and use a variety of arms and armaments to trounce the evil forces of creation, overcome the pervert and negative traits, and restore the balance in favour of the positive, the righteous and the auspicious forces in creation. All the Gods who exist in this creation are nothing else but myriad extended forms of that one supreme immutable and non-dual Brahm. [It's like the case of a man assuming different roles in his life. For instance, for his son he is a father, for a student he is a teacher, for a wife he is a husband, for an employee he is employer, when traveling by a car he is a driver or a passenger, and so on and so forth. The same thing applies to Brahm, the Supreme Being. In order to keep the wheel of creation moving, he has assumed different roles, both at the micro level of creation as well as the macro level. All these roles though apparently quite at variance with each other are nevertheless different aspects of the same Supreme Being.]

All these different forms of Gods and Goddesses using different arms and means to control and regulate this creation are actually Brahm in these forms to

perform different roles in creation, but none of them is separated or different or distinct or independent from the principal known as Brahm.

Therefore, Brahm assumes an astounding variety of divine forms (as Gods and Goddesses) in creation to serve it and protect its interest—some forms having two arms, some having four, others having six, eight, ten, twelve, sixteen or even eighteen arms¹.

All these divine forms of the Lord hold various signs of their being manifestation of the Lord himself, such as holding a Conch or having a mark of the same on some part of their divine form. [The Conch is a trademark sign of Lord Vishnu. All incarnations of Vishnu had it as a birth mark on some part of the body, usually in the palm of the hand.]

When he (Brahm) reveals himself in the ‘Viraat’ form (literally the huge, mammoth, colossus and vast cosmic form of the Lord that is all-encompassing, all-pervading and all-inclusive, and which is called the ‘Viraat Purush’) at the macrocosmic level of creation, he is said to have thousands of hands (symbolizing the sum total of all the creatures of creation). [In other words, when Brahm assumes the form of this visible world inhabited by living beings having a gross body, he is said to have thousands of hands as a metaphor for his being in all these individual forms. The term ‘thousand’ is only a figure of speech to imply the uncountable number of forms that the same Brahm takes in order to become each living being of this creation.]

The Lord is said to have as many countless shades of colours or complexions, and as many vehicles to move about or mediums to express himself in this world as there are his forms. [From the macrocosmic perspective this refers to the numerous Gods and Goddesses, and from the microcosmic viewpoint it refers to the countless variety of creatures that live in this world. Each has his or her own characteristic attributes, qualities, temperaments, nature and personality traits—which are like his or her ‘complexion or colour’. Since all these forms have their individual desires, aspirations, ideals and motivating factors that inspire them to act in a particular way and express themselves, they are said to have as many vehicles or ‘Vaahans’.] (8-9).

[Note—¹If we take a more broad and holistic approach of creation considering the view of the Upanishads that everything in creation is Brahm personified, then we deduce that not only the Gods but even all the varieties of animal and plant species in creation, right from the single-celled amoeba or simplest of algae and fungi to the most complex of animals and plants, both of astounding variety and magnificent diversity, are nothing but the same Brahm in all these forms. So, while we have a two-armed man symbolizing some God at the macro level of creation, we also have a woman standing for some Goddess. Just like we have benevolent or malevolent Gods and Goddesses, we also have noble, righteous, conscientious, pious and holy human beings, as well as cruel, pervert and sinful ones. Added to this is an un-imaginable variety of animals and plants in Nature. It’s observed that even some plants are blood thirsty like wild animals and cruel human beings—for instance we have the pitcher plant. Then again, not all animals are cruel and wild, for instance we have the cow. Amongst animals we find great diversity—for instance we have herbivores, omnivores and carnivores. Similarly, human beings are vegetarians, non-vegetarians and even cannibals. If we look at trees, we observe that a single tree may have numerous branches, and each of these branches is like a ‘limb’ of that tree. In the animal kingdom, the octopuses have so many tentacles, and the spider has so many limbs. So what is the wonder if Gods and Goddesses have so many limbs and heads because they are all parts of the process of creation in various stages of development and conclusion. Thus, a wise man must understand the essence of what this Upanishad means to convey instead of being bogged down by its imagery and the need to prove things that cannot be proved by any known worldly yardsticks.]

10. It is also imagined that all these countless forms of the Lord need different Shaktis or dynamic forces, powers and strengths, as well as armies or attendant warriors to help them carry out their myriad duties or various roles in creation.

[The Gods who take the lead in giving protection to the heaven and the heavenly bodies have their own armies to help them in performing their designated duties in the heaven. When Lord Vishnu revealed himself as Lord Ram, he too had an army of monkeys to help him eliminate the demons led by Ravana. But it is an imagination of the fertile mind that thinks the Supreme Being needs an ‘army’ to help him. The mind forgets the fact that even the members of such an imaginary army are also one or the other forms of the same Supreme Being as the God or the King under whom these armies live and function, as no living being in creation is exempt from the principle that ‘nothing exists that is not Brahm personified’. Besides this, it is incredulous to even think that the all-powerful and almighty Lord would need some subsidiary help or support to prop himself up. Brahm is the one who helps others, who supports others, who protects others, so it is absurd to think that someone else would help him, support or protect him! So, in effect, these armies of Gods in the heaven and the monkey army that helped Lord Ram on earth are actually the ‘Shakti’ of Brahm in a manifested form helping the Lord carry out the obligation of taking due care of the creation at all levels of existence. Just like a king or an emperor is the chief commander of the army which represents his power and authority, the army of gods in the heaven and the army of monkeys on earth are under the overall command of Brahm known as the Supreme Being in the heaven and as Ram on earth.]

Similarly, one only imagines that there are five individual forms in which the supreme Brahm exists¹, whereas the fact is that all these forms are various revelations of the same non-dual, uniform, indivisible and immutable Brahm. [It must be remembered that the term ‘Brahm’ applies to the ubiquitous cosmic Consciousness that has revealed itself as the Supreme Being known as Vishnu or the Viraat Purush at the macrocosmic level of creation, and as Lord Ram at the microcosmic level of creation.] (10).

[Note—¹There are many ways in which the term ‘five forms’ can be interpreted.

One is that it refers to the five elements of creation—such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth. The entire creation had been moulded out of these five.

The second interpretation is that it refers to the following five deities—the Gods Vishnu (the sustainer and protector) and Shiva (the concluder), the Goddess Durga (who rides a lion and is said to be the warrior goddesses who is the patron deity of warriors), and the Gods known as Surya (the Sun God) and Chandra (or the Moon God), or even Lord Ganesh (the deity who is worshipped before all other Gods, and is said to be the one who helps the worshipper overcome all hurdles and obstacles in any endeavour).

The third way to look at it is that the five divine forms of Brahm are the three Gods of the Trinity such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the Shakti or the cosmic dynamic energy of these three Gods revealed as Mother Goddess, and other countless Gods and semi-gods. Similarly, Prakriti or Nature is also one of the forms of the Shakti of Brahm. This Prakriti can be regarded as a form of Mother Goddess because the entire creation is conceived and developed in its vast bowl much like an embryo that grows in the womb of its mother. Actually, all of them are the same supreme Brahm revealed in these forms, either as the cosmic Father or as the cosmic Mother.]

11. Hence, right from Brahma, the creator and the progenitor of this creation, till the culmination of the process of creation and its very end, i.e. the whole creation

consisting of the animate as well as the inanimate world, right from its conception till its conclusion, is represented by the single word 'Ram'. This name of the Lord, which is 'Ram', encompasses everything in creation; it is synonymous with the whole gamut of creation. Its powers, potentials and prowess, its effect, impact and influence, are as stupendous, glorious and far-reaching as the meaning of its constituent letters (Raa and Ma).

[This fact is the subject matter of not only the present Ram Tapini Upanishad but also of the Ram Rahasya Upanishad. The significance, the glories, the spiritual value and the metaphysical importance of the two letters of Lord Ram's name, i.e. 'Raa' and 'Ma', have been extensively described in both of them. It is obvious here that 'Brahm' is implied when one speaks of 'Ram'. Since the entire creation is a revelation of Brahm, it naturally follows that it is also a revelation of 'Ram' if we are wise enough to realise that when the Upanishad refers to Lord Ram then it is not referring to some human king of Ayodhya but to the Supreme Being himself in this divine form.]

Hence, considering the fact that this Mantra of Lord Ram consisting of his divine name ('Raam') is the best and the most powerful and effective Mantra¹ amongst all the Mantras, one should accept it with the greatest of faith and reverence—i.e. be baptized with this Mantra and be initiated into the spiritual path by accepting the Mantra 'Raam' as one's meticulously and diligently chosen Mantra for the purpose of contemplation and meditation. In fact, this Mantra is the best one to be baptized with. One should repeat it constantly, consistently and persistently, with due faith, belief, diligence, sincerity and steadfastness. Without it, it is not possible to please the supreme Brahm. Since it is synonymous with and covers the entire gamut of existence of all the Gods (i.e. all of them come under its ambit and definition), repetition and worship of this single Mantra 'Ram' pleases them all. That is, by honouring Lord Ram one is deemed to have honoured all the Gods and divine forces of creation simultaneously. When one does Japa (repetition) using the divine Mantras of Lord Ram, he is deemed to have done Japa with all the Mantras of all the Gods combined. It is like a single-window solution to all the spiritual ills of Jiva (the living being) (11).

[Note—¹A *Mantra* is a spiritual formulae consisting of single letter or a group of letters forming words or phrases or even sentences that have great spiritual value and metaphysical importance for the creature. The Mantra has immense power and potential, and is the medium by which the creature can harness the dynamic energy of the various cosmic forces of Nature. Doing Japa with the Mantra has a multiplier effect and act as aids in the creature's pursuit to attain his desired objectives. The significance of a Mantra has been described in the following verse no. 12.]

12. Whatever deeds and actions an aspirant or seeker does or undertakes to do to achieve his goal are successful through the medium of a Mantra. The Mantra is a medium by which desired results are easily and comfortably attained; they are aids to one's fulfillment of desires and objectives in life—whether mundane or spiritual¹. A Mantra makes the attainment of the desired goal a certainty.

A Mantra indicates the result or rewards that can be expected by using it just like a certain ingredient in a medicine can indicate in advance what one can expect by the use of that particular formulation. [This is because each Mantra is like a mathematical formula, and each hymn is like an equation. Even as definitive results follow the use of certain pre-determined formula and equation in scientific quest or mathematical calculations, definitive results are also expected by employing specific

Mantras for doing Japa (repetition) or Yoga (meditation) and Dhyan (contemplation) with specific objectives in mind.]

The word Mantra is derived from two words—the first word is ‘*Manan*’ which means to persistently remember something so as to make the mind firmly rooted in it, to ponder and contemplate upon it, to deeply think about it and meditate on it so that one can arrive at some certain conclusion about the truth of that particular thing, while the second word ‘*Taan*’ means to give freedom and protection from some kind of torment or miserable condition, to deliver someone from his miseries and predicaments etc. Hence, a Mantra is an instrument by the help of which a person can find spiritual liberation and deliverance from his worldly torments and miseries. This is achieved by concentrating upon the Mantra, by relying upon its mystical powers and spiritual potentials, and using it to do meditation and contemplation. Constant repetition of the Mantra helps to multiply its effect and reinforce its earlier benefits. [Repetition of the Mantra is necessary for its full benefits to accrue and take effect. It’s just like the case of a patient having to repeat a medicine over a long period of time to get rid of some chronic disease. If he stops taking it before the disease is completely routed, then not only would the disease relapse but it would do so with a vengeance. Another example can be cited about a man’s skills and expertise in a professional field—if he discontinues using his knowledge and skills after some time in life, he forgets about them and gets out of tune. All the long years he had spent acquiring the knowledge and the special skill go to a waste if they are not practiced for a lifetime. Similarly, repetition of Mantras and practice of meditation is a life-long process, and a wise man should persevere with them.] (12).

[Note—¹In the present case, this Mantra that is employed for doing Japa is the ‘Ram Mantra’ which is a Tarak Mantra (refer Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1). This indicates that the aspirant seeks his final spiritual liberation and deliverance rather than hoping to get some worldly gain by employing it. Being a ‘Tarak Mantra’ instead of an ordinary Mantra, this Mantra of Lord Ram is the one that liberates the person from all spiritual delusions and worldly snares, and therefore to use it for some worldly accomplishments or gains would be absolutely absurd and ridiculous.

Again, since the Mantra of Lord Ram pertains to the cosmic Divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm which is pure Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation, it follows that a person who repeats this Mantra is deemed to be most enlightened and self as well as Brahm realised. He is deemed to have understood the great Truth of the ‘self’ and the Atma. He is rich with the divine virtues of Vairagya and Gyan as described in verse nos. 4-5 of this Canto 1 above.

While the eclectic Ram Mantra is used by a spiritual aspirant for his liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, other Mantras of various demonination are used by other ordinary people to fulfill their worldly needs and desires, such as the case when one does a fire sacrifice to attain certain objectives in this world and uses various Mantras to successfully complete it. Such exercises are done with some sort of worldly aim in sight, such as acquiring various mystical powers called the Siddhis, or getting established in this world and attaining name, fame, majesty, strength, powers, material prosperity and wealth in this world, or for obtaining victory on opponents, and many other such desires and wishes for which a man usually uses a Mantra. But it is like bartering away the value of a precious gem in exchange of glass or worthless stone.

Every Mantra has a divine aspect; all of them have their own potentials and powers that are intrinsic to them, but it actually depends upon the user how good he makes of it. The wise one amongst them would obviously employ the stupendous powers and potentials inherent in any Mantra to obtain something of an eternal, abiding and matchless value—and what better use can one put the powers of the

Mantra than to use it to find permanent freedom from the fetters that tie his soul to this deluding and tormenting world of a continues cycle of birth and death along with its attendant horrors and miseries.

And to top it all, if such a wise man happens to be privileged enough to come across a Mantra that is the best of them all, and which can be thousands of time more effective by putting in the least of efforts, and which gives direct access to the supreme Authority in creation which has the authority and power to grant the much-desired and much-awaited freedom for the seeker, what more can he want. Such a Mantra is this glorious ‘Ram Mantra’ which is the ‘Tarak Mantra’. It is divine, sublime, priceless and matchless in spiritual value, and provides a direct access to the supreme Brahm. This Mantra can provide ‘Mukti and Moksha’ single handedly; it is one-stop solution for all the spiritual woes of the creature as it bestows upon him liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation at one go. That is why those who accept it as their spiritual formula are deemed to be the wisest and the most enlightened souls in this creation. A man who comes to know about Lord Ram’s ‘Tarak Mantra’ would discard all other Mantras and accept this single Mantra wholeheartedly as a penance for all his spiritual problems.

This single Ram-Mantra is the letter and the spirit, the essence and the life of all the Mantras taken together. It is like the juice of all the Mantras extracted for the spiritual benefit of the spiritual aspirant. It combines at once all their varied meanings, their uses and goals, their holiness and divinity, their supernatural powers and mysticism. It is indeed like the crown jewel of all the Mantras, and it has the power and potential of all the Mantras put together into a single formula.]

13. The Mantra of a deity is a complete representation of that deity. In the present case, the Ram-Mantra is a complete manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being and the Lord of the entire creation, who is known as Ram in his visible microcosmic form, and as Lord Vishnu in his invisible macrocosmic form.

The great and unique virtue of the Lord is that he is ambivalent—i.e. he is equally present in opposing or contradictory things and situations simltenously and at the same time.

[This presents a great paradox about Brahm, and is also the reason why the pronoun ‘it’ is generally used to refer to Brahm—because it is ‘neutral’. An entity that is neutral can survive with equal ease in situations having opposite forces. We learn from the scriptures that the entire creation is a manifestation of Brahm, and we also learn that this creation has an astounding intensity of variations and contradictions woven into its texture. For instance, we have a cauldron of fire such as the blazing sun existing side by side with the moon which is cold, we have the Sata Guna which is a noble quality coexisting with the Tama Guna which is the most abhorable quality that anyone can possess, we have the light of the day as well as the darkness of the night existing simltenously in different areas of the same earth, it is also possible to have a family rejoicing the birth of a son and lamenting the death of another at the same time, and the list can go on endlessly. In brief, the point is that Brahm does exist even in the most unimaginable of opposing situations—simply because nothing exists or happens without Brahm, or because Brahm is an all-pervading, ubiquitous and ambivalent entity.

When this neutral-gendered Brahm assumes some kind of form, however sublime and subtle it might be, such as the form of the Viraat Purush, the pronound ‘it’ is now replaced by the pronoun ‘he’ as the Viraat is visualized as the cosmic ‘Purush’ or the cosmic ‘Male’ aspect of creation. The basic reason is that in order to initiate the process of creation, the supreme Brahm provided the ‘spark of life’, and

this spark was like the primordial cosmic ‘sperm’. Hence, in its role as the creator, Brahm assumed the form of a cosmic ‘Father’ who is a ‘male’, a ‘Purush’, and hence the use of the male pronoun ‘he’ for this new role of Brahm. At the cosmic level of creation, this primary ‘Purush’ was called Vishnu or Viraat—‘Vishnu’ because Brahm had assumed the responsibility of sustaining and protecting the creation, and ‘Viraat’ because of his cosmic, all-pervading, all-encompassing and infinitely vast form. At the cosmic level Vishnu is invisible and without a physical body, but when he decided to reveal himself on this earth he assumed a gross form having a body in the form of an incarnation, such as Lord Ram in the present Upanishad. This incarnation too was in a male form. Hence, all such incarnations of Vishnu are regarded as manifestations of Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The dynamic forces and the cosmic energy of Brahm that the latter uses to get on with the objective he had assigned for himself came to be known as ‘Shakti’ at the cosmic universal level of creation. Being a neutral gender, the pronoun ‘it’ is employed when we deal with the primary Shakti of Brahm. But when Brahm transformed into the Viraat Purush or Vishnu, this Shakti of Brahm also transformed itself into a counterpart of this new form as some ‘Goddess’, such as Laxmi who is the divine consort of Vishnu. So, as the creation progressed from the invisible and subtle level to a more grosser and visible level, and the primary Shakti of Brahm metamorphosed as various Goddesses, the pronoun ‘it’ that was used for ‘Shakti’ is now replaced with ‘she’ as these Goddesses are in a female form.

The reason for the Shakti assuming a female form of a Goddess is that though the Supreme Being provides the ‘vital spark of life in the form of the sperm’, the resultant embryo that formed needed a place to lodge and incubate till the time it matured and emerged as the world we know today. This crucial role of first accepting the cosmic sperm and then acting as the cosmic crucible or womb where the resultant embryo would be lodged, where it would get its nourishment, where it would incubate and develop till the time it was mature and independent enough to emerge as the world we see today was played out by the Shakti of Brahm which took the form of a Mother Goddess to carry out these functions on behalf of Brahm.

When Brahm, the Supreme Being, revealed himself as an incarnation such as that of Lord Ram, the Shakti revealed itself as the female counterpart, which in the present case is Sita. Since Brahm and Shakti are the two aspects of the same Divinity, it follows that the same Brahm exists both in a male form as well as in a female form. This creation is a huge revelation of Brahm, and therefore it follows that the two opposing forms of a male and a female coexist in this creation as a revelation of the same Brahm performing different functions, one complementing and supplementing the other. These two forms of a male and a female are the same universal Brahm in their individual forms. Therefore, Ram and Sita are inseparable and indistinguishable from one another.

This is the cosmic mystery and the greatest paradox about the Lord. For instance, the Lord is present in equal intensity in the water as he is in the fire; he is at ease in his manifestation as the subtlest element called the sky as he is in the grossest form known as the earth. The Lord’s power is manifested equally in the north and the south poles of a magnet—as is evident from the fact that both the poles would equally attract iron pieces of whatever size.

Extended further, we deduce that the supreme Brahm is present both in the unmanifest, unqualified and attribute-less form as pure Consciousness (present in all the living creatures as their Atma), as well as in the form of a manifest, qualified form that has specific attributes and characteristic features as Sri Ram (the king of

Ayodhya). The Lord's Shakti is revealed in a female form as Sita to accompany Brahm in his male manifestation as Lord Ram.

In brief, it is envisioned that the eternal, invisible, attribute-less, unqualified and universal Consciousness known as the supreme transcendental Brahm has assumed the visible form that has a gross body, and this form is known as 'Ram'. Brahm's cosmic Shakti is revealed in the female counterpart of Ram as his divine consort 'Sita'.]

The Lord is not easy to please without worshipping his divine form. It is to felicitate worship and help the aspirant to reach his spiritual goal more easily that various divine forms have been devised to offer worship, respects and obeisance to the Supreme Being. So a wise man is one who understands that when he is offering worship to any given deity of his choice he is actually offering his homage to the Supreme Being in that form, and that this Supreme Being is one and not two.

[The system of worshipping a form of the Supreme Being had been devised by ancient sages and seers to make it easier for the ordinary man to honour the Lord as it is much easier and practical to recognize and honour someone with physical characteristics and attributes rather than someone who is unknown, invisible and unimaginable. Even the Mantra OM—which is universally recognized as a medium to attain Brahm and obtain self-realisation by employing it do Japa and Yoga—is also a symbol of the Supreme Being. When we wish to reach a certain place, we need to know some landmark or sign so as to recognize the place. Otherwise we may have actually found it but would miss it because we do not recognize it. Similarly, by worshipping some form of the Lord, it is easy to recognize the deity to whom worship is being offered. It helps the mind to become concentrated and remain focused, instead of getting confused and disoriented. A visual form of Brahm, a form that has definable attributes, virtues, qualities and characteristics is easy to relate to than an entity that is absolutely abstract and beyond comprehension in spite of it being an unequivocal and ubiquitous truth. For instance, it is easy for us to understand what 'water' is than to understand what a vapour or a moisture is, or what H₂O is because we come in contact with 'water' in our daily lives but do not have much of a daily use of any of the other forms of water.

The deity acts like a 'peg' to tie the rope to; it acts as a nail or the 'Kilak' to fix the mind; it acts as an anchor to keep the spiritual boat from drifting away in the vast sea of various philosophies and doctrines only to get lost somewhere down the line.]

To make the process more easier, special 'Yantras' have been devised which serve the same purpose as worshipping the divine form of the deity. In other words, the Yantra is deemed to be a symbolic body or the physical form of the deity that is being worshipped and honoured. It has the same spiritual value, potential and power as direct worshipping of the concerned deity.

[The Yantra is therefore regarded as being a symbol of the Lord himself. The Yantra is a worship instrument or apparatus in the form of a geometrical diagram of different patterns, and it incorporates the various Mantras of the Lord and his many manifestations which are marked on it. The main Mantra which is placed in the center of the Yantra is dedicated to the deity to whom this Yantra pertains, and the rest of the Mantras are placed in accordance to certain fixed pattern. It is just like the construction of a complicated machinery that is custom made in order to fulfill specific requirements. Even if one part is wrongly placed or omitted, the entire machine either fails to function or deliver the desired result. Likewise, it is very important that the greatest of attention is put on the placing of the Mantras at the correct point in the Yantra. Again, as complicated machines require skilled technician

to operate them, the Yantra should also be handled carefully by those who are experts in it, and should not be fooled around with by non-initiated persons.] (13).

Thus ends Canto 1 of Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 1—Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad

Canto 2

[Canto 2 continues with the ideas of Canto 1 by further outlining the divine glories of Lord Ram.]

1. The Lord (i.e. Sri Ram to whom this Upanishad is dedicated) is ‘self born’ or ‘self revealed’—i.e. the Lord is ‘Swaayambhu’. He does not require any external medium or cause to reveal himself in a visible form; he has no one from whom he is born. This is because he is eternal and without an end, so there is no question of his taking a new birth, as he is always present, and had never died. It is only that he makes himself physically visible that creates an illusion of the Lord taking a birth or coming into being, and his vanishing from sight when he so wishes or when his job in the visible form is done that he is regarded as leaving this world for his heavenly abode. In fact, the Lord is uniform, universal, constant, immutable, imperishable, omnipresent and eternal, not needing to go anywhere and not needing to come from anywhere. [He reveals himself without any cause whatsoever, or waiting for any reason to do so, for he does it out of his own free will whenever he deems it fit, necessary and proper.]

The Lord is an embodiment and an eternal fount of ‘light’ as he is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness that is eternally self-illuminated. Hence, the Lord does not require any other source of light to illuminate him or make his presence known. That is why he is honoured by the epithet ‘Jyotirmaya’—i.e. an entity that is ‘lighted’ and ‘illuminated’.

The Lord is without an end or beginning; he is eternal and infinite; he has no measurable dimensions and attributes—i.e. he is ‘Anant’. [Even though he appears to have a defined form as a human being, but essentially he is un-definable, unqualified, attribute-less and immeasurable, as well as is beyond the limiting factors of time, space and matter.]

In fact, he shines from his own self-generated light or illumination; he makes his presence evident by itself, requiring no other proofs to establish his presence, truthfulness, authenticity and veracity—i.e. the Lord is ‘Swamev Bhaasate’. [His form is eternally illuminated and radiant, symbolizing enlightenment, wisdom, erudition and pure consciousness. He is like the self-evident and self-illuminated Sun in the sky which does not need any proof to establish its presence or anything else to keep it illuminated.]

He pervades throughout this living creation or world in the form of Consciousness; it is he in the form of ‘pure consciousness’ that resides in all Jivas (living beings) in this creation. It is he who has established this creation and keeps it established; it is he who supports this creation and the life in it (1).

2. The Lord himself is the one who is the cause of the creation coming into existence; he is the one who sustains and protects it; he is the one who finally concludes it.

Towards this end, he willingly utilises the three basic qualities called the Gunas that act as catalysts to give effect to the Lord's wishes. These three Gunas help to bring about a particular change in creation, and modify the existing equilibrium in accordance with the wishes of the Lord.

These three Gunas are the following—Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. The dominance of the first quality called Sata Guna results in the emergence or retrieval of this present creation from the darkness that had prevailed after the previous phase of creation was annihilated. The dominance of the second quality called Raja Guna is responsible for the growth, the development, the sustenance and protection of creation that has come into existence. And finally, the third quality of Tama Guna brings about the conclusion of the existing creation.

Just like a huge banyan tree is secretly and imperceptibly present in its seed, only to emerge when the situation is conducive for its birth, this entire creation is secretly present in the supreme Lord and waiting for the right conditions that would cause it to emerge into a vibrant world. [And this 'right condition' is created when the Sata Guna becomes a dominant factor.]¹ (2).

[Note—¹It ought to be noted here that all these three Gunas are always present in this world, but in varying degrees. Under normal conditions equilibrium is maintained, but when certain Guna becomes more active or dominant this equilibrium is disturbed, and this results in a change becoming possible. The three Gunas play the role of a catalyst in effecting this change. Even as a computer can only function on the basis of its configuration and soft-wares installed into it, the creature was conditioned to act according to the ratio of these three Gunas built into his thought texture and personality traits. In the present case, when the creation was harboured in the bosom of the supreme Brahm, a quiet balance was in place. When the Lord decided to see the creation come into existence once again after a long hibernation period after its conclusion at the end of the last phase of creation, his mere wish ignited the Sata Guna to become active and charged, and this stirred up the cosmic ocean of quietude which resulted in the first ripples of creation. This has been envisioned by ancient sages and seers as the stirring of the primordial cosmic ether or the cosmic gel that created subtle waves of energy that coalesced with one another and overlapped each other to become energized and gather strength. This produced the primordial sound that has been conceptualized in the form of the Mantra OM. And from this initial whirring and humming came into being the rest of the elements as the primordial cosmic gel began to show signs of losing its homogeneity and becoming more and more heterogeneous.

As the cosmic cauldron began to cool down and the various constituent layers of creation began taking shape, the Sata Guna, being the best and the most sublime of the three Gunas, floated to the surface like butter does in milk. The Tama Guna, being the grossest of the three Gunas, was the heaviest, the meanest and the densest, and therefore it settled at the bottom. Meanwhile, the Raja Guna, being of an intermediary character, occupied the place between the two. There was no fine and well-defined demarcation line between them, and the demarcation was more of being relative in nature. Hence, there were areas where the three intermingled equally, while at others one Guna dominated over the other two.

The Tama Guna, being crude, acidic and corrosive by nature, eroded the part of the creation where it dominated, explaining why the creation ends when this particular Guna becomes dominant. This also explains why the creature in whom the Tama Guna is a ruling character soon lands in grave spiritual trouble. But since the Sata Guna has a natural quality to look up and regenerate, this creation re-emerges from its ruins when the Sata Guna takes over the Tama Guna in a new phase of creation. The Raja Guna helps the nascent creation expand and develop to its full potentials under its patronage. It provides the necessary warmth, energy, stamina and

dynamism necessary for growth and development. When the peak is reached, then like the sine wave the downward slide begins, reaches the bottom, and then picks up momentum once again to resurface as a new creation. This is briefly how the cycle continues and the wave of life oscillates infinitely.

The entire process of creation that followed has been explained in various Upanishads in varying languages, but basically all of them assert that Brahm had utilized these three Gunas to effect a change in the prevailing situation as and when the Lord deemed it fit and proper to do so.

The three qualities mentioned above are as follows:-

(i) Sata Guna—it is the most superior of the three qualities. It represents creative thoughts, positive attitude, characteristics of service, humility, devotion, nobility, virtuousness, righteousness, auspiciousness etc. That is why Brahma the creator was wise and created the primary scriptures called the Vedas, and all the inhabitants of this world were law-abiding citizens who respected the laws of Nature and paid homage to the forces of Nature personified as various Gods. Sins and vices were non-existent. But as the supreme Brahm had wished that 'change be the norm rather than the exception' in his creation, because if there was no change the world would stagnate and become stale, its development and growth would stop, and then the very purpose of effecting some change in the quietude of the cosmos that prevailed after its last phase was annihilated would be defeated. So Brahm ensured that 'change' would be automatically built into the creation he has initiated, and towards this end he made these three Gunas as fluid as possible. Even a slight stir is enough to disturb the balance and set in motion some change.

(ii) Raja Guna—it is the second quality producing worldly desires, passions, ambitions, stormy nature, expansionist tendencies, desire to obtain lordship and dominant role in creation etc. This Guna kept the creature engrossed in this world of material objects. The Lord built this Raja Guna into the texture of this creation and as an integral part of a creature's mental tendency and thought processes to ensure that he remains interested in keeping the wheel of creation turning on behalf of the supreme Creator known as Brahm.

(iii) Tama Guna—it is the third and the most mean and base of the three qualities that represent such negative traits as sins, vices, misdeeds, anger, wrath, vengeance, deceit, conceit, recklessness, jealousy, hatred etc. Obviously, when such traits are dominant in any society, it becomes degenerate and decays to an end rapidly. To say that Brahm brings about the conclusion of creation by taking the help of Tama Guna is a metaphoric way of saying that when these negative factors become the norm rather than the exception in any society, it is bound to fail, disintegrate and wither away on its own. Brahm brings about the conclusion by unleashing the Tama Guna in the world.]

3. Similarly, the whole animate as well as the inanimate world is intrinsically and latently present in the Beej Mantra or the seed/root Mantra of Lord Ram. This Beej Mantra is 'Raam/Raan(g)'. The very fact that it is called a 'Beej' clearly indicates that it is the 'seed' from which the rest of the creation has emerged (just like the case of the huge banyan tree emerging from its seed as cited in verse no. 2 of this Canto above). [Refer also to Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 9 which deals with the same subject and in almost an identical language.]

All the three aspects of creation (i.e. origin, sustenance, and conclusion) are represented in the form of the three deities of the Trinity (as Brahma who is responsible for creation, as Vishnu who is responsible for sustenance and protection, and as Shiva who is responsible for conclusion).

Since the supreme Lord (in this case Lord Ram who is personified Brahm, the Supreme Being) is the foundation of this creation, since he is the one who is the

supreme creator, sustainer and protector, as well as the concluder (as noted in verse no. 2), it follows that all these three aspects of creation and their representative deities are dependent upon the Lord for their existence and importance.

Again, since the Lord uses his cosmic dynamic powers to bring about change and give effect to his wishes of creating, sustaining and concluding this creation, it follows that the female counter-parts of these three deities (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) are in effect the 'Shakti', or the dynamic energy as well as the stupendous cosmic power, authority, ability and strength of the supreme Lord (Ram or Brahm) in a personified form.

Since the letter 'Ra' (pronounced as in *run*) of the Sanskrit language is the fundamental letter of the Beej Mantra of the Lord, which is 'Raam/Raan(g)'¹ and which is regarded as the 'seed' ('Beej') from which the rest of the creation has emerged (as explained above), it follows that all the three aspects of creation represented by these Gods and Goddesses rest upon or have their foundation upon this basic letter of the Lord's name¹.

Those who are wise, erudite, enlightened and Brahm-realised are aware of this fact (3).

[Note—¹The word 'Ram' or 'Raam' ('Ra/Raa' as in *rather* or *ration*, and 'M' as in *mum* or *come*) consists of four distinct sounds of the Sanskrit language—the consonant 'Ra' (as in *run*, *rung*), the long vowel sound 'Aa' which is the second vowel (as in *rather*, *arm* or *father*), the basic vowel 'A' which is the primary sound in any language (as in *a* table; *amongst*) and the consonant 'Ma' (sounded as in *mum* or *come*).

Lord Ram is represented by the basic letter 'Ra' of the word 'Ram' without which it would not have any existence. This is symbolic of the fact that without the Lord, the creation would not have any existence. Now, since Lord Ram is the supreme Creator, it follows that the letter 'Ra' also stands for Brahma, the creator of the visible world. With the same analogy, the second letter 'Aa' of the word Ram represents the sustainer Vishnu because Lord Ram is also the universal sustainer and protector of creation. And finally, since Lord Ram is the ultimate destination of the entire creation, he also represents Shiva, the concluder. Therefore, the last letter 'Ma' of the word Ram stands for Lord Shiva.

The initiation of the sound, the propagation of the sound, and the winding up of the sound, are represented by the three Trinity Gods known as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, while the loop which ties them together into one single and wholesome composite mass, or in other words, which completes the circle, is the supreme Brahm called Ram. This concept has been explained in Canto 3 of Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.]

Thus ends Canto 2 of Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 1—Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad

Canto 3

[Canto 3 narrates in brief how the creation has evolved from the esoteric and mystical form of Lord Ram in the shape of his 'Beej Mantra', the basic letter around which the concept of all Mantras of the Lord is based. Since Lord Ram is supreme transcendental Brahm personified, and since Brahm is the cosmic super

Consciousness, the dynamism and the cosmic energy of the latter are revealed in the form of the Shakti (dynamism, authority, energy, potentials, powers, vitality, strength, import etc.) that is inherent in this Beej Mantra. If Brahm has revealed himself as Ram, then his Shakti has manifested itself as Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram.

Again, since the living being's 'true self' is nothing but this cosmic Consciousness personified as his Atma, his soul, it follows that for a wise, enlightened and self-realised spiritual aspirant his 'true self' is also a personification of Lord Ram! In other words, there is no difference between 'an enlightened and realised soul' and 'Lord Ram'.]

1. Lord Ram and his divine consort Sita are worshipped through this Beej Mantra of the Lord (i.e. the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)' stands for Lord Ram as well as for Sita). Or in other words, Lord Ram stands for the Viraat Purush or Vishnu, and Sita represents Prakriti or Mother Nature. [This is because Lord Ram stands for the supreme Brahm, while Sita stands for the Shakti or the dynamic aspect of the cosmic energy and the supreme inviolable powers of Brahm. Even as a king and his powers are inseparable from one another, Brahm and its Shakti are also inseparable and indistinguishable from one another. Brahm and Shakti are in-alienable, and therefore if Brahm reveals himself as Ram, his Shakti accompanies the Lord as Sita. As creation unfolded, Brahm came to be known as the 'Viraat Purush' or the primordial Male aspect of creation who provided the primary spark of life into the primordial cosmic gel to initiate the changes that would ultimately lead to the rolling forward of the wheel of creation. This form of Brahm was called 'Viraat' because of its colossus size and cosmic contours, and 'Purush' because it provided the first spark—or 'sperm'—of life. Brahm's dynamism and cosmic energy known as Shakti that brought about this change was called 'Prakriti' or Nature because it gave effect to the desire of Brahm to create and then sustain this creation in a perpetual manner by first conceiving and then harbouring and providing nourishment to the embryonic creation in its initial stages, and its subsequent development and growth. It was called 'Nature' because of two reasons—one, the primary Gunas, such as the Sata, Raja and Tama, that were used by the supreme Creator to inject certain qualities to the cosmic embryo determined the 'nature' of the off-spring that was eventually produced from it, and two, once the process of creation was set in motion, it took its own 'natural course' of evolution and development based on the laws of 'Nature' that 'naturally' came into force. All these factors were responsible for calling the primary form of creation as Prakriti or 'Nature'.]

It is from them (Ram as the 'Purush' or the primordial Male, and Sita as the 'Prakriti' or primary Nature) that the fourteen Bhuvans¹ (or the fourteen symbolic areas of the world) came into being.

It is from this cosmic form of the Lord that these Bhuvans (i.e. the entire gamut of creation) have come into being, it is this Lord that sustains them and protects them, and it is in this cosmic Lord that all of them would finally collapse into and vanish. [It is like the case of the waves in the huge ocean rising from its surface, developing and growing into huge and formidable walls of water that can often upturn ships and wipe out entire coastal villages when they lash ashore. When these waves have spent their force and energy, they collapse back into the ocean to take rest for some time only to re-emerge with renewed vigour when the time comes for the formation of a new train of high-rise waves. But this cycle of waves does not affect or alter the primary form or nature of the ocean even a tiny bit. Another fine example

would be that of the huge banyan tree emerging from a seed, growing into a huge structure, living its life to the full and dying to re-emerge from a seed once again.]

Lord Ram had assumed the form of a human being out of his own maverick power of creating delusions, called the power of 'Maya'. [This Maya is also a form of Shakti of Brahm, being very powerful and dynamic in its force and effect. This form of Shakti of the Lord is called 'Maya Shakti'. This form of dynamism of Brahm helps the latter to create delusions in this creation, which in turn keeps the creature trapped in the cycle of birth and death as it prevents him from realizing or becoming aware of the 'truth'. Brahm has employed this Maya Shakti to ensure that the wheel of creation rolled by him keep on rolling infinitely till the time the Lord decides to stop it. When he thus decides, he withdraws his Maya Shakti, and all delusions vanish. The concept of Maya Shakti has also been explained the form of a note appended to verse nos. 2 and 3 of the Sita Upanishad which is Chapter 9 of this volume.] (1).

[Note—¹(a) The name of the fourteen Bhuvans according to Padma Puran are— 7 upper worlds- (i) Bhu, (ii) Bhuvha, (iii) Swaha, (iv) Maha, (v) Janaha, (vi) Tapaha, (vii) Satyam; 7 nether worlds—(viii) Atal, (ix) Vital, (x) Satal, (xi) Rasatal, (xii) Talatal, (xiii) Mahatal, (xiv) Patal.

(b) In the beginning there was nothing to start with except the primordial cosmic gel. Then the Lord used his magical skills and stupendous powers to mould the entire creation from this jelly. The most evident example of this process is the formation of the complex human body from the single egg present in the mother and its fertilization by the male sperm resulting in an entity known as a man who is a microcosm of the entire creation. He is an image of the creation because the Lord had created man in his own image, and the entire creation is deemed to be a revelation of the supreme Lord who pervades throughout it uniformly. 'In his own image' is a figure of speech to emphasize the fact that whatever exists in the creation is one or the other form of the Lord, and there is nothing which is not a form of the Lord. Therefore, it would be safe to say that the maverick cosmic creator had no precedent to copy from; he had to go it alone.

The fact that the supreme Brahm created a man in his own image, or that Brahm revealed himself as a human being is endorsed by the Aiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition as well as the first chapter on the genesis of creation in the Holy Bible, Old Testament.]

2. 'We bow and pay our respects to the supreme Lord Ram (who is none else but Brahm manifested) who lives in this world and uniformly pervades in it as its 'Atma' and its 'Pran'—i.e. as the creation's soul and its life, as its essence, as its fundamental basis and its core. [This is the reason why Brahm is called a 'Purush'—it is because Brahm lives inside every individual creature as his Atma or consciousness, and as his Pran or vital life factors such as his vital winds. In other words, the body of the creature is the divine abode where this Brahm lives. In fact, the word 'Purush' means one who lives inside a 'Pur' or a city or a dwelling.]¹'

The spiritual aspirant should think of Lord Ram as the Supreme Being called Brahm himself personified. Brahm is the primary and primordial cosmic Consciousness that prevailed even before this creation came into being or was even conceptualized. This form of the Lord (Ram) transcends even the three Gunas (Sata, Raja and Tama) that helped to determine the nature and texture of the would-be creation. It is this form of the Divinity that is worthy of adoration and paying respects to, and the worshipper should bow his head to it.

He should endeavour to establish oneness between his own 'self', i.e. his own Atma, and this supreme Lord, i.e. the supreme Atma. This is called 'self-realisation' and attainment of Brahm-hood. When this is achieved, the spiritual aspirant exclaims

in ecstasy of having discovered the greatest truth of creation as well as of himself—he says ‘I am Lord Ram who is Brahm’; or ‘There is no difference between me and Ram’. This is the highest level of spiritual attainment and marks the pinnacle of enlightenment and realisation² (2).

[Note—¹Having created this world, the Supreme Lord entered it in the form of the Atma, the pure consciousness. This Atma is the soul, the essence of this creation, for if the core is removed the outer structure would collapse as it would have nothing to support it, or nothing to stand on. In other words, the genes of the supreme Father were transferred to his off spring, the creature at the micro level and the creation at the macro level, in the form of ‘Consciousness’, because Brahm is nothing but cosmic Consciousness. Again, since Brahm is the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation, it follows that this Atma representing the supreme Lord is also the Truth in this whole setup. This Atma is the ‘true self’ of the creature because it represents the supreme Lord, Brahm or Ram, and just like the supreme Lord had allowed himself to be surrounded by Maya (delusions) willingly, and thereby got sucked in the vortex of numerous duties pertaining to his own creation—such as its sustenance, protection, nourishment and regulation etc.—a man also gets sucked in this world if he allows his Atma to be surrounded by delusions and ignorance of its exalted heritage.

Another important component of this creation that infuses ‘life’ in it is the ‘Pran’. The word ‘Pran’ means ‘life that is marked by conscious awareness and activity’. In practical terms, both the terms ‘Atma’ and ‘Pran’ co-exist because both are like the two sides of the same coin.

While the word ‘Atma’ means the soul and the consciousness, the word ‘Pran’ means the vital winds that govern the vital signs of life in the gross body and its functioning. In practice, both are synonymous with each other. This is because a creature is alive only as long as his body as the Atma as well as the Pran in it. If one leaves the body, the other becomes automatically defunct.

The importance and interdependence of the Atma and Pran on each other can be easily visualized. The Atma in the form of consciousness is said to have its residence in the heart of the creature. It is common knowledge that life remains in the creature and his organs are kept conscious only as long as the heart beats and supplies blood to the different organs of the body. But say how can the heart beat and keep the creature alive if the Pran or the vital winds decide to call it quits and paralyse the rest of the body, preventing the organs to perform their basic functions, such as the blood vessels to carry blood to the heart, and the tissues to produce energy by digesting food?

Similarly, the Pran, in the form of the vital airs or winds, controls all the signs of life in the creature, and keeps all the organs of the body, the external as well as the internal, alive and active. But say how can it do so if the heart stops beating?

The Lord has been conceptualized as a ‘Purush’—literally meaning ‘one who lives in a Pur, a city or palace’. Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. According to the Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4. When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. According to the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18, it was this Viraat Purush himself that entered the body of all the creatures of this creation.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body

of the supreme transcendental Brahm, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

According to reverend Sankracharya's commentary on *Kathopanishad*, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature as the Atma at the micro level of creation, and as the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma at the macro level. This Brahm pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation. That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahm because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

²This realisation is the culmination of one's spiritual exercises. It is the pinnacle of self-realisation and attainment of Brahm-hood.

The declaration that the spiritual makes in this verse finds resonance in the Mahavakyas or the great saying of the Vedas. Some of the Upanishads that describe these Mahavakyas are the following—

- (i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad.
- (ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi).
- (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-3, 8; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi).
- (iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk Rahasayo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2.
- (v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8 (Tattwamasi; Ayamaatma Brahm); Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 ('So-a-Ham'); Canto 6, paragraph no. 22 ('Twam Brahmasmi'; 'Aham Brahmasmi'; 'Twamewaaham'; 'Ahamev Twam'); Canto 8, paragraph no. 5 ('Brahmaasmi' or I am Brahm; 'Ahamasmi' or Indeed it is I/me; 'Brahmahamasmi' or I am indeed Brahm; 'Yoahamasmi' or That is I/me; 'Brahmaamashmi' or Brahm is I/me; 'Ahamevaaham' or I am indeed I/me.); Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14 (Tat Twam Asi—That Art Thou); Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9-10 (So-a-Ham); Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 8 (Brahmasmi—I am Brahm personified); Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-8 ('Hans So-a-Ham'); verse no. 11 ('So-a-Hamarka'—that essence is me); Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15 ('Tattwamasi'—i.e. that supreme essence or truth is you; the second Maha Vakya is 'Ayamatma'—i.e. that essence known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is my own Atma, my own 'self'; the third Maha Vakya is 'Brahm Aham'—i.e. Brahm is me; the fourth Maha Vakya is 'Aham Brahmasmi'—i.e. I am Brahm).]

Thus ends Canto 3 of Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 1—Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad

Canto 4

[This Canto primarily deals with three points—(i) It describes the great Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram, and explains its metaphysical and spiritual greatness, importance and significance. (ii) It then outlines briefly the main events in the life of Lord Ram starting from the abduction of Sita by the demon king Ravana, narrating in brief how the Lord freed her by killing the demon, and ending with the Lord's return to his capital at Ayodhya and his anointment as its king. (iii) And finally this Canto describes elaborately the esoteric and mystical Ram Yantra—the magical charm instrument used to formally worship the divine form of the Lord using a matrix-like geometrical figure consisting of an array of concentric rings with an outer square boundary wall of parallel lines. This Yantra is also called a 'Bhupur', and it employs a lot of Beej Mantras of Lord Ram as well as of other deities. It is like a complicated IC used in modern-day electronic gadgets, and therefore it can be called a mystical gadget that is usually used in Tantra philosophy to harness the cosmic forces of creation for the spiritual benefit of the worshipper.

From the perspective of worship of Lord Ram it is deemed to be a divine seat of the Lord or even as a physical form of the Lord just like a consecrated idol of a certain deity is regarded as a personification of that deity.

The Canto outlines the detail of how this Yantra is constructed, and how the various Mantras are placed in it.]

1. The five letter primary Mantra used for dedication and devotion for Lord Ram is basically 'Raamaaye Namaha'. [Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 5. Refer Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 10.]

In this Mantra, the word 'Namaha' refers to the Jiva, the living being, who is reverentially bowing before the Supreme Being represented by the word 'Raamaaye'. Now, the word 'Raamaaye' in this Mantra has two parts—viz. 'Raam' and 'Aaye'. The first part 'Raam' refers to the Supreme Being who has manifested as Lord Ram, while the second part 'Aaye' helps to establish a bridge that links the Jiva, the living being, with Raam, the Supreme Being. It helps the Jiva to realise that his own truthful self is the same divinity or pure conscious Atma that has taken another form as Lord Ram. [In this context, refer verse no. 2 of the previous Canto 3 which also speaks the same thing.]

Hence, the complete Mantra 'Raamaaye Namaha' has many connotations—viz. (i) 'Yes, I, the Jiva, do realise that my truthful 'self' is the same divinity as Lord Ram to whom I pay my obeisance by bowing reverentially'; (ii) 'I bow most respectfully before Lord Ram whom I know to be the Supreme Being'; (iii) 'I bow to the transcendental Brahm known as Ram whom I recognize as being also my own self'.

In other words, this Mantra is the one that is used by self-realised and Brahm-realised creatures who understand the true nature of Lord Ram as being a personification of the supreme Brahm as well as of the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the bosom of all living beings as their Atma or soul. This Atma is the creature's 'true self'.

[The suffix 'Aaye' of the word 'Raamye'—Raam + Aaye = Raamaye—is called the fourth Vibhakti of the word 'Ram'. A 'Vibhakti' is a certain case or inflexion of a word in the Sanskrit grammar.] (1).

2. The basic Mantra dedicated to Lord Ram is 'Raam/Raan(g) Raamaaye Namaha'. [Refer Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 16. It briefly means 'I bow reverentially to Lord Ram who is represented by the Beej Mantra Raam/Raan(g). This

Beej Mantra has the same spiritual importance and divine significance as the eclectic Mantra 'OM' which stands for the supreme Brahm.' Being the Beej Mantra for the fire element also, this Mantra for Lord Ram implies that the Lord possesses all the virtues of the cosmic fire element, such as him being majestic, powerful, dynamic, vital for life, full of energy and vitality, self-illuminated and illuminating others, divine, holy and purifying as the fire element. So, while on the one hand Lord Ram is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified, and on the other hand he embodies all the virtues of the all-powerful fire element.]

In this Mantra, the words 'Raamaaye Namaha' refer to the person who offers the worship to Lord Ram because he is the one who is bowing before the deity whom he worships, while the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)' refers to the fundamental identity of the deity to whom this worship is being offered. In other words, the second part of the Mantra (i.e. Raamaaye Namaha) helps the spiritual aspirant to realise that the deity to whom he is paying his homage in the form of Lord Ram is none else but the supreme Brahm who is referred to in the first part of the Mantra by the Beej 'Raam/Raan(g)'. [Since this Beej is also the one for the cosmic fire element, this Mantra also implies that the deity to whom worship is being offered personifies all the purity, magnificence, splendour, glories and potentials of the fire element.]

A coordination between these two help to synergize their energies and coordinate their powers, strengths and potentials for the benefit of the worshipper so much so that all his desires and wishes are fulfilled. There is no doubt in it (2).

[Note—It is only when the two half of the Mantra are coordinated that the circuit is completed and desired energy generated that can empower the worshipper to achieve success in his spiritual endeavours. A harmony must be established between the worldly form of the Supreme Being as Lord Ram, represented by the word 'Ram' in the Mantra, and his cosmic, almighty and all-pervading divine form as Brahm represented by the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)' so that the worshipper, who is represented by the last word 'Namaha' because he is the one who is bowing to pay homage, can actually establish a link between the worldly microcosmic individual form of the Lord as the king of Ayodhya known as 'Ram', and his ethereal divine macrocosmic and all-pervading supreme form as the transcendental, supreme and almighty 'Brahm' represented by the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)'.

In this context the word 'Namaha' implies that the wise and enlightened worshipper is bowing before Ram who is not adored so much by him as a great human being or an extraordinary great king but as the manifested form of the Supreme Being himself, a form that is as magnificent, majestic and glorious as the fire element. This wisdom and erudition is absolutely essential if one were to remove doubts and all sorts of confusions, perplexities and schisms that may arise in his heart about the authenticity, the truthfulness and the philosophical import of this Upanishad. He must understand that the Lord he worships, the Lord to whom he is offering his prayers is no ordinary Lord or deity, but is the Supreme Being himself. The Mantra of Lord Ram is no ordinary Mantra but is the almighty and most dynamic of the Mantras as it is honoured by the epithet of being a 'Tarak Mantra', i.e. a Mantra that can provide the spiritual aspirant's soul its final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation that he so earnestly seeks but which had eluded him till this time.]

3. When a person is called by his name, he comes forward or presents himself in front of the caller. Similarly, by the use of the Beej Mantra of the Lord, or repeating it while doing Japa, the devotee or the spiritual seeker is able to have a direct communion with Lord Ram in his primary, divine, cosmic and sublime form as the supreme Brahm that is as almighty and powerful as well as glorious and dynamic as the fire element. The Lord too comes forward or appears before the devotee or the

spiritual aspirant who remembers the Lord and calls him for help by directly using his name, i.e. by directly appealing to him by his personal name that is specific to the Lord¹ (3).

[Note—¹The Beej Mantra of Lord Ram is like his unique identity code. When he is addressed by this Beej he knows that the devotee is one of his close followers because only a person who is dear to someone would have the liberty and the privilege to call the other person by his first name or even by his nick-name. If someone is not too close to person, he would rather use the formal format of addressing him instead of calling him by his pet name or by his informal name. But when anyone is close and intimate with the other person he would prefer the informal address and call the person by his nick-name or his pet name. So, when the devotee prays to Lord Ram with this Mantra, he is directly approaching the Lord or establishing a direct link with him using his pet name so to say.

In this analogy, the Beej Mantra is like someone's pet name or nick-name by which he is fondly known to and informally addressed by those who are very close to him as compared to his formal name and address with which he is known to and addressed by the rest of the world in his formal working life. Hence, the use of the Beej Mantra establishes a close proximity between the worshipper and the deity worshipped, and it creates an environment of informality, closeness, endearment, friendliness and direct access as compared to full names with prefixes and suffixes to represent honours and titles by which we address those in high position in society, such as when addressing a king or a president of a country.

In short, the full Mantra of the Lord that employs his various names and honours would be like a formal form of address of the Lord instead of an intimate form which employs his short name or even his Beej Mantra.

We can look at the Beej Mantra from another angle. It is like a Master key that can open a number of locks—i.e. the Beej Mantra can provide the worshipper access to many of the hidden forces and powers of the deity worshipped that would have been impossible for him to access without this Mantra. The Beej Mantra acts as a booster or an enhancer or a catalyst that multiplies the effectiveness of the other Mantras. It establishes a kind of right-of-way to the deity worshipped.]

4. [Now, after having understood the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of Lord Ram and his esoteric Beej Mantra, the formal process of doing worship and offering obeisance to the Lord is being narrated.]

The spiritual aspirant/seeker should concentrate his mind and intellect on the main word of the Mantra. It is 'Raamaaye'. It consists of three syllables or letters—viz. Raa, Maa and Ye.

The first letter 'Raa' of this word refers to the Beej Mantra (the seed/root Mantra) of Lord Ram—viz. 'Raam/Raan(g)'. The second letter 'Maa' refers to the Lord's Shakti (i.e. his cosmic dynamic energy, potentials and powers revealed as Prakriti as well as Maya). And the last word 'Ye' is the binding force that bridges the gap between the individual Jiva and the Lord, and between the Lord and his divine Shakti. It is therefore called the 'Kilak'—the 'nail' that fixes this oneness between the two, the 'peg' which helps to keep both the Jiva as well as the Shakti permanently linked or attached to their supreme Lord, who in this case is Lord Ram as Brahm personified.

Now, for the purpose of formal worship, the process of Anga-Nyas¹ is being described. The 'Beej' (Raam/Raan(g)) should be meditatively established on the right half of the chest of the worshipper. The 'Shakti' part (Maa) should be established on the left half of the chest. And finally, the Kilak (Ye) should be established in the centre of the chest in the region of the heart. [We note here that on one side of the chest Brahm is established, and on the other side Brahm's Shakti is established. They

are fixed on the body by driving a symbolic nail through the heart which is regarded as the central point of the body and the pivotal point, because without the heart no living being can survive. Further, the Atma or the pure consciousness is also said to have its abode in this heart. It would be observed that the heart is the only organ that actually shows signs of activity by ‘throbbing or pulsating with life’; none of the other internal organs show this physical sign of life. This pulsation of the heart is self-perpetuating, and this shows the ability of the Atma to sustain its own self without any external prop. The Atma is central to the entire living creation.

Brahm is the cosmic Atma, while Shakti is its cosmic dynamism and energy. So, when this Brahm and Shakti are established on the worshipper’s body, they are symbolically linked or wired to the Atma by fixing it with a ‘Kilak’ on the heart. This ritual is a metaphoric way of saying that both Brahm and Shakti are centered on the Atma, and the latter is the pivot around which the whole creation moves.

In other words, the Kilak part of the Mantra helps to link the individual worshipper’s Atma to the supreme Brahm on the one hand, and to Brahm’s cosmic Shakti representing the Lord’s powers, dynamism and energy on the other hand. Therefore, the word ‘Raamaaye’ kind of reminds the worshipper by saying—“Look, you (the worshipper) and Ram (representing Brahm) are one and the same, and the strength, powers, energy, authority and vigour that you have are actually the Shakti of Brahm which is established in you”; or “whatever you are, whatever energy and powers you have, are Brahm and its Shakti on display”; or “there is no difference between you and your powers on the one hand, and Brahm and its Shakti on the other hand”. In this context, refer verse no. 1 of the present Canto 4.]

This process is prescribed for worship and offering of prayers to Lord Ram to seek his blessings so that all the desires, wishes and aspirations of the devotee can be fulfilled (4).

[Note—¹*Anga Nyas*—There are two aspects of invoking any given Mantra and sanctifying the worshipper’s body with them. They are known as (i) Anga Nyas and (ii) Kar Nyas. They are done with any Mantra using its seed or root called the ‘Beej’ of that Mantra, and are the two basic rituals of invoking the divine powers of the Mantras which are basically mystical formulas employed in religious practice, specially during occult rites and meditation of which this Khechhari is a part. The word ‘Kar’ means hand, and ‘Anga’ means body, while ‘Nyas’ refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the body are touched and certain Mantras are said. It also means the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the invoked Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points. Therefore, Anga Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra’s supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and reposting it on the various locations of the body and its vital parts, such as the limbs, the abdomen and chest, the throat and forehead etc.

In other words, the process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra’s divine mystical powers in the worshipper’s own body and make it sinless, holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take its seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is not only getting constant protection from this godhead but also has been dutifully purified and made auspicious. The body is now the symbolic seat of

Divinity represented by the deity, and from the metaphysical perspective it has been now officially made the abode of Brahm as all the Gods are nothing but manifestations of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation. With the deity firmly established in the body of the worshipper, the latter is deemed to personify all the glorious, majestic, divine and magnificent virtues exemplified by the worshipped deity.

Anga Nyas is therefore the process of ritualistic worship by which certain fixed points in the body are designated where the chosen deity is mentally invoked through the specific Mantra. This envisions that the mystical divine powers of the patron God or deity being worshipped by the Mantra are mentally invested in these fixed cardinal points of the body, thereby empowering the aspirant with their stupendous potentials as well as symbolically assigning the body to the tutelary God or deity to whom the particular Mantra belongs for his protection and blessing.

In the context of the Beej Mantras, it refers to invoking their divine cosmic dynamic powers and establishing them on various parts of the body, or assigning the patron Gods of these seed Mantras some specific part of the body so that they can establish themselves there.

Hence, doing Kar Nyas with the Beej Mantras would be to establish these symbolic Gods representing the cosmic, divine and mystical powers that are encrypted in the different Beej Mantras on the hand of the practitioner, while Anga Nyas would be to do the same on other parts of the body such as the chest, abdomen, shoulders, throat, forehead etc.]

5. This is the traditional sequence followed for the use of all the Mantras during formal forms of worship—viz, first comes the ‘seed’ or ‘Beej’ of the Mantra, then the ‘Shakti’, followed by the ‘Kilak’, and finally the ‘Vinigyog’ or prayer for the fulfillment of the worshipper’s desires.

The worshipper should meditate upon Lord Ram as a personification of the supreme, transcendental, eternal, infinite, imperishable and measureless Brahm who is the cosmic supreme Consciousness and the supreme Atma or Soul known as the Parmatma of this creation. [Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2.]

He should meditate and contemplate upon Lord Ram as a personification of the cosmic ‘fire element’. Lord Ram is the Fire God manifested with all his purity, brilliance, dazzle, glory, radiance, splendour, energy, authority, powers and potentials.

[This is because the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram—i.e. ‘Raam/Raan(g)’ is also the Beej Mantra of the fire element. As already stressed earlier, this is indicative of the fact that Lord Ram is as powerful and dynamic as the fire element besides being personification of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. In other words, Lord Ram is a form of the Supreme Being that has the latter’s Shakti represented by the ‘fire’ in its full glory in attendance. Lord Ram is a visible manifestation of the stupendous glory, majesty, magnificence, dynamism and energy of the cosmic fire element as much as he is of the cosmic supreme Consciousness.] (5).

6. Being richly endowed by the Sata Guna (which is the best quality and most auspicious amongst the three Gunas), the Lord is the one who creates this ‘Vishwa’ or the vast universe.

Inspite of being splendidous, fierce and potent like the ‘fire’ element (refer verse no. 5), Lord Ram is also cool and soothing like the rays of the ‘moon’. This creation (or world or universe) is therefore a unified form of two opposite forces of creation—one is the most dynamic, uncompromising, unforgiving and relentless

nature of Brahm represented by the ferocious and scorching fire element, and the other is the soothing, nourishing, solace and succour providing aspect of Brahm represented by the moon¹. [It must be noted that the Beej Mantra for the Fire is also the letter 'Ra', and its extended, enhanced and reinforced form 'Raam/Raan(g)'. Refer Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2, 6, 10-11, 40, 80; and Canto 5, verse no. 3.]

In other words, the soothing aspect of the Lord counters the heat and scorch of the fire element in the world, enabling life to flourish in it. [Earlier we have already read that Brahm is ambivalent—refer Canto 1, verse no. 13. That is, Brahm is present in equal intensity and force in any two given situations however contradictory or opposing they might be. This is absolutely true and actually feasible because everything in creation is one or the other form of Brahm. If Brahm is as hot as the fire element, then it cannot be denied that the same Brahm is as cold as the water element for the simple reason that both the water and the fire elements are one of the many revelations of Brahm. Therefore, if Brahm has revealed itself as the fire element of which the celestial sun is a vivid form, then it is equally true that the same Brahm has revealed itself as the life-giving and soothing elixir known as the Amrit of which the celestial moon is a condensed form. The simultaneous existence of the fire represented by the sun and the nectar of life that counters the scorching affects of the fire represented by the moon in the same sky exemplifies the great paradox about Brahm—that Brahm represents all forces of creation, no matter how opposing or contradictory they might be. That is why it is said that Brahm is an all-encompassing and all-inclusive divine and truthful but most mysterious, enigmatic and esoteric entity in creation.]

Goddess Sita represents the moon because she is as beautiful and charming as the latter. She is also the Shakti of the Lord, i.e. his dynamic energy, his cosmic powers and potentials manifested in the form of his consort to accompany the Lord during his sojourn on earth. But she derives her importance, authority and powers by being associated with the supreme Lord, and only carries out the Lord's wishes and instructions. Hence, if Lord Ram is the moon, then Sita is the unique quality of the moon for which it is so much lauded and praised in this creation. [The moon is loved by all because it is so beautiful and so soothing as compared to the sun which is scorching by nature. Who would have loved the moon if its disc would not have been so enchanting to look at against the background of the dark sky, and if its light would not have been so soothing and comforting to even the most tormented soul? Similarly, the glory of Lord Ram and his fame is established in this world because of Sita. Had it not been for Sita, the story of Ramayan would not have taken the course it did, and therefore the life of Ram would not have been so much remembered by the people as it actually is now; he would have ruled just like other great kings and found some mention in some history text, and nothing more. The Lord's glory and fame is established in this world because he had killed the ferocious demon named Ravana for the sake of liberating Sita from his clutches. The whole story of the epic Ramayana is built around this basic theme.

Therefore, if Ram represents Brahm, Sita represents Brahm's Shakti. If Ram is the Viraat Purush, Sita is the Prakriti or Mother Nature. If Ram is Lord Vishnu, Sita is Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu.]

When we consider how creation was created and how it got protection, we must look at Lord Ram and Sita from the perspective of Brahm and its Shakti. So, when Lord Ram is associated with Sita in his cosmic form as Brahm that is associated with its divine cosmic energy and dynamism known as Shakti or Maya, or as the Viraat Purush who is associated with the Prakriti (Mother Nature), the resultant

product is this mysterious creation. Lord Ram provides the spark of life in the form of the cosmic ‘sperm’ that represents the fire element, and the resultant embryo that represents the infant or nascent creation is protected by the cosmic Mother by lodging it in her womb so that it is protected from the scorching effects of the fire element. Hence, the Shakti of Brahm protects the creation by its soothing nature just like a mother protects the off spring produced by the father.

So, it is to recognize this fact that Lord Ram is said to be equivalent to the fire element, and Sita to be equivalent to the soothing rays of the moon. Hence, if Ram is the moon in the metaphoric sense, then Sita is the latter’s soothing light and beauty.

With Sita, Sri Ram resembles the beautiful full moon with its most enchanting, soothing and glorious moonlight. In other words, just as the moon would lose its glory, majesty, magnificence and fame if its light and beauty are removed from it, Lord Ram would also be devoid of his cosmic powers and authority if he is not associated with Sita.

Again, just like the moon and its light cannot be separated from each other, Lord Ram and Sita cannot be separated from one another. In other words, Lord Ram and Sita are the two aspects of the same cosmic Divinity (6).

[Note—¹The word ‘Ram’ has two syllables or letters—‘Raa’ (as in *rather*) which represents the ‘fire’ aspect of creation, and ‘Ma’ (as in *come*) which represents the moon or cool aspect. Incidentally, the letter ‘Ma’ also refers to a ‘mother’. Hence, if Lord Ram is the Father, the ‘Purush’, then Sita is the universal Mother, the ‘Shakti’ personified.]

7. The worshipper should meditate upon the divine and sublime form of Lord Ram as follows—The Lord is established alongside Prakriti. [The word ‘Prakriti’ refers to Mother Nature at the macrocosmic level of creation, and it represents the almighty Lord’s cosmic dynamic energy called all-powerful and ubiquitous Shakti.

When the Supreme Being who is known as the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu at the macrocosmic level, manifested himself as Lord Ram (see verse no. 1 of Canto 1), this Prakriti, which was also known as Laxmi in the context of Vishnu, revealed itself as Sita to accompany the Lord during his sojourn on earth. This was done to aid the Lord in his duties and obligations for which he had decided to come down to earth as a human being.]

Lord Ram has a dark complexion, wears a Pitambar (a yellow, seamless, silk body-wrapping garment worn by Vishnu), has matted lock of hairs on his head, has two arms, is adorned by large ear-rings, wears a garland of gems around his neck, and holds a bow. By temperament he is defined as being ‘Dhir’—i.e. someone who is calm, patient, sober, tolerant, fearless, courageous, serious and steady under all sorts of circumstances and the greatest of adversities (7).

8. His (Lord Ram’s) countenance is always pleasant, warm, elegant and cheerful. The Lord is invincible, and he is invariably victorious in war.

He is endowed with the eight mystical accomplishments called the ‘Siddhis’¹ that add glory and importance to his already exalted position, his majestic stature, his matchless fame, his magnificent glory, his divine radiance and splendour, and his inviolable authority and majestic powers.

The primary Prakriti (primordial Nature), which is the cause of creation and is a personified form of the divine Shakti of the Supreme Being, has manifested itself (as Sita, the Lord’s divine consort), and has established itself on his left. [That is,

when Prakriti revealed itself along with the Supreme Being or the Viraat Purush to accompany the latter, it assumed the form of Sita and established itself on the left of Lord Ram as his divine consort (Sita). This is to conform to the Hindu tradition that a wife always sits to the left of her husband.] (8).

[Note—¹The eight renowned Siddhis or mystical achievements that adorn Lord Ram are certain supernatural special powers that are possessed by him which are not normally available to ordinary humans. The Lord is richly endowed with these Siddhis which not only give him special divine powers and authority but add to his honour and exalted position in this world. These eight Siddhis are the following—(i) ‘Anima’ which is the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) ‘Mahima’ is to have magnificence, majesty, glory and fame; it bestows unmatched honour and acknowledgement for one’s achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; (iii) ‘Garima’ is the virtue that gives weight, stature, dignity, elegance, decorum, gravity and significance to the person who possesses it; (iv) ‘Laghima’ is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) ‘Praapti’ is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) ‘Praakramya’ is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) Ishwatwa is to be able to have lordship and sway over everything else; and (viii) ‘Vashitwa’ is to be able to control and subdue others and bring them under one’s influence and obedience.]

9. The radiance of Sita’s divine body resembles that of gold; she is fair complexioned and glows like pure gold. She has two arms, is adorned with all the ornaments befitting her exalted stature, and she holds a lotus flower in her hand. The son of the Kaushal-clan (Lord Ram) is sitting happily close to her (9).

10. [Verse nos. 10-13 describe a symbolic triangle which is a geometrical depiction of the creation as well as the relationship that exists between the three essential pillars of creation—viz. the Supreme Being represented by Lord Ram, the Jiva represented by Laxman (Ram’s brother), and the Shakti represented by Sita (Ram’s divine consort).]

To the right of Lord Ram is standing Laxman (his younger brother) with a bow and arrow in hand. His complexion is radiant and fair like gold.

The trio—Lord Ram, Sita (seated on his left), and Laxman (standing to his right)—form a metaphoric triangle (10).

[Note—This triangle has Sita at one point, Laxman at the opposite end, and Lord Ram at the apex. A triangle can only be formed if the three are not in a single line. Hence, both Sita and Laxman are positioned slightly at an angle with relation to Lord Ram to make it possible for the three to form a triangle.

The symbolism of a triangle is explained as a note of verse no. 12 below.]

11. The divine and complete Mantra of Lord Ram is ‘Raam/Raan(g) Raamaaye Namaha’ (रं रामाय नमः) consisting of three words—the first word ‘Raam/Raan(g)’ is called the Beej Mantra and is indicative of Lord Ram himself, the second word ‘Raamaaye’ symbolises the other half of Lord Ram, i.e. his divine consort Sita, and the third word ‘Namaha’ represents the Jiva, the living being, represented by Laxman who is ever ready to serve the Lord with all humility and submissiveness.

Hence, this Mantra also forms another symbolic triangle¹ for the purposes of worship and construction of the Yantra (worship instrument) of Lord Ram.

Once upon a time, all the Gods came to have a divine glimpse (Darshan) of Lord Ram (11).

[Note—¹In this triangle, the Beej Mantra ‘Raam/Raan(g)’ occupies the apex, the word ‘Raamaaye’ occupies the point to the left, and the word ‘Namaha’ to the right. This Mantra is mentioned in verse no. 2 of the present Canto 4.]

12. The Lord was seated under the shade of the Kalpa Tree¹.

The Gods prayed as follows—‘Oh Lord (Ram)! You are a personification of Kaam² and Maya³. We most reverentially bow before you⁴. [If we were to use the Beej Mantra for Kaam and Maya in the same way as the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram, i.e. ‘Raam/Raan(g)’, is used in verse no. 11 above, we have two new Mantras—viz. (i) Klim/Klin(g) Raamaaye Namaha, and (ii) Hrim/Hrin(g) Raamaaye Namaha. In these two Mantras, ‘Klim/Klin(g)’ is the Beej Mantra for Kaam, and ‘Hrim/Hrin(g)’ is the Beej Mantra for Maya. Refer also to Ram Rahasya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse no. 16.] (12).

[Note—¹The *Kalpa Tree*—It is the evergreen tree of the Gods. It is said to possess mystical powers and can bestow all that is desired by an aspirant or seeker. The Botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is *Adansonis Digitta*; it is also called ‘Parijaat’ meaning ‘descended from the sea’, and ‘Harsingar’ meaning ‘the decoration of the Gods, especially Lord Hari’. The English name of it is Coral Jasmine; in Latin it is called *Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis* (nyctanthes means the night flower, while arbor tristis means the sad tree). Its flower is said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dying silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legends, it was produced during the churning of the ocean for the search of Amrit, or the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, by the Demons and the Gods. The king of the Gods, Indra, took it away and planted it in his capital at Amravati. According to another legend (in Vishnu Puran), a princess named Parijaat fell in love with the Sun God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the Sun became disenchanted with her and did not like her overtures any longer. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew up from the ashes at the site of her funeral pyre. The flower of this tree could not bear the sight of the Sun, and therefore it blooms during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.

²The word *Kaam* refers to the God of this name, and he is the God of beauty and passions. Here the reference implies that Lord Ram is as charming and handsome, as attractive and enchanting as Kaam-deo, the patron God of these qualities. It also means that the Lord can fulfill all the desires of his devotees because the word Kaam also means desires, aspirations, wishes and yearnings etc.

³The word *Maya* means delusions and its accompanying hallucinations and illusions. The supreme Brahm had employed this magical power of Maya to create this world out of his imagination, expanded it to astounding dimensions, endowed it with stupendous charms and magnificence, gave it beauty, grandeur and majesty, and made it so real and life-like that even the wisest of sages and seers lost their bearings and took this world to be the real thing inspite of being wise enough to know that it is simply a creation of Brahm’s imagination. In short, the Gods are praising the supreme Lord for his astounding abilities and supernatural magical powers to create something out of nothing. They indirectly pray to the Lord to give them immunity from the delusory effects of his Maya so that they do not get entangled in its web of delusions like it has entangled the rest of the world.

⁴Now let us examine the symbolism and the significance of the use of an equilateral triangle to depict the relationship between the three units of creation—viz. the supreme Brahm who is the primary cause of everything in this existence, his Maya Shakti which actually results in the artificial world coming into being and

keeping the soul of the creature trapped in it, and the Jiva or the living being. In this context, refer to verse nos. 10-11 above.

An equilateral triangle is like a pyramid having three points or corners—A, B and C. Suppose the corner A, which is the apex of this triangle, stands for Lord Ram symbolizing the Supreme Being. This creation has unfolded from the Supreme Being and represents the Lord's two arms that form the two lines AB and AC of this triangle. The corner B stands for Sita representing the Lord's Maya Shakti, and the corner C stands for Laxman who symbolizes the Jiva, the living being. The creation represents the space enclosed by this triangle ABC. In other words, as long as this triangle exists it is imperative that all these three cardinal points must exist.

From this sketch it is evident that if the Jiva (C) wishes to find what is called the 'Kaivalya Mukti', or the final liberation and deliverance of his soul whereby it merges with Brahm, the Supreme Being, then point C must move towards point A and merge with it. But the problem with this is that the point B representing Maya remains. As long as Maya remains, total freedom is impossible. This is because the line A-B still exists reminding the Jiva of the previous world represented by the triangle ABC. As long as any vestiges of the Maya remain, total freedom from all delusions is impossible. And this means that complete Mukti hasn't been achieved.

Total and undiluted Mukti as well as complete annihilation of the world and its temptations created by Maya is possible only when two points B and C of the triangle merge into the point A—i.e. when the Jiva is able to eliminate Maya alongside approaching Brahm. In other words, a living being can attain Brahm-hood and Kaivalya Mukti only when Maya is completely eliminated.

This triangle also helps to explain what the scriptures mean when they say that Mukti (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) is obtainable by the mercy and grace of the Lord. In this triangle, the apex A represents the Supreme Being. When he decides to provide the Jiva (point C) with Mukti from all worldly delusions represented by Maya (point B), all he has to do is to retract lines AC and AB so that the points C and B move towards point A and finally merge with it. All that remains then is the point A and the triangle representing this creation vanishes from existence and sight. The point A in its primary form is a 'dot', and this 'dot' is represented by the 'Bindu' (literally also meaning 'a dot') as mentioned in the Upanishads in relation to the cosmic Naad (cosmic sound) which is conceptualized as the monosyllabic word OM. It is from this OM that the entire creation is visualized to have originated. This 'dot' also is like the center of a circle, or the axle of the wheel of creation around which the wheel rotates. We will read about a Ram Yantra in this Upanishad which is a worship instrument in the form of a geometrical diagram used to worship Lord Ram in Tantra system of worshipping. This Yantra consists of consecutive circles built around a central point where the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, i.e. 'Raam/Raan(g)' is placed. This Yantra represented the creation in a miniature form. The central point is the 'dot' referred to here. It is around this dot symbolizing the Supreme Being or Lord Ram around whom the whole edifice of creation is revolves. If the 'dot' is removed, the entire structure would collapse and come to a naught; if the hub is removed, the wheel of creation would come apart.

The 'dot' is the first point of touch of the pencil upon the paper where the first corner of this metaphoric triangle ABC is made, and then this dot is actually elongated or stretched in the form of three lines to complete the figure of a triangle ABC. Hence, the 'dot' precedes the making of the triangle ABC. When this triangle is erased and a new one is to be made, the first thing to appear is again the 'dot'—which is the point where the pencil would first touch the paper. That is, the entire creation has its origin in the dot represented by the supreme transcendental Brahm. It is 'transcendental' because a dot is not easily visible to the naked eye and it also has no shape or outline. When we mark it with the letter 'A' we assign this dot with its first attribute. This is a metaphoric depiction of the first stages of creation—first we have Brahm which has no attributes, then the same Brahm is assigned a name of the

‘Viraat Purush’, literally the vast macrocosmic form of Brahm in the form of the primordial Male aspect of creation, i.e. we give Brahm some attributes, which is like giving the dot the name of ‘A’. Then in order to make a triangle out of this single point called ‘A’, we draw three lines branching out from it—and then assign letters B and C to the two other corners. The enclosure becomes a metaphor for this creation having three cardinal points without which this creation has no meaning—viz. Brahm (point A), Maya (point B), and Jiva (point C).

Two points would be obvious from this triangle—(i) that the minimum requirement for this creation to come into being is Brahm, Maya and Jiva, and (ii) the Jiva (living being) continues to be trapped or locked in this triangular structure and unable to attain Brahm until it manages to eliminate Maya, because as long as the Maya exists the triangle representing this deluding world continues to exist.

The ‘dot’, from which this symbolic triangle is made as an extension of this single point by drawing three lines stretching out from it as if they were its limbs or branches, represents Brahm. When we retrace these three lines back to their point of origin, we come to the ‘dot’ representing Brahm. In other words, this creation has its origin in Brahm, and this creation ends in Brahm.

Any equilateral triangle has three sides, and it represents a closed enclosure with no exit. Outside of this triangle there is nothing but void. Even if one point of this triangle is removed, the triangle would cease to exist. This is how the world that traps the creature is imagined to be and depicted in this triangle.

In this geometrical setup, even though the Jiva wishes to reach Brahm he would not be able to do so as long as the triangle exists—i.e. as long as the point represented by Maya persists. So, if the Jiva (point C) wishes to attain Brahm-hood (point A), it would be obligatory and absolutely necessary for the Jiva to eliminate or remove Maya (point B). Since a triangle exists only till we have three points linked with three lines, when one of the points is done away with—which in this case is the point of Maya—the triangle vanishes. What remains is only one single line with two ends—at one end is the Brahm and at the other end is the Jiva. Then it is easy for the latter to move quickly towards the former.

From the perspective of Mukti, the Jiva has two options to achieve Brahm-hood—one is to eliminate Maya himself by strenuous efforts, and the other is to request Brahm to retract the latter’s Maya so that the point B of the triangle is done away with. As a result of eliminating the point B, a direct link is established between the Jiva (point C) and Brahm (point A). This direct link is symbolized by the line AC of the now defunct, non-existent and redundant triangle ABC. Now it becomes easier for the Jiva to directly access Brahm and attain Brahm-hood by gradually moving towards his spiritual goal. That is, the Jiva (point C) slowly reduces the distance between points ‘A’ and ‘C’ (Brahm) to ultimately reach a stage when the point C finally merges with and becomes indistinguishable from point A. When this stage actually comes, it is obvious that the identity of the Jiva and Brahm become one and the same—i.e. the Jiva is deemed to have attained Brahm-hood. In spiritual terms, it is Jiva’s final Mukti. In other words, if the Jiva or the creature eliminates Maya or delusions, it becomes feasible and practical for him to obtain oneness with the supreme Brahm. This is the Jiva’s Mukti—this is his spiritual liberation, this is his deliverance from having to remain shackled to this world and being forced to be separated from the Parmatma.

Mukti here also means that the earlier triangle-like prison representing this deluding world that had trapped and imprisoned the soul of the creature within its boundaries has been completely and finally demolished, and there is no more fear from any such entrapments in future.

Now let us have another look at this triangle. When one of the corners of the triangle represented by the ‘creature’ (point C) ceases to exist, as in the case when the creature finds emancipation and salvation, the world represented by the triangle ABC simply vanishes. That is, as soon as the creature realises that he is linked to divinity in

its two fundamental forms represented by the two arms of the triangle—one that links him to Nature or Prakriti and its myriad delusions and deceptions called Maya (represented by point B), and the other that links him to the supreme Brahm (represented by the point A)—he graphically knows where he stands in the cosmic matrix. So, when he annihilates his independent identity as a 'Jiva' and merges himself with the supreme Brahm by acquisition of Gyan (i.e. by becoming enlightened and wise about the Truth of creation called Brahm, and the falsehood of the material world of sense objects represented by Maya), the triangle automatically vanishes.

In the above scenario, when the Jiva (point C of the triangle ABC) ceases to exist, what is left are the supreme Brahm (point A) and his Maya (point B). They are represented by the single line AB joining the remaining two points of the erstwhile triangle—a line that can be drawn to infinity or reduced to a point. This single point 'A' is the origin of the line AB or line AC, as well as the triangle ABC. This single point can be drawn into a line of infinite length, or made into a closed space of a triangle, or drawn into any other shape of any size we can imagine of by simply stretching the point A and keeping the pencil moving on the paper infinitely. So, this is a diagrammatic representation of how the supreme Brahm creates this universe even if we do not take into account the 'living world of creatures' as we know this world of ours to be.

The cosmos or creation is said to be infinite, uncertain, without any fixed form, shape and size, constantly evolving, continuously changing, and unfolding and unfolding endlessly, but it is also said that the same infinite creation assumes a finite shape. It is easy to visualize how this happens in the context of this triangle ABC. Here, the origin of the triangle ABC is the cardinal point or dot 'A'. The rest of the figure is an extension of this point—i.e. a line, whether straight or curved, is drawn out from the point 'A' to any direction we want. The other point of this line is 'B'. As long as it remains a line, it can be drawn out to an infinite distance, and retraced back to its original point. This line A-B has no shape or size, and neither does it enclose any space of any sort. This line is therefore a symbolic form of the infinite creation having its origin in Brahm.

But the same line can also be drawn into any shape or figure we want, and each shape or figure has a different name and meaning—for instance we can draw a circle, a triangle, a square, a rectangle, a parallelogram, a hexagon, an octagon etc. Suppose we assign three fixed corners to this line, then we have drawn a triangle, and this encloses a space. Once a triangle is made, its shape cannot be changed now as long as we wish to call it a 'triangle'. Therefore, the line A-B, that was primarily infinite, has now been made finite as a triangle ABC. Once this line is twisted to assume a 'shape' of a triangle, its destiny is fixed, i.e. it becomes a 'triangle', and now it cannot form any other shape. Further, the 'size' of a triangle also becomes fixed once the three corners are fixed.

This is a metaphoric depiction of how this primarily infinite creation becomes finite on the one hand, and the destiny of its components become fixed or pre-determined. So when Brahm (Supreme Being) creates Prakriti (represented by Maya Shakti or delusions) and Jiva (living being) in the process of creation, the primarily infinite creation becomes finite, and the destiny of the creature also becomes fixed. This creation represented by the triangle ABC is therefore like a prison for the creature, and the only way out of it is to make a breach in its walls. This is how Mukti can be achieved.

In the present context of this Upanishad, the apex corner this metaphoric triangle ABC represents the Supreme Being known as Lord Ram. The second corner B of this triangle is represented by the Lord's Maya Shakti in the form of Sita, Lord Ram's divine consort, and the third corner C is represented by the Jiva, the living being, in the form of Laxman, the Lord's younger brother.

In mystical and occult or Tantra forms of worship, this same philosophy of creation is depicted as a triangle with three corners having the Beej Mantras of the respective deities. That is, the apex corner 'A' has the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram, the corner 'B' for Sita, and the corner 'C' for Laxman.]

13. We (the Gods) give our due respects, pay our sincere obeisance and bow most reverentially before Lord Ram who is a personified form of the Vedas as well as the ethereal Mantra OM which is their primary origin. [This is because OM is the Beej Mantra for the supreme transcendental Brahm or Pranav, the Supreme Being who is the primordial and primary cause for the entire creation coming into being. Further, OM represents the first sound in creation, and it is this primary sound which eventually evolved to form distinct genres of sound that formed the basis of the spoken language and its alphabets. This primary form of sound was used to form words and hymns in which the Vedas were composed and revealed by the creator Brahma. The reference to OM implies that the Gods have recognized the following Mantra of Lord Ram too—'OM Raamaaye Namaha'. Here, the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)' for Lord Ram is replaced by the Beej Mantra for Brahm, which is 'OM', with the clear understanding that Brahm and Ram are the same divinity existing in two planes of existence—i.e. whereas Brahm is the divine Principal of creation at the macrocosmic level of existence, Lord Ram is the same Brahm who had assumed a human form with certain specific job in hand. This 'job' was to eliminate the evil and demonic forces that had been tormenting and terrorizing humble creatures of this creation.]

Oh Lord! You are the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram who supports Ramaa (Laxmi, the Goddesses of wealth and prosperity) on the one hand (in your cosmic form as Lord Vishnu), and on the other hand you are a personified form ('Murti') of Maya itself. ['Ramaa', the Goddess of worldly wealth and material prosperity, is also referred to as the 'Maya', or deluding temptations of this world. This is because worldly material riches are astoundingly addictive and sticky by their inherent nature. Once a man is attracted to them, they attach themselves to him like the blood-sucking leech. Lord Ram is the one who has full control over this aspect of creation too because he is the Lord of everything in creation. It has been repeatedly stressed in the scriptures that Maya is like a maid-servant of the Lord, implying that Maya is under the overall command and control of the Lord. In practical terms it means that if a devotee wishes worldly riches and charms, the Lord can give him all the riches of the world, and if the devotee wishes salvation and emancipation from this world, the Lord can make him immune to the formidable temptations of the same worldly riches that can land him in a quagmire of problems. The Lord can grant anything the devotee wishes.] (13).

14. Janki (Sita) is like an ornament that adorns the Lord (Ram)¹.

The Lord is a slayer (or eliminator) of demons (representing the evil, sinful, denigrated, degenerated and corrupt creatures in this world). To demonstrate it, Lord Ram had slayed the ten-headed Ravana², the king of demons, for whom he was like Kaal, the God of death himself personified.

We pay our homage to Lord Raghuvir, the Lord who had taken birth as a brave and courageous warrior in the clan of king Raghu (of Ayodhya). The Lord is very polite, gracious, kind, dignified, civilized and cultured like a thoroughbred nobleman and a perfect gentleman ('Bhadra') (14).

[Note—¹That is, since Lord Ram is the divine husband of Sita who is Goddess Laxmi personified, it follows that all the worldly riches, wealth, honours, respects, fames, majesties, magnificence, grandeur, pomp and circumstance that adorn the Lord are actually the subtle qualities of Goddess Laxmi on display as the world is accustomed to honouring and giving importance to those who are blessed by Laxmi. Since this materialistic world gives immense importance to wealth and its accompanying powers, pomp, authority, grandeur and fame, this allusion to Laxmi herself being the ornamentation of Lord Ram is cited here to indicate the great majesty, authority, fame and powers that Lord Ram exercises in this world are as a result of Goddess Laxmi accompanying Lord Vishnu in his incarnation of Lord Ram as the latter's divine consort Sita.

This stanza also means that 'Lord Ram is the one who adorns Janki or Laxmi'. In this latter case, the meaning would be reversed—that is, Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth, has acquired her importance and prominence because of her association with the supreme Lord known as Ram. Or, that Sita has acquired all her glories because of her association with Lord Ram.

²The 'ten' heads of Ravana has a symbolic meaning. Usually the demons had only one head like all living beings. They were called 'demons' because of their evil and sinful deeds, corrupt and pervert mind and intellect, cruelty of behaviour, reckless and ruthlessness tendencies, and despicable general demeanours. The demons had a preponderance of the Tama Guna, and a negative nature marked by horribly violent and intolerably volatile temperament. They had contempt for ethics and morality; they paid no heed to the principles of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility and auspiciousness).

The numeral 'ten' simply means that their king Ravana was ten times more sinful and ten times more powerful than the rest of them. It also means that negativity and evil nature of Ravana was ten times more than other demons of his race. So the Lord decided to get rid of this great menace for creation first, and then treat the ten-headed Ravana's killing as a warning to the rest of the demon race to mend their selves or face the same punishment. The Lord wished to give the rest of the demons a chance to mend their ways out of fear for their lives, if for nothing else. In fact, this is what exactly happened. Not all the demons were killed and eliminated from the surface of earth during the epic war at Lanka—and the surviving ones were ruled by Vibhishan who was the younger brother of Ravana and who had taken sides with Lord Ram in the epic war at Lanka in which his elder brother Ravana was killed.

This proves one more very important and pertinent point—merely possessing a gross body like that of a demon does not mean that a Jiva is condemned if his Atma, his inner being is not demonic or sinful, and instead is holy and pious like other wise and realised souls in this creation. Further, merely Gyan or knowledge of the scriptures does not ensure that the creature would be provided with Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance—this is proved by the fact that though Ravana was an expert in the knowledge of the Vedas and other scriptures, and though he was a Brahmin by birth, he still was the most evil Jiva alive at that time. Therefore, it is how a Jiva (living being, a creature) puts his body and knowledge to practical use that is of paramount importance rather than merely possessin a certain type of gross body or being able to have an access to knowledge and scriptures.

Hence, while the Lord felt it necessary to eliminate the demon king Ravana, the same Lord made his brother Vibhishan as the king of the remaining demon race.

There is another interpretation of depicting Ravana with ten heads. He was not an ordinary demon or villain, for Ravana was an expert in the four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva), the four Up-Vedas or sub-Vedas (Dhanur Veda pertaining to the science of warfare, Aurveda pertaining to herbal medicines, Arthashastra pertaining to economics and public administration, and Gandharva-veda related to music, song and dance-drama), the Purans (mythological histories) and the Dharmashastras (other scriptures relating to the philosophy of Dharma or the laws of probity, propriety and

righteousness). But inspite of having thoroughly studied all the Vedas and scriptures, inspite of being an expert in their tenets, and inspite of having this huge body of knowledge at his disposal, Ravana still became extremely pervert and sinful because of his vanity, passions, lust for power, ego, haughtiness and arrogance. He did not understand the spiritual message and meaning of the scriptures, and he did not utilise this knowledge for his spiritual welfare, most probably because he limited himself to their literal knowledge only, a knowledge that gave him immense temporal powers and fame but proved to be his unmaking.

This has the message for all spiritual aspirants and seekers of Mukti that mere knowledge of the scriptures is not sufficient for one's salvation; one must implement them in practice. By killing Ravana the Lord has sent a strong message to such people who are proud of their overpowering control over the literal versions of the scriptures that salvation is not theirs if they are not careful in how they utilise this knowledge and skill intelligently with proper wisdom. The Lord would not excuse them even if they are Brahmins (Ravana was a Brahmin by birth) and learned (Ravana was matchless in his knowledge of the scriptures) if they become sinful and fall from their path.]

15. Oh Ram Bhadra (the gentleman, noble and honorable Lord Ram)! Oh Maheshwas (the almighty Lord)! Oh Raghuvir (the brave warrior born in king Raghu's clan)! Oh Nripottam (the best amongst the kings)! Oh the slayer of the 10-headed Ravana! Please grant us your protection and patronage. Save us, protect us!

Grant us or bless us with 'Sri' or divine treasures in the form of auspiciousness, righteousness and other great virtues and excellent qualities which have direct association with you— i.e. which can be used by us only for auspicious, righteous and noble causes, which will lead us to you, and which would give us emancipation and salvation (as opposed to the worldly treasures, prosperity, fame, pleasures and comforts that provide gratification to the sense organs, that inspire indulgences in and attachments to worldly affairs that only lead to entanglement of the soul and prevent its liberation and deliverance from the endless cycle of birth and death in which the creature finds himself trapped).' (15).

16. The Gods further said—'Bestow us and bless us with all the good virtues that you possess yourself or that would make us as exalted and honourable as your own divine self.' [That is, make it possible that we, the Gods, too can attain an exalted stature whereby we can also become one with you, or we can obtain liberation and salvation for our own selves.]

The Gods prayed to Lord Ram and felt happy, contented, cheerful, reassured and comforted. They secretly accompanied the Lord during his sojourn upon the earth to help him and serve him here till the time he had killed the demons (led by their king Ravana) (16).

17. Like the Gods, the sages, hermits and seers also prayed to him (Lord Ram).

Meanwhile, the demon Ravana stole (abducted) Lord Ram's wife (Sita) from the forest where she was staying at that period of time with the Lord. This misdeed on the part of Ravana was the cause that led to his final ruin (17).

[Note—This verse shows that the point of time to which this Upanishad refers was when Lord Ram, Sita and Laxmam were staying in the forest from where Sita was abducted by Ravana. It was this single event that led to the epic war of Lanka and ultimately established the great fame of Lord Ram through the epic known world-wide as the Ramayana. This period corresponds to the chapter known as the 'Aranya Kand' of this great epic.]

18. Since the demon had abducted Ram's consort (Sita) from a 'Van' (pronounced as *won* or *one*; meaning a dense forest), he was called 'Ravana'¹. [The first letter of the word *Ram* and the word *Van* are combined to form the name of the demon as 'Ra+van = Ravana'.]

There is another interpretation. 'Ravana' also means—'the one who makes others weep, cry, lament and wail due to the severe pain, misery, torments, terror and sorrows inflicted upon them' (for Ravana's actions had made Sita suffer, weep and wail).

Further, he made a lot of noise or false claims, or he used to brag haughtily about his achievements, his strength and powers as well as of his invincibility and lordship over even the heavens. Wherever he went, he behaved most wildly and acted like a savage, making a lot of din and clamour to spread fear and terror.

So, the first part of his name *Ravana* comes from the word *Rav* for 'fuss, noise, chatter, clamour, nuisance and din'². Thus, he became famous as 'Ravana' because he made a lot of noise and false claims.

Meanwhile, Lord Ram and Laxman began their search for Sita (18).

[Note—¹There is an interesting connotation of the word 'Ravana'. Since his name includes the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram which incidentally is also the Beej Mantra for the eternal fire element, i.e. the letter 'Ra', it implies that Ravana was not an ordinary soul but a highly learned and scholarly one. Then, the word 'Van', meaning a forest, implies that he was a 'treasury' of scriptural knowledge and learning. The fact that he became a 'demon' instead of a living being behooving of his high standard of scriptural scholarship, knowledge, learning and erudition as well as his birth in the Brahmin race shows how merely literal knowledge and expertise in the scriptures would not necessarily mean that a person is exalted, worthy of honour and reverence, and spiritually liberated if he has not actually understood the hidden meaning of the doctrines and philosophy of the scriptures, and if he has not actually implemented them in practice in his life and deeds.

In this context, refer note of verse no. 14 above in this Canto.

Ravana had become extremely haughty and arrogant because of his knowledge and acquisition of mystical powers that come naturally to them who do severe Tapa (penances, austerities, religious exercises), and Ravana had scored high on this count. He had done exemplary Tapa so much so that it had pleased Brahma the creator as well as Shiva the concluder. There are numerous instances in the story of the Ramayana when he has told those who had tried to persuade him to abandon his stubbornness and make peace with Lord Ram that he knows fully well that Ram is not an ordinary prince but the Supreme Being himself, and that Sita is not an ordinary woman but Shakti herself. He had stressed to them that he has purposely created this situation of animosity with the Lord by stealing Sita with full knowledge that this would lead to his getting slayed at the hands of the Lord, and that this was the only once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that he has got for his spiritual liberation from the prison of the evil body of a demon that he had acquired for himself due to his own follies and misdeeds. He would not let go of this golden chance by any means. When we take this point of view of Ravana into account, the whole story of Ramayana assumes a divine hue as the story of a highly learned and realised soul who has committed some mistakes in the past due to arrogance and lack of wisdom as to what his deeds would amount to, but realises and acknowledges later on that he is a sinful man. All the deplorable actions of Ravana around which the story of the epic Ramayana is woven are actually the attempt of a soul to find redemption for its past sins, and find emancipation and salvation once and for all.

Besides this point of his scriptural knowledge, it is also well established that he was the greatest devotee of Lord Shiva at that time. Shiva is the Lord who is

honoured by the title of being a 'Maha-Deva'—the great Lord God. Shiva is also the patron God of ascetics and hermits, and he is the wisest and most enlightened God in the pantheon of Gods. So, the point is—how can one expect an ardent and faithful devotee of such a great God as actually being as sinful and unholy internally as Ravana's external behaviour and life has made him appear to be?

²In this regard there is a legend that when Ravana lifted Mount Kailash, where Lord Shiva has his abode, in order to transplant it in his own kingdom of Lanka, Lord Shiva had exerted immense pressure on this mountain so as to make it exceedingly heavy and difficult to be shifted and moved over to Lanka by Ravana. At that time, Ravana had made a lot of fuss and created a lot of nuisance. Hence he came to be known as 'Ravana'.]

19. The two brothers Ram and Laxman roamed around in search of Sita in the forested areas on the surface of the earth. Eventually they saw the demon Kabandh¹ in front of them, and they slayed him.

Thereafter, they went to Shabari's place² (19).

[Note—¹Kabandh was a demon who had no head but only a torso with a mouth, protruding limbs etc. much like an octopus. In early history of evolution, may be the octopus had lived on land, and the Lord had met one of their kings. These abominable creatures might have been creating numerous problems for the human race, and so the Lord, who is responsible for the welfare of all living beings, decided to banish such creatures from the landed area of the earth and send them to the deep sea. When the king of octopuses known as Kabandh was killed, the rest of the species ran underwater out of fear for their lives. It is just like the case when the subjects of some distant realm of a great kingdom are tormented by some savage enemy of the kingdom, the king himself goes there to get rid of this enemy and provide succour to his subjects. In the present case, the savage was the Kabandh who was constantly terrorizing the hermits, sages, seers and ascetics who lived in the remote forests of the Lord's realm, and therefore it became obligatory for the great king, Lord Ram, to personally come and eliminate this menace.

²According to the story of Ramayana, Shabari was a woman belonging to a forest tribe called 'Shabari'. This tribe was classified as Shudras or lower caste, and sustained themselves by collecting and selling honey and fruits from the forest trees. Being of a low caste, she is said have been ostracized by others. She served a sage named Matanga very devotedly. The sage was a realised soul, and so pleased was he with her devotion and service that he blessed her at the time of leaving his body that she would find her emancipation and salvation when Lord Ram visits her while searching for Sita. Like her Guru, Shabari too left her mortal body after having the privilege of meeting and worshipping the Lord in person by lighting the pyre herself with her mystical powers. According to Adhyatma Ramayana of sage Veda Vyas, it was Lord Ram who had performed her last rites himself, a rare privilege that was even denied to his own worldly father Dasrath.

Shabari used to live in the hermitage where earlier sage Matanga had lived. This hermitage was near Mount Rishyamook where Sugriv, the exiled younger brother of the king of monkeys Vali, lived with his close confidantes Hanuman, Jamvant, Naal and Neel etc. This place was about ten Yojans or eighty miles from Kishkindha, the capital of the forest kingdom of which Vali was the king. Refer note of verse no. 21 below.]

20. Shabari worshipped them with great devotion. Thence they (Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman) went ahead and met (Hanuman who was) the son of the Wind God and a great devotee of the Lord. At his behest, the Lord met and befriended the king of the monkeys (named Sugriv).

Then they (Lord Ram and Laxman) narrated the entire story about themselves and their predicament to him (i.e. to Sugriv, the king of monkeys) (20).

21. He (Sugriv) was skeptical about Lord Ram's prowess, potentials, powers, strength, courage, ability and valour. So, to test the powers and prowess of Lord Ram, Sugriv showed the Lord the colossus body (i.e. the head) of the demon named Dundubhi. Lord Ram threw it (i.e. flung it) away for ten Yojans (roughly 80 miles) without the least effort (by tossing it with the tip of his toes as if it was merely a child's play) (21).

[Note—The legendary story of Dundubhi is narrated in Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 61-70 of the epic story of the 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. Briefly, Dundubhi was a great demon who assumed the form of a wild bison and attacked Kishkindha, the capital of the forest kingdom of which Vali, the elder brother of Sugriv, was the king, and challenged Vali. Annoyed, Vali held Dundubhi by the horns and dashed the demon violently on the ground, killing him. Vali then tore off his head and tossed it in the air. This head landed about ten Yojans (approximately 80 miles) away at the hermitage of sage Matanga, raining blood all around, and greatly annoying the sage and defiling his hermitage. At that time, the sage had cursed Vali that if he ever dared to come to this place situated on the mountain called Rishyamook, his head would split and he would die instantly. It was out of fear of this curse that Vali never ventured on this mountain, and it was out of this certainty that Sugriv took up residence there when the latter was exiled by his elder brother Vali due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers.

So Sugriv wished to test the strength of Lord Ram, especially his superiority of strength over Vali, to ensure that he would actually be able to overcome such a strong and powerful enemy as Vali when he asked the Lord to throw the demon's head if he could. This Lord Ram did by tossing it with the tip of his toes, proving to Sugriv that he is indeed very powerful and does possess super-natural strength.]

22. He (Sugriv) still had his doubts. So to reassure him, Lord Ram pierced seven tall coconut trees with a single arrow. This miraculous achievement made the king of monkeys (Sugriv) exhilarated, for now he was convinced and reassured in his heart that his arch enemy Vali would now be finally overcome, and that the constant terror that he had been subjected to till now would come to an end. This in turn made Raghav (Lord Ram) happy, because he was able to make his friend happy. [This stanza makes out one most important point and one of the greatest positive traits in a human being for which he is remembered adoringly by all—a good friend is one who empathises and sympathises with his friend. Lord Ram was happy because his friend Sugriv felt happy. Previously when Sugriv had told him about the cause of his misery, the Lord had assured him that he would do all that is possible to provide him relief from his torments, even if it meant that it would force the Lord to kill someone (Vali in this case) who had done no personal harm to the Lord.]

Thereafter, he (Sugriv) was confident that Lord Ram would be able to subdue and vanquish, or cause the downfall and dethroning of the king of monkeys (i.e. Sugriv's elder brother Vali who had exiled the former and usurped not only the kingdom but also his wife out of anger and jealousy created by misunderstanding)¹ (22).

[Note—¹The episode that led to the animosity between the two brothers Vali and Sugriv has been narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 46-57. Briefly it is that once a demon named Mayavi challenged Vali for a duel. Beaten back by Vali, the demon entered a dark cave, and Vali pursued him inside it. Before it, he had requested Sugriv to keep a strict vigil on the mouth of the cave to ensure that the demon could not escape. After one month, a lot of blood seeped out of the cave. Thinking that the demon had killed his brother and would now

seek revenge from him and the rest of the monkey race, Sugriv closed the mouth of the cave with a huge boulder and went to the capital where the courtiers anointed him king even against his wishes. Meanwhile, Vali had killed the demon, and it was the demon's blood that had flowed out of the cave and which Sugriv had mistakenly taken to be that of Vali. When Vali returned home he found Sugriv on the throne. Obviously this created an immense misunderstanding and bad blood between the two brothers—with Vali thinking that Sugriv had willingly put the boulder on the cave's mouth to prevent his return so that he could be crowned a king and usurp the kingdom. Sugriv tried his best to explain, but the misunderstanding was so profound and the evidence so robust that Vali did not pay any heed to his pleadings of innocence, and beating Sugriv black and blue he kicked him out of the kingdom. It was then out of angst and fear of his own life that Sugriv took up residence on the Rishyamook Mountain because he knew that Vali would never dare to come here due to the curse of sage Matanga as described in note of verse no. 21 above.]

23. There, Vali's younger brother (Sugriv) roared thunderously, hearing which he (Vali) came eagerly out of his palace immediately. [This is obviously because Vali had never imagined that Sugriv would ever in his life gather enough and sufficient courage to challenge him again. So when he heard Sugriv roaring and challenging him in a sarcastic tone, he must have been extremely astonished and completely taken aback, wondering as to what has suddenly happened that has made this cowardly brother of his has gather enough strength to come and challenge him.] (23).

24. Then Raghav (Lord Ram) killed him (Vali) and installed Sugriv on the throne of the place (Kishkindha).

Thereafter, he (Sugriv) summoned all the monkeys and said, 'Oh brave monkey warriors! You are well aware of whatever is happening in all the directions of the earth (because you roam freely everywhere and have come to this place from all the corners of the earth upon being summoned by me) (24).

25. All of you must go out at once, search out Maithili (Sita, so-called because she was born in the kingdom of Mithila), bring her back and hand her over to Lord Ram.'

Receiving this command, all the monkeys set out in all the directions (of the earth in search of Sita).

Meanwhile, Hanuman crossed the ocean and reached Lanka (25).

[Note—Hanuman and his group had gone south in the direction of the island of Lanka where the demon king Ravana had held Sita captive. On the shore of the vast ocean, the group was made aware of Sita's location in Lanka by Sampati, the old vulture who could peer across the breadth of the ocean and see the city of Lanka. It was a stiff challenge to leap across the vast ocean, land in an enemy country, overcome their defenses and meet Sita, and then come back alive. It was only Hanuman who could do it, and so he was the one chosen for the epic mission and the great journey to and fro from Lanka.]

26. There (at Lanka) he saw Sita, killed numerous demons and burnt the city (of Lanka). Then he came back to Lord Ram and told him everything as they were (i.e. he narrated to the Lord everything as he saw them, as well as all that he had done) (26).

27. Then Lord Ram became very angry and wrathful, collected all the monkeys as well as all the available arms and armaments (needed for the assault on Lanka and the forthcoming war), and accompanied by them, he reached (or attacked) the city of Lanka (27).

28-29. He carefully examined (and closely reconnoitered) the city and declared war on its king (Ravana). In that war, he (Lord Ram) killed him (Ravana) along with his brother named 'Ghat-srotra' (i.e. one with large pitcher-like ears, here referring to Kumbhakarn), and Ravana's son named 'Sahastraaksha-Jitraayam' (i.e. one who had conquered Indra, the king of Gods, who had thousands of eyes or holes in the body)¹.

Thereafter, he (Lord Ram) made Vibhishan the king of that place (Lanka). [Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana who had sought and received refuge in the camp of Ram when he was publicly insulted by his elder brother. At the end of the epic war when Ravana was killed, the Lord had installed Vibhishan on the throne of the kingdom of Lanka and made him the king of the remaining demon race.]

After the coronation of Vibhishan, the Lord, accompanied by the daughter of Janak (i.e. Sita) who was seated to his left, and with all other monkeys too accompanying him (on the divine chariot of the Gods, called the 'Pushpak Vimaan'), embarked on the journey back to his own city (of Ayodhya) (28-29).

[Note—¹The son of Ravana referred to here was also called 'Meghanaad' because he roared and thundered like the cloud. The word 'Meghanaad' has two parts—viz. 'Megha' meaning a cloud, and 'Naad' meaning a loud reverberating sound.]

He is also called 'Indrajeet' or the one who had conquered Indra, the king of Gods. Indra is called 'Sahastraaksha' (literally meaning to have thousand eyes) because he is said to have thousands of eyes over his body as the result of a curse by sage Gautam to punish him for being sexually pervert as he had the vile temerity of having attempted sex with the sage's loyal wife in his absence by employing deceit. The lecherous Indra had assumed the physical body of the sage to satisfy his lust, but was caught by the sage. So the sage cursed him to have a thousand holes in his body. These 'holes' represented the female vagina, and the curse was in the form of sarcastic curse on Indra so that now onwards he would be able to see a woman's sexual organs spread all over his own body with thousands of eyes instead of only two to satisfy his lust, passions and mental perversions. It was also intended to tell the world in a symbolic manner about the punishment that one gets by being excessively lustful in the sense that one instance of lecherousness would create thousands of horrible spots that would taint a man's character and personality forever, no matter how socially established or well-placed he may be. After all, Indra was a king of Gods, and one can imagine his discomfiture that he would have to remain with a pot-holed and scarred body for the rest of his life.]

30. (After his coronation on the throne of Ayodhya—) The the two-armed Raghunandan¹ (literally meaning 'the two-armed son of the clan of Raghu'; here obviously meaning Lord Ram), is seated majestically on the royal throne (of Ayodhya, as its king emperor).

He holds a bow, is pleasant, benevolent, charming and cheerful in his disposition, and is magnificently adorned by all sorts of beautiful ornaments befitting his royal and divine stature (30).

[Note—¹Special mention is made of the fact that Lord Ram has 'two arms'. This is to remind the reader and emphasize the point that the Lord whose story is being narrated here is not an ordinary son who is one of the long list of kings belonging to king Raghu's dynasty, but Lord Vishnu himself personified. Lord Vishnu is the one who has four arms, and it is only to emphasize this point that a special mention is made here of this fact that Lord Ram has two arms—for otherwise it is absurd and most unnecessary to mention it when referring to a human king as every man has two arms, and there is nothing special about it. In brief, this special mention of Lord Ram having 'two arms' is to stress that though Lord Vishnu has four arms, but when the

Lord had assumed the form of a human being he took up the form that suits this role—i.e. he showed only two arms.

The Lord does everything to perfection—so when he became he had to play his role of a human being to perfection also, and in the process he had to assume a form with two arms as all human beings have two arms. This also goes to explain why the supreme Lord of this world behaved like an ordinary man as he roamed on the surface of the earth and wailed for his lost wife Sita inspite of being capable of wiping out the entire demon race by his mere wish. No, he would not do so because that would mean he is not an expert actor. When the supreme Lord had assumed a role of being a man, he had to act and behave like a man! A man cannot annihilate his enemy by his mere wish; he has to make effort, develop a strategy, gather friends and wage a war against his adversary in order to conquer him.]

31. [Lord Ram's seating posture is described here—] His right hand is held in the 'Gyan Mudra (posture)¹' while the left hand is in the 'Tej Mudra²' (also called the 'Bow-posture' as it symbolizes the Lord's stupendous valour, courage, might, strength, authority, powers and potentials).

[There is another way in which this stanza can be interpreted, and it is as follows—'His right hand is held in the Gyan Mudra and to his left is established an immense source of Tej or energy and splendour (represented by his divine consort Sita).' This Sita is an incarnation of 'Laxmi', the Goddess of wellbeing, prosperity and wealth; or of 'Sri', the personified virtues of grandeur, glory and majesty; or of 'Shakti', the personified form of the Lord's cosmic dynamism, energy, splendour and powers; or of 'Prakriti', the primary Nature and the Mother of the whole creation). All these entities are radiant and splendorous by nature, and inherently grand, majestic and powerful. They are represented by Sita sitting to the left of the Lord on the throne as symbolically being another half of the Lord because she is his divine consort who is inseparable from him. These facts are depicted by saying that the left of the Lord has the symbolic presence of these great virtues of creation which are remarkable by their rich radiance and splendour are inseparably associated with the Lord and accompany him in the form of Sita. When one honours the Lord, one automatically honours Sita. Verse no. 6 of Canto 4 has already said that the relationship between Lord Ram and Sita representing his Shakti is similar to the Moon and its beautiful and charming light, or the Fire and its inherent illumination and dynamism.]

That supreme Lord called Parmeshwar [Param = supreme; Ishwar = Lord], who is eternally 'Chinmaya' (or infinitely enlightened, wise, erudite, sagacious and realised), adopts these two postures as he sits on the throne to preach (his subjects and devotees). This sitting posture of the Lord is called 'Vyakhyana Mudra'—the posture he adopts when he is in the mood to preach or teach others on various subjects (such as about the great tenets, the maxim, the axioms and the doctrines as enshrined in the scriptures, the principles of spiritualism and metaphysics, the laws of Dharma or the laws concerning probity and propriety, righteousness and noble conduct, morality and ethics etc., and other such matters for the general good of his subjects and devotees)³ (31).

[Note—The three postures mentioned here—viz. Gyan Mudra, Tej Mudra or the Bow Mudra, and the Preaching Mudra. Now let us see what these three Mudras are

¹The *Gyan Mudra*—In this Mudra or sitting posture, the index finger of the right hand touches the tip of the thumb to form a ring. The palm is held open along with the three remaining fingers which touch each other. The right hand is bent at the elbow so that the palm and its fingers are placed right above the central part of the chest. The legs are bent at the knees and folded in, and the person sits erect with a straight spine.

²The *Tej Mudra*—This Mudra or sitting posture has three interpretations. One is that it radiates splendour and energy or ‘Tej’, and it also implies that the person is powerful enough to have unquestioned authority and control over others. When this Mudra is adopted by a self-realised and enlightened man, it also indicates that he is willing to bless others with his divine virtues that radiate out from his hands in the form of invisible rays of wisdom, enlightenment and realisation. The palm and the fingers act more like reflectors and antennas respectively in modern-day gadgets to affect this transfer of spiritual energy, mystical powers and dynamism by beaming the rays of these virtues from the spiritually charged, enlightened and self-realised man to the fortunate person on whom he is pleased.

The other interpretation is that the person who adopts this Mudra is ready to actively enforce the principles he is preaching. In the case of Lord Ram it also means the readiness and eagerness of the Lord to give his full protection to his devotees and subjects. It also symbolizes the Lord’s stupendous strength, authority, powers and potentials. Lord Ram is the Veda personified—see verse no. 13 of this Canto 4. So he is full of knowledge, wisdom and erudition. Only a person who is himself well-versed in any subject can teach others. His overall seating posture is compatible with his love for truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment, and is indicative of his total dispassion, renunciation and detachment from this world as indicated by the Gyan Mudra in which he preaches. The Tej Mudra wherein the Lord holds a bow is indicative of the Lord’s ability and eagerness to uphold the laws of Dharma and ensure that the virtues of righteousness and auspiciousness, of probity and propriety, of morality and ethics, and noble conduct and thought are always upheld and do not suffer due to any cause whatsoever. The bow also indicates the willingness of the Lord to protect those who follow the noble path shown by him as well as to punish those who either create obstacles in such a path, or themselves act sinfully and in a pervert manner.]

The third implication of the Tej Mudra is that is the Bow Mudra or the ‘Dhanush Mudra’. This is derived from the physical posture that is adopted in this Mudra. To adopt this Mudra, the person’s left hand is usually used. Its index and middle fingers are made to touch each other and held erect, while the ring finger and the small finger are curled inwards and pressed by the thumb against the palm. Then the left hand is folded in at the elbow and held in a tightly closed position so that the forearm is held parallel to the bicep muscles with the two opened first and second fingers standing erect and close to each on the top of the left shoulder. From a distance this position resembles a bow which is held by the left hand with its upper end projecting above the top of the shoulder.

³The *Preaching Mudra*—In this sitting posture adopted when one is preaching others or giving some serious discourse, the tips of the thumb and the index finger touch each other while the other three fingers are unfolded, touch each other and point outwards. The right hand is usually used in this Mudra, and the forearm is held parallel to the biceps by bending the hand inwards from the elbow joint. The open fingers and the open palm face the audience. This latter posture is very dear to Lord Ram as well as to the Goddess of knowledge, Saraswati, as it is convenient to teach and emphasizes one’s point in this posture.]

32. [The story of Lord Ram beginning from the prayers of the Gods right up to his coronation has been described in brief in the forgoing verse nos. 12-31. Now we go back to the divine triangle described previously in verse nos. 10-12. The construction of the worship Yantra, which is an instrument that is used in formal forms of offering of ritualistic worship to the divine Lord using various esoteric Beej Mantras and a geometrical diagram, is being narrated now—]

Shatrughan is present to the north of Lord Ram and Bharat is to the south of him, while Hanuman is standing attentively right in his front with the open palms of

their folded hands touching each other in front of the chest (as a mark of showing respect to the Lord as well as a token of submission much like a disciple who wishes to hear every word that his teacher says, or like a loyal servant ever eager to carry out every single order of his master). These three gentlemen form another triangle (32).

[Note—The triangle is formed by Shatrughan at one end, Bharat at the other end, and Hanuman at the third end.]

33. Sugriv (the monkey king of Kishkindha) is present below Bharat and Vibhishan is present below Shatrughan¹, while Laxman is standing behind Lord Ram, waving a whisk and holding a royal umbrella over the Lord² (33).

[Note—¹The term ‘below’ implies that the dais where Lord Ram’s throne is placed is a raised platform or dais having several steps leading upto its top. His brothers and close associates are standing on different steps depending on their closeness to the Lord and in accordance with the social hierarchy, court order and decorum prevalent at the time of Lord Ram that governed the positioning of various attendants and other functionaries of the royal court of the Lord. These rules governed as to where the different courtiers of a king-emperor attending him should sit or stand while the latter is attending his royal court. Hence, the Lord’s brothers Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan are standing on a step higher and closer to the Lord than the step on which Sugriv and Vibhishan stand. If the brothers are standing one step below the main platform of the dais, then Sugriv and Vibhishan should be standing on the second step.

However, Hanuman occupies a special place in the scheme of things as he is very dear to the Lord and privileged enough to receive the Lord’s attention more than anyone else. After all, the Lord had made it clear that his indebtedness towards Hanuman can never be repaid when the latter had come back with the news of Sita and conveyed her message to the Lord. It was Hanuman who had single handedly burnt the city of Lanka, thereby settling scores with Ravana in a symbolic manner on behalf of the Lord. Even during the epic war at Lanka, it was he who played an exemplary and stellar role in vanquishing the army of the demons. When Laxman lay unconscious in the battle-field when he was shot by an arrow of Meghnaad, the son of Ravana, it was Hanuman who had brought the medicine man of Ravana from inside the well-guarded city of Lanka to prescribe the proper treatment, and then went all the way to the mighty Himalayas to the north of India, uprooted an entire hill and brought it back to Lanka so that correct herbs could be administered to Laxman and he be brought back to life—all within the limited time-frame of the night before the break of day, and after having overcome all formidable obstacles put in the path by Ravana to hinder Hanuman’s progress. Finally, it was Hanuman who had brought the good news of Lord Ram’s arrival to Bharat when the latter was feeling hopeless and preparing to die at the end of the exile period. Hence, Lord Ram and his entire clan were extremely obliged to Hanuman. Therefore, no one questioned where he stood, and he always had the privilege of having a right of way and an unrestricted access to the Lord.

²Verse no. 10 outlines the 1st triangle, verse no. 11 the 2nd triangle, verse no. 32 the 3rd triangle, and verse no. 33 the 4th triangle. It should be noted that while Laxman was standing to the right of Lord Ram in verse no. 10, he has shifted place to behind him, and his place has been taken over by Bharat in verse no. 32. Besides this, it appears that Lord Ram has turned himself slightly to face Hanuman in verse no. 32 because it is said that Hanuman is standing respectfully and obediently facing the Lord.]

34. The two brothers (Bharat and Shatrughan) are standing with hand-held fans made from palm leaves. In this way, there are two imaginary triangles—one consisting of Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, and the other consisting of Hanuman, Sugriv and

Vibhishan. These two triangles have a total of six points, and therefore form a hexagon¹.

Lord Ram is seated in the center, surrounded by his attendants as described above.

Now, the positioning of the various deities in the worship instrument called the Yantra is being described. At the center of this Yantra is the hexagon mentioned above. In the center of the hexagon is seated the deity to be worshipped, which in this case is Lord Ram personifying the supreme transcendental Brahm.

Lord Ram is surrounded by various 'Aavarans'² (which literally mean a covering, shield, band, girdle, protective ring or sheath that encloses the deity from all sides). These Aavarans are in the form of various Beej Mantras of the Lord with different ascended sounds of the vowels (34).

[Note—¹When a worship instrument is constructed, its outline resembles a multi-tiered circular structure resembling a wheel. This wheel stands for the entire creation in a miniature form. At the center of this wheel is the hub representing the Viraat Purush around whom the entire creation revolves. This central area of the hub is designed like a six-pointed star, and at its center is a hexagon. Through the center of this hexagon passes the axle representing the cosmic Consciousness known as the supreme transcendental Brahm. The wheel is actually supported by the axle which is at its core but remains hidden from sight. The physical structure of the wheel however has the hexagonal hub as its center, and this hub is visible. In this analogy of the wheel of creation, Brahm stands for the axle, Lord Ram for the hub, and the rest of the components of the multi-tiered wheel stand for the different Gods and Goddesses who stand in attendance before the Lord and help him to regulate this vast creation and keep the wheel of creation rotating infinitely.

There are two triangles referred to here in this stanza. To construct the six-pointed star, one equilateral triangle is drawn erect while the other is drawn over it in an inverted position. Refer verse no. 40 below. The six corners of this star are enclosed in a circle drawn around it. This is the first circle. Subsequent circles are drawn outside it in concentric manner with increasing radii. These circles represent the various levels of creation.

²The word *Aavarana* means to cover in a veil, to sheath, to envelop, to wrap in a sheet, distortions, pretension, deception, deceit and something that does not allow the original thing to be seen by covering it with a thin veil that distorts its originality; a veil of ignorance about one's true nature, identity and essential form that cloaks the Atma/soul which is pure consciousness and the true self. Hence, the word 'Aavarana' literally means a covering, shield, band, girdle, protective ring or sheath that encloses the deity from all sides.

The basic *Beej Mantra* of Lord Ram is 'Raam or Raan(g)'. This is formed by the consonant 'Ra', as in the word *run*, to which the long vowel sound 'Aa' of the Sanskrit language is added, i.e. 'Ra' becomes 'Raa' as in *rather*, *father* etc., and then a dot is placed on its top to form the sound of a silent 'M' as in *mum* or *come*. Hence, the completed Beej Mantra becomes 'Raam'. It is also pronounced as 'Raan(g)' sometimes as the last syllable 'M' represented by the 'dot' or Bindu is silent. Now, to the basic alphabet 'Ra' are added other vowel sounds and the result is that we have a set of six Beej Mantras which are variants of the main Mantra 'Raa'. Incidentally, the Beej Mantra of the fire element is also the alphabet 'Ra'.

The various permutations and combination of this single letter 'Ra' would be the following Beej Mantras—Raam/Raan(g) (राम्) where the letter 'R' is pronounced as in the English word '*rather*, *round*'; Rim or Ring (रिम्); Room or Roong (रूम्) where the letter 'R' is pronounced as in the English word '*ruler*', Raim or Raing (रैम्) where the letter 'R' is pronounced as in the English word '*rang*'; Roum or ROUNG (रौम्) where the

letter 'R' is pronounced as in the English word '*wrong*'; and Raha (रः) in which the letter 'R' is pronounced as in the English word '*half*'.

As we observe here, the basic alphabet 'Ra' of the name of the Lord as 'Ram', which acts as the Beej Mantra for the Lord, can have different sounds depending upon the vowel sound added to it. In all these variants of the Beej Mantra, the basic sound is that of 'Ra'. It implies that the same basic truth and reality can appear to be different when viewed from different angles, with different levels of intelligence and wisdom. Therefore, no matter how one worships the Lord, no matter which Mantra is used for such worship, if the worshipper's mind is focused on the Lord, then these things become irrelevant. These variations of the same Mantra and Divinity are called 'Avaran' because they tend to hide the truth in a veil, creating dichotomies and variations, leading to confusions and making it difficult for a common man to unravel its secrets. If not understood wisely and interpreted judiciously, these Avarans surrounding Lord Ram's true identity can lead to a lot of doubts and perplexities in the mind of a spiritual aspirant about the reality of the Lord as being no one else but the Supreme Being himself personified.

These Avarans are like the various orthodox and heterodox theories about the same Supreme Being, and if one is not wise enough to pick up the Truth then he would be spending his entire lifetime making a wild-goose chase without reaching his spiritual goal. He must realise that all the different doctrines, philosophies and theories talk about one single universal and absolute Truth in different languages and metaphors.

In other words, all the six orthodox theories such as Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimansa, Vedanta and Yoga, and the three heterodox theories such as Charvaka, Buddhism and Jainism—all of them talk about the same Divinity using different languages. A wise man must transcend them and see the 'light of Truth', for otherwise he would be lost in the haze created by the Avarans that surround the Truth.

In brief, the implication of this example of the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram having many variations is that it is important for a wise spiritual aspirant to break through the outer shell of illusionary and misleading forms of Mukti and Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation), of Anand (bliss and happiness) as well as of Brahm (divinity and holiness) that are created by the Lord's Maya Shakti (powers of creating delusions), and instead endeavour to search out the real Truth by developing a deep insight into the reality of what constitutes divinity and holiness, and what is merely a make-belief form of it. The actual Truth is hidden in layers and layers of veils called the various 'Aavarans' that surround Brahm, thereby creating delusions about the latter.

Extended further, it would mean that one should break free from the many forms of Agyan (ignorance) that cause obstacles and come in the way of the seeker's search for the 'truth' about his Atma which is his truthful 'self' and pure consciousness representing the supreme Brahm.

In spiritual terms it implies that in order to access the supreme Brahm and find final emancipation and salvation, or becoming self and Brahm realised, the aspirant needs to overcome so many hurdles and break through layer after layer of surreal forms of divinity and holiness that often mislead him and divert his attention from the real goal. An aspirant who is not wise and enlightened enough would be dazzled by the glory and magnificent charms of so many Gods and their divine powers and abilities to fulfill all his worldly desires, but all this would only deflect him from his main aim of attaining his final salvation and emancipation. But at the same time, he has to show his respects to all these forms of the Lord in order to emphasize that he is humble and has no sense of pride and ego in him. Further, he has to keep all these attendants of the Lord pleased and in good humour so that they aid him in his spiritual progress, and do not unnecessarily cause problems for him.

In this context we have the example of the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda. It describes how a spiritual pilgrim passes through different levels of heaven in order to reach the supreme heaven where Lord Vishnu, regarded as the personified form of the Supreme Being, has his divine abode. During his spiritual journey, the pilgrim meets so many Gods, Goddesses, holy Spirits and their attendants, pays his respect to them, and goes on moving higher and still higher till he reaches his spiritual destination. He does not fall prey to the temptation of dazzling grandeur and majesty that each of these enchanting heavens offer to him. The point is that a wise and enlightened man should understand the basic principles of metaphysics and spirituality, and pick up the real gem while discarding the look-alikes for his own spiritual welfare. He should not allow himself to be tricked by the various Avarans that surround the reality and the truth.]

35-37. The second Avaran (ring of attendants) around Lord Ram consists of Vasudeo, Shanti, Sankarshan, Sri, Pradumna, Saraswati, Anirudha and Rati. They form a ring around Lord Ram and are respectively present in the eight corners around him¹. [Thus, the second ring around Lord Ram consists of eight attendants.]

The third Avaran (ring of attendants) around Lord Ram consists of Hanuman, Sugriv, Bharat [35], Vibhishan, Laxman, Angad, Jaamvant and Shatrughan.

The fourth Avaran or the ring around Lord Ram consists of Dhristi, Jayant [36], Vijai, Suraashtra, Raastavardhan, Akop, Dharmpaal and Sumantra². [37]. (35-37).

[Note—¹The eight Gods and Goddesses and their respective locations around Lord Ram are as follows—Vasudeo (the Lord of Vausus, the primary assets of creation such as gems, fire, water etc.) is present in the south-eastern corner; Shanti (the goddess of peace and tranquility) is present in the southern corner; Sankarshan (Laxman, as he is an incarnation of the legendary Seshnath, the cosmic serpent on whose back Lord Vishnu reclines in the cosmic ocean, and who became Balraam, the older brother of Lord Krishna when Lord Vishnu incarnated in this form) is present in the south-western corner; Sri (or Goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity) is present in the western corner; Pradumna (one of the many divine forms of Vishnu) is present in the north-western corner; Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge) is present in the northern corner; Anirudha (literally meaning one who cannot be stopped or obstructed; one of the many forms of Vishnu) is present in the north-eastern side; and finally Rati (the consort of Kaamdeo, the God of love and passion) is stationed on the eastern corner.

²We can visualize this situation in the form of a high dais where the Lord is seated, and the attendants of the Lord standing on different steps of the stairs which lead up to the top platform. These steps are located in the eight directions mentioned in these verses. These directions are the south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, north, north-east and east. Each direction is guarded by successive rings of attendants. We can say that these attendants are standing on different steps of the stairs leading up to the dais where the throne of the Lord is placed. The step they occupy depends upon their seniority and position in the hierarchy of the Lord's attendants.

For instance, on the stairs in the *south-eastern corner* are standing Vasudeo on the first step, below him is Hanuman on the second step, and still below him is Dhristi on the third step. Similarly, in the *south* direction, Shanti is standing on the first step, Sugriv on the second step, and Jayant on the third step. In the *south-western* corner are positioned Sankarshan on the first step, Bharat on the second step, and Vijai on the third step. In the *western* direction are positioned Sri on the first step, Vibhishan on the second step, and Suraashtra on the third step. In the *north-western* corner are positioned Pradumna on the first step, Laxman on the second step, and Raastavardhan on the third step. In the *northern* direction are positioned Saraswati

on the first step, Angad on the second step, and Akop on the third step. In the *north-eastern* corner are positioned Aniruddha on the first step, Jaamvant on the second step, and Dharampaal on the third step. And finally, in the *eastern* direction are positioned Rati on the first step, Shatrughan on the second step, and Sumantra on the third step.

Refer also Canto 5, verse no. 6.]

38. When Lord Ram is surrounded by the ten Gods, who are called ‘Dikpals’ (i.e. the custodians of the celestial world), it forms the fifth Aavaran (ring) around him.

These ten Dikpals* are the following—Indra who is the king of Gods and who has a thousand eyes on his body, and is therefore called ‘Sahastraaksha’, Agni or the Fire God, Yam or the God of Dharma (i.e. the God responsible to ensure that the great tenets of righteousness and proper conduct are observed by the creatures, and to punish those who violate these laws), Niritiya (also known as Nairitya), Varun or the Water God, Anil or the Wind God, Indu or the Moon God (sometimes replaced by Kuber, the treasurer of Gods), Ishan or Lord Shiva, Brahma the creator, and Anant who is Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation (or Lord Seshnath, the legendary serpent who holds the earth on its hoods in a symbolic gesture to indicate that Lord Vishnu is responsible for taking care of this creation).

[The eight Digpals are the divine forces of creation in a personified form of various Gods who are assigned the task of taking care of the entire creation. They are the following—(i) Indra who is the king of Gods and responsible for production of rain as well as to control all other Gods who are said to be represented by the various independent forces of Nature; (ii) Agni is the personified form of the fire element responsible for providing heat, energy, light, vitality, strength, vigour and vibrancy to creation; (iii) Yam is the personified form of death as well as assigned the duty to uphold the laws of Dharma (or the auspicious virtues of righteousness, nobility, propriety, probity etc.), and to punish those who violate it; (iv) Niriti or Nairitya who is the God responsible for the actual death and punishment of the sinful and unholy creatures in creation; (v) Varun is the personified form of the most essential ambrosia of life known as the water element that provides nourishment and lubrication to this creation, and is regarded as the basic element that harbours life in all its forms in its bosom; (vi) Anil is the personified form of the life-giving air or wind element which is also called Pran—literally meaning ‘life’ which is a proof of its importance and significance vis-à-vis this creation; (vii) Kuber is the treasurer of Gods and responsible to provide all the necessities of life to the inhabitants of this world; (viii) Ishan is Lord Shiva who is also known as Mahadev, the Great Lord, as well as the one who is responsible for maintain balance in this creation by controlling death, and hence is called the ‘concluder’; (ix) Brahma is the creator of the physical world as well as the body of knowledge known as the Vedas, and therefore assumes the role of a grand old patriarch of the family known as the world; and (x) Anant or Lord Vishnu who is so-called because he is eternal, infinite and endless, has infinite responsibilities, and is assigned the multi-prong duty of taking good care of the world in all respects. He is also called Anant as he is none but the eternal Brahm himself in the form of the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing and almighty Lord of creation. In fact, even Brahma and Shiva are said to be born from this Viraat Purush.] (38).

[*Note—Refer also Canto 5, verse no. 6.

(a) The following are the various direction in which these ten Gods should be worshipped—(i) Indra in the east, (ii) Fire in the south-east, (iii) Yam in the south, (iv) Niriti or Nairitya in the south-west, (v) Varun in the west, (vi) Anil in the north-

west, (vii) the Moon God in the north (sometimes also represented by Kuber, the treasurer of the Gods because of the fact that both are treasurers—while the Moon stores the elixir of eternity and bliss, called Amrit, that the Gods drink, Kuber stores all the riches that belong to the Gods) the Moon because the latter stores the Amrit/ambrosia for the Gods), (viii) Ishan or Shiva in the north-east corner, (ix) Brahma at a point located near the top or zenith of the celestial globe which is slightly tilted towards the east side, and hence located at a point between the north and the north-east, and (x) Anant in the bottom corner or nadir end of the celestial globe but slightly towards the west to correspond to a point between the exact south and the south-east corner. [The line joining the two points where Brahma and Anant are worshipped passes through the center of the celestial globe but is slightly tilted from the perpendicular line so that its top end points to towards north and north-east while its lower end points towards south and south-west.]

(b) According to the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 7, paragraph no. 58, the eight Lokpals are the following—Indra, Agni or the Fire God, Yama or the God of death, Nriiti, Varun or the God of water, Vayu or the God of wind, Soma or the Moon God, and Isha or Lord Shiva.

(c) The Beej Mantras or the root or seed Mantras of these Gods are respectively lum or lun(g) (लृ), Rum or Run(g) (रृ), mum or mun(g) (मृ), ksham (क्ष), vum or vun(g) (वृ), yum or yan(g) (यृ), sam or san(g) (सृ), hum or hun(g) (हृ), aam or aan(g) (आं), and num or nun(g) (नृ).]

(d) A brief introduction of the Gods mentioned above are given here—

¹Indra derives his name from ‘indri’ meaning the sense organs of the body—five organs of perception and five organs of action. The vital functions and the virtues of each of these organs are personified as a God. Since the heart is at the core of life of a man, the central authority that regulates all these Gods is also said to have its seat in the heart. That authority is the emperor of the body and its organs, and it is the Atma. Indra is a metaphor for or a personification of the combined virtues and characteristics that define all these organs and their functioning. The organs have an intrinsic tendency to move towards pleasing things and away from unpleasant things. Therefore, it is deemed that their messenger, the hand, brings to them only selected and best of things which is like bringing Amrit for their king Indra, because anything that is acquired by the subjects are first offered to the king before the subject can enjoy it. Indra in the present context is the Atma because the latter is the undisputed emperor of the body. According to the Rig Veda, 1/ 4-5; 51-57, Indra represents the combined forces of Nature represented by the different Gods. He loves to drink Som, the elixir of bliss and eternity (Rig Veda, 3/ 36/ 8). He has the Wind God called Marut as its chief assistant.

²The Fire God or Agni—He first appears in Rig Veda—1/1, 12/1-122. Since he was the first born amongst the Gods, he was called ‘Agni’ meaning the one who comes first, that which precedes. He is the foremost amongst the Gods worshipped on earth (Shatpath Brahmin, 6/1/11). He is compared to the Sun in the heavens. He has 7 tongues representing the 7 colours of the rays of the Sun or the colours of light (Rig Veda, 1/146/1; 3/6/2). Since he provides nourishment to the Gods by accepting the offerings made to the sacrificial fire at the time of fire sacrifices, he is deemed to be their sustainer and father (Rig Veda, 1/69/1). Other names of the Fire God called Agni or Agne are the following—Vishwavedus, Kavi, Kavikratu, Jaatvedus, Vaishwaanar, Tanunpat, Matrishwa and Naraashansha. It is believed that he was born from the mouth of the Virrat Purush (Rig Veda 10/90/13).

³The Yam God—He is extensively covered in the 1st and 10th Mandals of the Rig Veda. Sukta 10 of the tenth Mandal is totally devoted to him. Yam personifies the concept of death and life after death. As opposed to Niriti who is also the God related to death, Yam deals with giving justice to the dead person depending upon his deeds that he has done during his lifetime. Therefore, he is also called the patron God of

Dharma, because he gives the dead person an abode in the heaven for his righteous and noble life, whereas Niriti is the patron God of death and destruction due to sins and evil way of life. Yam's sister is Yami. His father is named Vivaswat or Vivaswaan, and he is also called 'Yam Vaivaswat' (Rig Veda, 10/14/5). His mother's name is Saranyu (Rig Veda, 10/17/1-2). He is regarded the patron God of those who are dying. He resides in the outer heaven. Out of the 3 Lokas (mythological worlds), the first two, i.e. 'Bhu' (earth; the terrestrial) and 'Bhuvaha' (the sky just above the surface of the earth; the space of the solar system) is the realm of Savita (the God who is treated as synonymous of Sun), while the third world, the 'Swaha' representing the heaven, is the abode of Yam (Rig Veda, 10/35/6). In some places he is also regarded as the son of a Gandharva and a marine beauty (Rig Veda, 10/10/4).

⁴*Niriti* or *Nairitya* God—First appears in Rig Veda, 10/59/1-3. He is regarded as the God responsible for destruction, ruin, decay, misfortune, bad luck, diseases, sins, miseries, troubles and torments. He is equivalent to death. He is treated as being synonymous with sin and death (Shatpath Brahmin, 7/2/1/3). Therefore, he is closely related to Yam in form as the God of death.

⁵*Varun*, the Water God—He appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/25; 2/28. He is the patron God of water (Gopath Brahmin, 1/1/7). He is regarded as the king amongst the Gods (Taiteriyā Sanhita, 3/1/2/7). He is the lord of all the Bhuvans or abodes (Rig Veda, 5/85/3). He is regarded as the patron God of the night (Atharva Veda, 9/3/18).

⁶*Anil* is the Wind God. He has been described variously as 'Maruts' and 'Vayu'. (a) The 49 Maruts—they are the Wind-Gods mentioned in Rig Veda, 1/37-39 and 1/165/3, 5, 7, 9. They are regarded variously as—(i) sons of Indra and Vrishni (Rig Veda, 2/34/2), (ii) Sons of Rudra (Rig Veda, 2/33/1), (iii) similar to the Fire-God (Rig Veda, 6/66/2), and (vi) Indra God (Rig Veda, 1/165, 171). The Purans call them sons of sage Kashyap and Diti.

Vayu or *Anil* or the Wind God appears in the Rig Veda, 1/2/1-3; 1/134. The 'vital air or wind element' was created from the Pran or the vital life-sustaining vitality of the creator Prajapati Brahma (Rig Veda, 10/90/13). He is regarded as the Atma of all the Gods (Shatpath Brahmin, 9/1/2/38). He bestows immortality to the Gods and other exalted souls who are able to please and control him (Rig Veda, 10/186/3). He has the fastest speed amongst the Gods (Taiteriyā Sanhita, 3/8/7/1). He moves in an oblique line (and not straight) (Jaimini Brahmin, 3/3/10).

⁷*Kuber*, the treasurer of Gods—According to Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan', Uttar Kand, canto 1, verse no.24-44, once sage Pulastya went to do severe penances in the Himalayas in the hermitage of sage Trinbindu. There his host married his daughter to him, and from this union was produced sage Visrawa. Sage Bharadwaj married his daughter to him, and the union produced Kuber. He was blessed by Brahma and other Gods and was made their treasurer. They also gave him the celestial plane called Pushpak aboard which Lord Ram had come back to Ayodhya after conquering Lanka. Kuber was the elder step brother of Ravana, the infamous king of the demon race and the villain of Ramayan.

⁸The *Moon God*, also known as *Indu* or *Chandrama*—He appears first in the Rig Veda, 10/85/19). He is the patron God of night. His origin is in the Mana (heart and mind; the emotions and thoughts) of the Parmatma or the supreme Lord (the Viraat Purush or Vishnu) (Yajur Veda, 31/12; Taiteriyā Brahman, 3/10/8/5). His existence depends upon the Sun God. On the dark night, he is supposed to enter the Sun (Aiteriyā Brahman, 8/28). Chandrama is synonymous with Som, the divine elixir and sanctified drink drunk during the religious sacrifices as it gives its drinker peace and a long life (Kaushatiki Brahman, 16/5; Aiteriyā Brahman, 7/11). He is the controller of seasons and months; he always changes so appear to be like a new born everyday. He gives peace and long life to the 'Stota', the chanter of hymns as prayers (Rig Veda, 10/85/19).

Chandra or the Moon Gods appears in the Vedas as follows-- Rig Veda—10/85/19; Yajur Veda—1/28; Atharva Veda—6/78/1-2; 19/1.

The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes this Moon as being as the symbolic form of the water element. The moon is said to be the celestial pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of eternity and bliss that is drunk by the Gods. In the human body, it is represented by the Eda Naadi passing through the left nostrils and which is used during do Pranayam. [Refer Canto 1, verse 166.] It is also present as the crescent moon, the Ardha Chandrakar Chakra, which is said to be the shape of the water element of which the patron deity is Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and located from the knee to the hip region. [Refer Canto 1, verse 176 and Canto 5, verse no. 13.] At other places it describes the symbolic importance of creating a union of the moon and sun as metaphor for the union of the creature with the supreme Brahm. [Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 56 and 68 for instance.] In the context of Pranayam it is used to indicate the bliss obtained by the ascetic. [Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 120, 127.]

Canto 1, verse no. 133 of this Upanishad describes the great Mantra ‘So-a-ham’ and asserts that the moon stands for the letter ‘sa’ of this Mantra. Other instances where moon appears in Yogshikha Upanishad are Canto 1, verse nos. 133, 146, 176, Canto 3, verse no. 11, and Canto 6, verse no. 4.

The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 4 asserts that the Moon God is Vishnu personified. This is because Vishnu is the sustainer and nourisher of creation much like the Som which is a divine elixir that sustains the Gods and gives them eternity. Another reason is that the physical form of Som is like the male semen which harbours life intrinsically inside it and is the means by which creation is brought about, and Vishnu in his more sublime form known as Viraat Purush is also the Lord from whom the entire creation emerged.

⁹*Ishan* and Lord Shiva are the same. Shiva is the concluder of creation and is the third of the Trinity Gods, the others being Brahma the creator, and Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation. Shiva has been assigned the task of bringing the world to an end. There are other connotations of this word ‘Shiva’—it refers to such virtues as truthfulness, holiness, divinity and purity; welfare and well being; righteousness and auspiciousness; renunciation, dispassion and detachment; wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment; peace, tranquility, serenity and their attendant happiness, joy and bliss. Lord Shiva is also considered as the most exalted and wisest amongst the Gods, and is therefore honoured with the epithet ‘Maha Dev’ or the Great God, and ‘Maheshwar’ or the Great Ishwar as he is regarded as the supreme Lord of the entire creation. Since ‘truthfulness and auspiciousness’ are qualities that are beautiful, this word also means something that is beautiful and beyond reproach.

The Atharvashikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 3 declares that ‘Shambhu’, one of the many epithets of Lord Shiva, is the highest deity to be worshipped and adored, and he represents the fifth state of consciousness that is called the Turiyateet, and to the fourth aspect of the ethereal word OM—i.e. when the word has been said fully and the mouth closes. The first letter of OM is A and it represents Brahma the creator, the second letter U represents Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation, the third letter M represents Rudra the annihilator and one of the names of Shiva, and the three and half letter called the ‘Ardha Matra’ represented by the horizontal ‘S’ mark attached to the symbol of OM on its side represents Ishan, one of the names of Shiva and the God who is the ruler of all other Gods. Finally, the fourth complete Matra symbolised by the dot on the top is Shambhu or Lord Shiva. This Shambhu or Shiva is Brahm in its best and most pristine form. He is *called Shambhu* meaning one who exists or is established in an enlightened state of highest consciousness (i.e. is ‘Bhu’) that is marked by perfect self control, complete neutrality, absolute tranquility, serenity, peacefulness and blissfulness (i.e. is ‘Sham’). [Hence, Lord Shiva is called Shambhu because he possesses these auspicious virtues and is Brahm because only Brahm is the supreme transcendental Lord of creation who surpasses all earlier states of existence such as the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Shshupta or deep sleep state and the

Turiya or post-Sushupta state to permanently live in the Turiyateet state of perpetual bliss and tranquility.

The Yogtattva Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 92-94 says that Lord Shiva, in his form as Rudra, is the patron deity and personification of the fire element, and it is no wonder then that he is surrounded by ‘fire-spitting’ serpents as a symbolism of this fact. In this Upanishad’s verse nos. 98-102 it is asserted that Shiva is the patron deity and personification of the sky element.

The Dakshin Murti Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 8, 10, 13, 15 and 19 affirms that Shiva is invariably wrapped by serpents. This Upanishad describes Lord Shiva as the south-facing Lord and elaborately elucidates the metaphysical significance of this from.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 4, verse no. 29 says that the Lord with three eyes (Trinetrum) is the bearer of this world having three aspects or the one who is the foundation upon which all the three Gunas such as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna rest (Trigunadhaaram) and is the one from whom the Trinity Gods (i.e. the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder Rudra) are born. [This Lord is none other than Lord Maheshwar, the great Ishwar or Lord of creation who is also known as Shiva, Ishan, Isha etc. This Lord is synonymous with the supreme transcendental Brahm. This fact is endorsed Krishna Yajur Veda’s Varaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 32, and in Dakshin Murti or Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad.]

As the deity of the fire element, he is said to have ‘three eyes’ (Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 93), and as the deity of the sky element he is depicted as having a moon tucked in his lock of hairs, besides having five mouths, ten arms and three eyes (Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 100). Now let us see their significance.

The Maho-panishad of Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 7 describes that Shiva was born from the forehead of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, invisible and all-inclusive gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The Panch Brahm Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 41 espouses that Shiva lives in the heart of the creature as an embodiment of ‘Sat-Chit-Anand’.

Ishan is one of the names of Shiva and it has been defined in Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 4 as follows—“Why is he (Brahm in the form of Rudra) known as ‘Ishan’ (literally meaning the ‘Lord’ and his ‘insignia or authority’)? It is because he (Rudra) has full control over all the Gods and their powers and authority. Ishan signifies the Lord’s overriding authority and complete control over all the aspects of creation that are individually controlled by these Gods who actually act on behalf of Rudra representing the dynamic form of Brahm. These Gods are nothing but the different forces of Nature personified.

It is you who controls this entire creation as Indra, the king of Gods as well as the organs of the creature’s body over which these Gods rule. That is also why you are called ‘Ishan’.”

He is also known as *Maheshwar*, the great God. This term has been defined in Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Kandika 4.

¹⁰*Brahma*, the creator is also known as Hiranyagarbha because he represents the primordial golden egg from which the rest of the creation emerged (or was born). He is said to have his abode in the Brahma-loka which is synonymous with heaven, hence he is depicted as having his realm on the top of the celestial globe.

Prajapati Brahma is the manifestation of the supreme cosmic transcendental creator Brahm, in the form of Brahma, the creator.

Brahma, the patriarch of the creation, has certain characteristic qualities which are exclusive to him and which make him the nearest analogue to Brahm, the Supreme Being who is the Supreme Soul of the cosmos. Brahma has the power to create and control destiny —and therefore he virtually decides the time of annihilation or death of the world, though the actual task of annihilating or ending this world or causing death is delegated to Lord Shiva, but the mandate to do so

comes from the supreme authority, who is not Brahma but Brahm, but the former has been delegated this authority by the latter. Brahma unfolded the world when he turned his head in the four directions and uttered the four basic words Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Maha (symbolising the creation of the earth, the sky, the heavens and the great creation having countless varieties and numbers of creatures, small and big, who would populate it) as well as the Vedas (Rig, Yajur, Sam and Atharva) and the profound body of wisdom and knowledge contained in them. (See Mahopanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9 of the Sam Veda tradition). Knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment are the chief characteristic of Brahm represented by the Atma/soul. Brahma also has these characteristic features because he is the one who has not only created the physical world but also the great body of knowledge in the form of the Vedas. Brahma is depicted as a white-bearded and learned grandfather of creation. This is a symbolic way of saying that he is the oldest and wisest one amongst all those who live. Even Vishnu and Shiva and all the other Gods are much younger to him. Both the two Gods (Vishnu and Shiva) are known to exhibit some elements of Rajoguna and Tamogunas, i.e. they have some sort of worldly characteristics such as showing anger, having passion etc., or assuming different forms as in the case of their various manifestations, but Brahma, the old bearded patriarch, remains one original without any manifestation, much like the supreme Brahm who remains detached from and dispassionate towards the creation, although he is the cause of it, is responsible for it and is the resting place for it.

The Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 8 describes how Brahma came into existence. The sweat drops from the forehead of Viraat Purush formed the water element which coagulated into the primary cosmic gel that glowed with energy. It was called the cosmic egg or Hiranyagarbha. It was from the latter that Brahma emerged atop a lotus.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 1 says that the Sun God is the Prajapati because the Sun is responsible for life on earth.

The four words pronounced by Brahma created the four basic components of the cosmos—‘Bhu’ represented the earth/terrestrial world, ‘Bhuvaha’ represented the space between the earth and the heavens or the sky where the solar system is located, ‘Swaha’ represented the sky beyond the solar system; it means the heavens or the deep recesses of cosmos; inter galactic space, and ‘Janaha’ represented the creatures that inhabited and populated these three worlds.

The four mouths of Brahma symbolise the 4 cardinal directions of the compass and the preaching of the 4 Vedas symbolising knowledge, erudition and wisdom.

Brahma is called ‘Prajapati’ or the one Lord who is responsible for the welfare of all the subjects of this vast creation without having any distinction between them. Since Brahma is the creator, he is like the father, and since he has established the laws that are to be followed by the subjects of this creation he is also like the king who decides the laws that form the codes of conduct in his realm. But the question arises that if Brahm is supposed to look after his creation with equality, then why does one creature suffer while the other does not. The answer lies the fact that one creature suffers and the other does not is none of Brahma’s faults but that of the creature itself because it goes berserk and does not follow the sanctioned paths as laid down in the different Upanishads, especially highlighted in this Valli in a very specific manner, and therefore has to undergo the consequences for its actions. The reason is that this world is characterised by the theory of action and reward, and what one does he is bound to enjoy or suffer from its results.

How Brahma was created from the auspicious quality called Sata Guna that dominated the initial stages of creation has been described from the metaphysical point of view in the Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 49.

Life span of Brahma—The Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, paragraph no. 8 describes the complete life-span of Brahma, the creator.

¹¹*Anant* has two implications—one is that this word refers to the legendary serpent known as Seshnath who holds the earth on its hood, and the other is that it refers to Lord Vishnu who is none but the eternal and infinite Supreme Being himself. The word literally means an entity that has no end. Truly speaking, it applies to the Supreme Being known as Brahm as he is the only one who is endless and without an end. Brahm's cosmic manifestation is known as Vishnu or the Viraat Purush. Anant supports the entire creation by forming its base or foundation, and this fact is depicted by saying that Seshnath holds the earth on its hood. Well, in another incarnation Vishnu had assumed the form of a Tortoise to support the mountain from sinking during the legendary churning of the cosmic ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the ambrosia of life and eternity. Then again, Vishnu had become a Boar to retrieve the earth on his snout when it was hidden in the under-world by a demon. In other words, whenever the need arose to give support to creation, it was Vishnu who has assumed various forms—one of them being as Seshnath. In his incarnation as Lord Ram, this Seshnath had become Laxman, Ram's younger brother, and in Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Krishna, Seshnath had become Balraam, Krishna's elder brother.

The fact that Anant is Lord Vishnu and no one else is endorsed in the next verse no. 39 which says that his weapon is the famous 'Chakra', the discus of Vishnu.]

39. The ten Gods have their respective weapons¹ stationed near them in the next ring just outside of the previous ring. This ring is the 6th concentric layer or girdle protecting Lord Ram.

The next Aavaran (ring) that encircles Lord Ram, i.e. the 7th outer ring, consists of the monkeys such as Neel etc., and sages such as Vashistha, Vaamdeo etc. All of them remain involved in worshipping and paying their homage to Lord Ram. (Please see also Canto 5, verse no. 7) (39).

[Note—¹The ten weapons of these above mentioned ten Gods are as follows—

(i) Indra's Vajra which is said to be the strongest weapon in creation. It is revealed in the form of the almighty thunderbolt which reduces anything to rubble when it ever strikes the earth.

(ii) Fire-God's weapon known as Shakti which stands for dynamism, energy, strength, vigour and vitality.

(iii) Yam's weapon known as Danda or a stick or baton. Since Yam is regarded as the keeper of Dharma, the tenets of righteousness, probity and propriety, he needs to wield the stick to ensure the implementation of these virtues, and uses the baton to punish the guilty and the violators.

(iv) Niriti's or Nairitya's Khanga or a sword. This God is said to be responsible to actually implement the commands of the Death God, sometimes also referred to as the Yam God, and hence wields the sword to cut off the head to kill and cause death in a symbolic manner.

(v) Varun's weapon is the Paash or the sling, the loop, the snare or the shackle. It is a symbolic way of saying that the Water God keeps the entire creation under its control with the help of the snare or the loop, and surrounds the entire creation like a girdle. This is because no life is possible without water. This also implies that the surface of the habitable world, the earth, is surrounded by ocean (water) on all sides.

(vi) Vayu's weapon is Ankush or the goad or any other sharp knife-like weapon. The Wind God controls all the vital functions in the body and is responsible for 'life' in all its hues. That is why it is also called the Pran (life) of creation. Its weapon 'goad' is very evident when a man suffers colic with sharp stabbing pains resembling the stabbing with a knife.

- (vii) Chandrama's weapon is the Gadaa or the mace.
- (viii) Ishan or Lord Shiva's weapon is the Shul or the trident, a spear or a lancet.
- (ix) Brahma holds a divine Kamal or a lotus. This indicates that he is wise and immaculate as well as the creator of holistic knowledge.
- (x) And finally, the weapon of Anant or Lord Vishnu is the famed Chakra—the circular saw-like discus that is the trademark weapon of Lord Vishnu. This Chakra has been described in detail in the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Uttar Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 3-13.]

40. [Verse nos. 40-66 describe in great detail how to construct the 'Pooja-Yantra' or the instrument used to offer formal forms of ritualistic worship to Lord Ram. It is in the form of a Charm or a Talisman Yantra or a magical apparatus in the form of a geometrical design that is used to offer worship to Lord Ram in ritualistic forms of formal worship as done under Tantra philosophy.]

After describing the outlines of the 'Pooja-Yantra' and the deities who are worshipped through it (verse nos. 10-12, 31-39), details of how to construct it in physical terms in the form of a geometrical diagram or a sketch are being described now.

Two equilateral triangles must be drawn in such a way that the second triangle is placed in an inverted position, up side down, on the first triangle. This results in the formation of a hexagonal enclosure at the center with six smaller triangles on its six surfaces.

In the central hexagon thus formed, two symbols of the divine word OM (ॐ) should be written so that they face each other like a mirror image (40).

41. In the centre of the hexagon and bracketed on two sides with the curved arches of the OM Mantra is written the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram—which is 'Raam or Raan(g)' (राम्).

Below this Beej Mantra of Lord Ram is written, in a symbolic manner or in codified form, the work that is to be done or wishes which need to be fulfilled. It is accomplished by writing it in the second case or inflexion of the Sanskrit language. It is called the 'Dwitiya Vibhakti' of Sanskrit grammar (equivalent to the objective case of English grammar)¹.

The name of the worshipper is to be written on the top of the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram. This name should be in the sixth case or inflexion of the Sanskrit language. It is called the 'Shashthi Vibhakti' of the Sanskrit grammar (equivalent to the possessive case of English grammar)² (41).

[Note—¹In the sentence 'I eat a mango', the word 'mango' is in the objective case, which in Sanskrit is called the Dwitiya Vibhakti.

²In the sentence 'This is John's work', the word 'John's' is in the possessive case, which in Sanskrit is called the Shashthi Vibhakti.]

42. As a next step, the word 'Kuru' (कुरु) should be written on either side of the Beej Mantra of Lord Ram (which is 'Raam/Raan(g)' --राम्).

Then the Beej Mantra representing the cosmic energy and dynamic powers of the Lord, called 'Sri' and represented by the monosyllable 'Srim/Srin(g)' (श्री) should be written exactly in the center of the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram (i.e. राम्). [To place the Beej Mantra 'Srim/Srin(g)' in the center of the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)', the latter has to be split into two segments—the letter 'Ra' will be at the left of the Beej Mantra 'Srim/Srin(g)', while the long vowel sound 'Aa' of the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)' will be to the right of the Beej Mantra 'Srim/Srin(g)'.]

The entire setup should be such that it is surrounded by or enclosed from all the sides by the twin mirror images of the Pranav word 'OM' written earlier according to verse no. 40 (42).

43. Outside the hexagon, there are six equilateral triangles, each having a base on one of the six faces of the hexagon.

The following Mantras should be written in the six triangles so that one Mantra is accommodated in one triangle. They are written on the base of each of the six triangles which happen to be the outer surfaces of the six sides of the central hexagon. The Mantras are the following—

(i) In the first triangle, the Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g) Hridayaaya Namaha' (रं हृदयाय नमः) should be written, (ii) in the second triangle, the Mantra 'Rim/Ring Shirse Swaha' (रं शिरसे स्वाहा) should be written, (iii) in the third triangle, the Mantra 'Room/Roong Shikhaayea Vashat' (रूं शिखायै वषट्) should be written, (iv) in the fourth triangle the Mantra 'Raim/Raing Kavachai Hoom/Hum' (रं कवचाय हुम्) should be written, (v) in the fifth triangle, the Mantra 'Roum/Roung Netraabhyaam Vaushat' (रं नेत्राभ्यां वौषट्) should be written, (vi) and in the sixth triangle, the Mantra 'Raha Astraaya Phut/Fut' (रः अस्त्राय फट्) should be written.

On the outer left hand side of each triangle's apex should be written the Beej Mantra for Ramaa (Laxmi), i.e. 'Srim/Srin(g)' (श्री), and on the right side, the Beej Mantra for Maya, i.e. 'Hrim/Hrin(g)' (ह्रीं) should be written. [That is, on either side of the apex of each triangle formed on the side of the hexagon, one Beej Mantra is written to the left of it and one Beej Mantra is written to the right of it. On the left is 'Srim/Srin(g)' and on the right is 'Hrim/Hrin(g)'.]

The Beej Mantra for Kaam (passion, desires), which is 'Klim/Klin(g)' (क्लीं), should be written in the middle of the space between any two triangles (that is, a total number of six Beej Mantra 'Klim/Klin(g)' are placed on the Yantra in between the six triangles) (43).

44. Both on the outside of the apex of each of the six triangles as well as just inside them, the seeker should write the Beej Mantra for Krodh or anger, i.e. 'Hoom/Hum' (हुम्) flanked on either sides with the Beej Mantra for Vaak or speech, i.e. 'Aim/Aiyan(g)' (ऐं).

Now, three concentric circles should be drawn just outside of the sketch made by the hexagon and its six triangles decorated by the Beej Mantras (as described in verse nos. 40-44).

Outside the third circle drawn as directed in this present verse, an eight-petal lotus should be drawn (44).

45. In the eight petals of the lotus made as prescribed in verse no. 44, the following three sequences of the Sanskrit alphabets are to be written—

(i) At the base ('Kesar') of the petals, the vowels of the Sanskrit alphabets are to be written so that each petal as a set of two alphabets (i.e. a pair of vowels— अ आ, इ ई, उ ऊ, ऋ ॠ, ए ऐ, ओ औ, अं अः).

(ii) Next, above these vowels, the consonants of the Sanskrit alphabets are to be written such that each petal has one category of consonant. These are called 'Varga'. [There are eight such categories or Vargas of consonants which are headed by the alphabets— क, च, ट, त, प, य, श, क्ष]

(iii) Above these alphabets, near the tip of each petal but inside it should be written the forty seven letters of the 'Mala Mantra' in sequence in such a way that each petal contains six letters of the full sequence. (Please see verse no. 63 for the full version of the Mala Mantra) (45).

46. The eighth petal of the lotus will have only five remaining letters of the 'Mala Mantra'. [The first 7 petals have 6 letters each = $7 \times 6 = 42$ letters in all, and the remaining $47 - 42 = 5$ shall be placed in the eighth petal.]

Now, another ring of eight petals of the lotus should be drawn outside the first ring as was described previously in verse nos. 44-45. The Beej Mantra of Ramaa, i.e. 'Srim/Srin(g)' (श्री), should be written at the base of each of these eight petals.

Then the individual eight syllables of the eight-syllable Mantra 'OM Namō Narayanaaya' (ॐ नमो नारायणाय) should be written in such a way that one syllable is accommodated in one petal. [The eight syllables are = OM + Na + Mo + Naa + Raa + Ya + Naa + Ye = 8.] (46).

47. Outside the second layer of lotus petals as described in verse no. 46, another (i.e. third) layer of a 12-petal lotus should be drawn. Each letter of the 12-letter Mantra 'OM Namō Bhagwate Vaasudevaaye' (ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय) should be written near the apex of each petal so that one letter is written in each petal in a sequential manner. [The twelve letters or syllables are OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te + Vaa + Su + De + Vaa + Ye = 12.] (47).

48. At the base (the 'Kesar') of these twelve petals should be written the Sanskrit alphabets such that each of the 1st eleven petals have four letters of the alphabet while the last (i.e. twelfth) petal has the remaining seven letters. [In Sanskrit, there are sixteen vowels and thirty five consonants from the first alphabet A अ to the last alphabet Gya ञ.] These letters should be in a slightly convex line (instead of a straight line to conform to the rounded contours of the circles of the worship instrument).

Outside this 3rd layer of the lotus petals, another layer—the 4th layer—of a 16-petal lotus should be drawn. At the base of each of these petals should be written the Beej Mantra for Maya— i.e. 'Hrim/Hrin(g)' (ह्रीं) (48).

49. In each petal of the 16-petal lotus of the 4th layer, one should write the letters of the following Mantras in such a way that one petal has one letter—'Hoom/Hum' (ह्रुं), 'Phat/phut' (फट्), 'Na' (न), 'Maha' (मः), and the 12-lettered Mantra 'OM Hrim/Hrin(g) Bharataagraj Ram Klim/Klin(g) Swaha' (ॐ ह्रीं भरताग्रज राम क्लीं स्वाहा). [These twelve letters are OM + Hrim + Bha + Ra + Taa + Gra + Ja + Raa + Ma + Klim + Swa + Ha = 12. Along with the earlier four syllables, viz. Hum + Phat + Na + Maha = 4, the total number of letters become 16. So, each petal will have one letter. Refer—(i) Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 54; and (ii) Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 30.]

The letters should be placed near the tip-end of the petals. Next, the sixteen Beej Mantras of the different close associates of Lord Ram who are well versed in the Mantras pertaining to Lord Ram (e.g. the Lord's devotee and close confidante named Hanuman) should be placed at the points where two petals join each other, i.e. between each pair of petals just above their junction points. [These 16 Beej Mantras are mentioned below in verse no. 50] (49).

50. These sixteen Beej Mantras (as mentioned in verse no. 49 above) are as follows— (1) ‘Hrim/Hrin(g)’ (ह्रं —for Hanuman), (2) ‘Strum/Strim’ (स्त्रं—for Sugriv), (3) ‘Bhrum/Bhrim’ (भ्रं—for Bharat), (4) ‘Vrum/Vrim’ (व्रं —for Vibhishan), (5) ‘Lrimum’ (ल्रं—for Laxman), (6) ‘Shrum/Shrim’ (श्रं — for Shatrughan), (7) ‘Jum/Jun(g)’ (ज्रं —for Jaamwant), (8) ‘Dhrim/DHrin(g)’ (ध्रं —for Dhristi), (9) ‘Jrim/Jring’ (ज्रं —for Jayant), (10), ‘Vrim/Vrin(g)’ (व्रिं —for Vijai), (11) ‘Srim/Srin(g)’ (स्रं —for Suraashtra), (12) ‘Ra(g)’ (रं—for Raashtra Vardhan), (13) ‘Am/Ang’ (अं —for Akop), (14) ‘Dhrim/DHrin(g)’ (धं—for Dharampaal), (15) and ‘Srim/Srin(g)’ (स्रं—for Sumantra). The Sanskrit alphabet ‘Cha’ (च) which has come in the main sloka marks the end of the sequence.

Next, another layer of a 32-petal ‘Maha-lotus’ (the great lotus) should be drawn outside the lotus with 16 petals. [This will be the 5th lotus.] Each of the petals of this lotus should have a symbol of ‘Naad’ (नाद) and ‘Bindu’ (बिन्दु), i.e. a concave surface with a dot on top (50).

51. The thirty two letters of the following Mantra should be written inside these thirty two petals, with one letter (syllable) in each petal—‘Rambhadra Maheshwaas Raghuvir Nripottam Bho Dashaasyaantkaasmaakam Sriyam Daapaye Dehi Me.’ (रामभद्र महेश्वास रघुवीर नृपोत्तम। भो दशास्यान्तकास्माकं श्रियं दापय देहि मे). [The brief meaning of this Mantra is ‘Oh gentleman Lord Ram! You are the almighty and the greatest Lord of creation, a brave member of King Raghu’s dynasty, and are the best amongst all the kings. You were the one who was the cause of the end or elimination of the ten-headed evil demon (named Ravana). Please grant the boon of Sri, or all sorts of majesty and glory, to me.’ The thirty-two letters are the following Raa + Ma + Bha + Dra + Ma + He + Shwa + Sa + Ra + Ghu + Vi + Ra + Nri + Po + Tta + Ma + Bho + Da + Sha + Syaa + Nta + Ka + Sma + Kam + Sri + Yam +Daa + Pa + Um + De + Hi + Me = 32 letters. Refer Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 81.]

Then the names of the eight Vasus¹, eleven Rudras², twelve Adityas³ and one Brahma should be mentioned near the apex-point of each petal, one name in one petal (51).

[Note—¹The 8 Vasus are the following— Dhruv, Dhar, Som, Aapha (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush, and Prabhaas.

²The 11 Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparajeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, Kapaali.

³The 12 Adityas are the following—Dhata, Arayma, Mitra, Varun, Ansha, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta, and Vishnu.]

52. As a next step, a circle should be drawn just outside of this 32-petal lotus so as to encircle it and touch the tip of each of the petals¹.

Then, a peripheral boundary of three consecutive squares (in the form of a parallelogram having three lines to each side)² should be drawn so as to enclose the multi-layered circular diagram made as per prescription contained in verse nos. 40-51. This is called the ‘Bhupur’, or the enclosing wall around the great fort where the Lord is symbolically seated in the worship instrument.

Next, the symbol of two weapons, i.e. the Vajra (the weapon of Indra) and the Shul (the trident or spear or lancet) are marked at all the eight corners of the Bhupur so as to give protection to the gates of this symbolic fort. The sign of the Vajra should

be marked or drawn in the four directions (i.e. in the north, west, south and east), and the symbol of the Shul or the trident/spear/lancet should be drawn in the four corners of the worship Yantra or the Charm instrument (i.e. in the north-west, south-west, south-east and north-east corners).

The completed diagram is called the ‘Bhupur Yantra’³ or the apparatus that is used for mystical and occult forms of ritualistic as well as Tantrik worship practices adopted to offer obeisance to the Lord (52).

[Note—¹The total number of names will be $8+11+12+1 = 32$.

²The three lines outside the circular apparatus/diagram represent the three inherent qualities present in any creature—viz Sata (the good qualities, Raja (the medium qualities) and Tama (the mean and lowest qualities).

³The characteristic features of a Bhupur Yantra are the following—a square, the sign of Vajra (goad) and Shul (trident or spear or lancet). The colour that is used to make these lines and symbols is the yellow colour.]

53-54. Even as any grand venue or a huge pavilion has four gates or entrances on four of its sides towards its north, east, south and west (for easy access), there should be four gates or entrances marked on the four sides of the square outlines of the Bhupur Yantra. [These four gates should be in the four directions—north, east, south and west.]

Then the ‘Bhupur’ instruments used for worship of Lord Ram should be decorated with the twelve signs of the zodiac¹. These signs should be placed one each on either side of the four gateways (i.e. 4 gates x 2 zodiac signs on either side of it = 8 in total), and the remaining four signs should be placed on the four corners of the instrument (i.e. in the north-east, the south-east, the south-west, and the north-west corners).

Then it should be made to appear that the legendary serpent known as Anant or Seshnath holds this Bhupur Yantra on its hood. This is done by writing the eight names of the Seshnanth or Anant on all the eight directions of this Bhupur as follows—in the North is written the name of Anant, in the North-East is written the name of Vasuki, in the East is written the name of Takshak, in the South-East is written the name of Karkotak, in the South is written the name of Padma, in the South-West is written the name of Mahapadma, in the West is written the name of Shankha, and in the North-West is written the name of Kulik. This depiction would make it appear that these eight legendary serpents are supporting the entire instrument from its eight corners (53-54).

[Note—¹The twelve signs of the zodiac are the following—Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. The zodiac is the belt or band of constellation of stars through which the Sun, the Moon and the planets move across the sky. The twelve signs of the zodiac represent the twelve constellations considered important by astrologers who were ancient astronomers as well as mathematicians. The twelve cycles of the moon coinciding with the twelve months of the year consisting of one solar cycle was the reason why the figure twelve was chosen because the Sun and the Moon were central to astrological calculations.]

55. After that, the Beej Mantra of the Nrisingh God—which is ‘Ksharoum/n(g)’ (क्षरौ)—should be mentioned on the center of the arch above the four main gates marked in the four directions (north, east, south, west), while the Beej Mantra of the Varaaha God—which is ‘Hum/n(g)’ (ह्रँ)—should be marked at the four corners of the Bhupur instrument (i.e. in the north-east, the south-east, the south-west and north-west corners)*. [Nrisingh is the half man and half lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu,

and Varaaha is the Lord's Boar incarnation. An entire Upanishad called the 'Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad' of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to the Nrisingh God; it is the 7th Upanishad of this Veda. Similarly, an Upanishad called the 'Varaaha Upanishad' of the Krishna Yajur Veda is dedicated to the Varaaha God; it is the 30th Upanishad of this Veda. These Beej Mantras are marked to invoke the respective deities and request them to protect the Yantra. This protection is in addition to the protection gained by placing the signs of the Vajra and the Shul as described earlier in verse no. 52, and the eight serpents as mentioned in verse no. 53.]

The Beej Mantra of Lord Nrisingh, i.e. 'Ksharoum/n(g)' (क्षरौ), constitutes of two letters—viz. the first is 'Ksha' which is a combined sound of two letters 'Ka' (pronounced as in *come*) and 'Sha' (pronounced as in *shun*), and the second is 'Raun/m(g)' (pronounced as in *wrong*). This second letter [Raun/m(g)] is based on the alphabet 'Ra' and is in the form of a half-syllable called the 'Reff/Reph'¹. It is then adorned by the 'dot' that is placed on the top of a letter in Sanskrit to give it a nasal sound. Hence, the effect is that the simple alphabet 'Ra' becomes 'Raun/Raun(g)'—as in the English word *wrong*.

Next we have the Beej Mantra for Varaaha—i.e. 'Hum/Hun(g)' (ह्रूं). It is based on the Beej Mantra for Maya or the delusion creating powers of the supreme Brahm—which is 'Hrim/Hrin(g)' (ह्रीं), and additionally adorned by the 'Indu and Naad' (collectively called the Chandra Bindu, the crescent shape and the dot on its top)². The 'Indu and Naad' is a reminder of the fact that this Mantra has the same spiritual value and dynamic powers as those possessed by the ethereal Mantra OM which is also adorned by the 'Chandra-Bindu' and which is synonymous with the supreme transcendental Authority of creation known as Brahm. So in effect the resultant Beej Mantra for Varaaha God combines the Shakti (dynamics, powers and energy) of both the Maya as well as Brahm which is the principal Authority that created this Maya (55).

[Note—¹The *reff* or *reph* is a burring, a whirring and a guttural sound represented by the sound of the letter 'R'. It indicates passion and affection of the mind. It also stands for an entity that is cruel and merciless, that is wrathful and contemptible by nature. It is a half-syllable that produces a sound equivalent to the word *whirr*, *wharf*. It is depicted in the form of a coma placed on a letter to give it the prolonged sound of the alphabet 'R'. This 'reff' or 'reph' is indicative of the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram which is 'Raam or Raan(g)'. It is also indicative of the dynamic powers and punch that the cosmic fire element possesses and depicted in form of the the roar of a blazing fire. In short, the 'reff' or 'reph' indicates that Lord Nrisingh is very fierce and un-compromising in his nature while giving protection to his devotees and punishing those who are vile and sinful. He is given the charge of the main entrance gates precisely due to these virtues because only a very brave, fierce, unrelenting and unforgiving person should be made to guard the main entrance to the fort or a city.

²The *Naad* and *Bindu* are collectively called the 'Chandra Bindu'. It is a sign resembling a concave crucible or shallow plate over which is placed a dot at its focal point. It is a 'moon-like spot' and hence called the 'Chandra' (moon) 'Bindu' (a dot). It is a nasal sound equivalent to the letter 'N' as in the words *can't*, *mount*, *taint* or *taunt*. The Moon is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of life and the ambrosial fluid of eternity and bliss. The Bindu is a drop of this Amrit. Hence, in metaphysics the term Chandra Bindu is used to refer to the supreme transcendental Brahm and the spiritual state of realisation of pure conscious 'self' when the aspirant enjoys bliss and experiences a surge of ecstasy. This is a metaphoric way of saying that he tastes Amrit dripping from the Moon.

In the present context it means that Lord Nrisingh is none else but Brahm himself personified.

*There is another interpretation of the *Bhupur Yantra*. If one closely sees the completed Ram Pooja Yantra or the worship instrument/apparatus used to worship Lord Ram and invoke supernatural forces to intervene on behalf of the worshipper and empower him with these divine powers in occult forms of worships, it would be noted that if the same instrument is used by a devotee with the spiritual approach of seeking refuge and shelter with his Lord for his all round well beings, instead of acquiring divine powers himself, then the instrument/apparatus appears to resemble a fort of an emperor. The Bhupur Yantra is the outer periphery or the three-layered walls of the fort. Its gates or entrance points are guarded by legendary snakes or dragons as well as by the Nrisingh God who has a ferocious form of half lion and half man. The protection of the four corners of the fort wall is the responsibility of the Varaaha God who has the form of the wild boar which salvaged the earth. The circular part of the main instrument represents the palace of the emperor who happens to be Lord Ram himself here. The various rings of petals etc. represent the circle of his different layer security ring of his body guards and kings as well as knights who are standing in attendance. This implies that a person who has taken refuge and shelter of the emperor is assured of the protection of all the attendants of the emperor.]

56. The Nrisingh God's Beej Mantra 'Ksharoum/(n)' (क्षरौं) is famed as a magic Talisman against malignant stars and is also used for the conquest of enemies. It is empowered by the combined strength of two most powerful and forceful dynamic elements of creation—the first is the 'fire' represented by the basic alphabet 'Ra' of the second letter 'Raum/Raun(g)', and the second is the supreme source of all powers and dynamism in creation, known as Brahm, that is represented by the Bindu or the 'dot' placed on the top of this second letter 'Raum/Raun(g)'.

In a similar manner, the Varaaha God's Beej Mantra 'Hum/Hun(g)' (ह्रूं) is empowered by the most powerful element of Maya represented by the alphabet 'Ha'. This is because the same alphabet 'Ha' is used in the construction of both the Beej Mantra—for Varaaha ('Hum/Hun(g)'—ह्रूं) as well as Maya ('Hrim/Hrin(g)'—ह्रीं). Then again, like the Beej Mantra for Nrisingh God, this Beej Mantra for Varaaha is also empowered with the authority and dynamism of Brahm in the form of the 'Indu and Naad' placed as the sign of the 'Chandra Bindu' on its top.

Therefore we conclude that both these two Beej Mantras—one of Nrisingh and the other of Varaaha—are equally empowered by the cosmic 'Shakti' or the dynamic powers and energy of creation (56).

57. The Beej Mantra for Varaaha, which is 'Hum/Hun(g)' (ह्रूं), is placed on the four corners of the Bhupur Yantra. [Refer verse no. 55.]

Now, the Beej Mantras of 'Lord Ram's Mala Mantra¹' are being described. [The word 'Mala' refers to a prayer rosary. Hence, these Beej Mantras are uttered as the worshipper turns the beads of the prayer rosary while he worships the Lord through the Bhupur Yantra. The following narration is rather esoteric in nature as it involves the construction of simple Sanskrit words that are used in the Mala Mantra of Lord Ram by using mystical names and esoteric terms for each individual letter of the Mantra. Hence, we shall break it into several parts for the convenience of narration as well as for understanding how it is constructed.]

The *first part* consists of the three words 'OM Namaha/Namo Bhagwate.' It means—

'Salutations to the supreme Brahm (OM)! I most reverentially bow before the Lord'.]

The first letter of the Mala Mantra is ‘Taar’, meaning that which provides spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. Hence, it is the Beej Mantra for Brahm, which is ‘OM’ (ॐ).

It is followed by ‘namaha’ (नमः). [This is indicative of submission and means that the worshipper is bowing before the Lord with great respect.]

Then the following Beej Mantras are used in sequential form—the Beej Mantra for ‘Nidra’ (i.e. sleep, which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Bha’ pronounced as in *abhor*—भ), ‘Smriti’ (i.e. memory, for which the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ga’ pronounced as in girl, girdle—ग), ‘Meda’ (i.e. flesh, Musk for which the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Va’ pronounced as in avert—व), and ‘Kaamika’ (i.e. name of a Goddess for whom the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ta’ pronounced as in French ‘T’—त) (57).

[Note—¹Lord Ram’s *Mala Mantra* that is being described here is given, with little variations, in two other Upanishads of the Atharva Veda, viz. Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 90-92, and Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 57. The full form of the Mala Mantra which has forty-seven letters is given in verse no. 64 of the present Canto 4.]

58. The ‘Kaamika’ is endowed with the qualities of ‘Rudra’ (i.e. is forceful, strong and unrelenting by nature, and if not satisfied, it creates anger and wrathfulness; its Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit vowel ‘Ae’ pronounced as in *may, gay, bake*—ए).

[The Mala Mantra till this point consists of the following words—‘OM Namaha/Namo Bhagwate’.

The fourth word of the Mala Mantra is ‘Raghunandanaaye’—meaning the great son born in the dynasty of king Raghu.’ This forms the *second part* and is constructed as follows—]

After that comes ‘Agni’ (i.e. the fire for which the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ra’ pronounced as in *run, rum*—र), ‘Medha’ (i.e. the power of belief, faith, recollection for which the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Gha’ pronounced as in *log-hut, Nottingham*—घ) which is adorned with ‘Amar’ (i.e. the virtue of eternity for which the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Oo’ pronounced as in *full, bull*—उ).

Then comes ‘Dirgh Kalaa’ with its ‘Bindu’ symbolizing the ‘Chandra Bindu’ placed on a letter. It is marked by the grand virtue of being ‘Akrur’—the opposite of cruelty. In other words, the entity that is adorned by the Chandra Bindu (the Dirgha Kalaa and its Bindu) is always merciful, compassionate, considerate, gracious and loving. The Dirgha Kalaa is represented by the Beej Mantra ‘Na’ (pronounced as in *none, noun, gone*—न). When the bindu is placed on it, it gathers the prolonged nasal sound of ‘N’ (as in *can’t, gone*).

After it comes ‘Hlaadini’. [It is the sound of the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Da’ as in the words *the, rather, mother* etc.’ with a nasal sound of ‘N’ preceding it. The latter is produced by the ‘dot’ placed on the alphabet just before it, and it helps to link these two alphabets when pronouncing the entire word. Hlaadini also means ‘refreshing, comforting, gladdening, exhilarating, very noisy and loud, the incense tree, and lightening or the thunderbolt of Indra. It is represented by the Beej Mantra ‘Da’—द).

This is followed by the long sound of the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Na’—i.e. ‘Na’ with the long vowel sound of ‘Aa’ added to it as a suffix. This produces the word ‘Naa’ as in the word *neither*, *Nitrogen*, *nice* etc. (58).

59. Finally, the word for ‘Kshudha’ or hunger, which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ya’ (य) as in *young*, *yearn* etc. is added at the end of this phase of the Mala Mantra. [The ‘hunger’ here is not for worldly gains but for one’s spiritual welfare.]

[The word that is now formed till this point is ‘Raghunandanaaye’. When this is added to the previous part of the Mala Mantra, it becomes the following—‘OM Namaha/Namo Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye.’]

The fifth word of the Mala Mantra is ‘Rakshoghna-vishadaaye’—meaning ‘give me your protection against all poisons and evil factors.’ This word (in the form of a phrase) is the *third part* of the full Mantra and it is constructed as follows—]

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Krodh (anger), which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ra’ (र) pronounced as in the word *run*, *rung*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Amogha (literally meaning infallible, undefeatable, unailing) which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ksha’ (क्ष) and which is a combined sound of two letters ‘Ka’ as in *kerb*, and ‘Chh’ as in *catch*, *ketchup*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Vishwa (world, universe) which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘O’ (ओ) and pronounced as in the exclamatory word *Oh* or in the word *oracle*, *organ*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Medha (intellect, sense, prudence, understanding, comprehension, wit) which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Dha’ (ध) but pronounced silently as in the exclamatory word *breathe*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Dirghaa which is the nasal sound of the letter ‘Na’ (न).

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Jwaalini (literally meaning that which is burning fiercely) which is one of the various Kalaas (aspects) of Vahini (fire element). This is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Va’ (व) pronounced as in the word *avert*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Rudra in the lower tone—i.e. the vowel sound ‘E’ (इ) of the Sanskrit language and pronounced as in the word *if*, *nip*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Mritu or death. It is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Sha’ (श) pronounced as in the word *shawl*. [The word ‘Shaman’ in which this alphabet is used literally means conclusion or elimination or control. From the cosmic perspective it would obviously mean conclusion of this deluding and entrapping world, and from the individual’s point of view it would mean elimination of all worldly delusions and entanglements.] (59).

60. The alphabet ‘Sha’ (as mentioned in verse no. 59) is established or placed respectfully before the next letter of the Mantra. It is the Beej Mantra for Hlaadini with a long vowel sound. It is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Daa’ (दा) pronounced as in the word *thou*.

And finally, the letter for ‘Twak’ (literally meaning the bark of a tree, skin, rind) which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ya’ (य), as in the word *yearn*, concludes this fifth word of the Mala Mantra.

[This word is 'Raksho-ghna-vishdaaye'. Hence, the Mantra till this point becomes 'OM Namō/Namaha Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnavishdaaye'.

The sixth word of the Mala Mantra is the following—'Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase'. It means 'The Lord is sweet by nature, has a cheerful countenance, and is happy. He is extremely radiant, majestic and glorious.' The following narration describes the various Beej Mantras used for its construction. This would be the *fourth part* of the full Mantra.]

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Kshwel (an unspoken sound) which is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ma' (म) pronounced as in the word *mother*, *run*, *rung*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Priti (to have affection and love) which is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet 'Dha' (ध) pronounced as in the word *breathe*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Amar (to be eternal and free from death; imperishable and infinite) which is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet 'Oo' (उ) pronounced as in the word *bull*, *pull*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Jyoti (illumination and light) which is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ra' (र) pronounced as in the word *run*, *rung*.

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Tikshna (sharp, incisive, pointed, potent, effective) along with that of Agni (fire element). These are taken together to form the composite letter 'Pra' as in *prank*, *pram*. [This letter has two parts—Pa (प) + Ra (र) = Pra.]

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Shwet (white, bright) which is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet 'Sa' (स) pronounced as in the word *sung*. This is followed by the sound of the dot (' ') which is placed on top of a Sanskrit letter to give the nasal sound equivalent to 'um' or 'un(g)' as in *sum* or *sung* (60).

61. The next letter is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Na' (न—pronounced as in the word *none*) which is the fifth alphabet from the one representing 'Kaamika'. [The Beej Mantra for Kaamika is 'Ta' (त) as in French 'T', and hence the fifth letter from it would be Na—न. The 'dot' mentioned in verse no. 60 helps in linking these two alphabets Sa and Na to produce the sound of 'Sanna'—सन्न]

The next letter is the one that follows the alphabet 'La' (ल)—i.e. the letter 'Va' (व) as pronounced as in the word *avert*.

The next Sanskrit alphabet is 'Da' (द) as pronounced in the word *then*. This alphabet comes two steps after the alphabet 'Ta' (त).

The next Sanskrit alphabet is 'Na' (न) as pronounced in the word *none*. It comes after the letter 'Dha' (ध). This letter 'Na' (न) has the vowel sound 'Aa' (आ) added to it. Hence, the resultant letter is 'Naa' pronounced as in word *noun*.

Then comes the letter for the wind element which is 'Ya' (य) with a long vowel sound of 'Aa' (आ) added to it as a suffix. The resultant letter is 'Yaa' (या) as in the word *yard*.

This is followed by Sanskrit alphabet 'Ma' (म) with the short vowel sound of 'E' (इ) added to it as a prefix. The letter 'Ma' stands for Vish or poison. Hence, the letter becomes 'Me' (मि) (61).

62. Then comes the Beej Mantra for 'Kaamika' which is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ta' (त) pronounced as in French 'T'. This is associated with the Beej Mantra for Rudra (a

form of Shiva) for whom the Beej Mantra is the vowel sound 'Ae' (ए) as pronounced in *may*. The resultant letter is 'Te' (ते) as in word *tame*. [In Sanskrit, the alphabet 'Ta' (त) is pronounced from the tip of the tongue like in the French 'T' as opposed to its English pronunciation which uses the back of the tongue.]

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for 'Sthir' (steady) for which the Sanskrit alphabet is 'Ja' (ज) pronounced as in the word *judge*.

Finally, the letter 'Sa' with the vowel sound of 'Ae' on top concludes this sixth word of the Mala Mantra. This letter is 'Se' (स+ए = से) pronounced as in the word *say*. [61 ½.]

[This forms the sixth word of the Mala Mantra of Lord Ram. This word is—'Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase'.

When this is added to the previous part of the Mantra, we have the following part of the Mala Mantra—'OM Namaha/Namo Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnavishdaaye Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase.'

Now, the construction of the seventh word 'Valaaye or Balaaye' is being described. This would be the *fifth part* of the full Mantra.]

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for Tapini (the most powerful and dynamic energy of creation) which is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ba' (ब) pronounced as in the word *bag*.

The next letter is the Sanskrit alphabet 'La' (ल) with the long vowel sound of 'Aa' added to it. Hence, the resultant letter is 'Laa' (ल + ा = ला) pronounced as in the word *lion* (laa + ion).

The last letter stands for 'Anil' (wind or air element), and it is the Beej Mantra 'Ya' (य).

This forms the seventh word 'Balaay' (बलाय).

[The Mantra till this point is the following—'OM Srimom Namo Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnavishdaaye Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase Balaaye.'

Now, the eighth word 'Raamaaye' is being narrated. The word refers to the deity for whom this Mantra is meant, i.e. 'Lord Ram'. This would be the *sixth part* of the Mantra.]

The next letter is the Beej Mantra for 'Anal' (fire element) which is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ra' (र) with the long vowel sound of 'Aa' (आ) added to it. This forms the letter 'Raa' as in the word *rather*. [Raa र + आ = रा.] (62).

63. The next letter is the Beej Mantra for 'Lord Narayan' (Lord Vishnu) which is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ma' (म) standing for Kaal (time; end; conclusion of creation), with the long vowel sound of 'Aa' (आ) added to it. This forms the letter 'Maa' as in the word *Ma* for mother. [म+आ = मा]

The last letter is the Beej Mantra for 'Pran' (life) which is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ya' (य) as in the word *yearn*. [This completes the eighth word 'Raamaaye'. The

Mantra till this point becomes—‘OM Namaha/Namo Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnavishdaaye Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase Valaaye Raamaaye.’]

[Now, the ninth word of the Mala Mantra, i.e. ‘Vishnave’ is being constructed as follows. This would be the *seventh part* of the full Mantra.]

The next letter represents the Beej Mantra for ‘Vidya’ (knowledge, skills) that is characterized by possessing the grand virtue that is associated with ‘Ambhas’ (the sky element). [In other words, knowledge is as vast as the sky.] It is represented by the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Va’ (व) with the short vowel sound of ‘E’ (इ) prefixed to it. The resultant letter is ‘Vi’ (व + इ = वि) pronounced as in the word *we*.

This is followed by the Beej Mantra for ‘Peeta’ (yellow) which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Sha’ (ष) to which is added the Beej Mantra for Rati which is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘A-Na’ (ण). [Rati is the divine consort of the God of passions and ambitions, known as Kaamdeo; the word also means to remain actively involved in something which in the case of Lord Narayan is to take care of this creation.] Hence, the resultant letter is ‘Shna’—ष्ण pronounced as in the word *Krishna*.

The last letter is ‘Va’ (व) which follows the Sanskrit alphabet ‘La’ (ल). It is adorned with the Beej Mantra for ‘Yoni’ (womb) which is the Sanskrit vowel ‘Ae’ (ए). Hence, the complete letter becomes ‘Ve’ (व + ए = वे) pronounced as in the word *way*, *away*.

[This completes the ninth word of the Mala Mantra, i.e. ‘Vishnave’. Hence, the Mantra till this point becomes—‘OM Namaha/Namo Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnavishdaaye Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase Valaaye Raamaaye Vishnave.’]

Finally, the word ‘Namaha’ is added to the above Mantra to imply that the worshipper is bowing reverentially to the Supreme Being represented by the word OM. Since this Mantra is dedicated to Lord Ram, this ‘Namaha’ is meant for the latter (63).

[Note—The full Mala Mantra of Lord Ram as constructed in accordance to the guideline provided in verse nos. 57-63 is as follow—‘OM Namaha/Namo Bhagwate Raghunandanaaye Rakshoghnavishdaaye Madhur-prasanna-vadanaayaa-mit-tejase Valaaye Raamaaye Vishnave Namaha.’ (ॐ नमो भगवते रघुनन्दनाय रक्षोघ्नविशदाय मधुर प्रसन्नवदनाय मिततेजसे बलाय रामाय विष्णवे नमः).

Briefly this Mantra means ‘OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm or Pranav)! I bow reverentially before Lord Ram who is also known as Raghunandan (because he had manifested in the clan of king Raghu of Ayodhya). He is the protector from all troubles and remover of all hurdles. He is of a sweet temperament; is of a cheerful disposition; and is an embodiment of extreme Tej (splendour, radiance, glory and magnificence). He is strong, powerful and valiant. He is Vishnu, the Lord of Sri (Laxmi). It is to Lord Vishnu as Lord Ram, and vice versa, that I bow reverentially.’]

64. The final shape of the forty-seven lettered ‘Mala Mantra’ of Lord Ram (as described in note of verse no. 63 above) pertains to Lord Ram who is crowned as the king of Ayodhya—that is, it relates to the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, when he had revealed himself as the noble king of Ayodhya. Since Lord Ram had a physical body and a visible form, this Mantra therefore relates to the ‘Sagun’ or manifested form of the Supreme Being that has a gross body, and which possesses specific attributes, qualities and characteristics as opposed to the cosmic form of the Lord

which is sublime, subtle, invisible, unqualified and without any kind of attributes. In other words, this Mala Mantra honours the Supreme Being known as Brahm in his incarnation as Lord Ram.

However, this Mala Mantra has great spiritual potentials and possesses stupendous mystical powers to liberate the Lord's devotees from the snare created by the three Gunas (or inherent qualities which are an integral part of all living beings)¹ that are closely associated with Maya (the worldly delusions)² which binds the creature to this artificial mundane world and its material sense objects.

[In other words, the forty-seven lettered 'Mala Mantra' of Lord Ram, who is no one else but the supreme Brahm manifested in a human form, has the astounding mystical power of destroying or eliminating the negative and evil effects of the three Gunas that keep the Lord's devotees bound in fetters, under the influence of delusions created by Maya Shakti, to this artificial world of sense objects and its illusionary charms. This helps in ensuring their spiritual liberty and deliverance from these fetters, as well as from the endless cycle of birth and death along with its associated miseries and horrors.]

This forty-seven letter Mantra should be written in the petals of the lotus inside the diagrammatic worship instrument of Lord Ram (which is in the form of a Talisman Yantra or a magical charm apparatus used for ritualistic worship of Lord Ram) as prescribed in verse no. 45 earlier (64).

[Note—¹The three qualities called the *Gunās* of the creature mentioned above are—

(i) *Sata Guna*—the noble, virtuous qualities; (ii) *Raja Guna*—passions and worldly desires; (iii) *Tama Guna*—mean, lowly and base qualities.

(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of *Sata Guna* are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This *Sata Guna* is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The *Vasanas* that have the *Sata Guna* or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the *Satwic* desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The *Raja Guna* is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the *Satwic* qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamsic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

The Vasanas that have the Tama Guna in dominance are regarded as the 'bad Vasanas' or better still the 'worst type of Vasana' that any individual can have.

The varying quantity and intensity of these three in any given individual would decide his specific character and how he is inclined to deal with the world and a given circumstance. The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular nature of an individual, giving him his individuality and his special personality which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process, et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, temperaments, inclinations, behaviour, thinking, outlook, the way they act and do their deeds, the way they tackle the problems of life, the level of their wisdom and intelligence, their personality and their general way of living.

This is also the reason why it is believed that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual and countable specific number of births that the creatures have to take, but only symbolise the huge possibilities of individual characteristics that are determined by the differing ratios of these three Gunas, and the immense number of individuals that exhibit these characteristics in this creation.

The three Gunas that determine the individual character of the creature, that determine his 'individuality' as compared to the general character of the group to which that individual belongs, are like the isotopes in chemistry. The isotope refers to the phenomenon wherein one of two or more atoms of the same chemical element that contain the same number of protons but different numbers of neutrons in their nuclei and therefore have the same atomic number and chemical properties but different mass numbers and physical properties. For example, two brothers have the same genes and the same inheritance, but the presence of the three Gunas in different ratios between them changes their personality and thought processes. One may be a highly righteous man while the other might be just the opposite. Their parents are the same, their upbringing is the same, they have attended the same school and ate the same food, but there is a deep chasm when it comes to their character as individuals.

Since each individual is like an independent piece of mosaic that completes the entire picture in conjunction with other such pieces, this individual creature's nature and character helps to determine the overall shape of the creation. These Gunas keep

the creation in a state of constant change, because numerous creatures die every moment and new ones are born. The Supreme Being has to be constantly on the alert because of this flux.

The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular 'nature' of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body—e.g. two men—might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, behaviour, thinking, outlook, action and deeds, wisdom and way of living. This is what is meant when it said that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual, countable specific number that there are actually and physically 84 Lakh types of bodies of living beings; it only symbolically refers to the huge possibilities that are possible with these three 'Gunas' and their different combinations that can imaginably produce a myriad variety of creation that can be created with these three basic qualities and their various sub classes of qualities.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajasic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvic' qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajasic' quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man.

The Naradparivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 77, says that these three Gunas are the basic Dhatus (elements) in creation.

The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 116 elucidates how these three Gunas are like the three Granthis (knots) of the body as far as the ascetic is concerned.

The Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 10 describes the relationship between Prakriti, Maya and Gunas in a very succinct manner.

How the three Gunas affect the man's character have been very precisely and expressly narrated in Shaarirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda in its verse nos. 7-13.

How the three Gunas were used by Brahm to create this world has been beautifully described in Paingalo-panishad, 1/7 and 2/3. Canto 2, verse no. 3 describes how Sata and Raja were used, while Canto 1, verse no. 7 narrates the use of Tama.

The concept of Gunas affecting the Atma has been elaborately dealt with in various Upanishads, for example the Maitrayanyu Upanishad, 1/11, 2/5, 3/5, etc. of the Sam Veda tradition.

²When *Maya* is associated with the three Gunas, it is called *Trigunmayi Maya*—or the powers of delusions that are calibrated by the influence of the above three Gunas.

Now let us examine this concept of 'Trigunmayi Maya' in brief.

Maya is a word which has two parts, Ma + Ya. The first half means a 'mother; a progenitor; something that creates', while the other half refers to the 'notion of doubt, of either this or that; the notion marked by uncertainty'. The word 'Ma' also means 'to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of'. Therefore, the composite word Maya refers to a situation which harbours or creates uncertainties, where it is uncertain whether what is said or understood or seen or witnessed or experienced is actually the truth or not. It is virtually the 'mother of all confusions, doubts and perplexities'. It therefore

refers to something or some situation which creates or produces perplexities, doubts and confusions, something that is not real; that which is deluding, illusionary, deceptive, mirage-like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define this entire complex phenomenon at once. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance-based, illusionary, imposturing, deceitful, invisible and super-natural in the sense that it defies all logic and understanding; all that which has no reality or substance inspite of appearing to be for real; all that is hollow and lacks gravity though appearing to be solid and dense. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth. It is the deluding and magical powers of the supreme transcendental Lord that hides the reality and creates an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions.

Maya is the indescribable and inconceivable cosmic dynamic power that Brahm employs to create delusions.

Maya is the deluding power of the supreme Authority in creation known as Brahm that has been used by him to create the sense of duality. The factual position is that everything is one and the same, and the different views of them is simply an illusion just like one sees a mirage in a desert and thinks it to be real whereas everyone knows that it is a physical phenomenon created due to the effect of excessive heat on desert sand, and it is the deluded mind that thinks it to be real though it is well aware that such things do happen in a desert and it is wise advice not to follow this illusion. Likewise, when Brahm decided to initiate the process of creation, he had to create a smokescreen of delusions to enable him to hide the truth, because otherwise everyone would renounce this world of artificiality and become recluses, and the result would be everyone becoming a monk, renouncing the world and the resultant termination of the cycle of birth and death! So under the influence of Maya or delusions, the living creature thinks that it, the Jiva, and Ishwar, the Lord, are two separate entities. The Jiva offers prayers to the Ishwar and looks upon him for his benevolent mercy and intercession in order to survive and prosper in this competitive world; the Ishwar looks upon the Jiva to offer him oblations and worship that would sustain and nourish the former as well as keep him in an exalted and honourable position. There exists a mutual symbiotic relationship between the two. The Jiva lives on the earth, while the Ishwar lives in the heaven. The Jiva watches the exalted stature, glory, fame and powers that the Ishwar possesses, and so the Jiva tries to acquire that stature for himself. Therefore the Jiva does good and auspicious deeds to go up to heaven, but the deeds themselves pull the Jiva down because of their inherent and inbuilt nature to tie down anyone who gets involved in them. So the creature continues to oscillate like a pendulum between being a mortal being living on earth and the immortal being living in the heaven.

This is the theory of 'duality'. Both are covered in an invisible veil of ignorance-based delusion. From the metaphysical point of view, Ishwar is the sum total of all the causal bodies that exist in creation, while the Jiva is represented by the individual causal body which harbours the pure conscious Atma or soul. This factor of the 'pure conscious Atma or soul' is common to both the Ishwar and Jiva, and hence to treat them differently is a stupid proposition caused by deluding effects of the mind. This is called being sheathed by a veil of Maya, or being under the influence of ignorance that prevents one from realizing the truth and reality.

Maya has three basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called Trigunmayi (त्रिगुणमयि), i.e. one which has the three Gunas or qualities. These three Gunas or qualities are—Sata, Raja and Tama. 'Sata' is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvement leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. 'Raja' is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It

makes a man more worldly than spiritual. 'Tama' is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used has a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, 'Tama' means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These three qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of 'Sata' makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of 'Tama' which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanors and mental setup in this world.

When a man understands any 'Truth' after rigorously examining the 'truthfulness' of that truth, when he has established the veracity of facts, he believes in it more firmly and more convincingly. No matter what other people tell him about the truth being not the correct or the whole truth, he would not listen to them, simply because he has verified the facts for himself, he has witnessed the truth himself, he has logically eliminated all falsehoods to deduce that what he knows is the 'truthful Truth'. His Truth is based on rigid and solid foundation; he is unwavering and steady in it. If he is steadfast and convinced in his knowledge, no matter how much ignorance and delusions (Maya) try to push him away from the absolute 'Truth', he will remain steadfast and unwavering in it. There will be no doubts and confusions in his mind.

The basic idea here is that Maya is like a transparent coloured sheet which covers the supreme 'truth' in the creation. Since it is transparent, it assumes the attributes of the 'truth' that it covers, because for all practical purposes an ordinary man is unable to see that veil because of its transparency. But at the same time, being tinged by different Gunas, the view of the 'truth' as seen through the veil of Maya gets tainted or distorted consonantly. This is a simple way of understanding what is called 'illusion and Maya vis-à-vis the Truth and Reality'. Maya nevertheless hides the truthfulness of the Truth, and instead lends its own attributes and characteristics to that Truth known as the 'Nirgun Brahm' by the Upanishads when the latter is observed through this veil, while at the same time assuming the glorious attributes of Brahm itself. So ignorant fools think that the Maya is the real thing, whereas they are actually seeing the 'veiled truth' as observed through this covering of Maya, because the actual 'truth' is hidden from view by this transparent sheet which has lend it its own colour and hue to it. As a result, that Nirgun appears to have some attributes, and it thereby becomes 'Sagun', or the one with attributes and characteristics, by the interference of Maya.

The 'Trigunamayi Maya' is further classified into three sub-classes—viz. Sata Guni Maya, Raja Guni Maya, and Tama Guni Maya. This nomenclature depends upon the dominance of one or the other of the three Gunas in any given situation. Thus, when the Maya is dominated by the Sata Guna, it is called 'Sata Guni Maya'; when it is dominated by the Raja Guna, it is called 'Raja Guni Maya'; and when it is dominated by the Tama Guna, it is called 'Tama Guni Maya'.

The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 10, describes these three types of Mayas. The *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse nos. 33, 44-45 describe how Maya creates this world.

How the conquering and subsequent elimination of Maya helps the creature to conquer and sub-sequentially eliminate the world and its delusions has been described in *Mantriko-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 4-8.

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse no. 2-3 describes Maya and says that it is the creator, the sustainer and the concluder of creation.

The *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 49 describes why it is important to overcome Maya.

The *Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 47-49, 52-54, 56-57 describe what Maya actually is, how it creates this world and hides the ‘truth’ known as consciousness, and goes on to describe the two important types of Shaktis or dynamic powers of Maya—one called the ‘Vikshep Shakti’ and the other called the ‘Aavaran Shakti’.

Maya has three other names as well—viz. (a) Maha Maya—or the great powers exhibited by Brahm at the cosmic level. This Maya is the progenitor of all other types of Mayas which keep the individual creature trapped in their net. The Maha Maya is the virtual mistress of all the delusions and misconceptions and their attendant ignorance that keep all the creatures of this creation enthralled by their deceptive charm. (b) Yog Maya—this is the stupendous magical powers created by the union of the supreme authority of creation known as Brahm, and the mystical and esoteric powers that delusions and hallucinations can create for the creature. (c) Maya Shakti—this is the ‘shakti’ or power and authority displayed by Maya in association with Brahm from whom it acquires its stupendous energy and powers.

The *Sarwasaaro-panishad*, verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, and the *Mantriko-panishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 3-8, describes Maya in substantial detail.

Why Maya created this world and its effect on it has been beautifully described in *Paingalo-panishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 12.

The stupendous powers of Maya have been called its ‘Shakti’. This concept has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 48. This Maya is so powerful that it misleads even the Gods as stated in *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 24.

The *Kathrudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 43 describes how Maya was created by the Supreme Being and how it is kept under tight leash by him.

Sage Veda Vyas’ *Adhyatma Ramayan*, in its Lanka Kanda, canto 14, verse no.28-29 describes the relationship between Maya and Brahm, albeit in the context of Lord Ram.

The mysterious net of delusions that keeps the creature trapped in its snare is called Maya Jaal. The word ‘Maya’ briefly means delusions and ignorance, and ‘Jaal’ means a net, a web, a snare, a trap, a magical spell’.

The *Tejobindu Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 5, verse no. 33 describes this Maya Jaal.

The *Tripadvibhut Maha-Naryan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 3, paragraph no. 16 cites a very fine illustration to explain how ‘Maha Maya’ or the Great Delusion affects Brahm.

The fact that Maya is under the overall control of Ishwar, the Lord of creation, inspite of being all-powerful has been emphasized in the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 4, paragraph no. 10.]

65. [Verse nos. 65-67 describe the greatness and effectiveness of the worship instrument of Lord Ram.]

This Lord Ram’s Talisman Yantra or a magical charm instrument/apparatus is worthy of worship by all as it is a representative of all the senior and chief Gods, because all of them are represented by their respective Beej Mantras in this Yantra. [These Beej Mantras are the ‘seed or root letters’ that are like a unique formula specific to each God. By worshipping this single instrument, all the Gods are deemed to be worshipped, along with the chief deity, Lord Ram.]

It has been preached and prescribed by ancient erudite sages and seers, and worshipped (used) by other great sages and seers who followed their example.

It bestows emancipation and salvation, a long life, and a healthy and disease free body to the spiritual seeker/aspirant (65).

66. Not only this, this Mantra also bestows sons to those who don't have one (and wish to have a son). What more can be said about this Mantra than the fact that by using it a man can attain/accomplish everything very soon. By taking its refuge (i.e. using it as a means to achieve one's aims), a seeker/aspirant can acquire glories and fame that accompany successful accomplishment of Dharma (acquire the great virtues of goodness, noble thoughts, virtuousness, auspiciousness and righteousness), Gyan (the virtues of wisdom, enlightenment, erudition and truthful knowledge about the reality), Vairagya (the virtues of renunciation, detachment and dispassion) and Aishwarya (the virtues of fame, glory, renown, majesty, powers, honour and respect) in this world (66).

67. This Talisman Yantra (or the magical instrument) used for worship of Lord Ram, along with its various esoteric Beej Mantras and the mystical methods employed for its use, are a closely guarded secret (i.e. it is not accessible to a layman or an uninitiated person). Without proper guidance, even the most erudite and intelligent person cannot understand or use it.

Worldly people (i.e. those who are engrossed in pursuing this materialistic world and remain entangled in it) are not worthy (entitled) to be instructed on its construction, use and potential powers. [This is because they won't believe in its potentials and mystical powers, and become skeptical instead. They would deride and ridicule it as part of some occult practice associated with a black-magic ritual which is devoid of sense. Besides it, these instruments are as dangerous as they are beneficial even as any student of science knows that wrong chemicals mixed in a chemistry lab might prove to be most hazardous, if not fatal. So, any misstep or other error committed even inadvertently might result in potential backfiring of the powers and effects of the Talisman instrument, causing more harm than good to the worshipper. That is why it is described as a secret knowledge that is inaccessible to all and sundry, and should not be used without proper guidance. This instrument is like a highly developed and complex scientific instrument or a technical gadget that should not be fooled around with. Its operation and mechanics should be learnt under expert guidance, and then it should be properly used. If due diligence is not exercised in its use and operation, and if the operator is not fully aware of its intricate design and well-versed in emergency trouble-shooting, then the same instrument or gadget would either be useless or cause havoc for the user.] (66).

[Note—(a) There is an Upanishad called 'Akshamaliko-panishad' belonging to the Rig Veda tradition that elucidates in great detail about the symbolism of the various alphabets and syllables as well as their consecration in the beads used as a prayer rosary. A reading of this Upanishad would show that each letter of the alphabet has a specific power, and when all of them are established in the beads of the prayer rosary, the latter acquires stunning powers and potentials of super-natural dimensions. This Upanishad is included in this author's anthology of Rig Veda Upanishads.]

Thus ends Canto 4 of Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 1—Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad

Canto 5

[The details of Lord Ram's worship using the 'Yantra' is being described in this Canto.]

1. The worshipper should first worship the honourable deities at the gate¹ of the place where the worship instrument is kept for formal worship. In practice it means that the deities are offered worship at the symbolic gates marked on the four sides (north, east, south and west) of the Bhupur Yantra. [For the Bhupur, please refer Canto 4, verse nos. 52-56.]

Then the worshipper should sit comfortably with a cheerful mind in the 'Padmaasan' posture². [This is the Lotus posture of sitting while doing rituals or meditation.]

To begin with, 'Bhut Shuddhi' is to be done—literally meaning 'cleaning of the elements'³. This implies that the five basic elements called 'Bhuts' (i.e. earth, water, fire, wind and space), which together constitute the body of the worshipper, should be symbolically purified so that it (the body) becomes fit and ready to worship the Lord. In terms of metaphysics, it implies the merger of all the five elements of Nature with the supreme Brahm from where they had emerged so as to establish oneness between the individual creature (i.e. the worshipper) and the Supreme Being who is being worshipped. [After all, the main object of worship of the Lord is to obtain Mukti, or spiritual liberation and deliverance of the worshipper, and this objective is made possible only when the five independent elements are thoroughly cleansed of their worldly taints and other negativities that act as spiritual drags and unnecessary encumbrances for them.]

Then the 'Ram Yantra' (worship instrument) should be consecrated and infused with divine mystical powers so as to activate all the dynamism inherent in the various Beej Mantras of various Gods representing the different forces of creation which are used to construct the Yantra. Thus, the worship instrument is energized and empowered with dynamic mystical powers when it is properly consecrated and activated. This process is known as 'Pran Pratistha'⁴—literally meaning 'establishing of life and injecting of vitality, vigour, strength and mystical powers in the instrument'.

This is done along with the ritual called 'Maatrikaa Nyas'⁵.

It should be carefully noted that the concerned Gods should be worshipped in all the four sides of the seat or dais where the 'Ram Yantra' (instrument) is being worshipped—i.e. in the front, behind, the sides etc.

The eight-petal Lotus that is marked in the central part of the Yantra is also worshipped simultaneously. [The eight petal Lotus is described in Canto 4, verse no. 44-46.] (1).

[Note—¹The *Dwar Pooja* is to be done when a worshipper embarks upon the formal form of worship of the Pooja Yantra or worship instrument that is placed on the altar in the center of the pavilion constructed for such worship rituals. It also indicates the offering of worship to the deities who are invoked for the purpose of affording their protection to the ritual and ensuring its completion without any hindrance. This process of Gate-Worship called the 'Dwar-Pooja' is as follows—the seeker/aspirant/worshipper should finish his ritualistic purification bath, wear clean clothes and garlands, and then he should silently and with due devotion enter the pavilion for worship of 'Ram Yantra' through the gate. There he should sip some water and keep offerings ready for worship. Then the Mantra-sanctified water should be symbolically poured (i.e. a few spoons should be sprinkled) on the gates. The

horizontal lintel at the top of the gate should be made up of the 'wild fig tree' called Gular (*ficus glomerata*).

The Mantras that are to be used to invoke the blessings of these four divine entities are also mentioned in verse no. 3. This verse says that the name of these four deities are used in the fourth case of the Sanskrit grammar, and to it is then prefixed by their unique Beej Mantra and suffixed by the word 'Namaha' to signify that the worshipper is respectfully bowing before the concerned deity as a mark of great respect. To make the Mantra complete, give it proper sanctity and infuse divine powers in it, the Beej Mantra for Brahm, which is OM, is prefixed to the Mantra. It is to be noted that the Beej Mantra of any God is made by using the first alphabet of the concerned God's name, and adding a 'dot' on its top. This 'dot' in the Sanskrit language is equivalent to the sound 'm' as in mum, or sometimes also pronounced as 'n' followed by a silent 'g' as in rung.

The Beej Mantra thus formed of these four deities are the following—for Vighesh it is 'Vim/Vin(g)', for Durga it is 'Dum/Dun(g)', for Vaani (representing Goddess Saraswati) it is 'Vaam/Vaan(g)', and for Kehatrapaal it is 'Ksham/Kshan(g)'. When the Beej Mantra 'OM' standing for Brahm is added as a prefix to these unique Beej Mantras of these four deities, and then to it is added their names, followed by the word for submission and bowing, which is Namaha, we have the following four Mantras—

(i) For Lord Vignesh it is 'OM Vim/ng Vighanaaya Namaha' (ॐ विं विघ्नाय नमः) which means 'Salutations to the supreme Brahm (or OM Salutations)! I bow most reverentially before Lord Vignesh and seek his blessings.'

(ii) For Kshetrapaal it is 'OM Kshem/ng Kshetrapaalaaya Namaha' (ॐ क्षं क्षेत्रपालाय नमः) which means 'Salutations to the supreme Brahm (or OM Salutations)! I bow most reverentially before the Kshetrapaal and seek his blessings.'

(iii) For Goddess Durga it is 'OM Dum/ng Durgaaya Namaha' (ॐ दुं दुर्गाय नमः) which means 'Salutations to the supreme Brahm (or OM Salutations)! I bow most reverentially before Goddess Durga and seek her blessings.'

And (iv) for Vaani it is 'OM Vaam/ng Vaanyea Namaha' (ॐ वां वाण्यै नमः) which means 'Salutations to the supreme Brahm (or OM Salutations)! I bow most reverentially before Vaani (as a personification or revelation of Goddess Saraswati), and seek its blessings.'

These four Mantras are used to worship and invoke the blessings of their respective deities in the following manner—Lord Vignesh (Ganesh) is worshipped on the right side of the gate and the Kshetrapaals on the left of the gate. On the top of the gate, i.e. in the lintel, Goddesses Durga and Saraswati are worshipped with their respective Mantras.

The holy river Ganges should be worshipped next to Lord Vighna in the right side of the gate, while the river Yamuna should be worshipped next to the Kshetrapaal in the east side of the gate with flowers and water offerings.

Then on the steps of the gate or on the threshold, the weapons should be worshipped with the Mantra 'Astraaye Phat' (अस्त्राय फट्). [Astra = weapon; Phat = one that pierces, ruptures, tears apart.]

The process should be repeated on all the four gates/doorways of the pavilion.

It ought to be noted carefully here that these 'gates' provide access to the altar where the worship Yantra is placed.

²The posture for sitting in the *Padmasan* (literally, like a lotus; the word Padma means a lotus) is described in the Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 39. To sit cross-legged so that the upper part of the feet (i.e. the opposite side of the sole) along with the toes of one leg is placed on the thigh of the opposite leg (i.e. left toes on the right thigh, and right toes on the left thigh), is called Padmasan. [The soles would be pointing outwards while resting on the thighs and the body would be held erect—i.e. the spine, neck and head would be

in a straight line. The hands, with palms facing upwards and resting one on the top of the other, are placed on the folded legs in front of and below the navel. The chin is drawn in and held tightly near the base of the Adam's apple at the pit of the throat. This sitting posture is said to dispel/ameliorate all diseases and counter or antidote all poisons. That is, this sitting posture is very beneficial for the body]

According to the Yog Kundalini Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 1, verse no. 5, the Padmasan is basically to sit in an erect position, cross-legged, so that the sole of one foot rests, facing upwards, on the thigh of the opposite leg. This posture of meditation helps one to overcome all sins and their evil affects.

³The *Bhut Suddhi* is the formal purification of the five Bhuts (the fundamental elements in creation). It essentially consists of imagining that the body consists of the five basic elements, viz. earth, water, fire/energy, air/wind, and space/sky, and then first merging them all, one by one, into one single entity, and finally into super consciousness which is synonymous with the supreme transcendental Brahm. This process purifies the body as it does away with its grossness and transforms it into an entity that assumes subtlety associated with the pure consciousness.

The process is as follows—(a) Imagine that the body from the toe to the knees consist of the 'earth element', is square in shape, has the mark of the Vajra (goad), and is yellow in colour. It is marked by the seed/root syllable or Beej Mantra 'lum/n(g)' (लृं). (b) The part of the body from the knees to the navel consist of the 'water' element, is shaped like a crescent moon, has the mark of the lotus, and is white coloured. It is marked by the seed/root syllable or Beej Mantra 'wum/n(g)' (वृं). (c) The part of the body from the navel till the throat (Adam's apple) consists of the 'fire' element which is triangular in shape, has the sign of 'Swastika' (ॐ), and is red coloured. It is marked by the seed/root syllable or Beej Mantra 'rum/n(g)' (रृं). (e) The part of the body from the throat till the root of the nose and the middle of the eyebrows consists of the 'wind' element, is hexagonal in shape, dark in colour, and has 6 dots outlining the six points of the hexagon. It is marked by the seed/root syllable or Beej Mantra 'yum/n(g)' (यृं). (f) The part of the body from the root of the nose to the centre of the skull is the 'space/sky' element, is circular in shape, its colour is grey like smoke/fog, and it is marked by a flag/standard. The seed/root syllable or Beej Mantra 'hum/n(g)' (हृं) is marked in it.

All these five elements should be merged with one another in a sequential form, beginning from the earth at the bottom of the body and going right up to the cranium where the sky element is located. In other words, the earth is made to submerge its self into the water element, the water into the fire element, the fire into the wind element, the wind into the sky or space element, and finally the sky/space element is freed from its confinement inside the skull to assume its original form as the vast, infinite, measureless and endless cosmos called the Prakriti or Nature in its macrocosmic dimensions. This Nature is without any specific attributes and is all-pervading and all-encompassing.

This Prakriti is also known as Maya which is the delusion-creating powers of Brahm, the supreme Consciousness. So, in the final step of purification, it is obligatory to remove this Maya altogether as it is the primary cause of the erroneous notion that the pure consciousness that is the true 'self of all living beings is the gross body consisting of elements of varying degrees of grossness, and that this body lives in a world which also consists of elements in varying degrees of grossness. Therefore, truthful cleansing would be a thorough rinsing of the inner-self so that all forms of delusions and misconception are removed.

When both the Maya (delusions and their attendant misconceptions and hallucinations) and the Prakriti (a person's natural habits, inclinations and temperaments) are eliminated, the worshipper is freed from all of their tainting affects. This results in his ability to relate himself with his truthful and immaculate form as the 'pure consciousness' rather than the gross body as well as the gross world

consisting of the five elements in their varying degrees of grossness. In other words, the 'self' of the individual merges with the 'cosmic Self' or the cosmic Consciousness of creation known as Brahm. This is complete cleansing of the worshipper as it is only possible when all Maya and its negative affects are done away with. Mere physical washing of the gross body by taking ritualistic baths in rivers that are visibly polluted or by any other means can never truly clean the soul sufficiently enough so that it is prepared to receive the guest-of-honour in the form of Brahm, the Supreme Being!

In this way, the seeker/aspirant/worshipper should meditate for some time and imagine that he has merged himself, i.e. his Atma or soul, with the supreme Soul called the Parmatma so as to become inseparable from the latter. This Parmatma is not one but the cosmic Consciousness known as the supreme Brahm.

Then, after recovering from deep concentration and meditative trance, he should imagine that his body is being recreated from that supreme Brahm by following the reverse sequence of events. This newly created body will have been purged in a symbolic way of all the sins and faults which were present in the worshipper's earlier body. Theoretically, it is like taking a new birth with a detoxified and purified body. The worshipper becomes a different person from his earlier self, and he then becomes eligible to worship Lord Ram using the divine Ram Yantra. The reverse sequence of events is as follows—the supreme soul—the world/Maya—space/sky—wind/fire—water—earth. Hence, the body has been purged and catheterized of all earlier impurities, and has now become worthy to worship the Lord who is immaculate, holy and divine.

The all-pervading, omniscient, omnipotent, attribute-less, almighty, all-encompassing and auspicious supreme Soul is present as the seeker's or worshipper's Atma in his own body. This process is deemed to be the best way for the symbolic purification of body that is needed to offer worship to the Supreme Being who cannot be approached with a polluted and dirty self.

The importance to thoroughly cleanse oneself before approaching the Lord is simple to understand even in the modern context—can anyone ever imagine that he would present himself in the royal court of a king, or in the front of the president of a sovereign country while he is dirty, stinking, shabbily dressed and in a general unkempt condition?

Another way of doing Bhut Shuddhi is as follows—The worshipper meditates upon his subtle heart as being in the form of a blooming lotus flower which has attained its maturity by being nourished and aided by the ethereal Mantra 'OM' representing Pranav or the supreme Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness.

Dharma (the virtues of righteousness, probity, propriety and nobility) is its metaphoric root, and Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment) is its stem. Vairagya (the grand virtue of renunciation and dispassion towards this material world and its charms) is its symbolic thallus.

The eight petals of this divine Lotus are represented by the eight Siddhis or mystical achievements that bestow the worshipper with supernatural powers. [These eight Siddhis are Anima, Garima, Praapti, Laghima, Mahima, Parakramaya, Ishwatya and Vashitwa. Refer note of verse no. 8 of Canto 4.]

The Atma or soul (the pure consciousness) dwells in the center of this divine Lotus. This Atma is self-illuminated and incandescent. It effuses a glorious light like the filament of the lighted lamp. Meditating and contemplating upon the Atma in the aforesaid manner, the spiritual aspirant should pull up the Pran, the vital winds and the life consciousness, from the lower ends of the body, up through the Sushmuna Naadi (the central nerve passing through the spinal cord) and upto the point of the Brahm randhra, which is a hair-like slit on the skull (cranium). At this point of time, the worshipper experiences supreme ecstasy and bliss that are the hallmark of Brahm. He feels oneness with the supreme Consciousness. He then realises the truth of the statement 'So-a-ham'—'that essence is I/me'.

This is the method of Yoga whereby a union between the individual and the cosmic Consciousness is established by eliminating the grossness of the various Bhuts that come in the way of this union. It is, in other words, cleansing of the soul from the tainting effects of the various Bhuts.

The worshipper visualizes that all the accumulated sins and misdeeds of all his previous lives have assumed the form of a Purush or a man with a gross body. Killing of a Brahmin is the head of this imaginary man, stealing of gold or anything else are his two arms, drinking wine and getting intoxicated is his heart, having extra-marital affairs, especially with his teacher's wife, is this man's hips and genitals, association with all sorts of sins and misdemeanors are his two legs, and all the rest of the sins and misdeeds, small and big, are like the hairs on the body of this man who is sin personified. This imaginary man has red coloured eyes, beard and hair. The complexion of his body is dark or black. He holds a sword and a shield in his hands.

The worshipper should imagine that such a fearful man who is an image of horrendous sins is present inside his own body in the right side of his abdomen. By employing various techniques of Yoga, such as doing Pranayam (breath control exercises) complete with its three phases of Kumbhak, Rechak and Purak aided by meditating upon the Beej Mantras of the wind element (which is 'Yam/Yang'), he should imagine that this sinful image of the man is being dehydrated with the internal heat generated by Yoga, and gradually becomes emaciated, dried and withered.

Then this dried-up body of the sinful man should be burnt and reduced to ashes by meditating upon the fire element and symbolically igniting it by using its Beej Mantra—which is 'Raam or Rung'.

Then the aspirant must imagine that the ash formed from the burnt-out body of the erst-while sinful man who was present inside him has been ejected out of his present body through the navel.

Then the aspirant should wash himself with clean water to clean the present body after the earlier corrupt body has been symbolically cremated and got rid of in the manner described above. This bathing is symbolically done by invoking and meditating upon the Beej Mantra 'Vam/Vang' for the water element.

In other words, after having performed the last rites of his ancestral body which was a personification of all his past sins, the spiritual aspirant takes a dip in the water to clean himself. This dipping is done not physically but in a symbolic manner by meditating upon the Beej Mantra of the water element.

When this symbolic bathing by taking a dip in the holy river or any other water body is complete, he steps back on the dry ground. In other words, he re-emerges in this world with a purified and sanctified body which is rid of all his past sins. This cleansed body is now ready to worship the Supreme Lord. From the metaphysical perspective, the cleaned worshipper is like a Hans—the Swan who lives in a lake or a pond which may be dirty but which does not affect the Swan which remains eternally clean so much so that it can pick up clean water from the polluted water in which it might be forced to live due to circumstances beyond its control. The Swan is also believed to be so wise and choosy that it can pick up pearls in an assortment of gems, and drink pure milk leaving behind adulterants added to it.

⁴The process of *Pran Pratistha* (consecration) means assigning the 'Ram Yantra' with divine mystical powers and infusing it with life, energy, vigour, vitality, strength, dynamism and potentials of an astounding proportions. Once accomplished successfully, the Yantra does not remain merely a diagram or geometrical matrix but assumes mysterious powers that help the worshipper to accomplish stupendous feats that would be normally impossible. It is like the numerous instruments or apparatuses in modern science, medicine and engineering that has helped man to perform astounding tasks and achieve magical feats that would be impossible to accomplish without the help of these aids.

The 'Pran Pratistha' involves an elaborate ritual using complicated religious process using various Mantras etc. The worshipper should place his hands on the

Ram Yantra or the idol of the Lord and pronounce specified Mantras for the purpose while imagining that the Yantra or the idol is being infused or injected with dynamism, energy and vitality, and thereby becoming alive and activated. It is similar to the case of switching on the electric current to make the electrical gadget activated and perform astounding tasks. Elaborate machines and computers would fail to deliver if not properly circuited and powered by the electric current. Even a minor fault would bring it to a grinding halt. The case with the Yantra is exactly the same—even a slight deviation from the prescribed method would render it useless, and it is this carelessness that has made them useless in modern times. Since their effectiveness depends on a host of spiritual requirements along with diligent and careful invocation of complicated Mantras which a man is not able to comply with today, he ridicules these Yantras as being a part of black-magic or sorcery rituals.

⁵The word ‘Maatrikaa’ literally means ‘the little mothers’, and they represent the cosmic Shakti or the dynamic but subtle powers of the deity to which a given Mantra pertains. This Shakti of the deity is present in its Beej Mantra. It is like the case of each element of the Periodic Table having its unique atomic number, and each atom having a particular number of electrons. The word ‘Nyas’ means ‘to establish, to place, to empower, to repose, to entrust’.

Hence, *Maatrika Nyas* is to empower the Bhupur Yantra as well as the worshipper’s own body with divine Shakti that is inherent in the various Beej Mantras of various Gods and Goddesses that are used in the construction of the worship instrument.

The Maatrika Nyas is to establish the mystical powers and dynamic energy of the various Gods and Goddesses by invoking their Shakti that is inherent in the Beej Mantras dedicated to them.

Since the cosmic energy and dynamism of the supreme Brahm is said to be revealed in the form of ‘Shakti’ conceptualized in a female form, the phrase ‘Maatrikaa Nyas’ therefore refers to the posting of the stupendous powers and dynamic energy of the supreme Brahm on the Bhupur Yantra so as to activate it and make it energized and empowered with the same Shakti, the same dynamism, energy, vitality, strength and powers of the supreme Brahm, that are delegated to the various Gods by the Supreme Being.]

2. Having completed the worship of the deities present at the Gate, the worshipper should now enter the pavilion and worship the chief priest or his Guru (moral preceptor) with the firm belief that the latter represents the chief deity to whom the worship is to be offered. [This chief deity in the present case is Lord Ram.]

The chief priest or Guru is seated in the front of and below the raised platform or the altar where the worship Yantra for Lord Ram is placed. The worshipper should keep his attention focused on Lord Ram while he worships the priest or Guru. He should imagine that the Lord is sitting on an elegant gem-studded high throne which has a soft silken seat.

Then he should visualize that the throne of Lord Ram is supported from the bottom by the following four divine powers to whom the worshipper offers his oblations and worship—viz. (i) Shakti (the personified form of the cosmic energy and dynamism of the Supreme Being that is responsible for sustenance of this world), (ii) Kurma (the legendary Tortoise which held the Mandrachal Mountain and the earth on its back to prevent them from sinking into the nether world during the legendary churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons), (iii) Naag (the legendary serpent called the Seshnath who is said to hold the earth on its hood), and (iv) Prithivi (earth) itself personified as a divine Goddess holding a blue Lotus (2).

[Note—¹The *Shakti* is to be worshipped in the form of a Goddess. She holds two lotus flowers in her two hands.

Lord *Kurma* is present on the shoulder or head of this Shakti. He is of a blue complexion.

Lord *Seshnath* is present on the back of Kurma (Tortoise) which is like a celestial rock. His body is like a white Lily flower.

Seshnath holds the Mother *Earth* on his hood. She is in the form of a Goddess whose complexion is dark like catechu tree (*Xanthocymus epictorius*). She holds a blue lotus flower in her hands, and the surging blue ocean with its pulsating waves is like the beautiful waist-band around her hips.

In the center of this Earth is a gem-encrusted island upon which there is a jewel-studded throne.

This is how the throne of Lord Ram is supported from below.

There is another version of how the throne of the Lord is held aloft by these four divine entities. Each of the four legs or pedestals of the throne is held from below by one of these four entities. Therefore they are placed on the four corners—the north-east, the south-east, the south-west and the north-west corners of the dais where the Lord is established.

The Mantras that are used for worship are the following—

(i) Mantra for the Goddess Shakti, which supports the creation and acts as the fundamental energy and strength which lends vitality and validity to it, is—‘Aadhaar Shakti Namaha’ (आधार शक्ति नमः). It means ‘I bow reverentially to Goddess Shakti who is the base that forms the foundation that holds aloft everything in this creation.’

(ii) Mantra for the legendary tortoise called Kurma, which is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu to support the earth as well as the Mountain called Mandrachal which began to sink into the nether world at the time of the churning of the ocean, is—‘Kurmaaye Namaha’ (कूर्माय नमः). It means ‘I bow reverentially to Lord Kurma.’

(iii) Mantra for the legendary serpent called Sheshnath, who supports the earth on its hoods and upon whose coiled body Lord Vishnu rests in the celestial ocean of milk called the Kshir Sagar, is—‘Sheshaaye Namaha’ (शेषाय नमः). It means ‘I bow reverentially to Lord Sheshnath.’

And (iv) the Mantra for Goddess Earth who holds the divine Lotus held in her hands is ‘Kamalaaye Namaha’ (कमलाय नमः). It means ‘I bow reverentially to Goddess who holds the Kamal or Lotus.’]

3. Vighna (i.e. Lord Ganesh, who is invoked to remove all hurdles and help in successful completion of the worship as well as accomplishment of desired results), Durga (the Mother Goddess), Kshetrapals (the custodians of the various areas of the world) and Vaani (the faculty of speech personified as Goddess Saraswati)—these four divine entities should be worshipped at the four corners of the Ram Yantra platform (i.e. at the door-steps that lead up to the main platform) by invoking their respective names in the fourth case of Sanskrit grammar called the ‘Chaturtha Vibhakti’, and then prefixed by their respective Beej Mantras and suffixed by the word Namaha for bowing before them as a token of respect and submission¹.

The next step is to worship a personified form of the four great rewards that are expected to be gained or great achievements that are expected to be attained by a worshiper by successfully completing the formal process of worship of the Yantra and its chief deity, which in this case is Lord Ram. [This is a symbolic way of reminding the worshipper or educating him about the great benefits that await him for his efforts and diligence.] This worship is done at the four legs or pedestals located at the four corners of the platform or dais where the worship Yantra of Lord Ram is installed. These four corners are the the south-east, south-west, north-west and north-east corners.

The four great achievements or rewards, and the leg or pedestal where they are symbolically honoured are the following—(a) the virtue of Dharma (i.e. access to the virtues of righteousness, noble thought and conduct, goodness, propriety, probity) is worshipped at the leg or pedestal that lies in the south-east corner of the platform, (b) the virtue of Artha (i.e. prosperity, wealth, material well-being) is worshipped at the leg or pedestal that lies in the south-west corner, (c) the virtue of Kaam (i.e. fulfillment of all desires, wishes, yearnings and worldly expectations that satisfy one's passions for enjoyment of this world) is worshipped at the leg or pedestal that lies in the north-west corner, and (d) the virtue of Moksha (i.e. spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) is worshipped at the leg or pedestal that lies in the north-east corner of the platform².

Similarly, the 'opposites of the above four fruits' (like the Christ and the anti-Christ) are worshipped in the four sides— (a) anti-Dharma or 'Adharma' is worshipped in the eastern direction, (b) anti-Artha or 'Anartha' is worshipped in the southern direction, (c) anti-Kaam or 'Akaam' is worshipped in the western direction, and (d) anti-Moksha or 'Amoksha' is worshipped in the northern direction³ (3).

[Note—¹The Mantras, how they are constructed, and their basic meaning have been described in detail in note no. 1 of verse no. 1 of this Canto 5. The four Mantras are as follows—(a) Lord Vighna on the right side by the Mantra 'OM Vim/n(g) Vighnaaye Namaha' (ॐ विं विघ्नाय नमः), (b) Kshetrapals on the left with the Mantra 'OM Kshum/n(g) Kshetrapaalaaye Namaha' (ॐ क्षं क्षेत्रपालाय नमः), (c) Durga on the lintel or top of the doorway by the Mantra 'OM Dum/n(g) Durgaaye Namaha' (ॐ दुं दुर्गाय नमः), and (d) Vaani by the side of Durga with the Mantra 'OM Vang Vaanye Namaha' (ॐ वां वाण्यै नमः).

²These four—Dharma, Artha, Kaam and Moksha—are called the great fruits or rewards symbolic of a successful life. They are represented by the bull, the lion, the ghost and the elephant respectively. Their colours are respectively red, black, yellow and blue. These should be imagined as being the shape of the four legs or pedestals of the platform. The symbolism is very obvious here—the sincere worship of the supreme Lord Ram bestows the aspirant with all these glories along with the majesty and magnificence that are naturally associated with them.

As in the previous case, the ritual of worshipping would involve the invocation of the respective Mantras of these four rewards which are imagined in the form of personified deities. Following the general guidance laid out for construction of any deity's Mantra, the four Mantras of these four rewards would be as follows—

(i) OM Dham/n(g) Dharmaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to Dharma and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.'

(ii) OM Am/n(g) Arthaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to Artha and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.'

(iii) OM Kaamam/n(g) Kaamaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to Kaam and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.'

And (iv) OM Mom/n(g) Mokshaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to Moksha and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.'

These four great rewards are visualized as four Kalpa Trees which are the ever-green trees of heaven that can give any kind of fruits wished by the worshipper.

³The opposite factors to those mentioned above are also worshipped or shown due respect so as to ensure that their patron-Gods are kept in good humour, and they do not create unnecessary hindrance and mischief for the aspirant. It is often seen that evil ones create unwarranted troubles if their extortionist demands are not met. This is

the reason why 'Adharma' which is the opposite of the virtues of Dharma and which implies un-righteousness, improper conduct, ignoble thoughts and reproachable behaviour etc., 'Anartha' which is the opposite of Artha and means adversities, ruin and misfortunes, 'Akaam' which is the opposite of Kaam and implies failures, frustrations and non-fulfillment of one's desires, and 'Amoksha' which is the opposite of Moksha and indicates remaining bonded or shackled to this material world and the gross body, and an inability to find freedom from their seemingly unbreakable fetters are also worshipped along with Dharma, Artha, Kaam and Moksha.

Like the above Mantras for positive virtues, the ones for these negative and opposing virtues will also be constructed on the same basic principle as follows—

(i) OM A-dham/n(g) A-dharmaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to A-dharma and request the latter to bless me and be kind towards me so as not to cause hindrance in my successfully acquiring the virtues defined as Dharma.'

(ii) OM A-am/n(g) A-narthaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to An-artha and request the latter to bless me and be kind towards me so as not to cause hindrance in my success and good fortunes.'

(iii) OM A-kaamam/n(g) A-kaamaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to A-kaama and request the latter to bless me and be kind towards me so as not to cause hindrance in my successfully accomplishing my objectives.'

And (iv) OM A-mom/n(g) A-mokshaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to A-moksha and request the latter to bless me and be kind towards me so as not to cause hindrance in my spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.')

4. The process of worship of the 'Ram Yantra' should be commenced from the circular figure in the center of the Bhupur Ram Yantra.

To begin with, in the central part of the instrument, the Sun, the Moon and the Fire (Agni) must be worshipped using their seed/root syllables or Beej Mantras as is done traditionally by wise and erudite worshippers¹.

The three consecutive rings or circles drawn in the central part of the Bhupur Yantra (refer Canto 4, verse no. 44) are to be worshipped as symbolic forms of the three qualities of Sata, Raja and Tama that encircle the creature and the rest of the creation from all sides, and it is of paramount importance for the worshipper to break free from their fetters so as to find Moksha (which is the best form of the four great rewards mentioned in verse no. 3 above)² (4).

[Note—¹The Mantras for the worship of these three deities would be as follows—

(i) OM Sum/n(g) Suryaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to the Sun God and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.'

(ii) OM Cham/n(g) Chandraaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to the Moon God and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.'

(iii) OM Am/n(g) Agnaaye Namaha' (meaning—OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to the Fire God and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.'

²A brief description of these three Gunas is given in verse no. 2 of Canto 2 of this Upanishad. Their respective Mantras for worship are as follows—

(i) For Sata Guna it is 'OM Sum/n(g) Sattwaaye Namaha' (ॐ सं सत्त्वाय नमः). It briefly means 'OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most

respectfully to the Sata Guna, and request the latter to bless me with its characteristic glories and virtues.’

(ii) For Raja Guna it is ‘OM Rum/n(g) Rajase Namaha’ (ॐ रं रजसे नमः). It briefly means ‘OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to the Raja Guna, and request the latter to be kind on me.’

(iii) For Tama Guna it is ‘OM Tum/n(g) Tamase Namaha’ (ॐ तं तमसे नमः). It briefly means ‘OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! I bow most respectfully to the Tama Guna, and request the latter to kindly leave me alone or excuse me.’]

5. After that, the following eight divine entities are worshipped in their personified form in a symbolic manner on the eight petals of the central 8-petalled lotus of the Bhupur Yantra. [Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 44-46.]

First, the petals on the four angles or corners and their relevant deities are worshipped and honoured, followed by those in the four cardinal points or directions. The worshipping is done in a clockwise manner, starting first with the petals that point to the four corners or angles, followed by those petals that point to the four directions.

Thus, we have the following course of worship—

(A) Worship of the lotus petals in the four corners—(i) Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and the true ‘self’ of the worshipper is honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the south-east corner; (ii) Antar-atma or the worshipper’s inner-self and his sub-conscious is honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the south-west corner; (iii) Parmatma or the supreme Soul of creation, also known as Supreme Being, is honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the north-west corner; and (iv) Gyan-Atma or that aspect of the supreme Consciousness that is eternally wise and enlightened, which never comes under the influence of delusions and ignorance, honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the north-east corner¹.

(B) Worship of the lotus petals in the four directions—(i) The Maya-tattwa (माया तत्त्व—i.e. the basic elements that characterize and define Maya, or the numerous delusions, misconceptions and entanglements that exist in this creation and are fostered by ignorance) is honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the eastern direction; (ii) the Vidya-tattwa (विद्या तत्त्व—i.e. the fundamental principles, basic doctrines and essential virtues of wisdom, knowledge, erudition, sagacity, learning and enlightenment etc. that can help one to overcome Maya and Agyan) is honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the southern direction; (iii) the Kalaa-tattwa (कला तत्त्व—i.e. the essential qualities in all the living beings that determine their individual personality and character; also meaning the various art, skill, craft etc. that exist in creation, as well as the basic fact that the world is ever-changing and no two things or instances are alike) is honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the western direction; and (iv) the Para-tattwa (पर तत्त्व—i.e. the supreme, absolute, essential, constant and universal Truth and Reality that refers to Brahm, the universal Consciousness) is honoured and worshipped on the lotus petal pointing towards the northern direction² (5).

[Note—¹Their respective Mantras are—(i) OM Atamane Namaha (ॐ आत्मने नमः) meaning ‘OM Salutations to the Atma before which I bow most reverentially’, (ii) OM Antaraatmane Namaha (ॐ अन्तरात्मने नमः) meaning ‘OM Salutations to the Antar-atma before which I bow most reverentially’, (iii) OM Parmaatmane Namaha (ॐ परमात्मने नमः) meaning ‘OM Salutations to the Parmatma before whom I bow most

reverentially', and (iv) OM Gyaanaatmaane Namaha (ॐ ज्ञानात्मने नमः) meaning 'OM Salutations to the Atma which is an embodiment of the virtues of Gyan—i.e. which is wise, enlightened, knowledgeable and learned. I bow most reverentially before it'.

²Their respective Mantras are—(i) OM Maya-tattwa Namaha (ॐ माया तत्त्व नमः) meaning 'OM Salutations! I bow before the fundamental delusions called Maya (that is created by Brahm)'; (ii) OM Vidya-tattwa Namaha (ॐ विद्या तत्त्व नमः) meaning 'OM Salutations! I bow before the grand virtues of wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment which are collectively called Vidya'; (iii) OM Kalaa-tattwa Namaha (ॐ कला तत्त्व नमः) meaning 'OM Salutations! I bow before the various skills, arts and crafts that exist in creation as well as the magical nature of this creation to change every moment'; and (iv) OM Par-tattwaaye Namaha (ॐ पर तत्त्वाय नमः) meaning 'OM Salutations! I bow before the supreme Tattwa or the great Principal and Authority of creation (which is the supreme transcendental Brahm)'. It is called 'Para Tattwa' as it transcends all known definitions and criterions, and is beyond comprehension and grasp of knowledge; it is the epicenter and progenitor of all essential Tattwas in creation.

As is the case with all the entities to which worship is being offered in this Yantra, the above eight are also honoured in a symbolic manner.]

6. The next step in the process of worship involves the honouring of and offering of worship to the various Shaktis such as Vimla etc.¹ [These 'Shaktis' are the various divine cosmic dynamic powers of the Supreme Being that have revealed themselves in the form of various Goddesses who are actually personifications of the various forces of Nature.]

Then the chief deity to whom worship is to be offered and for whom this Bhupur Yantra is meant and dedicated to is invited, honoured and worshipped². In the present case this deity is obviously Lord Ram. The whole divine body of the chief deity, which is Lord Ram in this case, is washed with clean sanctified water in a symbolic manner by sprinkling water on the Yantra as well as on the various parts of the worshipper's body itself. [This gesture implies that the Lord is invited to take his seat on the formal worship instrument as well as on the body of the devotee. This is done to make the worshipper enlightened about the fact that he is no longer an ordinary man but an honoured one who has sanctified himself by accepting the supreme Lord and inviting him to be enshrined in his own body. In other words, this gesture is intended to tell him that the shrine of the Lord is no where in the outside world but in his own body. The Lord is to be honoured and worshipped inside his own self and no where else—in fact, this is what is meant by the Maha Vakya (the great saying of the Vedas) 'So-a-ham'—i.e. that essence, that Supreme Being is none but me or I'. This eclectic realisation is the culmination of all spiritual endeavors and the truest form of Mukti when one is freed from the fetters of ignorance and its accompanying delusions.]

Besides this, the purpose of sprinkling clean water simultaneously on the instrument, where the Lord is invited to take his exalted seat, as well as the body of the worshipper is to indicate that only those who have thoroughly purified themselves and made their bodies as holy as the worship altar are the ones who are eligible to offer worship to the Lord. This process warns the worshipper to be on his guard, and be careful about what he thinks and does once he has decided to worship the Lord.]

After that, the various Lokpals and Dikpals such as Dhristi etc.³ are worshipped along with their weapons⁴. [Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 38-39.] (6).

[Note—¹The Shaktis in the form of Goddesses are as follows—Vimlaa, Utkarshini, Gyaanaa, Kriyaa, Yogaa, Prahavi, Satyaa, Ishaanaa and Anugrahaa. They are present in the tendril of the lotus having eight petals that is worshipped here. They are

established in a posture of granting various boons and bestowing fearlessness to the devotee who worships them.

²The full Mantra with which Lord Ram is to be invoked and worshipped is given in Canto 4, verse no. 63—‘OM NAMO BHAGWATE RAGHU-NANDANAYE RAKSHOGHNAVISHDAYE MADHUR PRASANNA-VADANAAYA MITTEJSE BALAYE RAMAYE VISHNAVE NAMAHA’ (ॐ नमो भगवते रघुनन्दनाय रक्षोघ्नविशदाय मधुर प्रसन्नवदनाय मिततेजसे बलाय रामाय विष्णवे नमः).

³The various Digpals are the great and senior custodians of creation, the word ‘Dig’ implying ‘great and senior’, while the Lokpals are the different caretakers of the various realms of the physical world and are junior to the Digpals.

The eight Lokpals are like the knights under a great King who in the present case is Lord Ram. They carry out the orders of the Lord in the physical world at a more mundane level of creation. These eight Lokpals are the following— Dhristi, Jayant [36], Vijai, Suraashtra, Raastravardhan, Akop, Dharmpaal and Sumantra. See earlier Canto 4, verse nos. 36-37.

The various Digpals are the divine forces of creation in a personified form of various Gods who are assigned the task of taking care of the entire creation. They are the following—(i) Indra, (ii) Agni, (iii) Yam, (iv) Niriti or Nairitya, (v) Varun, (vi) Anil, (vii) Kuber, (viii) Ishan, (ix) Brahma and (x) Anant. Refer Canto 4, verse no. 38 for details.

⁴The arms and armaments are—Vajra of Indra, energy of fire, baton of Yam, sword of Niriti, sling of Varun, goad of Anil, mace of Kuber, trident of Shiva, lotus of Brahma, and discus of Anant. See earlier Canto 4, verse no. 39.]

7. After that, the aspirant should worship Raghav (Lord Ram) along with the great sages such as Vashistha etc.¹, and chief monkeys such as Nal etc.² who are attending the Lord (or, who are standing near the Lord). [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 39.]

The worship should be accompanied by the offering of sandalwood and other items which are considered best and auspicious for being offered to the Lord.

Then the aspirant should offer or surrender the rewards of all his Japa (i.e. the repetition of the holy Mantra) to Lord Ram³ (7).

[Note—¹The name of the chief sages are as follows—Vashistha, Vamdeo, Jabali, Gautam, Bhargwadaj, Vishwamitra, Valmiki, Narad, Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan and Sanat Kumar. See Canto 4, verse no. 39.

²The chief monkeys who accompanied the Lord back from Lanka after his victory over the demon king Ravana are the following—Nal, Neel, Sushen, Maind, Sharabh, Dwivid, Dhanad, Gawaksha, Kirit, Kundal, Srivatsa, Kaustav, Shankh (conch), Chakra (discus), Gada (mace) and Padma (lotus). See Canto 4, verse no. 39.

³The Mantra pronounced while offering the rewards of doing Japa to Lord Ram is the following—Guhyadgooyahsya goptaatwam grihaanasmatkritam japam; sidhirbhavartu may dev twatprasaadaatkripaanidhe (गुह्याद्गुह्यस्य गोप्तात्वं गृहाणस्मत्कृतं जपम् । सिद्धिर्भवतु मे देव त्वत्प्रसादात्कृपानिधे॥). [Oh Lord! I have been continuously repeating your holy name and as its reward have come to realise the eclectic secrets about you. I am offering all the efforts to you and request you to bless me with divine mystical powers and success in my spiritual endeavours.]

According to some experts, the Mantra is as follows— ‘Avum Bhutam Jagadaadhaarbhutam Raamam Bande Sacchidaanandrupam, Gadaarishankhaabjdham Bhawaarim Sa Yo Dhyayenmokshapnoti Sarwaha’. (एवं भूतं जगदाधारभूतं रामं बन्दे सच्चिदानन्दरूपम् । गदारिशंखाब्जधरं भवारिं स यो ध्यायेन्मोक्षप्नोति सर्वः ॥). [I offer my respects and worship to Lord Ram who is the very basis and foundation of all the Bhuts or living beings in this creation. The Lord is an embodiment of truthfulness, consciousness and blissfulness. He holds a mace, a lotus, a conch and a discus. By

meditating and contemplating upon this divine vision of the Lord (as Vishnu) one can find Moksha or spiritual liberation and deliverance, salvation and emancipation.]

8. The aspirant should meditate upon Lord Ram as follows—‘He who is of such a glorious and elegant majesty as well as of magnificent fame and divinity, who is the very cause and the foundation of the world (i.e. the world rests on and survives because of him), who is an image of supreme and eternal bliss, who holds a mace, a discus, a conch and a lotus in his lotus-like hands, who is the destroyer of the shackles tying the creature to this mundane, deluding, artificial and entrapping world consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death— I revere him, adore him, honour him, and pay my sincerest obeisance to such a great Lord known as ‘Ram’.’

Those who say this with great honesty, sincerity, truthfulness and commitment of mind and heart, and meditate and contemplate upon Lord Ram in the manner outlined in this Upanishad, are sure to find Moksha, or spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, for themselves in this world (8).

9. At the time of winding up his worldly activities (i.e. at the time of his departure from the earth), Raghav (Lord Ram)—who pervades uniformly in the whole world as an omnipresent and ubiquitous cosmic Soul—simply vanished from sight. [That is, Lord Ram had not ‘died’ in the conventional sense by leaving behind any remains of his gross form (body) when he finally decided to leave this world. He did not ‘die’ as the word is generally understood to mean in relation with the death of a human being, for the Lord literally melted away or dissolved in the air at the site of his departure just like a simmering mirage vanishes from sight in a desert.]

Lord Ram’s arms (weapons) in the form of the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus too vanished along with him. [These four things always accompany Lord Vishnu in whatever form or wherever he is. They also accompanied the Lord in his incarnation as Lord Ram. So when the latter left this world it is obvious that these inseparable companions of Vishnu would also leave with him.]

The Lord reverted back to his original natural form as the attribute-less, supreme, almighty, all-encompassing, all-pervading, infinite, imperishable, absolute and eternal supreme Lord of creation (known as Lord Vishnu or the Viraat Purush). Accompanied by his cosmic Shakti or dynamic powers personified as Sita (who was an incarnation of Goddess Rama or Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu), Lord Ram entered his divine abode in the heaven.

Those who were close to him during his sojourn on this earth—the citizens of Ayodhya and the subjects of his realm, his kith and kin, his brothers and other family members, his companions and attendants headed by Vibhishan (the demon king of Lanka), Sugriv (the monkey king) etc.—all of them also went to his abode along with him (9).

[Note—The way Lord Ram made his final departure from the world along with his subjects have been graphically depicted in Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas in its Uttar Kand, Canto 9. An English version of this Ramayan has been published separately by this humble author.]

10. His (Lord Ram’s) devotees, by the blessings of the Lord, obtain whatever they wish to have, attain success in whatever they do, and are blessed with full accomplishment of objectives and fulfillment of desires in all their endeavours. They not only enjoy the fruits of their acquisitions or the rewards of their efforts in this world while they are alive, but upon death they attain the supreme stature called

‘Param Pad’—i.e. they reach the highest abode and obtain the most exalted state which is equivalent to or synonymous with the supreme Lord himself.

In other words, the Lord’s ardent and sincere devotees are able to enjoy the best of the two worlds—while they are alive in this material world they are able to enjoy the best of things and the greatest of fame and majesty that this world has to offer, and when they die they find Mukti or liberation and deliverance from the fetters of this material world and attain Moksha or emancipation and salvation for their souls. This means they will not have to take a birth or die again in this world which normally keeps a creature entangled in its net. They live a happy and contented life on earth, and obtain permanent peace and rest upon death.

Those who read these hymns, which bestow all the desired wishes as well as give fulfillment and prosperity, are able to purify their inner-self, and consequentially obtain deliverance from this entrapping world; they get liberation from the horrors of birth and death; they are bestowed with emancipation and salvation for their souls. Indeed, they find Mukti and Moksha. Amen! (10).

Thus ends Canto 5 of Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad

-----Shanti Paath-----

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Section 2—Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad

Canto 1

[This Canto describes the spiritual and metaphysical importance of Kashi, also known as Varanasi, which is an ancient pilgrim city in India which is supposed to possess mystical powers that provide Mukti, or liberation and deliverance to the soul of those who die here. The reason is that Lord Shiva utters the divine name of Lord Ram, which is regarded as the Tarak Mantra (which is a divine word that has the unique ability to provide emancipation and salvation to the soul), in the ears of the dying man or woman at this place. This fact is cited in our present Upanishad to bring to the fore the stupendous spiritual powers and prowess of the divine name and Mantras of Lord Ram, and to show that the Lord is none but the Supreme Being himself personified. One can imagine the astounding spiritual fruits or rewards that a spiritual aspirant can get for himself if he uses the Lord’s various Mantras to do Japa (repetition) and Dhyān (meditation and contemplation) with when merely hearing the Lord’s name being uttered into one’s ears at the time of death can provide liberation and deliverance from this world and its endless cycle of birth and death, along with their attendant horrors.]

1. OM salutations! Brishaspati (the moral preceptor or the Guru of Gods) asked sage Yagyawalkya¹—‘Oh Brahmin! Which is the holy site that dwarfs Kurukshetra in its holiness, divinity and sanctity? Which is the place chosen even by the Gods to worship their seniors? Which is the place much sought after by the creatures seeking spiritual deliverance, emancipation and salvation?’

Yagyawalkya replied—‘Certainly, this place—which is known as ‘Kashi’ (also known as the city of Varanasi in the north of India)—is called the ‘Avimukta Tirtha’¹.

It is the holy site which is the first and foremost place for doing noble, religious and righteous deeds—i.e. it is the ‘Kurukshetra’ for spiritual aspirants desirous of Mukti, or spiritual liberation and deliverance. [The word ‘Kurukshetra’ has two parts—‘Kuru’ means to ‘do’, and ‘Kshetra’ means an area or realm. Hence, the Kurushetra is the area or place where one must do deeds in order to obtain one’s desired objectives or fulfill one’s dreams. In the spiritual field, this doing of deeds in order to realise one’s objectives is to do auspicious and righteous deeds so that Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, is obtained from the endless cycle of birth and death in which the creature is trapped from time immemorial and countless generations of previous births. It is not that doing of good deeds elsewhere would not bear sweet fruits, but only that here the results are quicker and easier to beget as the spiritual soil, so to say, is more fertile at this place, and harnessing of positive energy of the super consciousness is more easy and readily possible here.]

It is the place of worship selected even by the Gods to honour the Supreme Being. It is the location where the creature can attain oneness with the Parmatma (the supreme transcendental Soul, or the Lord God of creation) more easily and with the least effort. Hence, one should treat this place called ‘Kashi’ as the real Kurukshetra as compared to other religious or pilgrim site he goes visiting in search of Mukti.

It is in this place where Lord Shiva (Rudra) preaches the dying creature about the ‘Tarak Brahm³’. This nectar-like advice makes the creature immortal, helps in his final liberation from all worldly fetters arising out of ignorance and delusions, and helps in his deliverance from this mundane world. It is this advice of Lord Shiva about the Tarak Brahm that gives the dying creature a once in a life-time opportunity and the final chance to obtain emancipation and salvation.

Hence, one should attempt to take up a residence in Kashi and have faith in its ability to provide Mukti. One should never abandon it. This is the truth'. Sage Yagyavalkya thus explained the importance and significance of Kashi and the Tarak Brahm to Brishaspati (1).

[Note—¹Sage Yagyavalkya—Sage Yagyavalkya belonged to that Vedic period when people had an integral and holistic view of life and the reality behind existence, and all-activities, secular or religious, were regarded as one big, wholesome and composite religious sacrifice called a Yagya. Life itself was consecrated and devoted to the realization of the transcendental and supreme truthful Reality. There was no distinction between renunciation and involvement in life’s chores. There was no dichotomy between the two, and the various debates arising in Indian spiritual practices due to different interpretations and re-interpretations of the Vedic and Upanishadic tenets was a product of the later period. One such exemplary sage and seer belonging to that golden period was Yagyavalkya—he was an enlightened wise man who was not only a self-realised householder but an ardent ascetic, an acclaimed scholar and an exemplary renunciate man par-excellence, all at the same time.

It is believed that Yagyavalkya was an incarnation of Lord Brahma, the creator, when he was cursed by Lord Shiva. [Skand Puran, Nagar Khand, 1-9.] His father was named Brahmabahu (literally, the limbs of Brahma, because the latter’s limbs had manifested as this person). [Vayu Puran, 61.] But according to a book of religious law written by Yagyavalkya himself known as ‘Yagyavalkya Sanhita’, his father also had the same name. So, our Yagyavalkya was, in effect, ‘Yagyavalkya, the second’. [Yagyavalkya Sanhita, 1.]

Yagyavalkya’s teacher in the science of Yoga (meditation) and the knowledge of the self (metaphysics and philosophy) was sage Vashistha, son of Hiranyanabha Kaushalya, a king of the Raghu dynasty which ruled Ayodhya in ancient times. [Vayu Puran, 88; Bhagwat Mahapuran, 93/106.] The sage performed severe penances and

austerities, know as Tapa, at Mithila, the birth place of Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram. [Skandpuran, Reva Khand, 42.]

He used to attend the court of great ancient wise kings, such as king Janak (the father of Sita—Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, canto 3-4) and Yudhisthir (of the Mahabharat fame—Mahabharat, Sabha Parva, 4/32). It was in the court of king Janak that Yagyavalkya had defeated all the assembled scholars of the time on various metaphysical and theological concepts. He is also believed to be a chief priest in Yudhisthir's Rajsu Yagya.

Sage Yagyavalkya was one of the greatest, most erudite, wise and renowned seers of his time. He was a senior and enlightened man, so wise and learned a scholar that even king Janak, who himself was a most self-realised and enlightened king of his era, was so much bowled over by his erudition, depth of knowledge and scholarship that he accepted the sage's discipleship (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahmin 2, verse nos. 1, 4). He was proclaimed the undisputed champion and winner in a metaphysical and theological debate held in the court of Janak during the course of a great fire sacrifice held where great scholars, seers and sages from far and wide had assembled (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahmin 1-9).

He was a much sought after teacher and an honoured exponent of the eclectic Advaita Vedanta philosophy of non-duality. This basically propounds, inter alia, that everything in existence, visible or invisible, minute or colossal, important or unimportant, are all fundamentally the same singular unit called Brahm manifested in myriad and diverse ways, that therefore nothing that exists which is not Brahm is not true, that this Brahm is the only supreme Authority and Divinity in the entire creation, that this Brahm and the individual Atma or pure consciousness of the creature are one and the same, and not two independent units, that this Atma is the pure self, etc. Anything contrary to this is false and fallacious.

It is believed that all major Upanishads belonging to the Yajur Veda tradition are either directly or indirectly expounded and enunciated by and elucidated upon by Yagyavalkya or any one of his long line of disciples who had acquired this eclectic knowledge from him. (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/6/1-3, 4/6/1-3 and 6/5/1-3.)

The high spiritual prowess and reach of Yagyavalkya can be judged from the fact that he could communicate directly with the Supreme Being called Mandal Purush in his visible manifestation as the brilliant and splendorous Sun as described in Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The fact that Yagyavalkya had a repeated communion with the Sun God, at least on four occasions is clearly marked out in Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 1/1/1-2; 2/1/1-2; 3/1/1-2; 4/1/1-2.

Yagyavalkya was a rich householder sage and seer. This is borne out by the fact that (a) on each occasion when he attended great debates he was showered with huge largesse by king Janak in the form of immense quantity of gold and thousands of cows (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 3/1/1-2, 4/1/1-7, 4/3/33, 4/4/23), and (b) when he asks his wife Maitreyi to partition his vast estate before he went on to take Sanyas (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/4/1-2, 4/5/1-2).

The creation of Yajur Veda's two branches:- Yagyavalkya was one of the several disciples of sage Vaishampayana. Once the teacher asked his disciples to perform the 'Brahmavadhya' sacrifice (a type of penance) for him. Yagyavalkya was so confident of himself that he offered to do it all by himself for his teacher. The teacher thought that he was haughty and boastful. So, disowning or disinheriting him from his line of disciples, he commanded that Yagyavalkya should return all that he had learnt from his teacher. The sage returned all the Mantras of the Yajur Veda that he had learnt from his teacher by 'vomiting' them out. The rest of the disciples were very cunning; they transformed themselves immediately into partridges, called Tittars, and gobbled up everything. From that developed the Krishna Yajur Veda's Taittiriya branch. It is called 'Krishna' after the teacher, and 'Taittiriya' after the partridges.

Now, not to be demoralised so easily, Yagyavalkya worshipped the Sun God who blessed him with a fresh set of Mantras of the Yajur Veda. Since it came from the

‘bright sun’, this set of Mantras was called the ‘Shukla Yajur Veda’. [The word ‘Shukla’ means ‘bright or light or illuminated’.] The sage revised this into fifteen sub-texts, called the Vajasanis, i.e. those belonging to the horse race. This is because the Sun God had assumed the form of a ‘horse’ to teach him, and the word ‘Vajis’ means a horse.

Yagyavalkya had fifteen disciples (e.g. Kanva, Madhyandin etc.) who mastered one each of these fifteen sub-text created by Yagyavalkya. [Vishnu Puran, 3-5; Vayu Puran, 60-1.]

Family—He had two wives. The elder was named Katayani, and the second was called Maitreyi. From the elder wife, he had a son named Katyanana. [Skandpuran, Nagar Khand, 130; Brihad Aranya Upanishad, 4/5/1.] According to ‘Yogi Yagyavalkya’, a hand book on Yoga, his third wife was Gargi, though she is depicted as a rival interviewer who tested the sage’s erudition and scholarship in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad. [Yogi Yagyavalkya, edited by Upendranath, Vasumati — Calcutta, 1-5.]

Sanyas—Though Yagyavalkya was externally a householder sage and seer, he was internally a self-realised and an enlightened man, a sincere ascetic and a renunciate monk who knew the futility of worldly pursuits. He was not preaching what he did not believe in. So he finally took to the eclectic path of Sanyas as clearly mentioned in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 4/5/15.

Works—Yagyavalkya wrote great texts on Yoga, metaphysics and law pertaining to daily life, much like Manu’s Smiriti Law. (i) Yagyavalkya Sanhita contains religious laws; (ii) Yog Sanhita was composed in the hermitage of sage Upmanyu [Kurma Puran, 25.]; and (iii) Yogi Yagyavalkya on Yoga philosophy.

Yagyavalkya was a great and acclaimed Yogi (an ascetic) as well as a metaphysical philosopher and preacher par-excellence who was well-versed in the knowledge of Brahm and the Atma.

²The word *Avimukta* literally means ‘that which is not free; that which is bound or shackled’. Here the word means that place or that entity that has the potential to set free those who are shackled by providing them liberation and deliverance from their bondage. It has many connotations such as—(a) The holy pilgrimage site of Kashi or Varanasi, a city of northern India where Lord Shiva is said to reside eternally on this earth and provide this liberation and deliverance to the soul of a dying man by uttering the Tarak Mantra in his ears. This is being referred to in our present Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad. (b) Another site is Kurushetra where the legendary Mahabharat war was fought. (c) According to Yoga philosophy, this site is located at two places corresponding to the holy sites mentioned above—one is the area around the ears, and the other is central point between the two eyebrows. (d) The Brahmrandhra which is the top central point of the head is also said to be the abode of Brahm. It is the Avimukta area because when the ascetic is able to concentrate his attention on this citadel, he achieves supreme bliss and peace. According to Yoga, when the vital energy of Kundalini is aroused, it snakes up the spine and enters this area, thereby immense bliss to the aspirant.

Refer also to Canto 2, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, verse nos. 2-13 of this present Upanishad.

This concept has been elaborately described in the following Upanishads also—(i) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 3; Tarsar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1.

³*Tarak Brahm* is that divine aspect of the super consciousness known as Brahm which provides the spiritual aspirant with Mukti and Moksha—i.e. final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. The formula used to achieve this eclectic goal is known as the *Tarak Mantra*.

The Tarak Mantra is therefore a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special

spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The word 'Tarak' means an entity that takes one across some formidable obstacle that seems otherwise insurmountable and unconquerable. It is a medium by which all hurdles and impediments in one's path that prevent one from attaining his spiritual goal are overcome easily. It is therefore an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance to the seeker, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature's soul, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pains from which he is suffering in this world and from which he sincerely wishes to find freedom.

The Mantra that has the astounding spiritual potential and mystical powers that can provide the soul of the frustrated, agitated and hapless creature trapped in the labyrinth of miseries and torments with final liberation and deliverance is called the Tarak Mantra. It helps him find freedom from all the fetters and delusions associated with this world and creation, and obtain final peace and rest for his soul.

Other Mantras can give him everything else in this creation, such as attainment of all types of Siddhis and other super-natural powers and abilities, or acquisition of other rewards such as Dharma, Artha and Kaam as mentioned in verse no. 3 of Canto 5 of the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, or other such great achievements that are rare, but they do not provide him with 'Moksha' so easily as does the Tarak Mantra.

Some of the important Upanishads that are dedicated to this Tarak are the following—Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1-2 (full); Canto 4, verse no. 14; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3 and 5 (full); the Atharva-shikha, 2/1; Atharvashir, Kandika (Canto) 4; Advaitarak, verse nos. 3, 7-11; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 15-16; Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8 which is fully devoted to this theme; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 4 and 18 (Shiva's Tarak Mantra).

Lord Shiva advises the dying Jiva (creature; the living being) about the supreme truth and absolute reality in creation. He enlightens the creature about the supreme, transcendental, eternal, absolute and the only Truth in this creation, called Brahm, which incidentally is the cosmic Consciousness as well as the ultimate destination of the soul of the creature where the latter would find eternal rest, peace, bliss, tranquility, beatitude and felicity.

Lord Shiva enlightens the creature that his true identity is the Atma, the pure consciousness, which is eternal, imperishable, incorrupt and pure, and which is synonymous with the supreme Brahm as the latter is nothing but the cosmic form of the same Consciousness. The creature is made aware of the fact that his 'true self' is not the gross body that is dying and that would be cremated in the fire, but it is the Atma that never dies as it is eternal and imperishable. Therefore, the creature is made to feel reassured that there is nothing to fear from death.

Shiva preaches the creature about the divine Mantra of Lord Ram as has been prescribed in this Upanishad that ensures his liberation and deliverance from the fetters of this mundane and ensnaring world. This is because the Mantras of Lord Ram have the stupendous mystical powers, the potential, the strength, the valour and the dynamism that they can actually break the shackle by which the wary creature had been forcefully tied, unwillingly and secretly, to the gross body and bonded to the gross world. To cite a simple illustration, the divine Mantras of Lord Ram are like powerful rays of laser or powerful bursts of electrons or currents of high voltage electricity that can perform miraculous tasks unheard of or unimagined.

Besides this, Lord Ram is Brahm personified, and his four-letter name 'Ram' is equivalent to OM, which is the Mantra for Brahm, in its spiritual strength and metaphysical importance. It is significant to note that out of all the countless Mantras and Beej Mantras enumerated in various Upanishads and other scriptures, the name of Lord Ram and his Beej Mantra 'Raam' are the only ones that are honoured with the

title of 'Tarak Mantra'—i.e. the Mantra that can provide liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation to the creature. Though OM is directly related to the supreme transcendental Brahm, it is 'Raam', the Beej Mantra and the name of Lord Ram which is called the 'Tarak Mantra'. When OM is used before it, it is used as a salutation and a sign of showing respect to the main deity—which is 'Ram'.

This Upanishad also elucidates and expounds upon the fact that there is no difference at all between Brahm and Ram. Hence, what Lord Shiva preaches to the dying man at Kashi by way of Lord Ram's Mantra is essentially the truth about Brahm and the spiritual aspirant's own 'self' which is pure consciousness. It ignites in his mind and sub-conscious the realisation that he is indeed an image of the supreme Brahm or of the cosmic Consciousness known as the Parmatma (Param = Supreme; Atma = Consciousness, Soul, Being). He realises that there is indeed no difference between the supreme Consciousness that prevails in the entire creation as Brahm, and his own Atma which is nothing but a microcosmic form of this Consciousness. This realisation fills his heart with unbound joy and ecstasy of the highest order. Therefore he does not regret at his departure from this miserable world and its accompanying pains; he does not regret at having to abandon the gross body which he would have realised by now is not his 'truthful self' at all.

Since he has found the ultimate fruit of all his endeavours, and since he has understood about the illusionary nature of the pleasures and comforts of this world, he has no unfulfilled desires or wishes left at the time of death, and neither does he want to acquire another body to enjoy the world any longer. He has attained the greatest happiness and joy that comes with spiritual realisation, and therefore he would naturally not want anything inferior. Enlightenment and self-realisation has also make him aware that there is no external heaven somewhere in the remote corner of the sky where he can hope to find happiness, but it is in his own inner-self, and it is achieved by attaining mental peace, stability, tranquility and calmness.

Lord Shiva is deemed to be the most enlightened and the wisest amongst the pantheon of Gods, and obviously when he teaches someone the teaching would match his erudition and level of wisdom. The hearer of the advice given by Lord Shiva is equally fortunate and privileged at having had the golden opportunity of being preached about the greatest Mantra, known as the Tarak Mantra, by the greatest teacher known as Lord Shiva. Being an exalted and learned ascetic himself, Shiva would naturally teach the creature the way to get rid of all delusions and attain final rest and peace for himself.

With this enlightenment and acquisition of wisdom of the highest order, the creature finds peace of mind and contentedness in heart. This preaching leads to his realisation about his eternal and truthful form as the Atma that is eternal and imperishable, and this realisation helps in the creature's liberation from numerous delusions that had trapped his soul to the material attractions of the world and the pleasures of the gross body. This eclectic realisation of the truthful nature of the Atma and his own 'self' provides the dying man immense peace of mind and a sense of fulfillment. He is able to break free from the fetters that shackle him to the vicious and endless cycle of birth and death. It gives his tormented soul its final peace, rest and bliss.

There is another twist to this concept of treating Kashi as the place that provides Mukti. When a man lives here, he watches endless corpses being brought in for cremation. He observes that the rich and the poor, the well-connected and powerful as well as the down-trodden and the humblest—all meet the same fate. He sees the mighty and the high lying on the same stack of wood to be cremated as the pauper and the beggar. He further notices that the towering fortunes and worldly acquisitions of a man are all left behind and nothing accompanies him to the funeral pyre. If a man is wise and thoughtful enough, these observations would make him ponder about the reality of this world, the utility of pursuing this material world, the transient and impermanent nature of the world as well as the body, the numerous inconsistencies

that exist in this life, and to search for something that has an eternal value that would give him real peace and happiness. At this stage he comes in contact with the wisdom enshrined in the Upanishads. But he might not have the time or the intellectual capital to understand their profound philosophies, so he takes to the recourse provided by Lord Shiva himself—and it is to take the shelter of Lord Ram and repeat his powerful Mantras just like a diseased man takes the best medicine diligently to get rid of his disease. If this medicine is provided by an expert doctor, what more can he wish and expect. Lord Shiva is the wisest amongst the Gods, and when he himself advises this remedy for a creature's spiritual ills, a wise man would not bat an eyelid before grasping this golden opportunity with both hands, so to say, and find permanent peace and happiness of his soul.]

Thus ends Canto 1 of Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 2—Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad

Canto 2

[In this Canto, sage Yagyawalkya explains to sage Bharadwaj the importance of the ethereal Mantra 'OM' and its similarity to the Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram.]

1. Once, sage Bharadwaj¹ asked sage Yagyawalkya—'Oh Lord! Who or what is the 'Tarak'—or who is that divine Being, or which is that entity that provides the final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the creature, or in other words, delivers the soul of the creature from this mundane, deluding and entrapping world from which it is ordinarily extremely difficult to break free and find liberation, and gives the creature freedom from all future transmigration?

And, who is the one who benefits from this benevolence and spiritual boon—or, who is the one that gets the benefit of this deliverance, liberation, emancipation and salvation?

To answer this question, the famous sage Yagyawalkya replied—'The Tarak Mantra (which is a group of letters or syllables or words that are infused with divine mystical powers and charged with dynamic spiritual energy that enables them to acquire the great magical potential to deliver the soul of the creature from this deluding and entrapping world, and provide it with emancipation and salvation once and for all) is as follows—

'The Sanskrit alphabet 'Ra' (र) standing for 'Anal' or the fire element, with the sign of the second vowel 'Aa' (आ) added to it (indicating its extended, enhanced and expanded reach, energy, potentials, powers and majesty), and with a 'dot' (called an Anuswar ' . ') on its top (standing for its supremacy over all other Mantras)—i.e. the monosyllabic word 'Raam/Raan(g)' (राम)—is the first word of the divine holy Mantra of Lord Ram. It is also called the 'Beej Mantra' of Lord Ram. [Refer Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2.]

The second word consists of three parts—viz, 'Raa' (रा), followed by the word 'Maaye', and then 'Namaha' (माय नमः).

Hence, the full 'Tarak Mantra' becomes 'Raam/Raan(g) Raamaaye Namaha' (राम रामाय नमः). [Refer Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no.

22; Ram Rashasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 16; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3.]

Besides this, the two other Mantras under this category of Tarak Mantra are the following—‘Ram Chandraaye Namaha’ (राम चन्द्राय नमः), and ‘Ram Bhadraaye Namaha’ (राम भद्राय नमः). [Refer [Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 26; and Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 25.]

These three Mantras and their constituent parts are respectively representative or symbolic of the three aspects of Divinity—viz. OM, Tattwa and Brahm.

[We note here that each of the three Mantras has three individual parts—viz. the first Mantra ‘Raam Raamaaye Namaha’ has these three parts—(i) Raam, (ii) Raamaaye, and (iii) Namaha. Therefore, the word ‘Raam’ stands for OM which in itself is a synonym for and a Beej Mantra for the supreme Brahm, the word ‘Raamaaye’ stands for the Tattwa or the principal Divinity to whom this Mantra is dedicated, which obviously is Lord Ram, and the word ‘Namaha’ refers to Brahm, the Supreme Being, to whom this Mantra refers to and to whom one bows in reverence when he says this Mantra. In other words, it is Brahm to whom the entire Mantra is dedicated, it is Brahm who is being praised by this Mantra, and it is Brahm to whom the worshipper bows in reverence.

Now, if we consider all the three Mantras together, the composite interpretation would be as follows—the first Tarak Mantra ‘Raam/Raan(g) Ramaaye Namaha’ is equivalent to OM; the second Tarak Mantra ‘Ram Chandraaye Namaha’ is equivalent to Tattwa; and the third Tarak Mantra ‘Ram Bhadraaye Namaha’ is equivalent to Brahm.

It ought to be noted here that all these three terms, i.e. OM, Tattwa and Brahm, essentially refer to the same eclectic entity that is the absolute Truth and Reality of creation, and it is the supreme transcendental Consciousness known by different names.

‘OM’ is the Beej Mantra or the root or seed monosyllabic word referring to Pranav, which in turn is synonymous with the primary Authority in creation and is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that is responsible for the entire creation coming into being, as well as for its maintenance and its conclusion. OM stands for the most sublime and primary form of energy that was responsible for initiating the process of creation, and which is still reverberating in the ether in the form of cosmic background sound. The entire creation is regarded as being a revelation of OM.

OM is the defacto Beej Mantra for the supreme transcendental Brahm just like ‘Raam’ is the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram. Since Lord Ram is a personified form of Brahm, it follows that OM and Raam are synonymous with each other.

The word ‘Tattwa’ means basic or fundamental aspect of anything. Since ‘Truth’ is the fundamental reality in any given situation and the basis of everything that has substance and meaning, in the spiritual sphere it is known as super Consciousness revealed as the Atma at the microcosmic level of creation and as Brahm at the macrocosmic level, therefore the word obviously refers to them. It also refers to the basic elements in whose form the universal Consciousness has revealed or expressed itself in order to give effect to the shaping of this vast and multifarious creation. In the case of Lord Ram, the 2nd part of the first Mantra is ‘Raamaaye’, and it refers to Lord Ram as a manifestation of Brahm, as well as Brahm’s divine Shakti revealed as Sita, the consort of Lord Ram. Like Brahm and his Shakti being the primary cause of this creation coming into being, Lord Ram and Sita are also equally important and have the same stature as far as the spiritual aspirant who uses this Mantra for his spiritual welfare is concerned. The Upanishads have unequivocally and universally stressed

that the Consciousness and Brahm are the only Tattwa (fundamental aspect) in creation, and therefore it is correct to say that the word 'Raamaaye' refers to this Tattwa. This word 'Raamaaye' refers to the 'fundamental truth' about Lord Ram as being a manifestation of Brahm and the cosmic super Consciousness itself personified.

Finally, Brahm is the universal Supreme Being, the one whose Beej Mantra is OM and who is the Tattwa referred to above. Hence, the word 'Namaha' is used to pay sincere homage to the Supreme Being known as Brahm who has revealed himself as Lord Ram.]

These three Mantras have symbolically manifested in the form of the three virtues of 'Sat, Chitta and Anand' respectively. In other words, these Mantras symbolize the three great auspicious virtues of creation—viz. 'Sat' meaning truthfulness, 'Chit' meaning consciousness and awareness as well as the sub-conscious, and 'Anand' meaning the ecstasy and bliss, the exhilaration and happiness that accompanies the realisation of the truth of the 'self' as being consciousness in all its glory and magnificence.

This is the way one should interpret them, have trust and firm conviction in them, and worship, revere, honour and adore them with sincere devotion and dedication (1).

[Note—¹Sage *Bharadwaj*—Sage Bharadwaj is regarded as one of the seven celestial sages known as Sapta Rishis. Ironically, we find many ancient sages with this name, and therefore it is clear that this word was used more as a surname or title rather than the name of an individual sage or seer. Bharadwaj is regarded as a Vedic sage after whom a lineage of sages and seers of the highest order was established. His disciples assumed their teacher's name as their title, and came to be known as Bharadwajs.

Sage Bharadwaj Baarhasptya is the seer of several hymns of the Rig Veda, Mandal no. 6. He is the son of Brihaspati, the moral preceptor of the Gods. He was the father of Dronacharya of the Mahabharata who has taught Arjun the science of archery.

The epic Ramayana mentions one Bharadwaj who was the disciple of sage Valmiki and lived near the banks of river Ganges in Prayag, the pilgrim city known as Allahabad in modern India. It was at his advice that Lord Ram stayed at Chitrakoot during the first phase of his forest exile.

Sage Bharadwaj is credited with two great works—viz. Bharadwaj Shrauta-Sutras consisting of ten sections, and Bharadwaj Griha-Sutras.]

2. The divine ethereal word OM has four sound syllables or letters of the Sanskrit language— viz, A, O, U, M. But in practice, it has six sound forms forming the following six syllables or letters as follows—the first is 'A' (अ—pronounced as in *a* pen, *run*) which is the 1st letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, the second is 'Oo' (उ—pronounced as in *bull*) which is the 5th letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, the 3rd is 'Ma' (म—pronounced as in *mother*) which is the 38th letter, the 4th letter is the half-syllable in the form of a sign known as the Ardha Maatra, the 5th is the 'Anuswar' (dot '—producing the sound equivalent of a silent letter 'M' as pronounced at the end of words such as *mum*, *come*), and the 6th is the crescent shaped 'Naad' (ँ—placed on the symbol for the word OM. [The Naad consists of two parts—the crescent shaped moon at the bottom and a dot dangling on the top of it at its focal point; it is also collectively called the 'Chandra Bindu', and it's a nasal sound which is something like 'ng' added as a suffix to a word—e.g. *swung*, *rung*.]

The final geometrical shape or symbol of the divine, ethereal and cosmic word OM for Brahm is—ॐ.

In this way, the cosmic, primordial, ethereal and divine sound OM is also called the 'Tarak Mantra'. It is so-called because it has the potential and mystical powers of providing liberation and deliverance to the creature from the shackles which tie him to this mundane world of an endless cycle of birth and death.

You must consider that word OM, or its synonymous word 'Raam/Raan(g)' (ॠ), as the Tarak Mantra. It is worthy of being worshipped, revered, honoured and adored; it is worthy of being contemplated and meditated upon. It provides deliverance from the horrible torments that the creature has to suffer in the womb, at the time of his birth, his old age and at the time of his death, as well as other great fears from this world that the creature has to suffer from. [This is obviously because this Mantra has the potential to provide emancipation and salvation to the soul, thereby freeing it from the burden and compulsions of taking birth in this world and having to face its interminable horrors. That is why it is called the 'Tarak' in the first place.] (2).

3. [This verse describes the benefits that accrue to a person who has faith in the Tarak Mantra, repeats it with devotion (i.e. does Japa with it), and uses it as a means to attain liberation and deliverance (called Mukti) from his spiritual and worldly torments.]

Any Brahmin (i.e. any wise and learned person who is a sincere aspirant or spiritual seeker, or any person who is eager, mentally inclined and honest to learn and know about the supreme Brahman, or any person who is nobler in thoughts, actions, inclination, temperaments, desires etc. than the others; the word Brahmin does not refer to any specific class of society here), who repeats this Tarak Mantra constantly, consistently and persistently, becomes empowered to overcome the ill affects of all types of evils, sins, misdeeds, misdemeanors etc. that he might have committed so far.

He becomes so holy that he literally leaps across death (i.e. he does not suffer from the terrible agonies associated with death).

Not only that, he is also freed (pardoned) from such grave sins as killing a Brahmin (or any learned and senior person, or for that matter any living creature), destroying an embryo in the womb (i.e. causing abortion) as well as killing a brave warrior deceitfully. Not limited to this, he in fact is exonerated from the sin of all the forms of killings that he might have been involved in¹.

He is delivered from this world and crosses over all the hurdles of life.

Wherever he stays, for all practical purposes, he is deemed to be living in the 'Avimukta site' (i.e. in the pilgrim site of Kashi/Varanasi—see verse no. 1 of Canto 1, and verse nos. 1-8 of Canto 4).

He is deemed to be great. He attains the supreme state of existence marked by eternity, felicity and beatitude. He is able to taste the elixir of eternal and imperishable life (3).

[Note—¹This blanket pardoning of sins should not be construed as a license for murder and committing other sins in the belief that mere repetition of the holy Mantras and living in Kashi would provide freedom from their horrific consequences. No, they wouldn't. Unless the man is sincere about his repentance and regrets honestly, unless he sincerely wants to reform himself and turn a new leaf in his life, mere reading of any scripture or visiting a pilgrim site or repeating some Mantra would not serve any purpose. An honest man who has realised his mistakes and wishes to atone for his misdeeds would not shy away from accepting his misdeeds, which in itself requires a great deal of moral courage and strength of mind as accepting one's crimes and confessing may be used against him. Such a man would

also like to undo what mistakes he had done previously in his life as far as he can. Towards this end, he would willingly suffer, because this suffering is a form of 'Tapasya' or penance for him to wash away the soot that has clung to his pure self because of his past.

The very fact that the man is sincerely desirous of emancipation and salvation ensures that he has decided to reform himself and is very eager for repentance for his past misdeeds and sins that he might have committed out of ignorance or out of compulsions of circumstances. Every man has the right to reform himself, for to err is an ordinary part of human life. No one can claim that he has not committed any wrong any time in life. The very realisation that he has been erring, that he must redeem himself while there is still some time left, and the sincerity with which the aspirant seeks liberation from bondages that are consequent of his past evil deeds is a sign that he should be given a chance to reform himself.

The Upanishad gives the remedy and the means of his spiritual upliftment, redemption and rehabilitation. It essentially tells him that everything is not lost, and there is still a chance of finding Mukti from the evil consequences of his past deeds. The basic idea that is being stressed here is that every man or woman gets a chance for redemption in life, and it is another matter how he or she looks at it or even recognizes that opportunity. The chance is there, but that chance is not to be played fools around with; it has to be used judiciously. It should not be used to hoodwink the world and escape punishment, but for true repentance and mending of ways. A man should not revert back to his bad old habits once he is assured of pardon for his past mischief.

The forgiveness is meant for those who sincerely wish to atone for their sinful past and lead a reformed life. This pardon is not for them who wish to exploit the magnanimity of the scriptures to hide behind them to escape punishment by claiming that now since they have read such and such Upanishad which grants pardon they ought to be forgiven from being punished, only to revert to their bad old ways once pardoned. Even in modern society first time offenders are given a chance at reformation and change, but any such law granting reprieve should not be misused. Habitual offenders deserve no mercy whatsoever.

This is essentially what the aim of this Upanishad is; this is the implied meaning when it says that even such horrible sins as murder would be excused. The subtle and implied intentions of the scriptures should be correctly interpreted to really benefit from them, and not to use them to justify reckless behaviour, as that would be tantamount to killing their spirit. That these wise principles enshrined in the scriptures would be twisted and turned on their heads by selfish men is not their fault.

Refer also to Canto 4, verse no. 14, and Canto 6, verse nos. 8-9, 13-18 of this Upanishad. In Canto 6, verse no. 14 it is said that a Srotiya Brahmin, i.e. a Brahmin who has studied the Vedas, commits theft of gold or gems belonging to others, he is also pardoned from this sin. But again it must be noted that this pardoning of the sin is applicable only if he decides to repent and take the spiritual recourse of surrendering before the supreme Lord and repeats his divine Mantra to purify his inner-self. But again, as in all the previous cases of sins being forgiven, the regret must be sincere, and the desire to repent and relent most honest, in order to benefit from this pardoning clause prescribed in the Upanishad. Frankly, this would involve accepting one's guilt and returning the gold or the gem to the rightful owner if it is at all possible. If that would mean punishment of some kind, then it has to be accepted. The provision of granting a pardon as prescribed in this Upanishad should not be taken as a blanket license for committing theft and evil deeds, for that is not at all the intention. The pardoning is given as a caveat that the sin is never repeated under any circumstance in the future, that one is sincerely repentant and needs an avenue for redemption, and if it is at all possible then all attempts must be made to compensate the offended party to the best of one's ability.

This forgiveness from sins has been prescribed in a number of other Upanishads as well—for instance the Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 12; the Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 10; the Ganapati Upanishad, verse no. 17; the Devi Upanishad, verse no. 32; the Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 13; the Dattatreya Upanishad, Section 3, stanza 4; and the Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 39.]

Thus ends Canto 2 of Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 2—Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad

Canto 3

[This Canto describes how the four letters of the ethereal Mantra OM had manifested themselves as the four brothers Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan. Then it goes on to assert that Sita, the consort of Lord Ram, is a manifestation of Mother Nature known as the primordial Prakriti. Intertwined in this discussion are metaphysical concepts regarding the four states of consciousness such as the Jagrat or waking, Swapna or dreaming, Sushupta or deep sleep, and Turiya or post deep sleep or the early stage of transcendental existence.]

1. The 1st syllable of the cosmic, divine, sublime and ethereal word OM is the Sanskrit alphabet 'A' (अ) corresponding to the English alphabet 'A' and pronounced as *a pen, son*. The son of Sumitra, i.e. Laxman¹ (the younger brother of Lord Ram), who enchants the entire world by his bewitching charm and pleasant demeanours, is a manifestation of this letter. In Vedant, he represents the Jagrat² or the 'waking state of consciousness' of the Atma (or the soul). In this state of existence, the Atma is aware of the external gross world at large, and therefore it is recognized as 'Vishwa'—literally meaning 'the world'. [Amongst the 4 chief names of Vishnu, he represents the name 'Sankarshan'.]

The 2nd syllable of OM is the Sanskrit alphabet 'Oo' (उ) corresponding to its English counterpart 'U'. Shatrughan³, who is known for his stupendous 'Tej', or his potentials, powers, dynamism and glory as the vanquisher of enemies, is a manifestation of this letter. In Vedantic terms, he represents the Swapna⁴ or the 'dream state of consciousness'. In this state of existence, the Atma is unaware of the external gross world at large, and is centered on the subtle world of the inner-self and the sub-conscious which is powerful and full of energy that more often than not remains hidden, dormant and concealed during the waking state. This state is therefore recognized as the 'Taijasa'—literally meaning 'energetic, vibrant, full of vigour and dynamism' even in a subtle form. Another reason for it being called 'Taijasa' is that it can 'dream and imagine' things of stupendous varieties and dimensions which the creature cannot ever hope to see or conceive in his mind when he is awake. [Amongst the four chief names of Vishnu, he stands for 'Pradumna'.] (1).

[Note—The four states of existence of consciousness: These four states have been described in a number of Upanishads—viz. (a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Trishikhi Brahman Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 149-150; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 2/1/16-20, 4/3/9-38; Subalo-panishad, Canto 4 full as well as Canto 9, verse no. 1-7; Paingalo-panishad, 2/11-16; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4-2/5; Turiyateet Upanishad. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse

no. 59-64, 72; Canto 4, verse no. 11-20; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1, 20-21; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 4; Shaarirak Upanishad, verse no. 14; Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11. (c) Atharva Veda tradition—Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 1, 24-26; Canto 6, verse no. 3-4, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-16, 19-20; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 (in relation with Sri Ram and others), and verse nos. 5-8 (in relation with the Atma); Param Hans Upanishad, paragraph no. 6.

¹Refer note of verse no. 5 of this Canto 3 for an exposition on Laxman being equivalent to the Jagrat state.

²Briefly, the *Jagrat state* is the 1st stage or the waking of consciousness. During this state, a creature's sense organs that constitute its gross body are active and they receive inputs from the physical material world outside which they in turn transfer to the mind which forms the creature's subtle body. This mind then filters through the clutter of information, then either orders the organs of action to respond accordingly, or it consults its supervisor, the intellect, for advice. Meanwhile, the mind stores all the information in its data bank for future reference much like the record room of an office. The true self of the creature, the pure conscious Atma, is like the King in whose secretariat the mind and intellect work, and therefore the Atma is the final Authority which takes the final decision and is responsible for all the things done by each of these individual entities. Even as the King cannot absolve himself for the sins committed by his subjects during his rule or plead ignorance of whatever is happening in his kingdom though he is not directly involved in them or in the day to day routine work of the kingdom as he stays in his palace and cannot be practically expected to control each movement in his kingdom, but he is morally responsible for them and cannot deny this responsibility. Similarly, the Atma of the creature is responsible for each and every thing that the creature does though the Atma is limited to its palace-like residence in the heart of the creature. So, the otherwise immaculate Atma is accused of things that body or mind of the creature does because the Atma is at the helm of affairs.

During this Jagrat state, the Atma interacts with the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of the gross body (i.e. the physical body). The sense organs of perception of the body collect information from the external world and pass them over to the mind, which in turn processes them and passes necessary instructions to the organs of action on the one hand, and files data for future reference in its memory bank on the other hand. The mind would also refer to the intellect those things which are not routine in nature. It is the transcendental state of supreme enlightenment and self-realisation.

The Jagrat state is when the consciousness is aware of the external world of material objects, and this is made possible through the medium of the sense organs of perceptions such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which enables the creature to respectively see, hear, smell, taste and feel this world. The creature's responses are carried out with the help of the organs of action such as the hands which receive, the legs that take him to the desired place, the mouth that helps him to speak and eat, the excretory organs that helps it to eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which helps him to recreate and enjoy the sensual pleasures of the world. These organs are located in the gross body, and since the world is experienced through them, the latter is also deemed to be gross. The coordination of all the perceptions and actions is done by the mind-intellect which is the subtle part of the body.

The first stage of Jagrat or waking state of consciousness has been beautifully described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 20; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-19, 31, 34-35.

³Refer note of verse no. 6 of this Canto for an exposition on Shatrughan being equivalent to the Swapna state.

⁴The *Swapna* state—Next comes the state in which a person sleeps, and in metaphysical terms it is called *Supta*. This is the sleeping state of consciousness. Here, the creature is alive because it's Pran or the vital winds move around and remain active in its different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body such as the nerves which number seventy thousand).

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 2 very precisely describes what sleep is.

Swapna or dreaming state is the 2nd state of consciousness when the latter has withdrawn its self from being actively involved in the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of perception and action. But the mind does not sleep and remains active as before, though this activity is at the subtle level of the sub-conscious. Here, the consciousness remains active through the medium of the vital winds, called the various Prans present inside the body, and moves in the different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body, such as the nerves and veins etc.) which keep the mind working. Refer Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 12, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 18; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 20; Krishna Yajur Veda's Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 58-60; Rig Veda's Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 19.

This Pran is deemed to be synonymous with the life factors and consciousness in the body as well as with the latent fire element present inside the body which gives the energy, strength and vitality to the body to live and remain active. If it were not for the fire element (Tej) and the wind element (Pran), the consciousness (Atma, the 'self') would have found it difficult to live in the body. In fact, the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 3 clearly states that the Pran in its manifestation as Agni or fire.

Since no external stimuli is being received from the outside world, the mind begins to replay what is stored in its memory bank and uses its stupendous abilities to imagine and recreate situations and circumstances in an imaginary world of dreams. Since the Atma living in the causal body depends upon the mind living in the subtle body to feel or sense anything pertaining to this world, for all practical purposes therefore the Atma begins to live in this new world of dreams conjured up by the mind and gets as involved in it as it was during the waking state. Since the mind is active here, the man remembers some of his dreams even when he wakes up. So as far as the Atma is concerned, the two states of waking and dreaming mean the same—the world exists for it in both these two states.]

2. The 3rd syllable 'Ma' (म) of the cosmic, divine, sublime and ethereal word OM corresponds to the English letter 'M'. It has manifested itself as Bharat¹ who was most realised, enlightened, erudite and wise. According to Vedant, he represents the 3rd stage of existence of consciousness, called the 'Sushupta'² state which is the 'deep sleep state of consciousness'. In this state of existence, the Atma is unaware of both the external world at large as well as the subtle world that exists in a person's dreams. In other words, the Atma is left undisturbed and free to be centered around its own truthful self, which is enlightened and wise, hence recognized as 'Pragya'—literally meaning 'wise, awakened, enlightened, aware, erudite and sagacious'. [He represents the 3rd name 'Anirudha' of Vishnu.]

The 4th half-syllable added as a tail end of the 2nd letter 'U' is called the 'Ardha Maatra'. This represents Sri Ram³ who is an embodiment of eternal bliss, peace and tranquility that is associated with Brahm-realisation, as well as the one who is most learned and highly expert in the scriptures. He symbolises the 4th state of consciousness called 'Turiya'⁴ which is marked by supreme and eternal bliss, or the high quality of bliss of self-realisation that is called 'Brahmaanand' attained during

the last stage of 'Samadhi' by Yogis (ascetics). [Sri Ram represents the 4th name 'Vasudeo' of Vishnu. Samadhi is a trance-like state of bliss and ecstasy that is obtained when one reaches certain high level of super consciousness when all grossness is eliminated and only the sublime survives.] (2).

[Note—¹Refer note of verse no. 7 of this Canto for an exposition on Bharat being equivalent to Sushupta state.

²The *Sushupta* or deep sleep state of consciousness—Beyond the second state of existence of consciousness is the third eclectic state called the *Sushupta* or deep sleep state. This has been elaborately dealt with in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 19; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 14-15, 19, 21-30. During this stage the creature does not dream.

The Sushupta or the deep sleep state of consciousness is the 3rd state in which the mind has also become defunct, and the Atma has withdrawn itself into the exclusive domain of the causal body and lives in seclusion, disconnected with the external world because of the non-involvement of either the gross body or the subtle body. Here it is surrounded by the space of the subtle sky around the heart, called the Hridya Akash. During this state of existence, the vital winds, called the Pran or 'life' of the creature, keep on moving in the different Naadis (various ducts such as nerves and veins etc.) as during the dreaming state so as to keep the body alive as is evident from the fact that all the subtle and imperceptible functions of the inner organs of the body such as the liver, kidneys, heart, pancreas, digestive organs, lungs etc. continue uninterrupted as before, because if they cease to function the body would die. It is the mind now that has gone in a defunct state. But this phase is temporary and shows the true nature and fundamental characteristic of the Atma, which is blissful and peaceful, contented and fulfilled, not feeling restless and perplexed in any manner whatsoever because it is now not being disturbed by the mind's constant nagging. That is why a sound asleep man does not want anything, he does not feel anything, he is not worried about anything, he is not concerned about anything, and he does not remember anything. That is also why one feels very relaxed and refreshed after even a short deep sleep when the mind and the body both find their rest.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 6 describes in clear terms why a creature stops dreaming.

³Refer note of verse no. 8 of this Canto for an exposition on Ram being equivalent to the Turiya state.

⁴The *Turiya* state—Then comes the 4th state of existence of the Atma, and it is known as *Turiya* state. This state is reached when the third state becomes a perpetual phenomenon instead of being only a temporary phase. Once this state of Turiya is reached, then even though the man might wake up from sleep and appear to be going about his normal duties in a routine manner in this world, his pure consciousness remains aloof and distanced from the sense organs of perception and actions as well as from the mind. This is the 'transcendental state' of existence of consciousness, and it goes beyond the third state of Sushupta or deep sleep state of consciousness. Here the spiritual aspirant lives in a state of perpetual Samadhi. That is, he remains in a constant state of blissfulness and meditation though he lives in this physical world and goes about his normal affairs like an ordinary man.

During this 4th state called 'Turiya', the Atma acquires all the characters of the earlier three stages, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleeping states in their individual form as well as in a combined and composite way. In this state of spiritual existence, the consciousness exhibits all the traits of the earlier three states at the same time along with the unique traits which would obviously be a net result of the combined affect of all the individual traits that are so unique to each of the three earlier states of existence consciousness—viz. the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep state.

The 4th state of existence of the consciousness or Atma is also called the 'Turiya Chaitanya state'. In this state, the creature exists in its purest form as the pure consciousness which is undiluted, uninterrupted and unpolluted by any impulses or inputs from the external world. This results in its pristine and immaculate form as 'consciousness' to shine through (much like the flame of the candle which shines with all its brightness and splendour once the tainted glass covering around it is removed). This consciousness is the true 'self' of the creature and its real identity.

Thus, it is the Atma or the pure consciousness as the true 'self' of the creature that is the witness of the existence of the other three states in which the creature lives. This 'self' or Atma is imperishable and without a birth or beginning. This is because the other three states continue to appear and disappear in a rhythmic cycle as the creature wakes up to face the world after his phase of sleep is over, only to go back to sleep again when it is exhausted, and wake up again refreshed and rejuvenated from sleep. But the fourth state is like the Sun in the sky which is steady and shines constantly upon the world and lights it up. This Sun is unaffected by anything happening in this world and to this world, and remains completely dispassionate and detached from anything mundane and terrestrial. Nights and days appear and disappear in a cyclic manner, but the Sun remains the same. During the night it is erroneously assumed that the Sun is no more, but as science has proved the Sun is there in the sky though it might not be visible to the creature during that period of time called the 'night' as it is shining on the outer side of the globe. The day is comparable to the waking state of consciousness, the moon-light night to the dreaming state of consciousness when a man is able to see this world but with a different light, while the dark night when nothing is visible is comparable to the deep sleep state of consciousness when nothing of the external world is visible.

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 64, describes what the practical implication of this Turiya state of consciousness is.

The Subala-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 9, verses 1-7 elaborately describes the fourth state of existence of the consciousness called the Turiya state. It says that the bliss and happiness, collectively called 'Anand', which is found in the 4th state of existence of the consciousness called 'Turiya' when one experiences and witnesses the divine supreme transcendental Being (Brahm), also ends with Turiya. It is the 'final frontier', the ultimate goal that the soul strives to reach. So, when the fount of bliss (Anand) is reached in the Turiya state, nothing more is left to be achieved or acquired. As soon as a man abandons this supreme state of existence and wakes up into this mundane existential material world, he immediately loses that bliss which he was enjoying in the Turiya state. The word Turiya means 'fourth quarter', and once this segment is reached after crossing the first three quarters, there is nothing beyond it and the complete cycle is achieved. There is accomplishment of all that has to be accomplished; there is the 'final coming home, full cycle' for the soul. Everything comes to a full stop.]

3. Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram, represents the cosmic Shakti of Brahm. This Shakti is a personified form of the cosmic dynamic energy, powers and authority of the Supreme Being by which he creates, sustains and concludes this entire creation along with all its inhabitants. [That is why this Shakti had to accompany Brahm in the latter's manifestation as Ram so that the evil demonic elements exemplified by the demon king Ravana could be got rid of. This is because Brahm utilises his cosmic Shakti or his dynamic powers of an astounding profundity to do anything. The Shakti carries out the orders of the Supreme Being and acts on his behalf. So, when Brahm decided to come down to earth to eliminate the evil, pervert and negative forces of creation which had become dominant and were creating insurmountable problems for the rest of the subjects of the vast realm of the Supreme Being, thereby stifling

Dharma and all righteousness and auspiciousness, the Shakti accompanied the Lord to help him fulfill his objectives. It is just like the more practical example of a king or an emperor being accompanied by his army and generals when he goes to some part of his vast and extended kingdom or empire to restore the rule of law and overcome some savage enemy who had been tyrannizing, causing horrors and perpetrating cruelty on the helpless subjects of the king or emperor. The king or the emperor actually does nothing in physical sense, but it is the army and its generals as well as the ministers of the sovereign who actually do what is needed to be done on his behalf. Similarly, Shakti, in the form of Sita, accompanied Brahm when the latter decided to come down to earth as an incarnation in the form of Lord Ram.] (3).

[Note—An entire Upanishad named ‘Sita Upanishad’ of the Atharva Veda tradition is dedicated to Sita. It is included in this volume.]

4. That cosmic, divine, sublime and primordial energy (referred to in verse no. 3) is called Sita. She represents the ‘Naad and Bindu’ represented by the ‘dot’ and the ‘crescent’ (◌◌) respectively that is put on the sign of the ethereal Mantra OM (ॐ) representing the supreme Brahm or Pranav, and without which the word OM remains un-adorned. [This mark is like a crown of OM. Even as any king, who is the sovereign of his realm, acquires his powers because of the crown on his head, Brahm also acquires his stupendous dynamic powers and majestic potentials because of this divine cosmic energy called ‘Shakti’ that he possesses. It is this Shakti that has revealed itself in the body of Sita.]

Erudite and wise ones also recognize her (Sita) as the ‘Mool Prakriti’ because she is a manifestation of the essential, primordial, primary Nature which is a basic component of this creation. This ‘Prakriti’ as well as the ‘Shakti’ are inseparable from and an integral part of the cosmic Authority known as the supreme Brahm. While Shakti is the dynamism of Brahm, Prakriti is the revelation of this Shakti at the cosmic level of creation.

When this Brahm assumed a visible form as Lord Ram, it is natural that the inseparable aspects of Brahm, i.e. Prakriti and Shakti, would also reveal themselves simultaneously. Hence, Sita is invariably and unequivocally associated with Lord Ram even as Shakti and Prakriti are associated with Brahm. It is this Brahm who is personified in the form of Lord Ram, and it is Shakti that is personified in the form of Sita (4).

5. [Verse nos. 5-8 that describes the four Paads or limbs or aspects of Brahm, the supreme transcendental divine Being, as corresponding to the four subtle sounds of the ethereal word OM. These sounds correspond to the four letters A, O, U and M that together constitute OM. Since the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ of the Jiva, the living being, is a microcosmic form of the Supreme Being, and since everything in creation is a manifestation of Brahm and nothing else, this Upanishad then goes on to explain how the four states of existence in this creation—known as the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or the dreaming state, the Sushupta or the deep sleep state, and the Turiya or the post-Sushupta or the transcendental state—correspond to these four letters of OM as well as to the four Paads of Brahm.

To understand Brahm in a holistic way, all of them have to be understood in a comprehensive and integrated manner, and not in a fractured manner. It is important to note here that OM is a monosyllabic sound, like a continuous rumble of distant thunder or the trundling sound of a running train, or the continuous notes played on the harmonium. But even as a musician knows the finer notes and tones being played

on the harmonium although the general sound produced by the instrument appear to be one continuous stream of music, those sages and seers of the past who were highly realised and expert in meditation and contemplation could discern the finer sound components of the otherwise uniform sound of the ethereal word OM that has its genesis in the vibrations produced in the cosmic ether signaling the presence of energy and dynamism in a most subtle and sublime form in the background of creation. This they named Pranav or the cosmic vibration of life that generated the energy that drives the dynamo of life in this creation. This was also called the cosmic Consciousness because it was able to inject vibrancy, dynamism and life into the otherwise inane and lifeless primary ingredients of creation.

The four components of OM were envisioned as the four phonetic sounds of the Sanskrit language corresponding to the alphabets A, O, U and M of the English language. Since everything in this creation is a revelation of one Brahm, it follows that the entire creation represents these four components of OM, and that the entire creation also represents the four Paads of Brahm.

Further, the Consciousness is regarded as having four primary states of existence—viz. the Jagrat or waking, Swapna or dreaming, Sushupta or deep sleep, and Turiya or transcendental state beyond the Sushupta. Therefore, these four letter-components of OM as well as the four Paads of Brahm are represented by these four states of existence of Consciousness.

These are the basic points that are being elucidated and expounded upon in the following verses of this Canto.]

The cosmic, divine, sublime and ethereal monosyllabic word OM is known as 'Akshar' as it is imperishable and immortal. [The Sanskrit word 'Akshar' has two meanings—one is a 'letter' and the other is something that 'does not decay, is imperishable and eternal'. OM is likened to a 'letter' because it is a monosyllabic sound. For the purpose of study and analysis of its magnificent divine aspects it is hypothetically split into three (A, U, M), four (A, O, U, M) and even six (A, O, U, M, Chandra Bindu and Ardha Maatra) components. It ought to be remembered that OM is not an ordinary monosyllable, but it is the Beej Mantra for the supreme transcendental Authority of creation and the cosmic Consciousness known as 'Brahm' that is at the root of everything that exists. This 'cosmic Consciousness' is known as Parmatma, the supreme Atma, the Brahm, the Supreme Being, at the macrocosmic level of creation, and as the Atma, the individual soul of the creature known as the Jiva, the living being, at the microcosmic level of creation.]

The entire visible world is but a manifestation/revelation of OM. In other words, the world is a visible form of the various aspects of OM (and since OM is the Beej Mantra for Brahm, this world is a visible manifestation of the latter). The visible physical world establishes and makes evident or visible the magnificent and stupendous glory of that invisible supreme Authority of creation known as the sublime Consciousness or the divine Brahm that is represented by the ethereal sound of OM.

Whatever existed, whatever exists and whatever shall ever exist in the future, as well as any other dimension or aspect of time and space which is beyond these three, are also nothing else but a manifestation or an extension of OM as a representative of Brahm. It is all-inclusive and comprehensive in nature.

Surely, everything is Brahm and a manifestation of Brahm, and nothing else. Therefore, it is also OM in a visible and manifested form. [Since everything is a manifestation of Brahm, and OM is a word used to indicate Brahm as it is a Beej

Mantra of Brahm, it follows that the entire creation is a symbol of OM in its physical form. This eclectic world view of creation creates a high level of equanimity of thought, and establishes uniformity and universality in this creation. It removes all causes or basis of dichotomies, schisms, frictions, ill-will and jealousy, thereby instilling harmony and calmness in the entire creation just like the case of the word OM which is treated as a monosyllabic sound though it has four sound components that are perfectly integrated in its sound structure.

Hence, though we assign different names and categories to different units of creation for the purpose of dealing with them in day-to-day life, it will be wise and enlightened to regard them as an integral and an inseparable part of one wholesome cosmic entity for all practical purposes.

As has been said above, OM is the Beej Mantra of Brahm. Brahm is known and recognized by this word OM. They are synonymous with each other. If this world is a visible manifestation of Brahm and an extension of its glory, it follows that the world is actually a manifestation and an extension of OM and its glory. Again, since Brahm is pure Consciousness, it follows that what is basic to this world is 'consciousness' and nothing else. In other words, if 'Brahm' and 'consciousness' are removed from this world, nothing worthy remains in it. Hence, Brahm or cosmic Consciousness is the 'Tattwa' of creation; it is the essential and basis unit of creation around which the rest of the edifice of creation is moulded.

OM has four basic sounds—viz. the sound of the letter 'A' (as in *son*) which represents the first aspect of Brahm symbolizing the initiation of creation, 'Oo or U' (like the letter 'O' in the word *go*) stands for the second aspect of Brahm and corresponds to the development, expansion and growth of the world, 'M' (as in *mum*) stands for the third aspect of Brahm and corresponds to the conclusion of the world, and finally the prolonged nasal sound of 'M' that is made after OM has been pronounced completely and the mouth closed stands for the fourth aspect of Brahm, and it corresponds to the time between the last creation and the beginning of a new phase. Hence, it naturally follows that the entire creation is nothing but a revelation of the four subtle and most esoteric aspects of the supreme Consciousness known as Brahm that is envisioned in the form of a sound equivalent to that made by saying the monosyllabic word 'OM'. This is why OM is regarded as the Beej Mantra for Brahm just like we have the monosyllabic word 'Raam/Raan(g)' as the Beej Mantra for Lord Ram because the Lord's name 'Ram' is based on a single Sanskrit letter 'Ra' as in the word *run*.

The four letters of OM, i.e. A, O, U and M, exist only in a hypothetical plane and are employed for the express purpose of analysis and study. It must be remembered that OM is a monosyllabic sound that is one, continuous, and unbroken sound. These letters have been imagined just for the purpose of understand OM. This instance is cited to explain how the entire creation and the four states of existence of consciousness are indistinguishable from one another when we consider the entire creation in a holistic and wholesome manner. Similarly, this also explains how Brahm is one single indivisible and immutable whole though it has been said to have four Paads in the present Upanishad as well as in other Upanishads.]

The world is a visible and gross manifestation of what is essentially invisible, sublime, subtle and supreme entity—i.e. the visible gross physical world is a manifestation of Brahm who is invisible, subtle, sublime and supreme. The visible and verifiable world proves that there is something beyond the spectrum of visibility that is real and truthful, and of which it is an image. That essential element which forms the 'soul' and the 'basic identity' of the world is called its 'Atma'. Since it is

Brahm that is at the core of all aspects of creation, it follows that Brahm is also the 'Atma or soul' or 'essence and fundamental aspect' of creation, or the 'Tattwa' of creation—both at the macrocosmic level of creation, in which case it is called the 'Paramatma' (the supreme and transcendental Atma), as well as at the microcosmic level of creation, in which case it is simply called the Atma of the individual creature.

This Atma or Parmatma has four Paads or limbs or aspects corresponding to the four Paads of Brahm represented by the four sounds of OM. Again, since the Atma is nothing but pure consciousness, it follows that the four Paads of the Atma or Brahm represent the four states of existence of the 'consciousness'¹.

[Although the supreme Brahm is indivisible, immutable and eternal, and it cannot be fractioned or partitioned, we hypothetically divide its entire being into four stages or states of existence just in order to understand or grasp its full form or nature like the monosyllabic sound OM that has been split into four components just for the purpose of study and analysis. That is, this division is done to facilitate study and comprehension of an entity that is usually beyond the reach of the mind and the senses.

The universal sound OM is split into four components A, O, U and M. These are regarded as being representatives of the four aspects of creation—viz. the origin, the development, the expansion and growth, and the conclusion respectively. They also respectively represent the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, Sushupta or deep sleep state, and Turiya or post-Sushupta state. This latter concept is explained below.]

The supreme transcendental Atma or the cosmic Consciousness, also known as 'Brahm' and represented by the word OM, has so-called four states of existence—viz. (a) The waking state of consciousness called 'Jagrat' (or Vishwa), (b) the dream state of consciousness called 'Swapna' (or Taijasa), (c) the deep sleep state of consciousness called 'Pragna', and (d) the 'Turiya' state of consciousness which is synonymous with the supreme blissful state of consciousness called 'pure Brahm', and which is beyond the earlier three states of existence of consciousness.

To begin with, the 1st state of consciousness, called the 'First Paad' or the first leg of the conscious Atma, is being described here in this verse as follows—

During the waking state of consciousness, the entire manifest gross world is the Atma's play-ground. The consciousness is spread in all the directions of the gross world because during this waking state of its existence it is aware of the entire length and breath of this world and all its happenings. Since this world is gross, the Atma during this waking state also becomes gross in nature because of its association with this gross world. The Atma assumes the basic gross character of this world as it is invariably influenced by the gross nature of its surrounding habitat with which it has to keep constant contact. During the Jagrat state, the Atma of the creature interacts with the physical gross world in which the creature lives. The Atma keeps company with the material sense objects of this world through the sense organs of the body of the creature. This contact is bound to have its influence upon the Atma, and since the world is gross and artificial, since it is dominated by the three Gunas (Sata, Raja and Tama) in varying proportions, as well as by Maya (delusions) along with its own array of problems, it follows that this influence is not positive at all, it is not conducive to the Atma's welfare and peace. Such is the influence of the Jagrat state that the Atma becomes restless and agitated; it forgets that its primary nature is one of being eternally peaceful and rested. In brief, the Atma acquires some degree of grossness and a tainted character so typical of this world.

From another angle this concept can be understood as follows—the conscious Atma, which essentially has no form and attributes, manifests its self in the form of the visible world, and resides in all the forms that this world takes. This is because Atma and Brahm are synonymous, and it is Brahm that is revealed in the form of the world. That is, all the living creatures of the world have the same Atma or pure consciousness in them. In other words, the Atma assumes the gross body of all the living beings, and it is with these bodies that the Atma of the individual interacts with the world of material sense objects. The Atma becomes aware of the presence of the various sense objects of the world by the medium of the sense organs of the gross body. These organs help the Atma to perceive the world and respond to it. That is why they are called organs of perception and organs of action of the Atma. The Atma is linked to the world through the sense organs that collectively make up the gross body of the creature.

Hence, during the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness, the Atma has spread its tentacles in the external material world and its sense objects which are primarily gross in nature. It lives in this world just like it lives inside the body of the individual creature. Therefore, the gross world becomes its de-facto body while the Atma exists in the Jagrat (waking) state. It begins to identify its self with the gross body (and forgets that it is most sublime and subtle in nature, and is the invisible consciousness that has no form). During the Jagrat state, the Atma is not only aware of the gross world but relates to it very intimately.

Hence, it is metaphorically said that the seven worlds² are the Atma's gross body during the Jagrat or waking state of consciousness—it physically lives in them, it mentally and emotionally relates to them, it is involved in them, and it is attached to them. During the Jagrat state, the Atma thinks that the external world is all that there is to it in existence, that the truth about which the scriptures speak is the external physical world with which it physically interacts during this state. But the deluded Atma forgets that the scriptures also speak that this world is an imagination of the mind because it has its origin in the mental wish of the supreme Creator to create something, that therefore it is artificial, deceptive, deluding and entrapping by its inherent nature. It becomes difficult for the Atma to realise the truth of this conclusion of the scriptures as it physically interacts with the gross world and feels its present in tangible terms. Therefore, the Atma takes to this world like fish to water, not realizing that this plunge would land it in a grave bog of slush and quicksand. Therefore, the otherwise immaculate and untainted Atma, which is regarded as the pure consciousness personified, becomes tainted and corrupted by all the characteristic negativities, unholy influences and demeaning qualities typical of this world.

[The seven worlds represent all forms of the living creation, and all forms of creatures that live in them. Hence, they symbolically refer to all forms of life where the Atma or the pure consciousness is aware of the existence of the external gross world—even in a rudimentary form.]

The Atma uses its nineteen symbolic 'mouths'³ to eagerly devour or passionately taste and imbibe the sweetness of the external world and the numerous comforts and pleasures it has to offer.

[Even as a man uses his mouth to partake delicious eatables, this Atma uses its so-called mouths to 'taste or sample' the extraordinary charms and juicy succulence of the external world, its material comforts and the pleasures of the sense objects. And just like the man gets addicted to some tasty eatable, the Atma gets hooked to the world and its charms. It then goes out to hammer and tong to grasp the world and 'devour it' in a symbolic manner by remaining engrossed in it and thinking of nothing

else but this world like a hungry man let loose on a dining table. The Atma gets hooked to the world and its material sense objects. Rather, the world attaches itself to the Atma like the leech which sucks the blood of wisdom, erudition, rationality, enlightenment and truthfulness out of the Atma, making the latter lose its pristine pure, uncorrupted and blissful nature. The Atma acts like a greedy bee that hops from flower to flower sucking a bit of nectar from this and a bit from that. It also behaves like a greedy bird that hops from one fruit to another on a tree, nibbling a bit of all of them till the end of the day, resulting in destroying all the fruits, littering the ground under the tree, but still remaining unsatisfied, and feeling tired at the end of the day.]

That supreme and sovereign entity which enjoys this gross world and is aware of its existence is called 'Vaishwanar'⁴. This is the supreme Brahm's first Paad or aspect. It is also the first form or state of existence of the Atma. (5).

[Note—¹The *four Paads of Brahm* is a subject of discussion, exposition and elucidation in a number of Upanishads. These four Paads of Brahm have been explained in (i) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda's Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6; Canto 8, paragraph no. 4; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-19.

²The *seven subtle forms of the world* are represented by the seven words pronounced by Brahma, the creator, at the time of creation. They are the following—Bhu (भूः), Bhuvaha (भुवः), Swaha (स्वः), Maha (महः), Janaha (जनः), Tapaha (तपः), Satyamaha (सत्यमः).

According to Brahmaand Puran (BP) and Vaaman Puran (VP) there are the following lokas— 'Bhu' (भूः) or earth [BP-3,4,2-18]; 'Bhuvaha' (भुवः) or the space between the earth and the heaven [BP-3,4,2-19]; 'Swaha' (स्वः) or the heavens known as Brahma's abode; the space beyond the earth's atmosphere; cosmic wind represented by the solar wind blows here [BP-3,4,2-20]; 'Maha' (महः) or the world created by Brahma pronouncing the divine word Maha meaning the great heaven or the outer space; it is believed that great sages and seers stay here; it is 1000 Yojans or appx. 8000 miles away from the Swaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-21; VP-52,21-22]; 'Janaha' (जनः), so called because it was to be inhabited by the humans and the cows [BP-3,4,2-22; VP-52, 22]; 'Tapaha' (तपः) or the Loka where great amount of austerity and penances are done; it is said to be 60 million Yojans or appx. 60 x 8 million miles away from the Janaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-24; VP-52, 23]; and 'Satyam' (सत्यम्) or the truthful heaven where the supreme Lord has his abode; it is 300 million Yojans or appx. 300 x 8 million miles beyond the Tapaha Loka [BP-3,4,2-25; VP-52, 24].

According to some legends, the distances of various mythological Lokas from the earth or Bhu Loka is as follows—the Bhuvha Loka is situated at a distance of 25 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Swaha Loka is situated at a distance of 50 Lakh Yojans from earth, the Maharloka is situated at a distance of 1 Crore Yojans from earth, the Jana Loka is situated at a distance of 2 Crore Yojans from earth, the Tapa Loka is situated at a distance of 4 Crore Yojans from earth, and the Satya Loka is situated at a distance of 8 Crore Yojans from earth.

1 Yojan = a distance of 4, 8 and 16 miles according to different calculations. It is usually taken to be equivalent to 8 miles.

1 Lakh = one hundred thousand (1,00,000). 1 Crore = ten Lakhs (10 x 1,00,000).

The seven Bhuvans or Lokas according to the Vedantic view are the following:-- the seven organs of perception situated in the region of the head —viz. the two eyes +

two ears + two nostrils + one tongue/mouth = seven. Refer *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8.

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 4 also refers to these seven Lokas as being a part of the first Paad or leg or limb or aspect or facet of the cosmic Brahm.

³The *nineteen symbolic mouths* of the Atma are the different organs, both gross and the subtle through which it interacts with the external world and recognizes it at all. These are as follows—(a) the five organs of perception such as eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin; (b) the five organs of action such as the hand, leg, mouth, anus/excretory and genitals; (c) the five Prans or the vital winds such as the main Pran which controls the very life of the creature and all other functions including the other Prans or vital winds, the Apaana which controls digestion and excretion, the Samaana which helps in distribution of nourishment and blood equally throughout the body, the Vyaana which control the activities of other winds and helps in maintaining pressure and balance in the body, and the Udaana which controls the power to rise and move around; and (d) the four ‘Antaha-karans’ are the four sheaths that surround the Atma and form its subtle forms; these are the food sheath, the vital air sheath, the mental sheath and the intellectual sheath. [According to the Shaarirak Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 4, the four aspects of the ‘Antahakaran’ (the inner-self consisting of the subtle body; the conscience; the sub-conscious) consists of the following four units—viz. the Mana (mind), the Buddhi (intellect), the Chitta (the faculty of reasoning, thought, understanding, attention, the sub-conscious etc.), and Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness and the accompanying arrogance and hypocrisy; lack of humility, simplicity and piety).]

These are called the so-called ‘mouths’ of the soul because it is through them that the soul partakes of this world. The entity whose gross body enjoys and experiences this world is called the ‘Viraat’ at the macrocosmic level and ‘Vishwa’ at the microcosmic level. This is the 1st step to understand the supreme Soul called ‘Parmeshwar’ or the supreme Lord known as Brahm.

⁴*Vaishwanar Atma*—References: (a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 21; Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse no. 15. (b) Atharva Veda’s Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 3.

The term *Vaishwanar* in simple words means the form of Brahm that is as large and as vast as the universe, enclosing it from all sides like a moat of a fort, and even existing beyond it. This all-inclusive, all-pervading and all-encompassing macrocosmic form of Brahm is the ‘Vishwa’ or the world because this world is a manifestation of Brahm, it is Brahm revealed in its myriad and diverse forms, and it is the glory of Brahm on display. If fact, if one wishes to witness Brahm, he must observe Brahm at play in this world itself. The physical aspect of Brahm in the form of the visible world is equivalent to the Jagrat state of consciousness because it is in this state that the creature sees the world. Here the word ‘creature’ refers to his Atma or soul which is pure consciousness and his true self. This Atma is called Vaishwanar because, like Brahm, it is manifested as all forms of life in this world. [Refer Mandukya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 3.]

The Atma is called a Vaishwanar because the man becomes aware of the world when he sees it with his own eyes. This is why it is called the ‘waking’ state of consciousness. The presence of the consciousness known as the Vaishwanar in the eye is a metaphor for this waking state because when a man ‘sees’ anything only when he is awake and not while he sleeps.

The word ‘Vaishwanar’ has many connotations as follows—(i) The fire used in sacrificial rituals. (ii) The microcosmic pure consciousness that resides inside the body of the creature and helps it to digest food. (iii) Vedanta says that it is the pure consciousness that is a fraction of the Supreme Consciousness, and it resides in the body of the creature even as the Supreme Consciousness resides in the macrocosmic vast body of Nature or creation. It is representative of the supreme, transcendental

entity that is the Lord and the primary cause and the governing authority of the whole creation. (iv) Since creatures have myriad forms, it has as many forms as the creatures themselves, incorporating all of them in it. Hence, it is also called 'Viraat Purush' (which means the vast, colossus, all incorporating, all-pervading, almighty form of the microcosmic Atma of the creature as well as the macrocosmic Atma of the creation; it is measureless, infinite and eternal). This is the subtle form of 'Vaishwanar'. (v) The gross manifestation of this 'Vaishwanar' is the 'Annamaya Kosh' or the food sheath which is one of the five sheaths enclosing the Atma of the creature. (vi) Its state of existence is defined as the 'waking state of consciousness'. (vii) The word also means—relating to or belonging to all men, omnipresent, known and worshipped everywhere, universal, general, common, complete, immutable, full in number, a collective noun for all the Gods, one who is all commanding and almighty.

In verse no. 1 it has been said the *Laxman* is equivalent to the Jagrat state of consciousness. Now let us examine the similarity between Laxman and this state. Laxman is an incarnation of the Seshnath, the legendary serpent who holds the world on its hood. Hence Laxman is the bearer of the world, and therefore called the Vaishwanar. By extension he also holds the seven worlds; their very existence depends upon them being supported by the Seshnath or Laxman—hence, these seven worlds are like part of his vast macrocosmic body.

He is always vigilant and alert, ever ready to serve Lord Ram and take care of his needs; he is well aware of the happenings in this world, and the Lord is made aware of them through Laxman—hence he represents awareness of the external world by the Atma, and therefore symbolizes the Jagrat state or the waking state of consciousness. Laxman is well versed in all the spheres of knowledge which is said to have nineteen branches, hence he has nineteen mouths which imply that he has the ability to learn and teach others all these nineteen branches of knowledge. They are the following—the four Vedas such as Rik/Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva, the five sub-Vedas such as Aurveda (knowledge of herbal medicines), Dhanurveda (the science of warfare and archery), Gandharva-veda (the skills of music and dance), Artha-shastra (economics and public administration) and Darshan-shastra (philosophy), Purans and Itihasas (ancient mythological histories), Dharm-shastras (various scriptures), Nyaya (law; jurisprudence), Mimamsa (investigation, analysis and determination), , Vyakaran (grammar), Jyotish (astronomy and astrology based on mathematics), Chanda (poetry and prose), Kalpa (rituals associated with formal worship and fire sacrifices), Shiksha (education) and Nirukta (commentaries or exposition on the Vedas).

The word 'Laxman' means 'one who can see'—this is because this brother of Lord Ram can 'see' this world in its actual form, in its truthful shape, and is well-versed in all the knowledge pertaining to this creation that has taken a visible form. This means two things—one, that Laxman was well aware of the falsehood of this physical external world of sense objects, and was therefore never attracted to them. He rather preferred to serve Lord Ram with full devotion as he knew the truth of who he actually was—that Lord Ram was none else but the Supreme Being himself personified.

The second interpretation is that Laxman was the eye and ear of Lord Ram; it was Laxman who guarded the Lord from all enemies and predators while the Lord slept in his hut during his forest sojourn; it was Laxman who accompanied the Lord to the forest to act as his bodyguard and caretaker, always vigilant and careful in his duties as the Lord's watchman and lookout. It was Laxman who acted as the symbolic sense organ of perception of the Supreme Being manifested as Lord Ram during his journey through this material world of gross objects. Just like the case of the Atma that uses the sense organs of the body to reconnoitre the world and interact with it, Ram used Laxman in all his dealings with the world. The Lord's dependence upon Laxman is highlighted on numerous occasions in the epic story of Ramayana, such as for

example when Sita was stolen, it was Laxman who had encouraged Ram to make efforts to find her instead of getting depressed and dejected at this loss. Even a cursory reading of the epic would make it clear that if there was no Laxman accompanying Lord Ram, then perhaps the Lord would not have been able either to kill Ravana and retrieve Sita or even return safely back to his kingdom after the harrowing events during his forest exile.

The idea of Laxman being an equivalent of the Jagrat state of the Atma fits in well with all the events of the epic story if interpreted with metaphysical perspective. For instance, Laxman is described as getting angry quickly—this is in consonance with the practical experience we all have in this world. When a man interacts with the world, he is bound to face certain instances when he loses his cool and gets angry, because everything cannot be according to one's wishes or expectations. Hence, the character of Laxman fits in well with the state of the Atma or the Jiva during the waking state of consciousness.

Again, in the forest when Lord Ram slept peacefully inside his hermitage, Laxman guarded the outside, and it is believed that he did not sleep a wink during the fourteen long years of exile. Similarly, the Atma remains ensconced comfortably inside the gross body of the Jiva (living being), while the sense organs are the ones that reconnoiter the world outside and keep an eye on the affairs of the physical world on behalf of the Jiva.

Being an incarnation of the Seshnath, the cosmic serpent on whose coiled body Lord Vishnu reclines in the cosmic ocean known as Kshirsagar, Laxman symbolically devours the entire creation by the fierce fire spewing from his mouth at the time of dooms-day. Hence, he is called 'Sankarshan'. Perhaps this is the reason why Laxman had accompanied the Lord to the forest to ensure that the evil demons were eliminated from earth.]

6. The 2nd state of existence of the Atma, the pure consciousness, is called the 'Swapna state' of existence, or the dreaming state. The imaginary world that is visualized by the latent 'Vasanas' (passions, desires and yearnings) that are inherently present in the sub-conscious of the creature is called a 'dream'. This is an imaginary world inspired by the Vasanas present in the bosom of the creature.

During this state, the man is virtually lying unconscious and completely inactive in the physical sense as his gross physical body is completely inactive and lying like a log of wood. He lies on the ground as if he had no life in him, and was like a dead man as far as his external activities pertaining to his gross body and its organs are concerned. But during this state of existence known as Swapna (dreaming), the mind remains very much active though the external gross body and its sense organs are completely inactive. During this state, the mind, accompanied by the sub-conscious, is as active as it was during the Jagrat (waking) state, the only difference being in the level of its activity. So, while in the Jagrat state its activity pertained to the gross world, during the Swapna state this activity is happening in a subtle level. A man dreams because the mind and the sub-conscious conjure up a most fascinating world in which the Atma lives during this phase of existence. To a great extent, the capacity of the mind to 'imagine and fly' is fully unleashed and tapped in one's dreams as opposed to the physical world while the man was awake—because while the latter phase presents many physical barriers of practical nature, none such obstacles are there in one's dreams. In some senses, the world of dreams is fancier and more charming than that of the physical world of the waking state simply because in this subtle state of existence the mind is given wings to imagine and fly according to its wishes without having to cope with any limitations of the physical gross world. [For instance, a man cannot fly in practical terms when he is awake, or he cannot

physically jump from a tall building without aid and survive as this would be nothing less than a suicidal jump, he can indeed attempt such feats while dreaming. In fact, the full potentials of the mind and the sub-conscious are unlocked during the dreaming phase—as is proved occasionally when insurmountable problems of daily life face by a harried man find their solutions when he sleeps, leading him to wake up with answers to the same problems that had defied all attempts to solve them earlier.]

It is the mind that imagines, and not the gross body. Therefore, during the Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness, the Atma is very much active and aware of the happenings around it, but instead of them being related to the gross plane of existence they are now confined to an imaginary world conceived in a 'dream'. Hence, 'dream' or the Swapna state of existence of the consciousness is synonymous with that which is an 'imaginary' conception of the mind without any physical gross dimension. It is something that has no real physical existence and pith. In other words, the Atma or the consciousness exists in its 'Sukshma' or the subtle form now in the dreaming state.

For all practical purposes, the Atma (or the creature's 'self' or his consciousness) interacts with this imaginary world of dreams during the 'Swapna' state of existence in the same way as it had been doing in the gross world while it was awake during the waking state called 'Jagrat'. That is, even during a dream, as long as it lasts, the Atma thinks that it is actually interacting with all the participants of that dream; it weeps, it laughs, it plays and it talks with them all as if they were alive and for real in the virtual world. For this purpose, the Atma uses its 'virtual' nineteen organs or mouths as it had been doing while it was interacting with the physical gross world while awake, though now they are in their 'subtle forms' instead of their gross forms.

Therefore, even in the dream state of existence of the Atma, there are seven worlds and nineteen mouths, though they exist in a subtle form, and not in their gross forms. The Atma lives in this subtle world of dreams, is an integral part of it, identifies its self with it, is influenced by it and is as involved and attached to its components in the same way as it did during the waking state.

That Atma which exists in this subtle form, that Atma which exists in the subtle world, and that Atma which uses the subtle organs to interact with this subtle world, is called 'Taijas'. This Taijas is the microcosmic subtle form of the Atma which has its counterpart at the macrocosmic level of creation in the 'Hiranyagarbha'. The latter therefore is the macrocosmic subtle aspect of the cosmic Consciousness very much like the Taijas is at the microcosmic level.

The Taijas has all the constituent parts of the 1st step or stage (called the 'Vishwa') as described in the preceding verse, but instead of being gross by the virtue of its association with the external gross world of material sense objects it now is in a subtle form as it is associated with a subtle world. Instead of being in contact with the deluding outside world involving its gross organs of action and perception, it is now more subtle in nature being based on the mind and its capacity to imagine and fly. [But it must nevertheless be noted that the Atma, the pure consciousness, still does not find pure peace and happiness as it is still buffeted by waves of emotions and the influence of Vasanas in the subtle level of its existence during the dreaming state of its existence as much as it was distracted and influenced by the physical world during the waking state. The only obvious difference is that during the dreaming state there is no physical barriers and limitations that are natural to the gross body and the gross physical world which has limited the stupendous potentials of the Atma. As compared to the physical gross body, the subtle mind has stupendous powers and potentials—

the mind can fly and imagine things that were simply incredulous to even speak of during the waking state of the body, thereby lending the Atma with equal potentials to imagine and reach those realms where it could not ever hope to do while awake. In brief, the Swapna is called 'subtle' as it gives 'wings to the Atma' and enables it to perform deeds that it was unable to in the Jagrat state. The physical world that exists during the waking state imposes certain inhibitions on the Atma, but all such fetters are removed while it dreams, and therefore it can do unimaginable things during its dream which would be unthinkable for it to do during its interaction with the world while in its waking state of existence.

During the Swapna or dreaming state of existence, the external stimuli from the outside world cease to affect the mind, but the latent and inherent tendencies, called the various 'Vasanas', create an imaginary world of perceptions and actions which are far more colourful than the actual world of the waking state, and which form an independent world of their own, called the world of dreams. This state of the Atma is not gross like the 1st stage, but it is a subtle state of existence of the consciousness, the state known as the Taijas state.

The word 'Taijas' is derived from the root 'Tej' meaning 'energetic, fast, dynamic, agile, full of vigour and vitality'. It is obvious from the above discussion that the Atma does indeed possess these potentials during the dreaming state of its existence. The word 'Taijas' also refers to light and its illumination. Hence, the Atma in this state is illuminated by the virtue of its inherent ability to create something from nothing—i.e. to 'dream' of things that do not have any substance and then be convinced that this imaginary world is truthful.] (6).

[Note—This Swapna or dreaming state of consciousness is equivalent to the second Paad or limb or aspect of Brahm. It is represented by *Shatrughan*, the second brother of Lord Ram. Refer verse no. 1 of this Canto 3. Shatrughan is an incarnation of Pradumna, the personified form of Kaam, the patron deity of passion and yearnings or Vasanas. The Vasanas reside in the heart of a creature, hence Shatrughan lives in the heart of all the creatures as their inherent desires and passions to overcome all hurdles and obtain their objective. The word 'Shatrughan' means 'one who crushes all enemies'—i.e. the Atma is able to overcome all restrictions imposed by the gross physical world in order to reach its target determined by the Vasanas during the dreaming state.

Since during the Swapna state of existence only Mana, i.e. the sub-conscious aspect of the mind and the subtle aspect of the heart, are active while the gross body sleeps or is absent, and that this Mana acts silently without any outwardly show of action, Shatrughan too lived a silent life and worked behind the curtain by carrying on with his assigned job of taking care of the daily affairs of the kingdom while Lord Ram was in the forest, and even later on after the Lord's return. The Ramayan, the epic story of Ram, has only few references to Shatrughan while it copiously praises Laxman for taking an active part in the deeds done by Lord Ram, especially the main purpose of overcoming the demons, and Bharat for his unwavering and untainted devotion for the Lord. The role of Shatrughan is of immense importance if one were to ponder who ran the kingdom while the Lord was away in the forest and also when he returned and was crowned. The nitty-gritty of administration of the vast empire was the responsibility of Shatrughan, but since he represented the 'Swapna' state of the cosmic Consciousness he preferred to word quietly and subtly behind the curtains instead of attempting to hog the limelight.

Since he resides in the Mana, he is aware of the inner thoughts of all the creatures and is the patron deity of the Mana. He represents that aspect of the supreme Brahm that enables the Lord to know the inner thoughts of all living beings as well as to control these thoughts.

Just the physical world is borne by Laxman in his primary form of Seshnath, the subtle world is borne by Shatrughan in his primary form as Pradumna or Kaam (in the form of Vasanas—inherent desires, yearnings and passions hidden in a man's inner self).

The deity who is the patron of the subtle world would also be responsible for its upkeep, and would also enjoy the things of this subtle world. Hence, the subtle aspects of the seven worlds as described in note of verse no. 5 have Shatrughan as their patron deity and sustainer. Shatrughan interacts with them by employing the subtle aspects of the nineteen entities, called metaphorically as the 'nineteen mouths', as described for Laxman in note of verse no. 5.

Since Praduman is another form of Kaam-deo (cupid), the deity of love and passions, he is deemed to be very charming, handsome and attractive—or he has a radiance of charm, majesty and glory effusing out of him in the form of Taijas (glow, radiance, light, illumination, halo).]

7. The 'sleeping state' during which the person does not desire/wish to enjoy any of the objects of this materialistic world and is neither conscious of their existence, a state when he does not even dream of any imaginary non-existent world—such a state of existence of consciousness is called 'Sushupta' or the deep sleep state of consciousness. This state is beyond the dream state, and is the third state in the hierarchy of existences in which the Atma or the pure consciousness lives. It corresponds to the third Paad or limb or aspect of the supreme Brahm who is the cosmic Consciousness personified.

Where the gross organs of the gross body represented by the organs of perception (eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin) and action (hand, leg, mouth, genitals and excretory), as well as the subtle organ represented by the mind, the sub-conscious and the intellect have become defunct or stand eliminated, that eclectic state of existence of the consciousness is called Sushupta.

The body which houses this state of the Atma is called the 'causal body'. It is so-called because the Atma or pure consciousness that lives in this state is the entity that is the 'cause' of the creation of both the world of dreams in the Swapna state as well as the world of material sense objects during the Jagrat state. During this Sushupta state of consciousness, the entire world, both the real as well as the imaginary, coalesce and merge into nothingness or non-being. They are now most quietly and imperceptibly shrunk into the entity that was the 'cause' of their existence at all in the first place. That is why it is called the 'causal' body.

The wise entity that was empowered with the knowledge that enabled it to create something and then sustain it is called 'Pragya'. It lives in this causal body. This Pragya is none other than the Atma or the pure consciousness, also called the 'true self' of the creature. This Atma of the individual is the microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic Atma of creation. At the individual level of the creature, it is called 'Pragya', while the same entity in its macrocosmic level is called 'Ishwar'—or the supreme Lord. It is 'Lord' as it is the central Authority that not only determines the existence of both the worlds—the Swapna as well as the Jagrat—but presides over them, enjoys what they have to offer or suffers from them, and then decides when to get rid of them.

This state of Sushupta is indicative of the dissolution of creation as nothing then remains. Then two options are available—either the Atma reverts back to the earlier two states of existence, or proceed ahead to the fourth state of Turiya which is actually a permanent state of Sushupta.

The entity living in the causal body and known as Pragya is one of its kinds; it has no duality and no parallels. It is an image of eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity, and it is wise, enlightened, realised and truthful. It is this entity that enjoys this world of eternal bliss and tranquility. It is pure consciousness and enlightenment personified. These virtues are its 'mouth', i.e. it accepts anything using these virtues as its accepting organs. In other words, it judges the world using the yardstick of enlightened consciousness, and not the way the mind had been judging it previously. The mind has a tendency to 'fly' in the vast sky of imagination, while the intellect 'moves' on sound ground of logic and rationality. Wisdom and erudition weighs everything and makes the creature aware that what he believes to be real is actually false and misleading. This is the function of the enlightened Atma. Once the sun of wisdom and enlightenment dawns on the creature's spiritual horizon, he finds immense peace and tranquility because all ghosts and phantoms arising in the darkness created by delusions and ignorance are eliminated for good.

In terms of Vedanta, the causal body encloses the Atma which is surrounded by the bliss sheath. When this Atma is not disturbed by constant interference by the mind and the intellect, it remains oblivious of the outside world, and being comfortably ensconced in the bliss sheath, it remains blissful and peaceful.

This Pragya (wise, enlightened, knowledgeable, erudite and sagacious) aspect of the Atma, which is pure consciousness, is the symbolic third Paad or limb or aspect of Brahm.

[The Atma or the soul of the creature is trapped in a body having these three layers of the body that are like sheaths that surround the soul—the gross body (verse no. 5), the subtle body (verse no. 6) and the causal body (verse no. 7). As soon as these are dissolved or removed or done away with, the Atma enjoys a state of merger with the eternal Atma of the cosmos. Or in other words, the individual Atma of the creature becomes one with the Parmatma, the supreme transcendental Atma. This Parmatma is also known as the Supreme Being, the supreme Brahm, and the cosmic Consciousness in the form of the cosmic Soul of creation.] (7).

[Note—This third state of existence called Sushupta corresponds to *Bharat*, the third brother of Ram. Refer verse no. 2 of this Canto 3. He epitomizes the virtues of devotion, faith, humility, probity, propriety, righteousness and conscientiousness, besides total detachment towards the material charms of the material world. He also exemplifies the virtues of Vairagya (renunciation, detachment, non-involvement with the material world and the charms of its sense objects), Yoga (meditation and concentration of one's faculties on the objective selected) and Tapa (sufferance, austerity, penance, self-control etc. for some great cause).

Hence he shows what is needed if one is to achieve the goal of reaching the Lord—i.e. he shows by example the virtues one must inculcate to obtain Mukti and Mokha. Therefore he is called the 'Paad' or limb of Lord Ram who is Brahm personified. He is the 'third Paad' (limb) as the minimum number of legs required for anything, such as a stool, to be stabilized is 'three'. In other words, if a spiritual aspirant desires to be established in his spiritual path he must follow the example of Bharat and inculcate the noble virtues which the latter implemented in his life.

Where the gross organs represented by the organs of perception and action of the gross body, as well as the subtle organ represented by the mind and the intellect have become defunct or stand eliminated, this state of existence of the consciousness is called the Sushupta. During this state the person does not have any desire for enjoying the material objects of the external gross world nor of the subtle world that exists in one's dreams. That is, he is completely in a state of Vairagya or renunciation—this is how Bharat lived in the middle of pomp and pelf of a flourishing kingdom. Hence he corresponds to the third state of Sushupta.

He is not at all moved by the ups and downs of administering a vast kingdom, remaining focused on meditation and contemplation. Hence he remains perpetually blissful and happy—the characteristic feature of the Sushupta state.

He is an incarnation of Aniruddha because he enjoys uninterrupted bliss and continuous meditation. The word ‘Aniruddha’ means ‘without any obstacles; unhindered and unstopped’.

Since he was most wise and thoughtful, he personified the Pragya aspect of the Atma in the third state of its existence.]

8. The supreme Atma or Consciousness that exists beyond the third state of Sushupta, i.e. that state of consciousness which transcends the earlier three states related to this world, is said to be the fourth Paad or aspect of Brahm. It is called the Turiya state.

The Atma that exists in this fourth state called the Turiya or transcendental state is the one that is said to be the creator or progenitor of the other three states. [When the pure consciousness decides that it wishes to interact with the world, it would have to retrace the path followed by it to reach this higher spiritual state of Turiya—i.e. it would have to pass through all the three stages mentioned in verse no. 5-7. But if it decides to get rid of the world and find eternal peace, it will not do so. Then in such a case, the person who has reached this fourth state of consciousness, called the Turiya, would remain in this world like other men do, but would be a totally changed and transformed man—he would be totally immune to this world and its charms and temptations, as well as its pains, miseries and sufferings. He would seem to be awake and going about his normal duties, but internally he would be in the state of deep sleep, not at all being aware of or interested in what the body, both its gross components as well as its subtle components, do. He would be virtually ‘sleep walking’ as far as the world is concerned. All the characteristics that are enumerated below in this verse are of the Turiya state of consciousness.]

The Atma in this Turiya or fourth state of existence is called the ‘Parmatma’ or the supreme Atma—for now it is not an ordinary Atma of the creature that is affected by the deluding influences of the world, but beyond such considerations. It is also known as the ‘Ishwar’ or the Lord of the creation—for now it has reached the state when it no longer relates its self with the mundane world of material sense objects, it does not wish its comforts and pleasures, but has risen high up to occupy a much exalted stature that makes it ‘superior’ to all the rest in creation. Such a high Atma is Parmatma and it is also the Ishwar or Lord of creation. It is called ‘Ishwar’ because it is the undisputed Lord of all that exists. It is this Atma that has not only created everything but also enjoys them and eliminates them should it want to do so. In other words, if a wise man so wishes and is firmly determined, then he can easily forgo the attractions of the world in a moment by just making a firm decision that he is not interested in them. This world exists only because the Atma, or the consciousness which is the ‘true self’ of a creature, wishes it to exist.

[According to Vedanta, Ishwar represents the sum-total of all the causal bodies in this creation. This is because Ishwar is the ‘cause’ of coming into being of whatever that exists in this creation. Anything, no matter how inconsequential and miniscule, that has an existence owes its presence to the Ishwar. It is like the case of line or any other figure drawn on a piece of paper. Its origin is in the first ‘dot’ that was formed when the tip of the pen had first touched the paper. The line or the figure is merely an extension of this dot. If the line is retracted and seeks its original point it will come back to this dot. If there is no dot, the line cannot be drawn. Similarly, everything in this world has its origin in this single ‘Ishwar’, and the rest is simply an extension of this Ishwar.]

The supreme macrocosmic Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, is the Soul or essence or the Tattwa of creation, and like its counterpart present in the causal body of the individual creature, it is also Pragya—i.e. it is wise, enlightened, awake, conscious, realised, intelligent, sagacious and erudite.

This Parmatma is all-knowing and omniscient as it lives inside the secret inner chambers of the creation in the form of the Atma of all the creatures. Being an ‘insider’, he knows everything; he is privy to the inner thoughts and ideas of the mind, the sub-conscious and the intellect of the creature; nothing is hidden or out of sight of him.

Being a resident inside the bosom of all the creatures in the form of their Atma, and being all-pervading, immanent and omnipresent by the virtue of it being the most subtle and sublime entity known as ‘consciousness’ in creation, this Parmatma is known as ‘Antaryaami’—one who lives inside everything and knows even that which is not known to the outside world.

Parmatma or the cosmic Atma is the cause of everything in existence—hence it is the ‘supreme Creator’. It is this Atma that is the origin of all the Bhuts (elements), their sustenance and growth, and their final resting place. [This can be easily visualized by a simple illustration. When we wish to draw any figure on paper—say a line or a circle, we use a pencil or pen which makes a ‘dot’ at the spot where it first touches the paper. This ‘dot’ is then virtually stretched in all imaginable directions on the surface of the paper to make the desired shapes visualized by the mind—whether it is a circle or a triangle. If we retrace the lines the way they were drawn, we come back to the original dot. This symbolically depicts the way the creation is regressed.]

Since the Parmatma (Supreme Being) is ‘consciousness’ itself personified, it follows that he does not need any other thing to be the cause of his own origin—simply because it is ‘consciousness’ that makes ‘life’ possible in creation, it is ‘consciousness’ that magically transforms a lifeless gross body into an active and vigorous creature. If ‘consciousness’ is removed from this world, the latter would be absolutely worthless and lifeless. Left to its own accord, this world would not be able to remain alive or revive its self in case ‘consciousness’ decides to abandon it. This quintessential factor of life in this creation is known as the ‘Atma’.

The cosmic Atma or the cosmic Consciousness is a complete neutral entity and characterized by paradoxes. For instance, it is neither introvert nor extrovert. It is an embodiment and a fount of wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, sagacity and knowledge on the one hand, but ironically the same Atma appears to exhibit the opposite virtues by allowing its self to be accompanied or engulfed by Maya (delusions) that has helped this Atma to create the world of artificiality and entrapments.

This cosmic Atma is all-knowing as well as ignorant. It is omniscient on the one hand, but remains indifferent and neutral to all forms of knowledge on the other hand. It remains merely a mute spectator, a mere witness and a neutral observer of all that is happening around it, giving the impression that it is gross, blockhead, ignorant and dumb. Its neutral and dispassionate state is often misinterpreted in this wrong way. The neutrality of the Atma is due to the fact that it is renunciation and dispassion personified; it remains indifferent to all delusions and hallucinations that are the hallmarks of this creation. But since it has to remain in this world, it appears to be influenced by all the taints and shortcomings that characterize this world.

This state of the Atma whereby it appears to exhibit dual characteristics which lead to confusions about its truthful form and nature as a sublime and subtle entity that is free from all grossness and delusions is known as the Jagrat as well as the

Swapna states of consciousness depending upon the level of grossness or subtlety exhibited by the Atma respectively. This happens because during both these two states of existence, the Atma appears to be involved headon in the affairs of the world, whether this involvement is at the physical level of the gross world as it happens during the Jagrat state, or at the subtle level as it happens during the Swapna state.

The same Consciousness is uniformly and universally present in all the creatures of creation as their Atma, and in fact the entire creation is nothing but its image, but still each individual creature is unique and different from the other. Many factors that are extraneous to the Atma—such as the characteristic attributes of the gross body, the presence of the various Gunas in different and varying proportions, the level of mental and intellectual development, the Vasanas and Vrittis (inbuilt desires and passions, as well as natural tendencies and inclinations) that an individual possesses—go collectively to make an individual unique inspite of the same Atma living in them. [A person fights others as if they were different from his own self, and there is so much diversity and dichotomy in creation that it becomes impossible to reconcile what is said in the Upanishads and what is actually observed in the practical world.]

The Atma is said to be almighty so much so that its mere wish can create and destroy the world, but ironically it requires the aid of the ‘Shakti’ or energy and power and dynamism of Nature to do anything at all. [This is best understood by the story of Ramayana itself. Lord Ram was Brahm personified, and therefore he should have killed the demon king Ravana by mere wish, instead of having to go to Lanka to do so. Then there are versions of Ramayana, such as the Adbhut Ramayana of Valmiki and Adhyatma Ramayana of Veda Vyas which tell how it was Sita, an incarnation of Brahm’s Shakti, that had actually helped the Lord accomplish the astounding deeds that he is credited for.]

This Atma is so small and subtle as well as sublime that it cannot be heard, seen, felt, touched, smelt or held. It is not an object that can be used in the conventional sense a man uses other entities of creation.

The Atma has no attributes, qualifications and dimensions that can be quantified and measured. It has never been visibly seen or observed, it has never been practically used and experimented with, and it has never been comprehended, grasped or caught either by the mind-intellect complex or by the sense organs of perception and action.

The Atma has no specific characteristics, qualities, virtues or attributes that can be used to define and qualify it. It is such a miraculous and inexplicable entity that it cannot be incorporated as a subject that can be comprehended by deep research and ponderings. It is beyond the purview of thought, imagination, intellect and conception. [That is, this supreme entity cannot be reduced to any physical matter that can be researched and experimented in a laboratory. It cannot be made a subject to be judged by the calculating mind which has a natural tendency to reduce everything to logic and rationality.]

The Atma cannot be even indicated or represented by indirect methods, such as by the use of signs, formulas, symbolism, metaphors, similes, analogues and examples. The only holistic and comprehensive proof of its existence and truthfulness is the ethereal experience that one has upon attaining self-realisation obtained when one reaches the higher states of super conscious existence known as the state of Samadhi. It is experienced only by attained and self-realised seekers. This supreme, ethereal, divine and holy entity is completely devoid of any delusions and falsehoods, any deceit and artificiality.

The Atma cannot be comprehended as it is beyond the scope of the mind and intellect. There is nothing in existence that can be used to compare the Atma with. There is no sign that can be used to indicate anything about the Atma. The only way to know the Atma is to 'experience and witness its presence' in the form of the 'super consciousness', and other vital life-factors of existence such as the Pran (or the vital winds). [That is, if one was to search an entity known as the Atma with the help of certain characters or virtues, no matter how great and magnificent they may be, one would fail in his search. This is because the Atma is extremely subtle and sublime by nature, and it has no grossness and density whatsoever that can be perceived by the sense organs of the body, including the mind and the intellect. That is why it is said that the Atma is beyond comprehension and reach of the sense organs of the creature. However, the existence of the Atma can be experienced during higher levels of existence which are in consonance with the plane in which the Atma actually exists. It is just like the case of modern radio communication where one can listen to a particular station only when he is tuned to that frequency.]

It is absolutely calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil; it is beautiful and auspicious; it is the ultimate Truth and Reality; it is the benevolent benefactor of all and provides all auspiciousness and welfares (i.e. it is 'Shiva').

Such a unique, divine, incomprehensible and incomparable cosmic Consciousness is regarded by those who are wise and in the know of things as the 'Advaitya Brahm'. This Brahm is an eternal, majestic, powerful, sublime, fascinating, almighty and stupendously magnificent entity.

[That is, the supreme entity known as Brahm has unique and apparently paradoxical characteristics enumerated here. This makes Brahm one of its kinds, because it is impossible to duplicate them. Advaitya means non-dual. Hence the Brahm that is unique and without parallel is 'Advaitya'. The Brahm that is uniform and universal, that is irrefutably and unequivocally one, and not two, inspite of the countless forms in which it has revealed itself in this creation—is 'Advaitya'. The Brahm that is both visible as well as invisible, that is here as well as there—is known as 'Advaitya Brahm'. The Brahm that is in the present as it was in the past, and would remain the same in the future—is 'Advaitya Brahm'.]

Those who are well-versed in the essence of all spiritual and metaphysical knowledge, those who are blessed with wisdom and erudition of the highest order that has enabled them to have deep insight into the fundamental universal truth of everything in creation in its essential form, call this supreme transcendental Truth and the ultimate Reality of creation as 'Brahm' and the 'cosmic Atma' or 'Consciousness'. It is the fourth Paad or limb or step or form of Brahm.

In other words, the wisdom to understand what has been said of Brahm in this verse is the fourth and the last step to realise the truthful and essential nature of the supreme transcendental Brahm, about the Atma, about the pure consciousness that exists at both the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic levels of creation at the same time. The fourth Paad of Brahm is the latter's cosmic transcendental form that goes beyond the gross and the ordinary level of the subtle that borders the gross level of existence. It corresponds to the higher level of existence of super consciousness that is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent, that is all-knowing and omniscient, that is almighty and supreme. [This fourth Paad is equivalent to the Turiya state of consciousness because it transcends the mundane and moribund existence of the Atma in this physical gross body that is bound to this physical gross world of material sense objects, thereby forcing the otherwise eternally free, ethereal, sublime and subtle Atma (the consciousness) to lead a trapped and deluded existence

as long as it remains confined to this gross body and attracted to the gross world. and forced to live in and interact with and .] (8).

[Note—The fourth Paad or aspect of Brahm is personified as Lord Ram. All the characteristics described in this verse are reflected in the life of Lord Ram. For instance, in the story of Ramayana we find that though Lord Ram was an incarnation of the all-knowing and omniscient Brahm but still he had searched for Sita like an ordinary man when she was abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. Though he is almighty, he had to take the help of the monkey army to conquer Lanka and retrieve Sita. Though he is Advaitya and single, he was always accompanied by Sita and one of his companions, such as his brothers, or one of the monkey or demon friends that he had made during his trip to Lanka. Though he is neutral and dispassionate, he had waited for Sita when she was kidnapped like an ordinary man who loses his dear wife.

From the metaphysical perspective, all the events in the life of Lord Ram teach a wise man how the immaculate Atma gets mired in this world if it allows itself to get involved in its mundane affairs. Even a cursory reading of the story of Ramayana would show how Lord Ram, who was none else but the Supreme Being himself, was subjected to all the experiences that a common human being goes through in the course of his life in this world simply because the Lord had allowed himself to be involved in the affairs of the physical world by assuming a gross body. When this analogy is applied to the Atma it is easy to see how and why the Atma gets sucked in the affairs of the world if it allows itself to be identified with the gross body (of the creature) in which it lives. Though the Atma of the creature is well aware that the world and all its material sense objects are false, entrapping and deluding by nature because the Atma is inherently all-knowing, wise and enlightened, but still it remains engrossed in it as if it did not know the truth. Every man knows that he would die, but still he continues to hoard wealth for the ‘future’ which might never come.

Therefore, the entanglements of the Atma in the world are its own creation. Even the Supreme Being himself had to undergo all sorts of worldly sufferings when he assumed a human form as Lord Ram, so the sufferance of the Atma by its involvement in the world is of no wonder.]

9. The true understanding of the divine nature and cosmic nature of the Atma/soul or the pure consciousness is possible with the advice and guidance given by self-realised, wise, erudite and enlightened teachers as well as ancient scriptures. It can be understood, comprehended and grasped only with the aid of an uncorrupt, unbiased and sharp mind that is analytical, rationale, intelligent and receptive.

This Atma/soul is eternally self-luminous, brilliant, radiant and splendid—i.e. it is always enlightened and wise, it is self-realised and all-knowing, it is free from ignorance and its accompanying darkness.

It is free from the tainting affects of Avidya or lack of true knowledge—i.e. the Atma, left to its own devices, would never do anything that is in-auspicious, unrighteous, unholy, improper and unscrupulous. [From the practical point of view we can regard it as the inner voice that invariably warns a person by ringing a bell inside his inner self whenever he is about to commit anything that is wrong. His ‘conscience’ would immediately object. This first objection that arises from the inner self is the voice of the Atma that resists all unrighteous deeds and thoughts. That the man overlooks them and continues nevertheless with his evil designs is the reason why the Atma—which is the man’s ‘true self’—is forced to suffer from the misdeeds done by the body and the mind. Had the man listened to his inner voice he would not only have prevented himself from much physical sufferings but would also have given his Atma true peace. But unfortunately this does not happen—because the allurements

of the physical world and the desire to gratify the sense organs of the body, the various inherent Vasanas or worldly passions and yearnings, and Vrittis or tendencies and habits that are part of his nature, and such other elements are too strong to be easily overcome.]

All actions and deeds that have their genesis in ignorance and delusions, or those which are done or inspired by ignorance and delusions due to lack of wisdom, truthful knowledge and awareness of the reality, cast their negative shadow on the otherwise immaculate nature of the Atma. [The Atma is pure consciousness that remains free from being attached to the body that actually does the deeds. When the creature comes under the influence of delusions, he thinks that his body is his true 'self' instead of the Atma. This is due to ignorance about the reality and the truth, making the creature erroneously think that it is the Atma that does the deed, whereas in fact it is the body that is actually involved in doing any deed.]

The devotee prays to and worships Lord Ram so that the Lord eliminates such negative aspects of his Atma, and removes the darkness of ignorance as well as its deluding effects that shackles the person in its vice-like grip.

The Atma (pure Consciousness; the Soul) is 'Advaitya'—i.e. it is eternally one, without a second, unique, non-dual, indivisible, immutable and peerless.

It (the Atma or consciousness) is an embodiment of supreme, absolute and universal 'Anand'—i.e. it is always in a state of bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility.

It (the Atma or consciousness) is the foundation and the resting place for all that exists.

It (the Atma or consciousness) is the only majestic authority and the supreme power in existence.

It (the Atma or consciousness) does not have any trace of the spiritual darkness created by Avidya (ignorance about the spiritual truths) and Moha (attachments and longings for this material world and the body that are accompaniments of Avidya). [The Atma is not attracted to the fascinating charms of this world, nor does it have any desire to enjoy them or hoard them because it is well aware of their perishable nature and the web of entanglements that they create in their wake. It is neither interested in the body because it is aware of its imperishable nature too. It keeps a safe distance from both the world as well as the body, both of which are gross, perishable and ensnaring by nature. The Atma is a separate entity distinguished from the gross body as well as the equally gross world, and it is merely a witness to what is happening around it. Neither does the Atma suffer from anything in this world nor does it feel happy from anything. When a wise and intelligent person understands this, he is said to have reached the 'Turiya state'—for now he lives in this world with complete detachment and indifference. This provides him with bliss so characteristic of the Turiya state. No problems of the world worry him or disturb him any longer.]

In other words, if a man comes to realise what his 'true self' is, if he understands it to be the pure Atma which is consciousness personified, hence an image of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, all darkness in the form of Avidya and Moha are immediately dispelled. He is filled with the light of spiritual realisation; he is illuminated with the brilliant light of enlightenment. Obviously, where there is light there cannot be darkness!

With this enlightenment and wisdom, the spiritual aspirant would realise that 'he', i.e. his 'true self', is the same Atma that is endorsed by all the scriptures as being the supreme Atma of creation, and which is described by the name of 'Ram' in this

Upanishad. This Atma of the individual creature and the cosmic Atma of the whole creation is the same Brahm who has revealed himself as Lord Ram.

Lord Ram is none but the self-illuminated and brilliant cosmic transcendentatqal Authority known as Brahm. He is the Supreme Being himself personified. There is no duality or distinction between any of the three entities known as the Atma, Brahm and Ram. Knowledge of this is true enlightenment and erudition.

Lord Ram is as indefinable and incomprehensible as is the supreme transcendental Brahm. [In earlier part of this Upanishad it has been asserted that Lord Ram is no ordinary human being but Brahm, the Supreme Being himself personified. Since Brahm is synonymous with the Atma, and since the Atma resides in the subtle heart of all living beings as their 'pure self', it follows that when a spiritual aspirant truthfully becomes 'self-realised' he would see that 'he' (as his Atma and not the gross body) and 'Ram' (the divine Brahm and not the gross body of a prince of Ayodhya) are one and the same holy, sublime and divine entity called the 'Advaitya Brahm'—the non-dual Brahm.

When this actually happens, it is said that such a person has reached the pinnacle of spiritualism, and he is deemed to have attained freedom from the snare created by Avidya (ignorance), Moha (wordly attachments) and Maya (delusions)—that is, he has attained Mukti or Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation.)

Such a realised spiritual aspirant should think 'That is me/I'—'So-a-Ham'¹. There is no difference between me and the supreme Brahm who has revealed himself as Lord Ram. He thinks of non-duality between his own Atma and the supreme Atma known as the Parmatma in the revealed form of Lord Ram. Therefore, he knows the truth of the eclectic phrase 'Atma-Ram'. It is this 'Ram' that is being lauded and worshipped in the Mantras which address the Lord as Ram Chandra, Ram Bhadra etc.

Lord Ram who is eternally enlightened and self-illuminated, is honoured and recognized by the eclectic but most esoteric terms used to address him, such as 'OM' (the Beej Mantra of Brahm and the ethereal word which is said to the parent of all Mantras), 'Tat' (that), 'Sat' (truth), 'Yat' (is), 'Param' (supreme).

Indeed, that divine and transcendental Lord Ram who is addressed by these terms and who is beyond the comprehension of the mind and reach of the faculty of speech is no one else but 'I' or 'Me'—i.e. he is 'Atma-Ram'.

Constant reflection on this eclectic Mantra and keeping the mind focused on the irrefutable truth of this great Maha Vakya ('So-a-Ham'; 'Atma-Ram') would finally establish oneness between the spiritual aspirant and Lord Ram who is none but Brahm personified. In other words, this way of meditation and contemplation would help the spiritual aspirant to establish oneness between himself and the supreme Brahm in the form of Lord Ram. The wise aspirant should endeavour to establish oneness and non-duality between his own Atma and the supreme transcendental Atma of the cosmos known as Brahm or Ram (9).

[Note—¹*So-a-Ham* is one of the famous Maha Vakyas of the Vedas. The word 'that' refers to Brahm, while 'me or I' refers to the Atma which is the true identity of the aspirant. There are countless Upanishads that describe the Maha Vakyas. For instance—

(i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad.

(ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi).

(iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-3, 8; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse

no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi).

(iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk Rahasayo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2.

(v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8 (Tattwamasi; Ayamaatma Brahm); Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 ('So-a-Ham'); Canto 6, paragraph no. 22 ('Twam Brahmasmi'; 'Aham Brahmasmi'; 'Twamewaaham'; 'Ahamev Twam'); Canto 8, paragraph no. 5 ('Brahmaasmi' or I am Brahm; 'Ahamasmi' or Indeed it is I/me; 'Brahmahamasmi' or I am indeed Brahm; 'Yoahamasmi' or That is I/me; 'Brahmaamashmi' or Brahm is I/me; 'Ahamevaaham' or I am indeed I/me.); Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14 (Tat Twam Asi—That Art Thou); Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2 (I am Lord Ram who is Brahm personified; there is no difference between me and Lord Ram); Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9 (So-a-Ham; Atma-Ram); Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 8 (Brahmasmi—I am Brahm personified); Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-8 ('Hans So-a-Ham'); verse no. 11 ('So-a-Hamarka'—that essence is me); Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15 ('Tattwamasi'—i.e. that supreme essence or truth is you; the second Maha Vakya is 'Ayamatma'—i.e. that essence known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is my own Atma, my own 'self'; the third Maha Vakya is 'Brahm Aham'—i.e. Brahm is me; the fourth Maha Vakya is 'Aham Brahmasmi'—i.e. I am Brahm).

This is in consonance with the philosophy of the Upanishads that stress that the Atma, the truthful identity of the creature, is none other than Brahm. That is why an enlightened one says that 'I am Brahm'; or 'I and Brahm are one'. There is no sense of pride and haughtiness or vanity and self-praise in it; it is a statement of truthful conviction said from the heart which is devoid of all imposture and deceit. Such an enlightened person is not expected to boast and expect false honours from this world. This conclusion derived at by logical reasoning will inculcate the feeling in the seeker/aspirant that he posses all the grand and holy characteristics, virtues and attributes associated with the divinity known as Lord Ram—such as possessing supreme bliss, peace, tranquility and serenity, being eternal and imperishable, have unadulterated enlightenment, wisdom, erudition and truthful knowledge, being endowed with the splendorous and dazzling light of enlightenment that comes with self-realisation, etc. All these make the aspirant feel self-illuminated like the supreme Lord himself; he acquires those majestic and mystical spiritual powers that come with self-realisation. This gives the aspirant a high degree of blissfulness and complete sense of fulfillment.]

10. Those wise, erudite, enlightened and self-realised people who come to understand the basic, universal and absolute spiritual truth about their 'real self', known as the Atma, as being a personification of Lord Ram—that there is no difference or duality between them and the supreme Lord of creation known as Brahm who had revealed himself as Lord Ram, well surely, such persons are not to be defined as being ordinary humans. They have understood the true meaning of the Maha Vakya 'Atma-Ram'.

They are deemed to be liberated, delivered and freed from the fetters of ignorance and delusions that keeps ordinary, less fortunate and ignorant people eternally shackled to this gross body and equally gross world¹.

Such wise, spiritually enlightened and self-realised men are said to be an image of Lord Ram himself. There is no doubt in it.

This is an Upanishad, and therefore it speaks the truth. Hence, those who understand the truth of its teaching do indeed find Mukti—they are spiritually liberated and delivered from the fetters of ignorance and delusions; they are spiritually liberated from this gross body and the gross world; they find emancipation and salvation for themselves.’ [But it must be noted that belief in the oneness of the Atma and Brahm, as well as the fact that the Atma is one’s true self, should be sincere and honest. To bear fruit, it must be truthfully accepted, without an iota of doubt, with a clear conscious, and without having any pretensions and deceit in one’s heart.]’

This is how sage Yagyawalkya preached sage Bharadwaj (10).

[Note—¹This is because ignorant people treat the body as their true self, and the world as the real thing and the main goal of life. Since both the body and the world are perishable and gross by nature, such people never do find permanent peace and happiness. They keep of being tossed around like a ship on a rough ocean. They feel miserable and restless due to this tossing and turmoil that is so very characteristic of this world. But once they realise that their ‘self’ is not the body but it the Atma which is separate from the body and only lives in it, they would treat this body as an alien thing or an extraneous element. Now they begin to wonder why they had acquired this body in the first place if the Atma is their ‘self’ instead of the body. Then they search for an answer and find it in the scriptures that clearly tell them that this unfortunate situation befalls upon the creature because it had wrongly identified its ‘self’ with the gross body and then indulged madly in an equally gross world in some past time, and the present dilemma is due to the accumulated affects of all those mistakes. Then obviously a wise man would not repeat the same mistakes again so as to land him once again in the same trouble. In other words, in the present life a wise, enlightened and self-realised man would treat himself as distinct from the body and the world, and instead think that he is a divine entity having an exalted origin. This would prevent him from committing the same mistakes that had landed his Atma in the present state in this world. Besides this, from the practical standpoint also when a man thinks in positive terms his entire personality undergoes a drastic change. He overcomes his negativity and dejection of spirits that bog down his progress in life and keeps him chained to miseries and agonies—some of them real and more of them imaginary. When one thinks ‘I am big and noble’, he indeed becomes one as compared to a man who thinks negatively and finds that he is surrounded by unhappiness and miseries all around him.

‘Ishwar is the Atma as seen and/or grasped by the mind. His highest name is OM. So repeat it, meditate on it and think of all its wonderful nature and attributes. Repeating the OM continually is the only true worship. It is not a word, it is God himself’ — Swami Vivekanand (The Complete Works of Sw. Vivekanand, 9 vols, 7/62).

*The Lord is His name (Jeremiah, 33/2; Isaiah, 48/2; Amos, 4/13).
I will praise thy name, o Lord, for it is good (Psalms, 54/6).
Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together (Psalms, 34/3).
Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee (Psalms, 5/11).
For our heart shall rejoice in him because we have trusted in his holy name (Psalms, 33/21).]*

Thus ends Canto 3 of Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad

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Section 2—Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad

Canto 4

[This Canto is dedicated to highlighting the significance and importance of the 'Avimukta Kshetra' & 'Tarak Mantra'. It narrates why Kashi gets its unique stature of being the place that gives Mukti to the creature who dies there. It is to be read in conjunction with Cantos 1 and 2 of this Upanishad, as well as Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12 of the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad.]

1. Once, sage Atri¹ asked sage Yagyawalkya—‘How can I know about the ‘Chidaatma’ (the eternal and pure conscious Atma that is the cosmic universal Consciousness personified, and is wise, enlightened and intelligent; the Atma that resides in all the living beings as their soul, and forms their enlightened ‘self’) that is described as being ‘Anant’ (literally meaning an entity that is without an end, is eternal, infinite and imperishable), ‘Avyakta’ (an entity which is not manifest, is unknown and indescribable; is invisible, indefinable, nameless, formless, incomprehensible and attribute-less), ‘Paripurna’ (an entity that is complete in all respects, is wholesome, is fulfilled, is self-sufficient, and wants nothing), and as being an embodiment of the virtue of ‘Anand’ (full of bliss, happiness, felicity and beatitude)? (1).

[Note—¹Sage Atri— Sage Atri is an ancient sage credited with the composition of the 5th Mandal of the Rig Veda Samhita. His name appears in other places in the Rig Veda Samhita also (10/137/4 for instance). His disciples assumed his name as their surname and came to be known as Aatreyas.

Sage Atri is classified as a ‘Maharishi’ because he was one of the senior and the most exalted sages of his time. He is listed as a member of the Sapta-rishis, the cluster of seven celestial sages. Therefore, according to mythology, he is also a member of the Sapta Rishi Mandal, or the cluster of seven stars known as the Great Bear.

He is said to be one of the ten Manas-putras or mental born sons of the creator Brahma. Therefore, he was one of the Prajapatis or progenitors of mankind also. He is said to have given protection to the Sun God against the demon Svarbhaanu who caused the solar eclipse by composing a ‘fourth’ hymn against the curse of the eclipse, the other three being the usual liturgy of prayers offered during the eclipse to save the Sun God from this curse. He is said to be chief priest of the five ancient tribes of Vedic period settlers called the Panch-janas. When he was tortured by the demons, he was rescued by the Ashwini-kumars.

Atri’s wife was the famous hermitress named Anusuiya (meaning one who has no jealousy against anyone). She was the daughter of Kardama Prajapati and a stellar instance of chastity and virtuousness as a wife and a hermitress. According to mythological accounts, sage Atri and his chaste wife Anusuyia were childless, and having a desire to have a son they prayed and did severe penance. All the three gods of the Hindu Trinity, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder appeared before the couple and requested them to ask for a boon. Upon the couple’s request, all the three Gods became their sons. Brahma became the sage known as Chandra representing the Moon God, Vishnu became the wise and enlightened sage Dattatreya, and Shiva became the angry sage Durvasa.

During his forest sojourn, Lord Ram had visited him in the Dandakaaranya forest where the sage preached him the nuances of Dharma (Ramanya by Valmiki, Aranyakand, 117). He was an authority on Dharma (tenets of righteousness, probity and propriety) and has been quoted in the Manusmriti (3/16) and the epic Mahabharata (in its Anushaashan Parva, 65/1).

A separate text called the ‘Atreya Dharma Shastra’ is attributed to him. It has nine chapters that deal with Daan (charitable donations and gifts), Japa (prayers) and

Tapa (austerity and penances). Other texts attributed to him are the 'Atri Smriti' and the 'Atri Samhita'. The latter has roughly 400 verses and deals with the principles of Dharma.]

2. The famous sage Yagyawalkya replied—'Such an exalted Atma which is eternal and indescribable is said to be symbolically established in the spiritual realm called the 'Avimukta Kshetra'. That is why a sincere spiritual seeker should endeavour to worship and honour as well as contemplate and meditate upon the Atma there.' (2).

3. Atri asked again—'But where is this place called 'Avimukta'?' (4).

4. Sage Yagyawalkya answered—'That place is situated between 'Varanaa' and 'Naashi'.' (4).

5. Atri asked—'What are 'Varanaa' and 'Naashi'; what is the meaning and the significance of these two?' (5).

6. Yagyawalkya replied—'That which stops or puts a leash on or restricts all the evil consequences of whatever is done by the creature is called 'Varanaa'. Or, that which prevents the creature from committing more sins and misdeeds, that which stop his further spiritual downfall and moral degradation is called 'Varanaa'. [The word 'Vaaran' means to stop, to prohibit, to sensor, to restrict. The word 'Vaaran' is a verb, while the word 'Varanaa' is a noun. Hence, the entity known as 'Varanaa' is the one that stops (Vaaran) further growth of evil tendencies in a creature.]

Similarly, that which not only destroys, eliminates, crushes, purges or catheterizes all the sins and evil deeds done by the creature but also overcomes their evil consequences for his benefit (so that he does not have to face sufferance from their negative effects, and is ensured of his spiritual welfare) is called 'Nashi'. [The word 'Naash' means to destroy and eliminate, to purge and remove. If 'Naash' is a verb, then obviously 'Nashi' is a noun—an entity that destroys.]' (6).

[Note—The literal meaning of the word *Avimukta* is 'that which is not liberated; that which is bound, requiring liberation'. The word here signifies that the creature who is presently not liberated can find his spiritual liberation if he takes the recourse of finding shelter in the Avimukta Kshetra. In other words, a living being who is bound to this mundane world of delusions and artificiality due to his ignorance and also due to the entangling effects of his accumulated past deeds but has realised his follies and pathetic condition, and who is sincerely yearning to break free from the fetters that pillory him to this deluding world of transmigration and its accompanying horrors, can find his spiritual liberation and deliverance if he takes the shelter of the Avimukta Kshetra. This would help him to finally break free from the vicious cycle of birth and death and its accompanying horrors. Hence, 'Avimukta' site is 'that place where those who are yet not spiritually free reside in order to get future spiritual freedom'.

The word 'Vaaran', from which 'Varanaa' has been derived, means to stop, prohibit, obstruct, prevent or bar, while 'Naashi' refers to elimination and destruction. From the perspective of this terrestrial world, the Avimukta Kshetra that is located between Varanaa and Naashi is called 'Varanasi', a city in northern India and situated on the banks of the holy river Ganges. It is said to be the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva, and it is here that it is believed that Shiva utters the Tarak Mantra in the ears of a dying man so that the latter gets Mukti. Refer also to verse nos. 9-14 of the present Canto no. 4. The concept of the Avimukta Kshetra that provides Mukti to the soul of the creature is also dealt with in Canto 1, verse no. 1, and Canto 2, verse no. 3 of this Upanishad.

From the spiritual and metaphysical perspective, the composite word refers to that place which has the majestic and mystical spiritual potential and power not only to stop the creature's further spiritual decline but also to help him redeem himself from the bad or negative consequences of his past misdemeanors. It is like a holy site where the pilgrim goes seeking salvation. There, he would take a bath in a river or pond to clean himself and then go to some shrine to pay his obeisance to the presiding deity of the place and seek the latter's blessings. In the present case, the 'cleaning of the body' is a metaphoric way of saying that an aspirant washes off all his past misdeeds by sincerely regretting for them, and taking a vow of not repeating his mistakes again. If he indeed succeeds in turning a new leaf in his life, if he indeed improves himself and becomes a changed man, and if he sticks to his new chosen path then it is sure that his spiritual redemption is at hand. He must be ready to atone for his past sins by undergoing sufferance as a token of his punishment, but all future torments would be eliminated.

Such a man is considered wise and enlightened as he would be eagerly searching for the 'truth' that has been lauded in the Upanishads, and in order to find this 'truth' he would be honestly following the advice of these Upanishads. Obviously when a man follows the instructions of a learned teacher, who in this case is the Upanishad itself, with faith and conviction, he is bound to be successful in his endeavours. Therefore, a man who understands the actual meaning and significance of the term *Avimukta vis-à-vis* his *Atma* (i.e. his true 'self') and how it impinges on his spiritual welfare is sure to find *Mukti* or *Moksha* for himself—that is, he is assured of liberation and deliverance from the evil affects of his sins and misdeeds, and consequentially find emancipation and salvation for himself.

A sincere aspirant would set his house in order by exercising the greatest of restraint on his wayward sense organs and prevent them from acting in an unscrupulous and unrighteous manner. He would endeavour to eliminate all the accumulated scum of his life in the form of the evil affects of his reckless past deeds done out of ignorance that has burdened his soul till now. He would divert his attention and mind away from both the world of material sense objects as well as from the gross body and its need for gratification, and instead turn it inwards towards his inner self and nobler goals in life. By realizing that the body and the world are perishable and entrapping by nature, he would keep his *Atma* away from their clutches.

But for this to be effective the aspirant has to be sincere and committed. Pretensions can cheat the people of the world, but they cannot cheat one's own 'self'. The precondition for salvation and emancipation of the *Atma* is sincerity of purpose and commitment on the part of the spiritual aspirant.

The realisation by the creature of the fact that he has indeed been wayward and sinful, and that all his present sufferings are a result of his past misdeeds, is the first step towards *Mukti*. Then he would look for a way out of his predicament and find the solution in the teaching of the Upanishads. He would then grasp this lifeline with both hands and follow it till emancipation and salvation is indeed available to him. Naturally his life would become exemplary and free from further sins. This would ensure that he gets freedom from the continuous cycle of miseries and torments to which he was hitherto bonded.

The study of the Upanishads and practice of their eclectic principles and philosophies kindles 'self-realisation' in the spiritual aspirant when he realises who he actually is, and what the difference between his 'true self' and the body as well as the rest of the gross world is. He becomes wise and enlightened about the eclectic existence of the divine but most esoteric entity known as the '*Atma*' or pure consciousness. He realises that the real subtle and sublime truth is something different from the gross world and the gross body. So he is freed from the strong fetter of ignorance that had shackled him so far to the world as well as the body. Identifying himself with the ethereal *Atma* instead of the gross body is in its self finding *Mukti*—

i.e. it is being freed from the limitations and shackling effects of the body and the world in which the aspirant lives, it is being delivered from the horrible cycle of ignorance and its accompanying delusions.]

7. Sage Atri asked—‘Where is the symbolic location of this Avimukta site from the metaphysical and the spiritual perspective of the aspirant? That is, where can one hope to find this spiritually important holy site besides its terrestrial location (between the Varanaa and the Naashi as described in verse nos. 3-6 of the present Canto 4, as well as in verse no. 1 of Canto 1, and verse no. 3 of Canto 2)?’ (7).

[Note—There are two ways at looking at a thing—one is at the grosser level of creation that pertains to the physical world, and the other is at the subtle level of creation that has a sublime dimension. From the former point of view of the physical world, the Avimukta Kshetra is the city known as Kashi situated on earth in the northern part of India, and from the second point of view pertaining to metaphysics, it is located in the forehead between the two eyebrows. The second view is based on the eclectic view that the body of the aspirant is a miniature world in a symbolic manner, because the Jiva, the living being, is a microcosm of the whole creation. There are umpteen numbers of Upanishads that stress the point that for a wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant, his body itself is an abode of the Supreme Being, and that one need not search the Lord anywhere in the external world but within one’s own inner self. The body is regarded as a sanctified abode of Brahm. The Truth lies within, and not without anywhere.

It is not practically possible and feasible for each and every living being to go and reside in Kashi to seek Mukti, but nevertheless it is everyone’s right to claim Mukti. So, the best thing is to become wise, and seek this Mukti within one’s own inner-self by concentrating the mind and its attention on the symbolic Avimukta Kshetra located in the forehead. This implies that one should meditate and focus one’s attention and energy of the Pran on this point of the body. In Yoga Upanishads it is pointed out how an ascetic gathers his Prans (his vital wind forces) from all parts of the body, and pulls them up to concentrate his attention on this area of the forehead. When he is successful in doing it, it is said that he experiences the light of enlightenment and wisdom. This is metaphorically depicted as the acquisition of the ‘third eye of wisdom’ that is said to be located here. Therefore, it is not necessary for everyone to flock to Kashi seeking Mukti or Moksha. Merely living in Kashi will serve no good for the Atma if the Jiva (living being; the creature) remains as engrossed and trapped in the never-ending cycle of affairs of the mundane world of material sense objects as he was before coming here. Instead, a person who remains where he is at present, but endeavours to focus his mind, sub-conscious and intellect in the search of the ultimate spiritual Truth by meditating and contemplating upon this Truth is more fortunate and successful in attaining his spiritual goal than his bretheren who merely lives in Kashi and wastes his precious life doing nothing, or worst still, in remaining engrossed in all sorts of worldly affairs.]

8. Sage Yagyawalkya replied—‘The point in the forehead where the root of the nose meets the point that lies between the two eye-brows is called the metaphysical or the spiritual site of ‘Avimukta’. This point is symbolic of the illuminated heaven where the supreme Atma or Brahm has its abode¹.

This junction point is also called ‘Sandhya’—literally meaning a place where two units or entities unite or join together. This is because it symbolizes the point where the Duloka (the lower heaven) meets the immensely illuminated Param Dham (the upper heaven or the supreme abode of the Supreme Being). Indeed, those who are well-versed in the metaphysical knowledge of the supreme transcendental Brahm regard this point as the place where one can come in direct contact with Brahm².

Those who are well versed in the knowledge of Brahm worship him at this point while they do their daily worship known as ‘Sandhya’³.

Hence, in order to attain Mukti, or spiritual liberation and final deliverance from the body and the world, a wise man should worship the invisible and indescribable supreme Lord (i.e. Brahm manifested as the cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma of creation) by residing in the Avimukta Kshetra.

He must understand that this ‘Avimukta Kshetra’ has two locations—from the physical point of view it is located in the terrestrial world between Varanaa and Naashi (as described in verse nos. 3-6 of the present Canto 4, as well as in verse no. 1 of Canto 1, and verse no. 3 of Canto 2, which corresponds to the holy city of Varanasi, also known as Kashi), and from the metaphysical and spiritual point of view it is located in the forehead between the two eyebrows (where the third eye of wisdom is located and where the aspirant experiences extreme bliss and ecstasy if his Pran is concentrated here—as described in the present verse no. 8)⁴.

Only such a wise, realised and enlightened person who has understood where the Avimukta Kshetra is really located (from the spiritual point of view) is competent to teach others about it. Verily, such a person who is aware of this site is certainly liberated and delivered; he is certainly entitled to preach about the essential knowledge of the eternal and truthful Atma to others⁵. [This is natural, as only a person who knows something can tell others about it. The rest of the people are imposters and only mislead others.] (8).

[Note—¹It is believed that at the time of creation, the supreme Brahm entered the body of the creature through the Brahm-randhra, the hair-like slit in the cranium, and took up his residence in the mind. Refer Aeiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition, Section 1, Canto 3, verse no. 12, and Paingal Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 11. That is why the head is the area of the body where the man’s faculty of reasoning, reflection, thoughts, analysis and intelligence are located—because Brahm is all-knowing and omniscient.

²The word *Sandhya* refers to the place in the forehead where the two Naadis called ‘Ida’ and ‘Pingla’ coming from the base of the spine and passing through the two nostrils come to meet each other at the root of the nose. It is here that the Sushumna Naadi, the most important nerve coming from the base of the spine and through which the vital Pran (life forces) rises up when the Kundalini is ignited, also meets these two Naadis, thereby creating a vibration in the nerves of the head, which in turn results in titillating them and creating an extreme sensation of ecstasy and bliss.

The internal point in the forehead where the two eyebrows meet the root of the nose is said to be the location of the so-called ‘symbolic third eye of wisdom’. This is the area of the head where a man’s faculty of reasoning, reflection, thoughts, analysis and intelligence are located. That is why when we ponder deeply upon something, our forehead furrows automatically as a sign of intense concentration of all the faculties of the mind.

According to the philosophy of Yoga, this is the point where the ascetic who diligently follows the rules of meditation and contemplation focuses his Pran (life forces, including the consciousness) by pulling it up from all other parts of the body by means of various techniques, such as Pranayam (breath control), Aasans (various sitting postures), Bandhas (restrictions on the body) etc. And it is here that he experiences an extreme sense of spiritual thrill or ecstasy. The area of the head higher than this point is said to be the abode of Brahm. When the Pran moves ahead on its onwards journey, it reaches the top of the skull and finally escapes through the Brahm-Randhra, the hair-like slit on the cranium from which it is believed Brahm had entered the man’s body at the time of creation and took up his residence in the head. This is the reason why the virtues of intelligence, wisdom, reasoning, thinking etc. are

all located in the head rather than in any other part of the creature's body—simply because Brahm is synonymous with these grand qualities.

According to the philosophy of Kundalini Yoga—which pertains to obtaining spiritual bliss as well as liberation from the fetters of the gross body by the kindling of the cosmic energy lying trapped and untapped inside the body in the form of a spiral coil at the bottom of the spinal cord—when the vital energy of Kundalini is aroused, it snakes up the spinal cord through the Sushumna Naadi and enters this area of the forehead mentioned in this verse. When this happens, the practitioner experiences an extreme sense of spiritual ecstasy and bliss not to be found elsewhere. The energy of the Kundalini acts more like the rocket that propels the Atma or pure consciousness of the creature towards the realisation of its true potentials by rising high and leaving the mundane affairs of the body and the world behind. Once the creature tastes the nectar of bliss and ecstasy which had been eluding him all through his life, he would naturally not like to revert to his earlier state of sorrows and miseries. The aspirant metaphorically experiences the presence of Brahm in the head when he experiences extreme bliss and ecstasy, a high degree of beatitude and felicity, because Brahm is synonymous with these virtues.

This concept has been elaborately described in the Shukla Yajur Veda's Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 3; Tarsar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1.

The point of concentration referred above, according to Canto 3 of Saubhagya Laxmi Upanishad belonging to the Rig Veda tradition, is called the 'Bhru Chakra' or 'Agya Chakra'. It is often called the 'third eye of wisdom'. These Chakras are subtle and sublime energy centers in the body, and are extensively dealt with in all the Upanishads that deal with Yoga. This particular Chakra is said to control wisdom and enlightenment in a man; its colour is Indigo and it also regulates such virtues as fortitude, tolerance and forgiveness.

³The word *Sandhya* also refers to a special ritual done by the Aryans three times a day—in the morning, midday and at sunset. The word *Sandhya* means a period or juncture point occurring three times a day when two periods of time meet each other—viz., morning, when the sun rises and darkness of the night meets the light of the day, noon when the pre-noon hours meet the post-noon hours and the sun is in its zenith in the sky, and evening hours when the sun is setting and lighted hours meet the dark hours. During these periods, Gayatri Mantra or any other devotional Mantra or hymns or prayers are said in honour of Sun-God or any other patron God of the devotee. Observation of these sacraments are said to be very rewarding and beneficial for the person who does them.

⁴If he is not able to physically live in the terrestrial Avimukta Kshetra, he would get the same benefit of spiritual liberation and deliverance if he makes Atma (pure consciousness; his 'true self') symbolically live in the Avimukta Kshetra by focusing his attention (mind) and his Pran (vital life-forces of the body represented by the vital winds) in the area of the forehead narrated in this verse. [In fact, from the spiritual perspective this latter Avimukta Kshetra is of a greater importance as it is available to all the creatures in equal measure. It might not be practically feasible for each and every creature to go and live in the city of Kashi. Besides this, even if one is fortunate to get this benefit of being physically present in this holy city but remains engrossed in the affairs of the material world, pursuing its false charms and indulgent in its sense objects, or remains focused on the efforts to gratify the gross body and the natural urges of its sense organs—then his living in this terrestrial Avimukta Kshetra is of no value. Merely living in it would not provide him liberation, deliverance, emancipation or salvation.

On the contrary, a person who lives an ordinary life in any ordinary village or city, but a righteous and auspicious life that is lived according to the prescription of the Upanishads, a person who practices the profound spiritual principles of Upanishads by seeing the supreme Brahm everywhere, and who practices meditation and contemplation by focusing his mind and his Pran in the Avimukta Kshetra that is

symbolically present in the forehead is indeed able to attain the rewards as promised in this Upanishad. That is, such a wise and enlightened person does find Mukti and Moksha for himself even though he is not living in the city of Varanasi or Kashi—or for that matter, in any other holy terrestrial site.

In this context it ought to be noted that there are a number of Upanishads that emphasize the point that the body of the creature itself is a holy pilgrim site as well as a shrine of the Lord. For instance, the following Upanishads treat the body as an abode of Lord Shiva—(i) The Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165-168, Canto 2, verse nos. 6-10, 20, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-15, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-5, 13-16, and Canto 6, verse nos. 32-33, 47; and Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11. (ii) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 48-59.

Body as an abode of Shakti (the dynamic manifestation of Shiva and revealed as a divine Goddess) and 4 Peeths has been propounded in the Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 6-12.

Body as an abode of Shiva and Shakti is expounded in (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 75; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4. (ii) Atharva Veda's Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 2, verse no. 8-9.

Importance of the body as a medium of obtaining Siddhis (mystical powers) is stressed in the following Upanishads—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Advai Tarak Upanishad. (iii) Atharva Veda's Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 1-8.

Importance of the body as a Linga (symbol of Brahm and the Atma)—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 10.

Body as a pilgrim site called 'Triveni Sangam'—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 30.

The spiritually evolved idea of obtaining Mukti and Moksha by turning inwards and experiencing the presence of the supreme Brahm inside the body has been expounded in the Advai Tarak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. In fact, this entire Upanishad is dedicated to this theme.

The body has *four Peeths* symbolising the abode of divine Shaktis or Goddesses. This is endorsed in the Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 170-175, and Canto 5, verse nos. 3, 8-12.]

⁵By meditating and concentrating one's attention at the focal point of the nose and the two eyebrows mentioned above, the spiritual aspirant acquires such stupendous spiritual insights that he becomes enlightened about the glorious and mystical nature of the supreme transcendental Brahm who pervades throughout the creation as its consciousness known as the Atma. Only a person who knows anything can teach about it. The Atma is such an esoteric sublime entity that it cannot be 'learned' in conventional manner by merely studying voluminous scriptures; it has to be experienced and witnessed first hand to somewhat comprehend what it actually is. It is so profoundly mystical and mysterious that it cannot be put into words.

But a self-realised person who has witnessed the presence of the cosmic Consciousness can guide others on the correct path to be followed so that they too can realise the presence of the Atma though it is true that Atma cannot be taught about like other subjects merely because the teacher is well acquainted with it. An enlightened and self-realised seeker is at least qualified to guide others.

Therefore, any seeker/aspirant who resides in the 'Avimukta' site—whether in its physical location in the city of Kashi or Varanasi, or in its metaphysical symbolic location in the forehead as described in this verse—and spends his time meditating upon and concentrating his mind and intellect on the Atma (the soul, the true form of the 'self' as the illuminated and conscious entity which is a miniscule reflection or image of the supreme, all-pervading, omniscient, almighty macrocosmic Soul of the creation called Parmatma) at its metaphysical location at the conjunction point between the eyebrows and the root of the nose, is truly deemed to be erudite,

sagacious, wise, enlightened and self-realised. He is the one who is deemed fit and qualified to preach on metaphysics and spiritualism; he is said to be truly enlightened about Brahm.]

9. After that, sage Yagyawalkya said to sage Atri—‘Once upon a time, Lord Shiva worshipped Lord Ram for one thousand Manvantars¹ by offering sacrifices, doing Tapa (penances and austerities) and repeating his Tarak Mantra² (i.e. the Lord’s holy name which provides the creature with liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) (9).

[Note—¹*Manvantar* = 1/14th fraction of 1 day of Brahma; 71 four-Yug cycle or era of the celestial cycle of birth and death according to the Hindu philosophy.

²The *Tarak Mantra* of Lord Ram is given in verse no. 14 of this Canto 4. Besides this, there are other places where various variations of the Tarak Mantra are given—viz. Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2, 3 and 5.

10. This pleased Lord Ram so much that he said to Shiva, ‘Oh Parmeshwar (i.e. the supreme Lord)! Ask for any wish you desire; I shall give it to you.’ (10).

11. Then the enlightened and wise Lord Shiva said—‘Oh Lord! Those who die at the Manikarnika Tirtha (a holy site located on the banks of river Ganges), or in the area under my domain which is called Kashi, or in the water of the river Ganges, or on its banks—please be kind to give all such creatures the benefit of Mukti, or liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death as well as freedom from all sorts of spiritual torments. All of them should be blessed with the fruits of emancipation and salvation. I do not want any other boon to be granted by you (or there is nothing else except this that I want).’ (11).

12. Then Lord Ram replied—‘Oh Lord of the Gods (‘Devesh’)! Any creature, even those as humble and lowly as worms and insects, who would die anywhere in your holy domain, would get instant deliverance. There is no doubt about it. (12).

13. To provide deliverance to all those who die in your holy domain known as ‘Avimukta Kshetra’ or Kashi/Varanasi, I shall reside there even in stone idols as well. [That is, those who worship me sincerely in even such lifeless objects as a stone idol shall have the benefit of liberation and deliverance from this mundane, entrapping and deluding world consisting of a vicious cycle of birth and death.] (13).

14. Oh Shiva! Anyone in your holy realm who worships me (or invokes my holy name or remembers me) by using my ‘Tarak Mantra’ consisting of six letters (रं रामाय नमः — Raam/n(g) Raamaaye Namaha), I will liberate him from all sins, even from such horrendous ones which are ordinarily unpardonable like the killing of a Brahmin¹. You should not worry about it (14).

[Note—¹On the face of it, it appears incredulous that the Lord would forgive the killing of a Brahmin, or in other words condone murder of any kind. The idea is to give the sinner a chance to redeem his Spirit even if he had committed a grave error. It may be due to compulsion of circumstances beyond his control that he was forced to commit some grave sin, or it was committed inadvertently or out of ignorance. If he sincerely regrets for it, if he is ready to undergo its punishment, then by all means he must be given a chance to redefine his life and turn a new leaf. This is very

important—for it means if a man commits some kind of misdeed out of ignorance or some other cause, and he sincerely regrets for it and is therefore given a chance at redemption, it would mean that at least one soul has been saved and the burden of the earth is reduced by that extent.

If no hope is given for redemption and forgiveness for sins, it will not help the society in any manner whatsoever. Even if one man is reformed it so much the better, because otherwise he would add to the ever-growing list of the fallen, the evil and the sinful, without any hope ever of this list coming to an end. All the scriptures have a sincere desire to uplift the creature from the quagmire of spiritual delusions in which he has landed himself, and that is why they show him a direct path of redemption and reformation. Obviously it is the fallen and the sinful that need to be lifted up, and not those who are already on a high ground of morality and righteousness!

The Lord is not a cruel tyrant who is ever eager to find sinners so that he can torture them no end in the name of punishment for sins because he derives sadistic pleasure in their miseries. No, that is not at all the case. The Lord is ever so gracious and merciful; he is ever so compassionate and kind that he wants to give the sinner the maximum leverage possible in life so that he can be saved. So every possible opportunity is given to the sinful man to re-define his life and make it better in the time to come.

Refer also to note of verse no. 3 of Canto 2 of this Upanishad.]

15. Anyone who accepts this Mantra either from Brahma (the creator) or from you (Lord Shiva the concluder)¹ is able to obtain all the Siddhis² (mystical powers) that naturally accompany the Mantra while he is still alive, and when such a person dies he is able to find physical freedom from the shackle of the gross body when his Atma makes its exit from the gross body for good. After that he does not have to take a birth again, and his soul merges with me to become one with me³ (15).

[Note—¹By referring to Brahma and Shiva as the ones by whom a seeker of Mukti can be initiated—here meaning getting baptized—in the holy Mantra of Lord Ram, the Lord seeks to erase the imaginary dividing line that the followers of Vishnu and Shiva have drawn between themselves by calling themselves as either Vaishnavs or Shivites respectively.

Lord Ram has himself taught the Tarak Mantra to Lord Shiva here in the present Canto 4, verse nos. 9-16, and to Brahma, the creator, in Canto 5, verse nos. 1-5.

Another spin to it is that 'Brahma' refers to Brahmins or upper crust of the society who are regarded as learned and wise and the keepers of the upright conscience and righteous behaviours of the society, while Shiva refers to the people belonging to the lowest rung of society for the general demeanors, behaviours, life styles, food habits, residence of Lord Shiva etc. as depicted in the scriptures and traditional lore is the opposite of the way Brahmins live. But at the same time, he is referred to as the 'Lord of Gods' (see verse nos. 10, 12) by Lord Ram himself. It is well known that Shiva is the most superior amongst the Gods in knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition etc. in the whole of creation. He is even referred to as 'Rameshwar', i.e. the Lord of Lord Ram. Shiva's realisation of the illusionary and deluding nature of this world is reflected in his having renounced all worldly desires and comforts, and being ever engrossed in meditation in the Himalayas. The location of his 3rd eye is exactly at the place as prescribed in verse no. 2 of this Canto, i.e. he is wide awake to the realisation of Brahm. He is the only God to have this awakening.

So, the reference of Lord Ram to both Brahma and Shiva as the ones from whom his divine Mantra can be accepted signifies the fact that (1) the divine Mantra of Lord Ram is liberating even for the exalted as well as for the lowly, (2) the source of the Mantra-giving process is less important than the sincerity of the seeker/aspirant, and (3) even apparently crazy-looking fellows like Shiva might be actually the most erudite, self-realised, attained and enlightened one that ever existed in this creation.

²That is, all spiritual achievements and supernatural powers would be easily available to a man who uses the Lord's Mantra for the purpose of Japa or repetition, Yoga or meditation, Dhyan or concentration and contemplation, etc. Such a person becomes self-realised and experiences the stupendous spiritual powers of the Mantra when he experiences the bliss and ecstasy that accompany its constant repetition that leads him to become acquainted with the eternal Atma which is consciousness personified. He also realises the potential of the Mantra in actually providing him with liberation and deliverance from all spiritual miseries that had been tormenting him till then. He is now assured of emancipation and salvation, an assurance that fills him with an extreme sense of contentedness and fulfillment. He is so filled with bliss that he does not seek happiness in the outside world, and instead remains contented in his inner self. He distances himself from the gross body and an equally gross world, and instead remains focused on his Atma. He does not allow his 'self' to be involved in world and get trapped by its numerous delusions and temptations. He keeps himself aloof from the gross body and the deeds done by it. Briefly, he lives in a perpetual state of 'Turiya' or the transcendental state of existence of consciousness even though he has to live a normal life in this world. As such, for all practical purposes from the spiritual perspective, he is deemed to be liberated from the fetters of the body and the world that shackle ordinary creatures, and is deemed to be delivered from their entangling web of delusions and their accompanying hoard of miseries and torments.

³In other words, when the self-realised, enlightened and wise man dies, he would find his final Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, his final Moksha, or emancipation and salvation, when his individual Atma reverts back to its primary form and merges with the supreme Atma known as the Parmatma. It must be noted that when Lord Ram says 'the spiritual aspirant's Atma would merge with me', he is referring to the supreme Brahm, the Supreme Being, and the universal cosmic Consciousness that he personifies. Obviously, when the individual Atma merges with the cosmic Atma, all distinctions and barriers are removed, and then the former becomes indistinguishable and inseparable from the latter. This is the final 'dissolution' of the soul; it is the final liberation of the Atma as all its fetters are removed and it becomes the cosmic entity that it primarily was before it began to be identified as an individual creature. This is the aspirant's final Mukti or Moksha when all grossness and worldly encumbrances of the Atma are removed and it is restored to its original sublime and ethereal form as the pure consciousness.]

16. Oh Shiva! When you utter my divine Mantra in the right ear of the dying person anywhere in the holy realm called Avimukta, that person is certain to get liberation and deliverance; he would certainly find emancipation and salvation.'

In this way, a person who is fortunate enough to have a divine and purifying sight of the 'Avimukta Kshetra' which is blessed by Lord Ram himself, is sure to get rid of the sins and various faults that have been accumulated by him over numerous cycles of births and deaths (16).

Thus ends Canto 4 of Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 2—Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad

Canto 5

[This Canto lists the great forty-seven Mantras of Lord Ram. They were revealed by sage Yagyawalkya to sage Bharadwaj.]

1. After that, sage Bharadwaj asked the famous sage Yagyawalkya—‘Oh Lord! Please tell me about those divine Mantras which immensely please Lord Ram and are instrumental in giving a divine and holy vision of the Lord to his devotee.’ (1).

2. Yagyawalkya replied—‘Oh Brahmin! Just like Lord Ram had told Lord Shiva about the significance of Kashi while blessing him with a boon (see Canto 4 above), he had preached to Brahma in a similar fashion on some other occasion. Brahma had then praised and paid his obeisance to Lord Ram by bowing before him and singing his glories using the same set of hymns or Mantras that the Lord had divulged to him. Hearing his discourse (or divine advise), Brahma had bowed before him reverentially and sung his praises and glories using the following hymns (2).

3. To begin with, Brahma mentally bowed most reverentially before Lord Ram who is the foundation, the pillar and the backbone that supports the entire creation. As such, he is no one else but the great Lord Vishnu¹ who is the sustainer, protector, caretaker and nourisher of this creation. He is known as Narayan as he is free from all sorrows and miseries as well as all sorts of faults, taints and shortcomings that are associated with this creation. He is a treasury or a fount of eternal and supreme bliss, peace, contentedness and tranquility as well as of wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment. He is an abode or treasury of all these virtues. He is an embodiment of divine light and illumination (which is a metaphor for his supreme divinity, holiness, sublimity, magnificence, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment). He is indeed ‘Parmeshwar’ (i.e. the supreme Lord of all).

Brahma (the creator) bowed mentally before the divine form of Lord Ram, who is none but Lord Vishnu manifested in his form, and prayed to him using the sacred hymns as follows—[There are a litany of forty-seven Mantras dedicated to Lord Ram which are listed here. These are the hymns used in offering worship to the Supreme Being, the Lord God, during formal prayers held during ritualistic worship. It is like the Common Book of Prayer used during liturgical services.] (4).

[Note—¹*Vishnu* is also known as Lord Narayan. In the context of creation, Vishnu is also known as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. It is from the Viraat that even the creator of the visible world, i.e. Lord Brahma, was born. It is from the Viraat that Lord Shiva, the concluder was born. The entire creation is said to be a manifestation of Viraat. The word ‘Viraat’ means an entity that is vast and colossus, that has an infinite dimension, and that encompasses the entire creation within its ambit. When creation unfolded, the Viraat Purush assumed the role of the supreme sustainer, the caretaker, the nourisher and the regulator of this vast creation which was his own creation, and therefore like his own off-spring.

Whenever there was trouble in this creation, and when the balance of power needed to be restored in the favour of the righteous and the good virtues, the Lord took one or the other form depending upon the exigencies of the circumstance prevailing at the time. Each of these forms of Vishnu was called an incarnation.

Lord Vishnu is the sustainer and the care-taker of the world. He is the most important of the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma, the creator, and Shiva, the concluder. It’s easy to produce and destroy, but it is indeed a mammoth task to sustain and nourish what has been born. Lord Vishnu is also depicted as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the creation from whose body the rest of the

creation is said to have been formed; the Viraat embodies the whole creation in his own self. According to Purans, even Brahma and Shiva have been created from Vishnu. His name first appears in the Rig Veda, 1/154-156. The Lord represents all that is virtuous, noble, righteous, auspicious, high and glorious in this creation. He is all pervading, all encompassing and omnipresent. He is a personification of Yagya, or the various religious sacrifices (Shatpath Brahman, 1/1/2/13). The Lord has taken numerous forms and revealed himself on different occasions to uphold good and righteous, and trounce bad and evil. Lord Vishnu is also depicted as a synonymous deity for Brahm; he is Brahm personified.

Detailed notes on the *Viraat Purush* and *Lord Vishnu* are appended to the relevant verses in the following Upanishads of this volume—(i) Chapter 11, Tripadvibhuti Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph 1, 5-6; Canto 2, paragraph 11-12; Canto 7, paragraph no. 18 and its note; Canto 8, paragraph no. 17; (ii) Chapter 10, Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 15, and verse no. 25 with its accompanying note; and (iii) the present Chapter 13, section no. 2, Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4/36 and its note.

Refer also Vishnu Puran, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70.]

१. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् द्वैतपरमानन्दात्मा, यः परं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/1. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan'¹ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is 'Advaitya'—i.e. he is non-dual, without a parallel, is peerless and unique.

He is the 'Atma' (or soul; the pure consciousness) that is an embodiment or a fount of 'Param Anand'—i.e. he is the personified form of the eternal and ethereal cosmic Consciousness that is an image of supreme, pure and absolute bliss, beatitude and felicity.

He is the most majestic, exalted, sublime and supreme transcendental Brahm personified. The three Lokas called Bhu (भु), Bhuvaha (भुवः) and Swaha (स्वः)² are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/1).

[Note—¹The word *Bhagwan* has two parts— 'Bhag' and 'wan'. The 2nd part 'wan' means 'one who possesses'. The 1st part 'Bhag' refers to the following six qualities or virtues in their entirety—(1) Aishwarya of all sorts—i.e. someone who has all majesty, powers, wealth, fortune, opulence, flourish, supremacy, sway, dominance, glory, grandeur, omnipotence and other glorious virtues (सम्पूर्ण ऐश्वर्य), (2) Dharma—i.e. to have the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety, virtuous and noble conduct and thought (सम्पूर्ण धर्म), (3) Yash—i.e. the fame, glory, majesty and renown that comes with possessing noble and virtues qualities (सम्पूर्ण यश), (4) Sree—i.e. wealth, prosperity, pomp and circumstance, prestige, splendour, glory and honour, and all other factors associated with those qualities mentioned in serial no. 1-3 above (सम्पूर्ण श्री), (5) Gyan—i.e. comprehensive knowledge, erudition, wisdom, skills, expertise and enlightenment (सम्पूर्ण ज्ञान), and (6) complete Vairagya—i.e. full and sincere renunciation, detachment and dispassion towards this world and its material sense objects as well as towards this body and its desires for gratification (सम्पूर्ण वैराग्य)].

Hence, anyone who is endowed with the above six qualities is called a 'Bhagwan'.

Conventionally, the word is used as a synonym for the words 'Lord, God, Supreme Being', and is used for someone who is glorious, divine, holy, majestic, honoured and revered.

²The three worlds represented by the three cryptic words are 'Bhu' representing the earth, 'Bhuvaha' representing the sky above the earth, and 'Swaha' representing the heavens. These representative words and their respective worlds were created by the creator Brahma at the beginning of creation.]

-----२. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चाऽखण्डैकरसात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/2. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the supreme Atma or Soul (the pure cosmic Consciousness) which is eternal, uniform, universal, indivisible and immutable; it is a single entity that cannot be partitioned, fractioned and fractured in any way whatsoever. It is one unified whole.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/2).

-----३. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च ब्रह्मानन्दामृतं भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/3. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is a personified form of the Amrit (the ambrosia or elixir) of supreme and undiluted Anand (bliss, happiness, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity) that is associated with Brahm and Brahm-realisation.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/3).

-----४. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यस्तारकं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/4. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the Tarak Brahm—i.e. he is the supreme Lord who can provide the creature with liberation and deliverance from this world and its never ending miseries and the

cycle of birth and death. He is the supreme Lord who can provide the soul of the creature with emancipation and salvation.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/4).

५. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च ब्रह्मा विष्णुशिवो यः सर्वदेवात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/5. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the one who has revealed himself as the Trinity Gods known as Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the concluder). [This is obviously true as these three Gods of the Trinity represent the Supreme Being performing three functions of creation, and Lord Ram is that Supreme Being.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/5).

६. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये सर्वे वेदाः साङ्गाः सशाखाः सपुराणा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/6. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

All the Vedas, their branches, all the Purans and other scriptures are nothing but the Lord revealed in their forms.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/6).

७. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो जीवात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/7. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the Lord who has revealed himself as the Jivatma or the living being. [The word 'Jivatma or Jiva Atma' refers to the living being. Jivatma is the cosmic consciousness that comes to live in a gross body, or assumes a form of a gross body. Since this gross body harbours the Atma or the pure cosmic consciousness inside it, it begins to show all the signs of life and vitality, hence called a 'Jiva'—i.e. a living being. The otherwise inane and lifeless gross body has now become alive and active because of the presence of the Atma inside it, thereby giving it the unique honour of

being a 'Jiva Atma'. Since the Atma is an universal and unchanging entity that is Advaitya or non-dual by nature, and it is another name for the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that has manifested as Lord Ram, it follows that the Jiva Atma is also the Lord in this form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/7).

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८. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/8. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the Lord who resides in the bosom of all living beings as their Atma, the pure conscious soul, the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the subtle heart or the inner-self as the 'true identity or the true self' of the creature.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/8).

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९. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये देवाऽसुरमनुष्यादिभावा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/9. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

All the Gods, the non-Gods called the Asurs, and the Humans—indeed, all of them are the same Lord Ram (or the supreme Brahm) revealed in their forms.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/9).

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१०. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये मत्स्यकूर्माद्यवताराः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/10. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram (in his cosmic form as Vishnu) who had revealed himself as incarnations of Lord Matsya¹ (the Fish incarnation of Vishnu) and Kurma² (the Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu).

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/10).

[Note—¹*Matsya Avtaar* or the Fish incarnation of Lord Vishnu—In this incarnation as a Fish or Matsya, which is the first of ten divine incarnations of Vishnu, the Lord is said to have saved Manu, the progenitor of mankind, and the Saptarishis (the seven mental sons of the creator Brahma) along with their wives during the dooms-day deluge. They were made to board a boat which was pulled by this Fish and saved from being drowned. They re-populated the world later on. It is a story identical to the Biblical story of the Noah's Arc.

²*Kurma Avtaar* or the Tortoise incarnation of Lord Vishnu—Kurma or Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu—It is the second incarnation of Vishnu. The Lord had supported the legendary Mountain called Mandara which had started sinking during the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal and life.]

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११. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च प्राणो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/11. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Pran' or the vital life sustaining forces of creation. [The word 'Pran' literally means 'life and consciousness'. The word is used to mean the vital winds in conventional terms of Yoga and Upanishads because the vital winds are said to regulate all the functions of the creature's body. No living being can survive without the presence of air in this world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/11).

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१२. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् योऽन्तःकरणचतुष्टयात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/12. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the four aspects of the inner-self of all living beings, called the 'Antahakaran Chatusthaaye'. [The 'Anthakaran' is the inner self of the creature. It forms his subtle body. It has the following four components—Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (the faculty of concentration, paying attention and memory; knowledge and sub-conscious), Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) and their attendant Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature based on these basic components of the subtle body). That is, the basic nature of a person and the way he would react to a given circumstance, the way he would deal, behave and interact with the world, the way he would interpret things, the way he thinks, the things that would appeal to him and the things he would abhor, etc.—that is, the overall personality of the creature, all depends upon the mental setup tinged with the fundamental character traits that are firmly ingrained in him.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/12).

— १३. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च यमो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/13. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Yam'. [The word 'Yam' has three connotations—(i) Yam is the God of death¹, and hence Lord Ram is the one who brings about the conclusion of creation in the form of Yam. (ii) Yam is the God of Dharma—the deity who is responsible for implementation of the tenets of Dharma, or the eclectic principles of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety as well as nobility in thought and conduct. Hence, Lord Ram ensures that the tenets of Dharma are upheld in this creation. (iii) Yam also means self restraint and control over the sense organs. Hence, Lord Ram exemplifies these grand virtues of creation.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/13).

[Note—¹*Yam* as God of death and the deity responsible for upkeep of Dharma is the one who judges the creature for his deeds during his life and ascertains the reward or punishment that he deserves for them; he is therefore also called Dharma-Raj or the king who is responsible for ensuring that the grand and eclectic principles of Dharma are implemented in full in this world. If any creature violates its principles then Yam punishes him by condemning him to suffer in hell.

Yam God is extensively covered in the 1st and 10th Mandals of the Rig Veda. Sukta 10 of the tenth Mandal is totally devoted to him. Yam personifies the concept of death and life after death. As opposed to Niriti who is also the God related to death, Yam deals with giving justice to the dead person depending upon his deeds that he has done during his lifetime. Therefore, he is also called the patron God of Dharma, because he gives the dead person an abode in the heaven for his righteous and noble life, whereas Niriti is the patron God of death and destruction due to sins and evil way of life. According to legends, Yam's sister is Yami. His father is named Vivaswat or Vivaswaan, and he is also called 'Yam Vaivaswat' (Rig Veda, 10/14/5). His mother's name is Saranyu (Rig Veda, 10/17/1-2). He is regarded the patron God of those who are dying. He resides in the outer heaven. Out of the 3 Lokas (mythological worlds), the first two, i.e. 'Bhu' (earth; the terrestrial) and 'Bhuvaha' (the sky just above the surface of the earth; the space of the solar system) is the realm of Savita (the God who is treated as synonymous of Sun), while the third world, the 'Swaha' representing the heaven, is the abode of Yam (Rig Veda, 10/35/6). In some places he is also regarded as the son of a Gandharva and a marine beauty (Rig Veda, 10/10/4).]

— १४. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चान्तको भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/14. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

Lord Ram is the one who concludes this creation or brings it to an end, and is the only one who lasts even after the creation is concluded. [In other words, (i) Lord Ram is Lord Shiva personified, or Lord Shiva is none but Lord Ram in his role as the concluder of creation, and (ii) Lord Ram is the cosmic Consciousness or the supreme Brahm who is the only entity that survives the conclusion of creation, and from whom the next phase of creation starts. This is because Lord Ram as Brahm is infinite, eternal and imperishable cosmic Consciousness.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/14).

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१५. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च मृत्युभूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/15. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the Mrityu or death¹. [In other words, the God of Death is a form that Lord Ram takes to bring about the conclusion of creation. That is why it has been said in the scriptures that a wise and enlightened man does not fear from death as he has developed a sufficiently holistic view of life in which he sees the Lord everywhere in every phase of creation—he sees his Lord equally in life as well as in death.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/15).

[Note—¹Lord Ram is the sustainer as well as the concluder of the creation. There is no perplexity in it because as Brahm personified, the Lord is the beginning and the end of all that exists. Besides this point, Lord Ram has to get rid of evil and corrupt forces of creation so that righteousness and auspiciousness can prevail. Therefore, he is personified death for those who are pervert and sinful.]

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१६. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चामृतं भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/16. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘Amrit’ or the ambrosia or elixir of life. He is the nectar of life, the vital force of life, the essence of life, the eternal source of life.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/16).

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१७. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यानि पञ्चमहाभूतानि भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/17. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Panch Maha-Bhuts', or the five principal elements of creation. [In other words, the five elements that constitute the basic backbone of creation have their value and importance because they are one of the many forms of the Supreme Being known as Ram. Or, Lord Ram has assumed five forms called the 'Panch Bhuts' in order to carry out different functions of this creation. The Panch Maha-bhuts are the sky or space, air or wind, fire or energy, water or elixir of life, and earth upon which the entire edifice of creation rests. The difference between 'Five Bhuts' and 'Five Maha Bhuts' is that the former refers to the above five elements at the microcosmic level of creation dealing with the individual creature, while the latter term is applied to the same elements when they are considered in their macrocosmic form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/17).

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१८. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः स्थावरजङ्गमात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/18. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the entire creation—both in its immobile form as well as in its mobile form. [The word 'Sthaavar' refers to something that does not move or show apparent signs of life—such as members of the plant kingdom and rocks, mountains etc., while the word 'Jangam' means those who are mobile and exhibit clear signs of life—such as the members of the animal kingdom. In other words, every single unit of creation is a form of the supreme Brahman who is known by another name as Ram.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/18).

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१९. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये पञ्चाग्नयो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/19. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Panch Agnis'¹, the five divine forms of the sacred fire.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/19).

[Note—¹The five divine fires are the following—Garhyapatya' (गार्हपत्य—the fire of the household hearth), (b) 'Dakshinagni' (दक्षिणाग्नि—the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity), (c) 'Ahavaniya' (आहवनीय—the fire to invoke the Gods during a ritualistic sacrifice), (d) 'Sabhya' (सभ्य—the fire of the Vedic period which was continuously lit) and (e) 'Awasathya' (आवसथ्य—the fire of the later Smriti period).

The *Garhyapatya fire*—This is the householder's fire. A householder has land and farm representing 'earth' in which he grows food. This food is grown with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire place in the house. Hence, the Garhyapatya fire, or the householder's fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these four entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the 'fire element' because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

The fire was the central piece of all religious life in early times of the Vedic period when a fire sacrifice was deemed to be the best religious activity that a righteous man can expect to do. In this context, the Garhyapatya fire is the main fire lit during such formal fire sacrifices. The fire pit was either square-shaped or rounded. In the context of the fire sacrifice, it was used for the purpose of daily rituals, cooking or warming the offerings, heating of the vessels, to perform circumambulation, to act as a main cauldron or reservoir of the sacred fire which was to be kept perpetually burning throughout the life of the householder once it was lit.

The *Dakshinagni fire*—This fire is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

Like in the case of the Garhyapatya fire, the fire that was lit in the main sacrificial shed or site just near the main fire pit but to the south of it and where donations and charities were made was called Dakshinagni fire. The fire pit for this fire was semi-circular or bow-shaped.

The *Ahawaniya fire*—This fire is lit to invoke the Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The 'electric' is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possesses most

stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahm in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahm present in it which gives it its punch and strength.

According to Vedic tradition, the invitational fire, the Ahawaniya fire that is lit to invite or invoke the Gods, is started from a spark brought from the Garhyapatya fire of the patron who does the fire sacrifice or on whose behalf it is being done. If such a fire is not available with him, then it is brought from some other person's house who worships the sacred fire on a daily basis. The Dakshinagni is then lit to bear witness to the charities made during the fire sacrifice.

The following are also regarded as the five fires— (i) The Sun, (ii) The Lightening, (iii) The Terrestrial fire, (iv) The Master or Lord of the household, and (v) The Chief Priest.

Scriptures ordain that a learned person should worship the fire element by doing five types of sacrifices in his life. These are called the Panch Maha Yagya (the five great sacrifices). They are the following— (1) Bhut Yagya refers to taking care of other creatures in creation, such as feeding animals and providing for their protection and shelter. (2) Manushya Yagya refers to doing the same thing for fellow human beings as done for animals and other creatures of this creation. (3) Pitri Yagya refers to offering oblations to dead ancestors and doing religious activities for the peace of their souls. (4) Dev Yagya refers to the performance of fire sacrifices in which offerings are given to the sacred fire which sustain the Gods and are done to honour them. (5) And Brahm Yagya refers to the study of the Vedas and other scriptures that enlighten the man about the ultimate Truth known as Brahm. These five sacrifices have been described in Ashramo-panishad, verse no. 3.

According to the *Pran Agnihotra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 12, the five holy fires are the following—Pran or breath (because it keep the body warm and alive), Ahawaniya, Dakshinagni, Garhapatya, and Sarwa-Praaschitya or the fire of repentance, expiation and penance'.

According to the *Pran Agnihotra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 19, there are *five fires* in the body. They are—(i) Suryaagni also known as Darshanaagni, (ii) Ahawaniya Agni, (iii) Sharir Agni, (iv) Dakshinaagni, and (v) Koshtagni or Kosta Agni which is akin to the Garhyapatya Agni.

The *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse nos. 29-32 of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the following 5 *fires*—Kalagni, Samulaagni, Vadaagni, Electric (lightening) and Sun (the cosmic cauldron of fire).

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२०. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः सत्पव्याहृतयो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/20. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Sapta Maha Vyarihitis'¹, the five divine forms of subtle life. [The Vyarihitis were the first esoteric words uttered by Brahma, the creator, at the time of creation, and each of them metamorphosed as a world of its own.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/20).

[Note—¹The *Vyahritis* are the primary root words pronounced by the creator Brahma at the time of the beginning of creation and from which formed the nucleus around which the seven worlds formed. In other words, the rest of the creation was revealed from these primary sounds created by Brahma.

The seven 'Vyahritis' are the words—(1) Bhu, (2) Bhuvaha, (3) Swaha, (4) Maha, (5) Janaha, (6) Tapaha, and (7) Satyam. 'Bhu' was the nucleus for earth, 'Bhuvaha' for the sky above the earth, 'Swaha' for the space beyond the earth's atmosphere and is generally meant for the heavens, 'Maha' stands for the greater heavens beyond the solar system, called the Maha-Loka where enlightened sages and seers are supposed to dwell (as opposed to earth where ordinary creatures including subterranean creatures would finally take up residence), 'Tapaha' was the place where exalted ascetics would do penances and austerities, and 'Satyam' was the truthful and ultimate abode where the ultimate and irrefutable supreme truthful entity which is the only Authority in creation resides.

According to Sankhya Shastra and the Purans, Brahma, who is known as 'Swayambhu' (self-created and self-begotten in the sense that he had no father or ancestor from whom he descended) created seven elements called 'Vyahriti', viz. Bhuh, Bhuvaha, Swaha, Mahaha, Janaha, Tapaha and Satyam respectively (भूः, भुवः, स्वः, महः, जनः, तपः, सत्यमः) which constitute the fundamental elements which formed the gross body of the creation as its core building blocks at the macro level. Encircling this core is the rounded globe called 'earth' which is surrounded by concentric circles constituting of 'water' (जल), 'energy' called 'Tej' (तेज), 'wind or air' (वायु), 'sky or space' (आकाश), the notions that are described as 'pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity' collectively called 'Ahankar' (अहंकार), and the notions of 'importance, majesty, grandeur, magnificence and lordliness' called collectively as 'Mahattatva' (महत्तत्त्व). Each of them was ten times larger than its preceding layer or circle.

The seven Vyahritis and the worlds they represent are the following—
 (a) 'Bhu' represents this world (earth), fire, Rig Veda and Pran (life giving breath); (b) 'Bhuvaha' represents the sky called Antariksha, wind or air, Sam Vedas and Apaana wind (i.e. the wind which passes down the intestines and helps in digestion and excretion); (c) 'Swaha' represents Dukoka (the heavens), Aditya (the celestial sun), Yajur Veda and Vyan (the wind that prevails throughout the body); (d) 'Maha' represents Aditya (the Sun God), Chandrama (the Moon God), Brahm (the supreme transcendental Being who has no specific attributes) and Anna (food which sustains life in this creation); (e) 'Janaha' represents the world inhabited by mortal creatures such as the life on earth; (f) 'Tapaha' represents the world where great ascetics and hermits live to do severe penances and austerities, and therefore it is most auspicious and holy and marked by an effulgence of divine energy and splendour; and (g) 'Satyam' representing that truthful abode where the supreme transcendental Brahm lives; it is the ultimate destination of all spiritual pursuits, and is marked by eternal beatitude and felicity.

The Taittiriyo-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Valli 1, Anuvak 5 describes these Vyahritis. It however focuses on four Vyahritis only, i.e. Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Maha. In this verse, the different ‘Vyahritis’ are being worshipped as manifestations of the supreme transcendental Brahm.]

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२१. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या विद्या भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/21. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as glorious virtue known as ‘Vidya’— i.e. knowledge in all its forms. [Knowledge is the most important component of creation as even the basic functions of life depend upon knowledge.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/21).

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२२. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या सरस्वती भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/22. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as ‘Saraswati’¹, the Goddess of knowledge, erudition, sagacity, skills and wisdom as well as the faculty of speech. [In other words, the sublime and grand virtues that are represented by this goddess are nothing but one of the numerous majestic and eclectic virtues of Lord Ram revealed in that divine form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/22).

[Note—¹*Saraswati*—In the form of a goddess known as Saraswati who personifies the virtues of learning, wisdom, erudition, knowledge, expertise and skills of all kinds as well as all kinds of arts, crafts and sciences and all other bodies of knowledge that exist in this creation, she appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/164/49, and subsequently in Rig Veda, 6/61/1-14, 7/95/1-2, 4-6, and 7/96/1-3. The Goddess is also honoured in other Vedas as follows—in Sam Veda, 1461, in Yajur Veda, 20/84 and 34/41, and in Atharva Veda, 6/94, 18/1/42-43. The faculty of speech called Vak has been personified as a goddess. She is related to Brihaspati, the patron God of speech and wisdom (Rig Veda, 10/71/1). She is the patron goddess of speech because all forms of knowledge need speech and the ability to express and explain things properly to be perpetrated and become useful for this creation. Suppose there was no speech, then the knowledge would not have been disseminated so widely. All the Vedas are said to be created by her; hence she is regarded as the mother of the Vedas (Gayatri Rahasyo-panishad, 4/5/9-10).

According to the Purans, she is the Shakti or dynamic power of the creator Brahma because any specialised process would require technical skills, expertise and relevant knowledge in order to complete it successfully—especially the one as technical and complicated as the one related to the creation of a vast and infinitely complex structure known as the universe that is continuously evolving and ever changing in nature, in which no two units are alike, and which has defied explanation and full understanding even at the hands of the highest of intelligent brains. No success in any auspicious endeavour is possible without intelligence, wisdom, erudition, relevant knowledge, skills and expertise.

Since Goddess Saraswati embodies these virtues in her self, and since the Vedas are the traditional ancient repositories of all knowledge that was created by Brahma the creator, it is said that the Vedas are personified forms of Saraswati. Again, since the information contained in the timeless Vedas were passed on from generation to generation by the process of teaching and learning which entails the use of speech and skill with language, this Goddess is said to patronize these two—the faculty of speech called Vak, and skills with the language. Learning and teaching also requires intelligence and a properly functioning mind and its subconscious, these too were patronized by Saraswati. That is why a person who is highly learned and scholarly, who is wise, intelligent and erudite, is said to be especially blessed by Goddess Saraswati. The Vedas created by Brahma would have been useless had it not been for Saraswati that enabled these Vedas to be revealed, taught and propagated from generation to generation.

Etymologically, 'Saraswati' represents a river, and this is how she is represented in the Rig Veda, because the word literally means 'to flow'. This is a very apt definition for Saraswati because that knowledge which 'flows and spreads', which 'grows and develops', is good for all and it blooms, while that which is locked in books and shelves of libraries is as good as non-existent, it becomes stagnant and has no practical value and utility. Metaphorically, this 'flow' can also represent speech because what we speak also flows forth from our mind and tongue; that is why good orators are said to be making a flowing and flowery speech that springs out from their mouth in a natural flow much like a stream gushing out from a natural spring or flowers that blossom in the spring season on their own.

Since the light of knowledge and wisdom is the anti-thesis of the darkness created by delusions and ignorance, she is iconographically depicted clothed in spotless white—the colour of all-inclusiveness purity and irrefutable immaculacy, of absolute truth and reality, as well as of wisdom, knowledge and light that removes the various shades of darkness representing ignorance and delusions. She sits on a lotus also symbolizing purity and cleanliness.

Her mount or vehicle is the Hans, the Swan, which is itself regarded as a very wise bird. It is believed that it would pick up pearls and leave the rest of the gems aside from a collection of jewels, and drink pure milk and leave its adulterants to symbolise its ability of selecting and accepting the best of what is available. Saraswati sitting on the Hans implies that mere technical knowledge, skill and expertise alone are not enough if it is not complemented with wisdom, insight, erudition and enlightenment. This means a person on whom Saraswati is pleased would use his discretionary intellect and wisdom to select the best option available to him; he would pick out the nuggets of wisdom contained in the vast and voluminous scriptures that are of any spiritual worth for him

and accept them in his daily life, leaving aside the rest. The swan moves majestically in a pond of lotus flowers, it lends glory to the pond and the flowers because it is the only living entity in the immobile surroundings. Likewise, a wise and learned man is like a gem in the society.

In mythological lore, a Peacock is also depicted as her vehicle. The peacock is said to be the most beautiful bird with its opened plume of colorful feathers—this symbolises the fact that knowledge can not only bring the best things of the world to the person who has knowledge and expertise on any subject but also to symbolise that it is a person's degree of mental development and the level of his wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment that makes him attractive, much respected and honoured rather than the amount of physical wealth he possesses, the strength of his body or its beauty that has any real importance. The peacock in its self is not a beautiful bird; it is its colourful plume of open feathers that makes it so charming and attractive. So, mere knowledge and intelligence is not as important as their type and the use to which they are put. A man's knowledge can be the cause of ruin and miseries for others, while another man's knowledge can show happiness and peace to the less fortunate ones. Obviously, the latter is revered by the society and the former is loathed.

In iconographic accounts, she is shown as having four hands. The four arms are indicative of her all-inclusiveness, as they stand for the four Vedas as well as the four cardinal points of the directional compass (east, south, west and north). Further, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm is also said to have four Pads or aspects—refer Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 4, Section 5-8 of Sam Veda tradition.

In one version, two of the hands hold a Veena (Indian lute)—one hand holding it, while the other hand strumming its string to indicate that she is eternally singing the hymns of the Vedas, deriving eternal bliss from this singing, and perpetually immersed in contemplation and meditation. The Veena, a musical instrument used to sing melodiously, indicates the ability to be sentimental and emotional on the one hand, and this involves the interaction of the heart because a good singer sings from the heart, and to be intelligent and have a sharp mind which naturally involves the mind and intellect on the other hand, because one has to be an expert in the Vedas and the languages in order to remember the complicated verses and recall them flawlessly while singing. Coordination between the heart and mind is very necessary for singing; singing is not possible if the heart and the mind are not rested, are not at peace with them selves, and not in harmony. The third hand has an Akshamala (prayer rosary). The rosary indicates that inspite of knowing everything and being Brahm personified, she remains constantly engrossed in doing Japa or repeating some divine Mantra herself to teach her followers never to abandon contemplation and meditation as well as the use of divine Mantras. The fourth holds a book symbolizing knowledge in all its forms, in its most visible and tangible form. The book indicates knowledge not only of the scriptures but of all the sciences, arts and crafts taken together.

In another version, she is depicted as holding a rosary, a goad, a loop and a book in her four hands—refer verse no. 38 of the 'Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad'. The symbolism of the goad and the loop is obvious. They indicate the fact that when a man becomes wise he is able to rein in his sense organs by using the loop, and coax himself to follow the correct

path by using the goad of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment.

Saraswati is considered as the divine consort of Brahma, and hence represents his power of intelligence, wisdom, skill, erudition, expertise and knowledge that enabled Brahma to create the Vedas and the rest of this creation.

An entire Upanishad called *Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad* belonging to the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is dedicated to her.

In Christianity, *Saint Catherine* is honoured as the patron saint of learning, students and educational institutions. She is a lady saint like goddess Saraswati and was born in Alexandria in a wealthy family in CE 294. Her name before baptism was Dorothea. She had accepted Christ as her betrothal, and as proof of her devotion for the Lord she was given a ring in her dreams which she found on her fingers when she woke up. But this dedication led to her being martyred during the rule of the Roman Emperor Maximian. It is believed that the angel of God took her body to the foot of Mountain of Moses in the Sinai desert. This mountain is where Moses had received the ten Commandants from the Lord. A monastery in her name exists there today.]

— २३. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या लक्ष्मी भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/23. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as ‘Laxmi’¹, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. [In other words, it is Lord Ram in his cosmic role as the sustainer of creation assumed the form of goddess known as Laxmi so that he can provide the creature with material comfort and pleasures of life so that the creature is not put to undue inconvenience.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/23).

[Note—¹*Laxmi* is the Goddess of well being, majesty, wealth and prosperity. She is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and represents the dynamism of the Lord that helps him to carry out the function of sustenance, development, growth, nourishment and protection of this vast and myriad creation.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 11 describes the Mantra dedicated to this Goddess. To quote—“OM salutations! The most glorious, majestic, powerful, great and divine Goddess is the *Laxmi** of the three worlds called the Bhu Loka (the terrestrial world where mortal creatures live; the earth), the Bhuvaha Loka (which is the lower heaven where the junior Gods and spirits live), and the Swaha Loka (the upper heaven where the Lord of the world Vishnu lives). [*The word *Laxmi* is used here as an adjective to describe the glorious virtues and majestic qualities that give greatness and supremacy to an entity. It is usually measured in terms of grandeur, magnificence, prosperity, opulence, supernatural powers, sway and authority that such an entity possesses. In materialistic world it is usually a synonym for material wealth, prosperity, opulence and the fame that

comes with them. In other words, the divine Goddess Laxmi who is the consort of Lord Vishnu personifies these virtues. Since Lord Vishnu is another name for the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-inclusive form of the supreme Brahm, from whom the entire creation has been born and who completely soaks it like water in sponge, it follows that Laxmi represents the dynamic qualities of Vishnu that helps the Lord to sustain and protect the world.]

Let the great Goddess Maha-Laxmi whose other name is 'Kalkarni' (i.e. the one who actively controls all the deeds and actions of the creature in all phases of time and circumstance) inspire and impel us towards doing auspicious, righteous and noble deeds.'

This Mantra dedicated to the great Goddess Laxmi in the Gayatri Chanda (style of poetical composition) is enunciated in the Yajur Veda, and is therefore called the 'Maha-Laxmi Gayatri Mantra' of the Yajur Veda. It has twenty-four letters or syllables.

Laxmi is the patron goddess of wealth, and she epitomizes all round welfare and well being, not only in material terms but also in spiritual terms for only a well off aspirant who has not to bother about his daily needs can comfortably involve himself in religious activities such as doing fire sacrifices and making charities. If a man is mentally worried about his bread and butter, he would find it hard to concentrate on spiritual pursuits without a sense of guilt of not living up to his responsibilities towards his family, especially when he has spent the whole life as a householder with a large bundle of responsibility on his shoulders. Even the cosmic sustainer and care-taker, Lord Vishnu had to keep her with him in order to take care of the material needs of his subjects. An entire Upanishad, called the 'Saubhagya Laxmi Upanishad' belonging to the Rig Veda tradition is dedicated to this goddess. This Upanishad is chapter no. 9 of this humble author's anthology of Rig Veda Upanishads.]

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२४. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या गौरी भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/24. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Gauri', the Goddess who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva and considered as the Mother Goddess. [The Goddess Gauri is also known as Parvati who is regarded as the Mother of all other forms of goddesses. She is a personified form of Shakti, the cosmic dynamic powers and energy of the supreme Brahm by which the latter does anything. This Shakti is not different or separate from Brahm but only a manifestation of the latter's cosmic dynamism, energy and powers. Since Lord Ram is none else but Brahm personified, it is said here that all the dynamisms and energies that are present in this creation, and all the Goddesses who are personifications of these grand virtues of Brahm, are actually the Lord himself playing out these roles in a secret form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/24).

२५. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या जानकी भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/25. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Janki', the daughter of King Janak and his divine consort. [Janki is also known as Sita. She is an incarnation of Goddess Laxmi or Rama who is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and a manifestation of Shakti in its macrocosmic form.]¹

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/25).

[Note—¹*Sita* is the cosmic primordial primary energy and power called 'Shakti', which was responsible for setting in motion the process of creation, personified. She is the divine consort of Lord Ram who is none other than Lord Vishnu in a human form. An entire Upanishad, called 'Sito-panishad' is dedicated to her. It extols her divine, ethereal, holy and sublime aspects, and is the 4th Upanishad of the Atharva Veda. It is included in our present volume.

As has been pointed out earlier, Shakti is the dynamism and energy of the supreme transcendental Brahm in a personified female form. Shakti is an integral part of Brahm and is nothing but one of the Supreme Being's various forms to perform specific functions. It is this Shakti that has revealed itself as Sita or Janki. Hence, it is appropriate to say that it is Lord Ram who himself has revealed as Sita. Again, since it is Brahm that pervades in each pore of creation and there is nothing in this creation that is not Brahm, it clearly follows that Sita is also a form of this universal divinity known as Brahm.]

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२६. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च त्रैलोक्यं भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/26. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the three legendary worlds, and hence is called the 'Trilokya'. [The word 'Trilokyam' has two connotations—one is that the Lord is able to see everything in all the three worlds, that nothing is hidden or secret from him because he is omniscient and all-knowing as well as a resident in the inner-self of all the creatures as their Atma or soul, and two, that all the three worlds are his revelation, or that all the three phases of creation—viz. the past, the present and the future—are uniformly pervaded by the Lord who is the omnipresent and all-encompassing Supreme Being of creation. The three worlds are the terrestrial world, the lower heaven represented by the sky just above the surface of the earth, and the upper heavens represented by the deep recesses of the sky.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/26).

२७. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च सूर्यो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/27. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Surya¹', the Sun God in his subtle manifestation, and as the visible celestial Sun in his more visible form.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/27).

[Note—¹The Sun/*Surya*— The Sanskrit word for the Sun God or Aditya is *Surya*. This word has three connotations—viz. (i) Sartehe—one how moves. This refers to the Sun because it moves constantly across the sky. It also refers to the supreme cosmic Consciousness that makes all movement possible. (ii) Sviryate—this means one who receives and accepts. This virtue refers to the fact that all offerings offered to the fire sacrifice are done in the presence of the Sun, and since the latter is the celestial cauldron of fire all the offerings are deemed to be offered to it. In another plane, it refers to the Jiva, the living being, who receives stimuli from the world and then accepts them and deduces that the world from where they originate is real and true. (iii) Suvatehe—meaning one who shines. This is very obvious in the case of the Sun. This virtue refers to the supreme Self or supreme Consciousness that is self-illuminated and self-effulgent.

Sun God or Surya appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the 'eye' of the Viraat Purush, and at the time of creation when this Viraat Purush revealed himself as the individual creature such as for example a cow, a horse and a man, the Sun God took up residence in the eye (refer Aitereyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4). He is also regarded as visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9. The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). The Sun is like the Atma of all the creatures (Akchu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

The Sun is the brightest, the most splendourous, the brilliantly radiant, the most majestic and grandest entity in the entire firmament. The whole length and breadth of the sky is lit with its light; all the objects present in the sky, visible or invisible, are illuminated by its light. It is the eternal and infinite celestial source of light, heat and energy; it inspires, fosters, sustains and protects life in this world; it is synonymous with and a metaphor for life in all its dimensions. Its splendour and radiance makes it an apt metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment. As an embodiment of this virtue of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity he has been held in high esteem and as the great teacher and preacher of eclectic knowledge pertaining to the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. He had assumed the form of a horse and revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda to the great sage Yagyavalkya. He was also the teacher of Hanuman, said to be incarnate Wind God and Lord Shiva, and who was the great, most ardent and the wisest devotee of Lord Ram.

From the physical perspective also, the Sun is regarded as a fount of light, energy and heat which supports life in all forms in this physical world. No life is imaginable without the presence of the Sun.

According to mythological accounts, the Sun God was the son of sage Kashyap and his wife Aditi from whom all the Gods were born. He is said to be a revelation from the eye of the Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu who is the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing vast and invisible form of the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm. The physical Sun in the sky is the Viraat Purush's visible form. He was married to Sangya, the daughter of Vishwakarma who is regarded as the architect, builder and planner of the Gods. Sangya had two sons and one daughter from the Sun God—viz. the sons named Shraadhha-dev also called Vaivaswat Manu and Yam the god of death, and the daughter named Yamuna which is also the name of a famous river in India. Sangya could not bear the intensity of the Sun's heat and light, so she left her 'shadow' or image and herself went away disguised as a mare to do sever penance. From this 'shadow' were produced two sons and a daughter. The two sons were Shani God who is believed to be full of malice and evil forebodings reflecting the genes of his mother as a dark shadow, and Saarvarni Manu, and the daughter was Tapti literally meaning one who is fierce and hot. In due course of time, the Sun God found out that his real wife Sangya was involved in doing severe Tapa, so he was extremely pleased with her and brought her back. It was from her form as a mare that the Ashwini Kumars were born. They derived their name from the root 'Ashwa' meaning a horse. These twin sons of the Sun God are regarded as the medicine men of the Gods.

The Sun God revealed himself as Sugriv, the king of the monkey race, during Treta-Yug when Lord Ram incarnated, and as Karna during Dwapar when Lord Krishna came as an incarnation of Vishnu. Sun God rides a chariot driven by Arun who is the son of Vintaa (his mother) and the elder brother of Garud, the legendary heron or eagle who is the mount of Lord Vishnu. The seven horses of the chariot represent the seven colours of the Sun's light. He is constantly on the move and controls and regulates the seasons, months, solstice and year.

The Surya Mandal, i.e. the divine abode of the Sun God, has been narrated in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 10, verse nos. 1-23. It is also referred to in the Tripadvibhuti Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 as falling in the path of a spiritual aspirant who, upon leaving his gross body, is going astride the Garud (the divine vehicle of Vishnu which is represented by the OM Mantra here) through the path of the sky to the heaven where Lord Vishnu lives.

References of the Upanishads dealing with the Sun God—

- (a) Rig Veda = Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, Canto 2, verse no. 4.
- (b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Savitri Upanishad.
- (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15.
- (d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Akchu Upanishad, Cantos 1 and 2; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1; Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2; Naryan Upanishad, verse no. 1.
- (e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1; Surya Upanishad; Gayatri Upanishad.

According to Yoga Upanishads, the Sun God has his symbolic presence in the naval of the body in the Nabhi Chakra or the Manipur Chakra, and as the fire element in the Mooladhar Chakra, the Swadhisthan Chakra and the Kundalini. The dynamic energy of the sun represented by its life-giving powers is revealed in the form of consciousness that flows in the Pingla Naadi, the nerve passing through the right nostril.

The *Akchu Upanishad* lists some of the virtues of the Sun God in its Canto 1, verse no. 1 which is exclusively dedicated to his grand virtues.

Aditya or the Sun God, or his visible form as the celestial Sun, has been repeatedly regarded by the Upanishads as a visible *manifestation of the Viraat Purush* who himself is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. For example, Sam Veda's

Chandogya Upanishad—1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15; Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is the *eye* of the Supreme Being—refer Aiteriyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and finds his abode in the creature's eye— refer Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6, 8 describes the Sun God as the *Pran*—the vital life giving factor in creation, the life consciousness, and in Canto 1, verse nos. 9, 12-15 as Prajapati—the creator, motivator, nourisher, sustainer, protector and caretaker of the subjects of this creation. He is called the Fire God or the Vaishwanar Agni, the Viraat Purush, the Pran or life consciousness that supports all life in this world—Canto 1, verse no. 7.

The Akchu Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is fully dedicated to the Sun God. It has two parts—in its Canto 1 sage Sankriti offers prayers to the Sun God, and Canto 2 contains the metaphysical and spiritual teachings of the Sun God for the benefit of the sage.

The Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1, says that the Sun God is known as 'Mitra', literally meaning a friend. This is because the Sun God's benevolence and life-sustaining abilities make him a fast friend of every single living being in creation. He fosters life and is a friend of life rather than being its enemy by annihilating it. He helps the world to develop and grow as well as to acquire its stupendous magnificence and glory—refer Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is also known as 'Savita'—refer Savitru-panishad of Sam Veda tradition, and Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

The Narayan Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in Brahmo-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

'Aditya' or the Sun God appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda-- 1/41/4-6; 2/27; 8/47/14-18; 10/185; Sam Veda—395; 397; Yajur Veda—23/5; 34/54; Atharva Veda—5/3/9-10; 16/3.]

२८. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च सोमो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/28. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Som or Soma'¹. [The word 'Som' refers to the Moon God, while the word 'Soma' refers to a drink derived from the sap of a herb of the same name that is used as sanctified drink during fire sacrifices. It is white in colour. This drink is offered to the Gods as well as taken as sanctified drink by the participants of the rituals. It is said that Soma, the drink, is stored in Som, the celestial Moon, thereby giving the latter its name 'Som'. It is the elixir that gives

ecstasy and bliss to the Gods. In the present context it means that both the elixir of life known as Soma as well as the Moon God who is charged with its custody are actually the Supreme Being revealed in their forms. The Soma is the Supreme Being's magnificent quality of giving happiness, joys, bliss and ecstasy, while the glorious Moon in the heaven represents the virtues of providing peace, tranquility, calmness and rest to the creature who is finding himself agitated and restless due to the continuous turmoil and the numerous torments and miseries of this existential world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/28).

[Note—¹The *Som* or the Moon God (also known as Chandrama)—He appears first in the Rig Veda, 10/85/19). He is the patron God of night. His origin is in the Mana (heart and mind; the emotions and thoughts) of the Parmatma or the supreme Lord (the Viraat Purush or Vishnu) (Yajur Veda, 31/12; Taittiriya Brahman, 3/10/8/5). His existence depends upon the Sun God. On the dark night, he is supposed to enter the Sun (Aiteriya Brahman, 8/28). Chandrama is synonymous with Som, the divine elixir and sanctified drink drunk during the religious sacrifices as it gives its drinker peace and a long life (Kaushatiki Brahman, 16/5; Aiteriya Brahman, 7/11). He is the controller of seasons and months; he always changes so appear to be like a new born everyday. He gives peace and long life to the 'Stota', the chanter of hymns as prayers (Rig Veda, 10/85/19).

Chandra or the Moon God or Som appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—10/85/19; Yajur Veda—1/28; Atharva Veda—6/78/1-2; 19/1.

The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes this Moon as being as the symbolic form of the water element. The moon is said to be the celestial pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of eternity and bliss that is drunk by the Gods. In the human body, it is represented by the Eda Naadi passing through the left nostrils and which is used during do Pranayam. [Refer Canto 1, verse 166.] It is also present as the crescent moon, the Ardha Chandrakar Chakra, which is said to be the shape of the water element of which the patron deity is Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and located from the knee to the hip region. [Refer Canto 1, verse 176 and Canto 5, verse no. 13.] At other places it describes the symbolic importance of creating a union of the moon and sun as metaphor for the union of the creature with the supreme Brahm. [Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 56 and 68 for instance.] In the context of Pranayam it is used to indicate the bliss obtained by the ascetic. [Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 120, 127.]

Canto 1, verse no. 133 of this Upanishad describes the great Mantra 'So-a-ham' and asserts that the moon stands for the letter 'sa' of this Mantra. Other instances where moon appears in Yogshikha Upanishad are Canto 1, verse nos. 133, 146, 176, Canto 3, verse no. 11, and Canto 6, verse no. 4.

The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 4 asserts that the Moon God is Vishnu personified. This is because Vishnu is the sustainer and nourisher of creation much like the Som which is a divine elixir that sustains the Gods and gives them eternity. Another reason is that the physical form of Som is like the male semen which harbours life intrinsically inside it and is the means by which creation is brought about, and Vishnu in his more sublime form known as Viraat Purush is also the Lord from whom the entire creation emerged.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Chandrama or the Moon God is one of the ten Digpaals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the north-western direction and worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that his weapon is known as Gadaa or the mace.

The Moon God is said to be a custodian God of the Soma, a white coloured drink derived from the sap of a plant of the same name. It is used as a sanctified drink during fire and other religious sacrifices and is offered to Gods. It is said to provide ecstasy and bliss. The Moon derives its name as ‘Som’ because of the fact that it is considered as the heavenly pitcher of this Soma juice stored by the Gods.]

_____ २९. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यानि नक्षत्राणि भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/29. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the different ‘Nakshatras’¹ or stars and their constellations. [In other words, all the gross bodies in the heaven such as the numerous stars and their equally numerous clusters are one of the myriad forms of the supreme Lord known as Ram.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/29).

[Note—¹The *Nakshatras*—The word Nakshatra refers to the star or constellation (group or cluster of independent stars) that is present in the lunar mansion which is the 1/27th part of the path of the moon’s revolution around the earth. It represents 13.33 degrees of the sky. Since the sidereal revolution time of the moon is a little less than 27 days and 8 hours, the moon travels through one Nakshatra during the course of a day. The day is therefore named after the particular Nakshatra through which the moon is passing on a particular day according to the lunar calendar. The Nakshatras occupy a very important place in astronomical and astrological calculations.

The Atharva Veda (14/7) and Maitraayaniya Sanhita (2/13/20) lists the names of twenty eight Nakshatras. These are the following—Ashvini, Bharani, Krittika, Rohini, Mrigshiras, Aardraa, Punarvasu, Pushya, Aashlesha, Maghaa, Purva-phaalguni, Uttar-phaalguni, Hastaa, Chitraa, Swaati, Vishaakhaa, Anuraadhaa, Jyeshtha, Mulaa, Purva-aashaadha, Uttar-aashaadha, Shrivanaa, Dhanisthaa, Shatabhisha, Purva-Bhaadra-padaa, Uttar-Bhaadra-padaa, and Revati.

The Purans however consider that the twenty seven Nakshatras are daughters of Daksha Prajapati and married to the Moon God called Chandra.

The Nakshatras are related to the twelve Zodiac signs called the Raashis. The Nakshatras are further classified as males and females, as well as benevolent ones and malevolent ones depending upon their positive or negative impact on the creature.]

३०. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये च नवग्रहा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/30. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘Nava Grahas’¹ or nine Grahas or planets. [In other words, all the planets in the heaven are one of the numerous forms of the supreme Lord known as Ram.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/30).

[Note—¹The *Nava-Grahas* or nine planets—The Navgrahas are the following—Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu.

According to some texts, there are only eight Grahas or Astha Grahas because they treat the last two, i.e. Rahu and Ketu, as one entity. Refer Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Kandika 2, verse no. 9. This Upanishad is in honour of Lord Rudra as another name of Brahm, and says that Rudra is a personification of the eight Grahas.

The Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 12, verse no. 1-28 describes the Grahas and their divine chariots and their horses.]

३१. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये चाऽष्टौ लोकपाला भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/31. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘eight Lokpaals¹’. [The word ‘Lokpaal’ means one who takes care of the world. Obviously, this role is played by Vishnu amongst the Trinity Gods. It is Vishnu who has incarnated as Lord Ram, so the similarity is evident. Here the implication is that the it is Lord Ram or Lord Vishnu who has manifested himself as the eight Lokpaals to take care of the eight directions of the gross world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/32).

[Note--¹The *eight Lokpals* are the custodians of the eight directions of the world. They are represented by the following— (i) Indra (इन्द्र—the king of Gods), (ii) Agni (अग्नि—the Fire God), (iii) Yam (यम—the Death God; also called Dharma Raj because he upholds righteousness and nobility of thoughts and conducts), (iv) Niriti (निर्ऋति—the God who controls death due to sins and evil tendencies as opposed to Yam who judges the destiny of those who die depending upon the content of righteousness and probity element in their earlier life), (v) Varun (वरुण—the Water God), (vi) Vayu (वायु—the Wind God), (vii) Kuber (कुबेर—the treasurer of Gods), and (viii) Ish (ईश—Lord Shiva). Though Brahma and Anant (Vishnu or Sheshnath, the legendary hooded serpent on whom Vishnu reclines in the cosmic ocean called Kshir Sagar) are also considered guardians of the world and are listed as the last two amongst the ten Diggals, but the above eight Gods are regarded as the Lokpals.

Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 36-37 mentions the name of eight Lokpals, and verse no. 38 mentions the names of eight Diggals. Verse no. 39 lists their weapons.]

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३२. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये चाऽष्टौ वसवो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/32. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'eight Vasus'¹. [The Vasus are the Nature's gift to creature. They were the natural assets formed by the supreme Brahm so as to make life feasible and convenient in creation. In other words, the supreme Brahm who is also known as Lord Ram not only created this world but ensured that it is well provided for and its basic needs are taken care of by manifesting himself in the form of these eight primary requirements of life. This is the reason why one of the names of Vishnu is 'Vasudeo'—the Lord of Vasus. It ought to be noted here that Lord Ram is an incarnation of Vishnu or Vasudeo.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/32).

[Note—¹The *eight Vasus*— These *Vasus* are the various patron Gods who preside over the essential elements of life. They are eight in number as follows—Vishnu who is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and 'Ray' representing glory and fame. The element 'Fire' is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The 'fire' element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world.

The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv (ध्रुव), Dhar (धर), Som/Soma (सोम—the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods; it is white in colour and is said to be stored in the moon), Aapha (आप—water), Anil (अनिल—wind), Anal (अनल—fire), Pratush (प्रत्यूष) and Prabhaas (प्रभास).

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to

the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The Ekakchar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Kandika (Canto) 1 says that the Vasus were created in the beginning of creation from the first Matra 'A' of OM representing the first leg of the supreme Brahm along with Brahma the creator, the Rig Veda, the Gayatri Chand and the Grahapatya Agni.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Vasus, along with the Rudras and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

Lord Vishnu has one of his names as 'Vasudeo' because he is the sustainer and protector of creation, signifying his undisputed lordship over all the essential elements in Nature, called the Vasus of which there are eight in number, which were created at the beginning of creation to help sustain the upcoming creation. It ought to be noted here that Vishnu is also called Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and it is from this form of Brahm that the creator of the visible creation, i.e. Brahma the old patriarch of creation, had emerged atop a divine lotus that sprouted from the navel of Vishnu. In other words, everything has its origin in the supreme Brahm.

The word 'Vishnu' consists of two components—'Vishwa' meaning the world or the entire creation, and 'Anu' meaning an atom. Hence, this is made up of atoms called Vishnu, and therefore the latter pervades throughout this creation. The whole creation is a manifestation of Vishnu. The divine glories of Lord Vishnu have been extolled in the Tripadvibhuti Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph 5-6; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 17, as well as in Vishnu Puran, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70.]

३३. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये चैकादश रुद्रा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/33. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'eleven Rudras¹'. [The word 'Rudra' means angry, and it is one of the names of Lord Shiva, the concluder of creation and the third of the Trinity Gods. In other words, Lord Ram had assumed the form of Rudra or Shiva in order to bring this creation to conclusion. Refer verse no. 4/5 and 4/15.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/33).

[Note—¹The *eleven Rudras*—*Rudra* is the angry form of Lord Shiva. The word means 'the terrible one; the angry and ruthless one; one who roars and thunders; one

who makes the enemy weep; one who destroys this trans-migratory world of birth and death; one who destroys ignorance and delusions; one who eliminates evil and perversions.'

Rudra is a Vedic deity and has been eulogized in three full Suktas (hymns) dedicated to him. These are Rig Veda's 1/114/1-11; 2/33/1-15, and Yajur Veda's 16/1-66. Besides these Suktas, Rudra is honoured as a deity at a number of places in the Vedas—viz. Rig Veda—1/43/1-4, 5/42/11, 7/46/1-4, 7/59/12; Atharva Veda—5/6/3-4, 6/55/2-3, 7/92/1, 11/2; and Yajur Veda—11/54.

Rudra is regarded as the father of Marut, the Wind God (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). Rudra assumes many forms—usually it is eleven forms (Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/4/9/7), but sometimes they are also said to be thirty-three in number (Taittiriya Sanhita, 1/4/11/1). Rudra is regarded as having a close relationship with Agni, the Fire God (Shatapath Brahman, 5/2/4/13). The Padma Puran, Swargakhanda, Chapter 8 mentions only eight Rudras. These eight, eleven or thirty-three forms of Rudra might mean as many aspects of Shiva.

However, in terms of the Upanishads, the eleven Rudras stand for the ten vital winds called Prans + one Mana or mind. The ten Prans are five chief Prans such as Pran (breath), Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyana, and five subsidiary Prans such as Nag, Kurma, Krikara, Devdutta and Dhananjaya. [Refer—Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 77-87 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition; Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-57 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

Rudra is said to have created such mythological figures as Bhuts (ghosts), Pretas (disembodied spirits), Pishacha (goblins), Khusmaandas (malignant imps).

In iconography, he has been depicted as wearing long tresses coiled on the head, has strong powerful arms, has a body decorated variously with serpents or priceless ornaments, and holds a strong and invincible bow and arrow as well as a thunderbolt. When necessary, he becomes ferocious and charges at his enemies on a chariot or on foot, while at the other times he is full of mercy and compassion. He is closely associated with forests and mountains, and is also the patron deity of herbs and medicinal plants. Hence, he is the killer of diseases and a great healer. Here, 'healing' would mean spiritual healing rather than physical ailments afflicting a creature.

He destroys sins and evil tendencies in the world, and grants the boon of liberation and happiness.

According to the epic Mahabharata, Anushasanaparva, Chapter 14, it is Shiva in the form of Rudra who destroys this creation at the end of one cycle of creation.

The Sharav Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 6, describes Rudra as Sharav—the killer or destroyer. In this Upanishad, Lord Shiva had assumed this form to liberate Vishnu from the form of Nrisingh (a half man and half lion form) which the Lord had taken to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting the devotees of Vishnu to such an extent that he did not spare even his son Prahalada. After slaying this demon, Nrisingh roamed around in the forests striking terror in other creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of 'Mahadev' as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called 'Rudra', the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

There is another connotation of the word 'Sharav'. The word literally means the killer or slayer. In other words, Sharav is that form of the Supreme Being which instils fear in the heart of evil and pervert creatures, and kills or eliminates their evil tendencies. The word also refers to 'the Lord who shines in the heart of his devotees' as their Atma or pure consciousness.

The creature or the embodied soul is called 'Shar' or the form of the ethereal spirit that has assumed a gross physical body having a head. One who cuts off the head is known as 'Sharav'. The head is a metaphor for pride and ego and their accompanying traits of hypocrisy, haughtiness and arrogance. It is in the head that all evil planning is done, and it is the head that inspires the creature to indulge in all sorts of vices and inauspicious deeds. When this happens, the great God, the Parameshwar, makes it sure that the soul of such a creature is liberated from the sinful body in which it has been trapped by killing the gross body and liberating the soul.

So, while on the surface it appears to be a physical fight between two powerful creatures, one being the Shar and the other being the Sharav, here referring to Nrisingh and Rudra respectively, it is actually a system evolved by Nature whereby evil and perversions are kept under check. It is a system instituted by the Supreme Being himself to regulate and maintain balance, order and law in his creation. Though Nrisingh was Lord Vishnu himself in that form, the latter forgot who he actually was once the Lord had assumed a physical form. This is the effect of Maya—the overwhelming power of delusions that automatically comes with having a gross body like that of ordinary creatures. This situation also highlights the reason why all the creatures are under the overpowering control of Maya—if Maya can delude Vishnu to forget about who he is and wander in the forests as some cruel creature in his form as Nrisingh then it is little wonder that ordinary creatures are held under the overpowering sway of Maya.

Now, who would liberate such primarily innocent souls trapped by Maya, and who would provide protection to other innocent creatures who are being subjected to torments by this single deluded and evil-possessed soul? Naturally it is their supreme Father who is very merciful and who is greatly pained at the predicament in which his off springs, the creatures, find themselves in. So this Father intervenes not only to free the trapped soul in the evil body, but also to provide succour and solace to other creatures who are being tormented by this single individual.

Thus, the Parameshwar assumed the form of Shriv or Rudra to liberate Vishnu from the evil body of Nrisingh.

The 11 Rudras—(1) Lord Shiva has eleven forms called *Rudras*. The eleven Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. They are the following:--(i) Mannu (मनु), (ii) Manu (मनु), (iii) Mahinas (महिनस), (iv) Mahaan (महान), (v) Shiva (शिव), (vi) Ritdwaj (ऋत्ध्वज), (vii) Ugrareta (उग्ररेता), (viii) Bhav (भव), (ix) Kaal (काल), (x) Vamdeo (वामदेव), and (xi) Dhritvrat (धृतिव्रत). The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

(2) The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har (हर), Bahuroop (बहुरूप), Trayambak (त्र्यम्बक), Aparajeet (अपराजित), Shambhu (शम्भु), Vrishakapi (वृषाकपि), Kapardi (कपर्दी), Raivat (रैवत), Mrigvyadh (मृगव्याध), Sharva (शर्व), and Kapaali (कपाली).

(3) Lord Shiva has eleven forms, and one of them is 'Rudra', which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called 'Maheshwar'. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give

a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God.

The word 'Rudra' is literally used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness. But this a very misleading title for Shiva because there are a number of great Upanishads which describe Rudra as none but the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged, who sustains it and in whom the creation would finally collapse. It is this Brahm in the form of Rudra who is treated at the supreme Lord God of creation, and hence is called Maheshwar. The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition and Atharvashir Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition are exclusively dedicated to this theme. The Dakshin Murti Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the esoteric significance of the Shiva Tattva or the essential knowledge of Shiva who is the greatest Guru or moral preceptor and teacher of the creatures.

The Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda is especially relevant here because it explains the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra himself, and upon close reading it would be very clear that Rudra is describing Brahm when he describes himself.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Rudras, along with the Vasus and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.]

३४. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये द्वादशाऽऽदित्या भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/34. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'twelve Adityas'¹. [The Aditya is the Sun God, and is regarded as the most potent and powerful evidence of the existence of the Supreme Being. Refer verse no. 4/27. This verse means that it is Lord Ram as the Supreme Being who has not only revealed himself as the Sun God but also keeps the celestial Sun burning and sustaining life in this world. The entire solar system revolves around the Sun, implying that the entire wheel of creation is centered on Lord Ram. The Lord is like the central axis around which the wheel spins.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/34).

[Note—¹The *twelve Adityas*— The *twelve Adityas*—(a) According to mythology, there are said to be *twelve Adityas* which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

(b) According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyawalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete

year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man.

Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation.

(c) According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata (धाता), Arayma (अर्यमा), Mitra (मित्र), Varun (वरुण), Anshu (अंशु), Bhug (भृगु), Indra (इन्द्र), Vivaswan (विवस्वान), Pusha (पूषा), Parjanya (पर्जन्य), Twashta (त्वष्टा) and Vishnu (विष्णु).

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as Dhata during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as Aryama during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as Mitra during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as Varun during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as Indra during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as Vivaswan during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as Pusha during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as Kratu during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as Anshu during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as Bhag during the tenth Hindu month of Pausa also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as Twashta during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as Vishnu during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

Since the Sun God is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Viraat Purush, he is like an Emperor who, during his sojourn across the sky which is like his vast realm, is accompanied by many sages called Rishis, celestial courtesans called Apsaras, celestial musicians called Gandharvas, servants called Rakshas or demons, guards known as Bhalls, and serpents called Naags. The Rishis walk in the front singing the Lord's glories in sacred hymns; the Apsaras dance to the music scores by Gandharvas; the Rakshas (demons) push the chariot from rear; the Bhalls take care of the chariot and guide it along, while the Naags pull it forward.

These attendants are also different like the forms in which the Sun God is worshipped in different months as described above. The list is outlined month-wise in the following sequence—Rishi, Apsara, Gandharva, Raksha, Bhalla and Naag.

(1) The month of Chaitra—Rishi is Pulastya; Apsara is Kritsthal; Gandharva is Tumburu; Raksha is Heti; Bhalla is Rathkrit; and Naag is Vasuki.

- (2) The month of Vaishakha—Rishi is Pulaha; Apsara is Punjiksthali; Gandharva is Narad; Raksha is Praheti; Bhalla is Ojaha; and Naag is Kachaneer.
- (3) The month of Jyestha—Rishi is Atri; Apsara is Menaka; Gandharva is Hahaa; Raksha is Paurusheya; Bhalla is Rathaswan; and Naag is Takshak.
- (4) The month of Ashadha—Rishi is Vashishta; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Huhu; Raksha is Shukra; Bhalla is Chitraswan; and Naag is Sahajanya.
- (5) The month of Sravan—Rishi is Angira; Apsara is Pramlocha; Gandharva is Vishswaivasu; Raksha is Varya; Bhalla is Srota; and Naag is Elapatra.
- (6) The month of Bhadrapad—Rishi is Bhrigu; Apsara is Anumlochaa; Gandharva is Ugrasen; Raksha is Vyagrha; Bhalla is Aasaaran; and Naag is Shankhapal.
- (7) The month of Ashwin—Rishi is Gautam; Apsara is Ghritaachi; Gandharva is Dhananjay; Raksha is Vaat; Bhalla is Suruchi; and Naag is Sushen.
- (8) The month of Kartik—Rishi is Bhardwaj; Apsara is Varchaa; Gandharva is Parjanya; Raksha is Senjit; Bhalla is Vishwa; and Naag is Earaawat.
- (9) The month of Margashirsha—Rishi is Kashyap; Apsara is Urvashi; Gandharva is Ritsen; Raksha is Vidyuchhatru; Bhalla is Taksharya; and Naag is Maashankha.
- (10) The month of Paush—Rishi is Aayu; Apsara is Purvachitti; Gandharva is Sfurja; Raksha is Arishtanemi; Bhalla is Uurna or Oorna; and Naag is Karkotak.
- (11) The month of Magh—Rishi is Jamdagni also known as Richik-tanaya; Apsara is Tilottama; Gandharva is Shatjit; Raksha is Brahmapet; Bhalla is Dhritrashtra; and Naag is Kambal.
- (12) The month of Phalgun—Rishi is Vishwamitra; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Suryavarchaa; Raksha is Makhaapet; Bhalla is Satyajit; and Naag is Aswatar.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Adityas, along with the Vasus and Rudras etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

The Sun is said to have *twelve Kalaas* (shapes, forms, dimensions or aspects) and the Sun with each Kalaa would therefore be known by that name. They are called ‘Dwaadash Aditya’, meaning the twelve forms in which the Sun God is known. They are the following—Tapini, Taapini, Dhumraa, Jwaalini, Ruchi, Shushumna, Bhogadaa, Vishwaa, Bodhini, Dhaarini and Kshamaa.

Lord Ram is said to belong to the solar race because he had twelve Kalaas possessed by the Sun. There is an obvious parallel here.]

३५. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च भूतं भव्यं भविष्यत् भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/35. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself in all the dimensions of time and space—the past, the present and the future. In other words, there is not a single moment when Lord Ram as the cosmic Consciousness is not present in this world. [This implies that though the Lord’s worldly sojourn had ended when he left this earth for his heavenly abode as described in all the Purans and the epic Ramayana as well as in the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 9, he continues to live amongst us at each moment of our lives.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/35).

३६. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो ब्रह्माण्डस्याऽन्तर्बहिर्व्याप्नोति विराट् भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/36. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram, in his form as the Viraat Purush¹, who pervades uniformly throughout this universe and encloses it from all sides. He is present inside as well as outside this creation, being all-pervading, omnipresent and all-encompassing.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/36).

[Note—¹The *Viraat Purush*—The *Viraat Purush*, according to metaphysics, is the gross body of the creation and it is this body which is the source from which the rest of the cosmos was moulded or created or manifested. That is, the entire creation, both visible and invisible, is a manifested or revealed form of this Viraat Purush.

Purush has been defined in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. According to the Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahman created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4. When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahman, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 2, clearly states the supreme Lord resides in this creation as its Atma and Pran.

According to reverend Sankracharya's commentary on Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahman who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature at the micro level and in the Viraat Purush at the macro level. This Brahman pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation. That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahman because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

The Viraat Purush is the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahman. The counterpart of the Viraat Purush at the microcosmic level of creation is the Man or the Purush. The Man is an image of the Viraat Purush.

According to Vedanta, the Viraat is the sum total of all the gross bodies in the creation at the macrocosmic level. [Refer—The Tripadvibhuti Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 10-11.] The individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat, it is an image of Viraat.

According to the Purans, Viraat is known as Lord Vishnu. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm.

The entire universe has been created by Vishnu's passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner. The word 'Viraat' refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless and infinite; something that is beyond all terrestrial yardsticks and measurements. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all the sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water.

At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms 'subtle and gross' are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

The word Purush according to metaphysics refers to the primary and supreme creator of creation known as the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross Male body or aspect of the cosmos and is the first macrocosmic gross revelation of Brahm. Ultimately, this Brahm is the Supreme Being who has revealed himself as the Viraat Purush. The creation unfolded from this Purush when he metamorphosed as the gross body of the entire creation, visible and invisible. Therefore, he is the sum-total of all the gross bodies of all the creatures taken together in this creation at the macrocosmic level, and it is from his macrocosmic body that the entire creation was moulded. In other words, the Viraat Purush represents the entire spread of the cosmos. At the micro level of the world, the individual creature is the counter part of Viraat Purush. In other words, the individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat; it is an image of Viraat.

Literally, the word 'Purush' means someone who resides in a body. [Refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18.] Here the body is the gross forms of the various entities of creation in which the Viraat Purush, as the cosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm or cosmic Consciousness took up residence at the time of creation, and does so since that time. When the creation would finally wind up, this Viraat would revert back to his original form as the invisible Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness. An entire Sukta in the Rig Veda, 10/19 is dedicated to this Viraat Purush

In the Purans, he is also known by other names, such as Vishnu, the sustainer. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. The entire universe has been created by Vishnu's passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner.

The word 'Viraat' refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless, and infinite and beyond all terrestrial yardsticks. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water. At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms 'subtle and gross' are only relative and for the purpose of

understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

The Viraat Purush is also the creator of this world as pointed out in Canto 2, paragraph 11 of Tripadvibhūt Maha-Narayan Upanishad, and the former is also entitled to be called Brahma the creator. It must be carefully noted that the difference lies in the level or plane of creation in which a particular entity is being considered for study.

The cosmic form of the Viraat Purush has been described in the Tripadvibhūt Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 11; and Canto 6, paragraph no. 11.]

३७. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो हिरण्यगर्भो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/37. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who had revealed himself as the Hiranyagarbha¹. [The 'Hiranyagarbha' is the cosmic egg from which the rest of the creation, including the Viraat Purush referred in verse no. 4/36 above, have emerged. It is the sum total of all subtle bodies of creation at the macrocosmic level of creation. Another name of Hiranyagarbha is 'Brahma the creator'. In other words, it is Lord Ram who is none else but the supreme transcendental Brahm personified, and it is from him that both the cosmic egg known as Hiranyagarbha at the most subtle level of creation, and a more grosser form of it known as Brahma the creator had emerged at the very initial stages of creation.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/37).

[Note—¹Hiranyagarbha—Hiranyagarbha is the macrocosmic subtle body of Brahm, so called because it is akin to the cosmic golden egg lying in the womb of Brahm from which emerged the Viraat Purush, the gross body of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. The word Hiranyagarbha has two components—'Hiranya' meaning yellow, and 'Garbha' meaning the womb. Hiranyagarbha was the primordial cosmic fertilised egg, deriving its name from the fact that its yolk core was yellow and glowing with an incandescent light like the one radiating out from the splendorous Sun in the sky, called the Maartand.

There are different versions regarding this Hiranyagarbha. According to the concept of Vedanta, Brahm is the cosmic supreme and transcendental Consciousness residing in the macrocosmic causal body called the Ishwar. In this context, when Brahm decided to reveal or unfold this creation, first the causal body known as a Ishwar developed the macrocosmic subtle body called the Hiranyagarbha, and from this evolved the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm called the Viraat Purush. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. All these three sublime bodies of Brahm at the cosmic level—viz. Ishwar, Hiranyagarbha and Viraat Purush—were invisible, subtle, unqualified, without any attributes, all-inclusive and all-pervading. It was the unrevealed form of Brahm. But that was just the beginning.

When this visible world was created, which had attributes and qualifications, the same macrocosmic units of Brahm metamorphosed themselves into their respective counterparts in the individual creature's body. Hence, Ishwar is represented by the Pragya or the individual's causal body, Hiranyagarbha is represented by the Taijas or

the individual's subtle body, and the Viraat Purush is represented by the Vishwa or the individual's gross body.

These three bodies are the three states in which consciousness exists, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. At the microcosmic level, the Pragya relates to the deep sleeper state of consciousness called the Sushupta state, the Taijas relates to the dreamer state of consciousness called Swapna state, and the Vishwa relates to the waking state of consciousness called Jagrat state. The three corresponding states at the macrocosmic level are the Ishwar which relates to the cosmic deep sleep state of Consciousness called cosmic Sushupta, the Hiranyagarbha which relates to the cosmic dreamer state of Consciousness called cosmic Swapna, and the Viraat Purushh which relates to the cosmic waking state of Consciousness called cosmic Jagrat.

According to Purans, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the Brahma the creator, as well as to the Viraat Purush because Brahma was born atop a lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu who is no one else but the Viraat Purush. If the word 'Hiranyagarbha' is to indicate the cosmic egg, then it was from this egg, lodged in the womb-like navel of Vishnu, that Brahma emerged. Hence, the 'original creator' was not Brahma but the Viraat Purush as Vishnu, and therefore the latter is the Hiranyagarbha—the golden cosmic egg. So we conclude that Hiranyagarbha essentially refers to the cosmic egg from which the rest of the creation evolved. Since Brahma is said to be the great grandfather of this creation, he is aptly named Hiranyagarbha, i.e. the cosmic egg from which this visible and gross form of creation evolved.

This concept of Hiranyagarbha being produced from the body of the Supreme Being called Narayan or Ishwar have been elaborately dealt with in *Maho-panishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 8 of the Sam Veda tradition. The same idea is reiterated in the *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12, and Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-14 in the context of genesis of creation which addresses the primordial Lord as 'Adi-Narayan' or the Lord who preceded this creation.

The Hiranyagarbha is very subtle like the mind-intellect of the creature. The mind-intellect is also called the subtle body because it is through this mind-intellect that the Atma of the individual creature creates this world by using the mind's stupendous ability to imagine, envision and conceptualise things, and then using the intellect to justify it to be true, real and logical. But this instrument of the mind-intellect is invisible, is so subtle and hidden from view that its presence is only deduced by its astounding potentials which are manifested in the form of the gross body and its own stupendous capabilities. Whatever the mind wishes to do, it gets it done by the body.

There is another connotation to this observation. Since the mind is the creator of the world by its power of imagination, and then sustaining or perpetuating its own creation by believing in the truthfulness and reality of the world, it is therefore the mind itself that can conclude this world. So, while it is like Brahma the creator, it is also like Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. If the same mind can assume three roles, it is not incongruous to believe that the same Hiranyagarbha is Brahma and Vishnu simultaneously. Since Shiva is a synonym used for the supreme transcendental Brahm—because the word 'Shiva' stands for an entity that is truthful, beautiful, auspicious, divine and holy as affirmed by a number of Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition that deal with the 'Shiva Tattwa', this Hiranyagarbha is also Shiva.

The word Hiranyagarbha has two components—'Hiranya' meaning yellow, and 'Garbha' meaning the womb. Hiranyagarbha was the primordial cosmic fertilized egg deriving its name from the fact that its yolk-core was yellow and glowing with an incandescent light like the one effusing from the splendorous Sun in the sky, called the Martand. It was lodged in the womb-like navel of the Viraat Purush. It also

resembled the musk deer in the sense that musk spreads its fragrance everywhere but it is not visible because it is hidden in the abdomen of the deer. Similarly, this Hiranyagarbha had spread its glory, radiance and splendour through the length and breath of the void of the cosmos, but was not visible itself.

This Hiranyagarbha is like the musk present in the body of the musk deer. The deer is not able to see the musk but is nevertheless maddened by its perfume, running mad in search of the source of the perfume not knowing that it is hidden well inside its own body. Similarly, the creature is unaware that the supreme Brahm is residing in his own bosom as the pure consciousness called the Atma while he spends his entire life searching for it everywhere in the outside world.

Hiranyagarbha is called Maartanda, the Sun, because of its golden colour and brilliance like the golden yellow and brilliant disc of the sun in the sky. Like the light of the sun illuminates the world and brings everything in it to light or knowledge, the Hiranyagarbha too brings to the fore the intentions of Brahm by revealing this vast creation. The Hiranyagarbha had spread the sacred divinity, the stupendous glory, the dazzling radiance and the brilliant splendour through the length and breath of the vast realm of the cosmos like the sun spreading its glory on the earth by way of its energy, light, heat and warmth.

The word 'Hiranyam' also refers to 'Amrit or elixir or nectar of eternity and bliss'; it also means 'green'. That is why greenery is associated with fertility, vibrancy, life and abundance of food and plentiful vegetation. The trees are green, and their precursor, the algae and moss, were also green. Indeed the food is the elixir of life in the world—nothing can ever survive without food and water. So, 'Hiranyagarbha' first created these to initiate the process of creation, and then sustained them once the process got under way. The 'Viraat Purush' as well as the 'Hiranyagarbha' are both used often synonymously to indicate the macrocosmic forms of the Male aspect of creation whose female counterpart is called 'Nature' or Shakti. The Shakti is the dynamic aspect of Brahm's creative powers and an effective method of displaying the Lord's cosmic authority.

The concepts of *Viraat* and *Hiranyagarbha* are inter-related as the latter refers to the subtle body of Brahm and the former refers to the gross body of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. They have their origin in the supreme Brahm called 'Adi-Narayan'. This concept has been elaborately explained in the Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12, and Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-14 in the context of genesis of creation.

The terms *Viraat* and *Hiranyagarbha* must be clearly understood to avoid confusion because they are used for both Brahma as well as Vishnu. The term 'Viraat' means anything of colossus dimensions and nature, something that is vast and infinite. The Viraat Purush is the gross body of the Supreme Being known as Brahm from which the rest of creation emerged—refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11 of Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda. This Viraat has his roots in the cosmic egg in which the subtle body of Brahm took shape as the cosmic embryo, called the Hiranyagarbha—refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza no. 1 of the same Upanishad. The latter is so-called because it was hidden in the cosmic womb ('Garbha'), and like the yellow-coloured yolk of the egg it was radiant and golden ('Hiranaya') in colour.

It was from this cosmic embryo called the Hiranyagarbha that the creation emerged, including the Viraat Purush, hence it is called 'Brahma the creator'. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza 1 of Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad.]

३८. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या प्रकृति भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/38. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Prakriti'¹. [The word 'Prakriti' refers to Nature in its macrocosmic dimension. This Prakriti forms the primary nature of the individual creature. It is the driving force that impels the creature to do something in a particular way and also decides his natural habits, temperaments, tendencies, desires and aversions etc. At the cosmic level, it is the womb in which the entire creation conceived by the Supreme Being was nourished and developed till it took its shape in the form of the visible world. Hence, this verse means that it is Lord Ram playing out his cosmic role as the Mother who would nourish the creation in her cosmic womb as well as give the would-be creation its characteristic personality by shaping its nature, inclinations, temperaments, desires and aversions, its Vasanas (passions) and Vrittis (natural tendencies) etc.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/38).

[Note—¹*Prakriti*— The word Prakriti basically means 'nature' with all its connotations. The Chambers dictionary defines it as the power that creates and regulates the world; the power of growth; the established order of things; the cosmos; the external world especially that untouched by man; the inherent qualities in anything that makes it what it is; the essence; the being; the constitution; a kind or order; naturalness; normal feeling; conformity to truth or reality; the inborn mind; the character, instinct or disposition; the vital power; the course of life; the nakedness of truth; the primitive undomesticated condition; the strength or substance of anything; a deity personifying some force of physical nature.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams, in his encyclopedic Sanskrit-English dictionary describes it thus—'making or placing before or at first'.

The Chambers dictionary defines it as the power that creates and regulates the world; the power of growth; the established order of things; the cosmos; the external world especially that untouched by man; the inherent qualities in anything that makes it what it is; the essence; the being; the constitution; a kind or order; naturalness; normal feeling; conformity to truth or reality; the inborn mind; the character, instinct or disposition; the vital power; the course of life; the nakedness of truth; the primitive undomesticated condition; the strength or substance of anything; a deity personifying some force of physical nature.

The word Prakriti has many connotations, viz. the original or natural or basic form or condition of anything; the original or primary nature, character, condition, constitution, temperament, disposition; the fundamental form or shape or essence or pattern or standard or model, rule; Mother Nature which has the active physical natural forces that are responsible for unfolding the creation, its sustenance and annihilation; something that is inherent, innate, genuine, unaltered, unadulterated, basic, normal, bare, naked, crude, integral and stripped of all pretensions; the fundamental pattern, form, standard and model upon which the rest of the things are based; the crude or basic or root or seed form of any word, and by extension of anything expressed; that which decides the existential mode of anything; the coefficient, the multiplier of any fundamental element.

As inherent nature and temperament of a creature, it determines the way the world behaves and thinks; it determines the basic character of the creature and the creation as a whole because the individual creature is but a single unit of the creation. It ought to be noted here that the concept of Prakriti is intricately woven into the fabric of creation and conforms to both the views of Avyakta (un-manifest) and Vyakta

(manifest). At the subtle level, Prakriti is Avyakta, while at the gross level it is Vyakta. The word would also therefore have two applications.

The word Prakriti also refers to the 'personified will of the Supreme Being in the creation', and it therefore is synonymous with the powers of the Supreme Being personified as Mother Nature in whose womb the entire creation has revealed itself. It is deified forces of Nature and revealed as different renowned and powerful Goddesses.

The Prakriti represents the cosmic creative will of the creator that has revealed itself as the primary female aspect of creation which is known as 'Shakti', while its male aspect is known as the 'Viraat Purush'. The Shakti is the active ingredient or force that creates and regulates everything, while the primary entity or Being whose will this Shakti is implementing is called Brahm who remains passive.

According to the Purans, this Prakriti or Nature has been personified as different Goddesses, while Brahm has been known as Viraat Purush in the terminology of Vedanta or the Upanishads, and Vishnu in the Purans. The Shakti is the female aspect of Purush, and is considered as inseparable from him; in fact they are two halves of the same Brahm. In order to create, Brahm revealed himself in these two primary forces which revealed themselves as the cosmos or Nature. As the different inherent tendencies of a creature, the forces of creation came to be known as Sattva, Raj and Tam which determines and regulates the continuous cycle of creation, sustenance and conclusion. The Purush is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the Prakriti. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks that Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood.

According to Sankhya Shastra, Prakriti is the original producer of the material world consisting of the three Gunas or fundamental qualities that are inherent in all the creatures and they decide the character and temperament of that creature depending upon the dominance of one quality over the other two. These three Gunas are—(i) 'Sata', or those which are auspicious and righteous and noble, (ii) 'Raja', or worldly qualities marked by such notions as having passions, desires, greed etc. and (iii) 'Tama', or those qualities that are 'dark' by nature, such as those that are categorised as sinful and pervert, leading to a creature's moral downfall.

The word Prakriti refers to the following—(a) Mother Nature and (b) the natural habits, temperaments and inclinations of a person. The Purush is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the Prakriti. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks that Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood.

The term has been described in the Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, verse no. 6. The Paingalo Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 1, verse no. 3 describes how Prakriti came into being and how its three basic characteristics of Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas represented by three primary colours of white, red and dark metamorphosed into the myriad character traits that would mark the creation and its inhabitant creatures when the creation would eventually come into being.

The Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 47-49, describe very succinctly and clearly the concept what Maya (the dynamic

powers to creation delusions), Jiva (the individual creature; the living being), Ishwar (the supreme Lord God; the Supreme Being), Prakriti (Nature) and Jagat (the manifested world; creation).

The Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 10 describes the relationship between Prakriti, Maya and Gunas in a very succinct manner.

The Garbha Upanishad, in its paragraph no. 3 outlines the eight Prakritis or nature of a creature.

The *various Vikaars* or faults, imperfections, shortcomings, taints, blemishes and corruptions that mire the inherent character and nature of Prakriti or Nature at the macrocosmic level of creation have been enumerated in Shaarirako Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 17.]

३९. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चोङ्कारो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/39. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’, himself personified.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘OM or Omkar’¹. [OM is the monosyllabic word standing for Brahm. Everything that exists is said to be incorporated in this single word. It is the Tarak Mantra as well. Hence, this verse implies that OM refers to Lord Ram as much as it is meant to refer to Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. OM and the RAM are synonymous words—refer Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2-3; and Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2; Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 and the first half of verse no. 5.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/39).

[Note—¹OM—It is the ethereal Mantra dedicated to the supreme Brahm. It is the primary sound from which the rest of the creation evolved as it provided the basic energy needed to start the process of change in the cosmic ether by stirring the stagnant gel at the beginning of the process of creation. It is OM that is revealed in the form of all knowledge and their encrypted form as the Vedas and other scriptures. It is OM that has revealed in the form of the faculty of speech which helps not only in the dissemination of information but even enables the creature to express himself and let his desires be known. It is the Beej Mantra or the seed Mantra of Brahm and the word by which the supreme transcendental Brahm is known and identified. The three letters of OM, viz. A, U and M, are said to be representative of the three phases of creation—i.e. ‘A’ stands for the beginning of creation, ‘U’ for its development and expansion, and ‘M’ for its conclusion. The three letters of the name of Lord Ram—viz. R, A and M correspond to these three letters, and by extension to the three primary phases in creation as outlined above. The importance of OM in relation to Lord Ram has been explained in Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2; Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 and the first half of verse no. 5 of this Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad. Refer also to Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2-3.

Ancient sages conceptualized the abstract divinity known as Brahm in the form of a word OM and then proceeded to explain the entire concept of creation, its development and its conclusion by analyzing this single word. In the present context, this verse means that OM not only refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm but also to Lord Ram in his cosmic form as the Supreme Being.]

४०. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चतस्रोऽर्धमात्रा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/40. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'four Ardha Maatraas'. [In other words, Lord Ram represents the four 'Ardha Maatraas'. The Ardha Maatraas are the half-syllables used in Sanskrit language, and are placed above, below, before and after an alphabet to give it a proper sound. This helps the concerned alphabet to acquire a proper form and gives a meaning to the word of which the alphabet with its Ardha Maatraas is a constituent part. This personification of Sri Ram as Ardha Maatraas symbolises the fact that without him the creation loses its meaning, glory and existence even as a word loses its meaning and impact without the alphabets having proper Ardha Maatraas.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/40).

[Note—¹The *Ardha Maatraas*—In the context of OM, the Ardha Maatraa refers to a half-syllable placed at the end of the third letter 'M' of OM in the form of a 'Halant' or a mark of an oblique line placed below M. In the symbol of OM, it is represented by a horizontal 'S' sign placed to the right groove of the symbol which represents the long vowel sound of 'Ooo' in Sanskrit (like in *boot*). Normally, the letter 'M' of the word OM is to be hummed in a prolonged sound stretching into infinity. But since it is not done and the worshipper becomes silent, it is called 'half Maatraa' or half syllable. It is tantamount to conclusion of the word OM, and since OM is envisioned as representing the whole gamut of creation, this Ardha Maatraa is symbolic of conclusion of creation. That is why it is accompanied by the universal fire of destruction called the Samvartak Agni.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that the Ardha Maatraa of OM represents the Moon God, the Mantras of the Atharva Veda, the Maruts (the Wind God), the Viraat Chanda and the Samvartak Agni. It is the fourth leg or Paad of Brahman and follows the third letter 'M' of OM.

The Tripadvibhuta Maha-Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 7, paragraph no. 68 says that Lord Vishnu represents the Ardha Maatraa.]

४१. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च परमपुरुषो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/41. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who is a personification of the Supreme Being called the 'Param Purush'. [The word 'Param' means 'supreme and transcendental', while 'Purush' means a 'male'. Hence, the phrase 'Param Purush' refers to the supreme, transcendental macrocosmic form of the Male aspect of Nature; the supreme Lord of creation; the Viraat Purush in his most subtle and sublime cosmic form known as the Adi-Narayan or Maha-Vishnu that exists beyond the known world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/41).

४२. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च महेश्वरो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/42. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Maheshwar'—the great Lord or the great Ishwar. [The word 'Mahesh' usually refers to Lord Shiva as he is regarded as the most wise and enlightened God in creation. The fact that Lord Shiva—or Maheshwar—is none else but Lord Ram in his form is also affirmed in verse no. 4/5 and 4/43. The word also means that Lord Ram is the Lord of all the Gods.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/42).

४३. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च महादेवो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/43. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Mahadev'—the great God. [The word 'Mahadev' is conventionally used for Lord Shiva as he is regarded as the senior most God amongst all the Gods because of his high degree of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment. Hence, this verse implies that it is Lord Ram himself who has manifested as Lord Shiva, the Lord known as Mahadev. Refer verse no. 4/5 and 4/42. The word also means that Lord Ram is the great God or Deva who is the senior most God amongst all the Gods.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/43).

४४. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् य ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय महाविष्णुर्भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/44. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

Lord Ram is honoured and worshipped by the same twelve-lettered Mantra which is deemed fit and worthy to be used for honouring and worshipping the great Lord Maha-Vishnu, the Supreme Being. This eclectic Mantra is 'OM Namō Bhagwate Vashu Devaye' (ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय). [This shows that Lord Ram and Lord

Maha-Vishnu are the same divine entity. It is in accordance to the eclectic philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta or the principle of non-duality. Refer also to verse no. 4/5.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/44).

४५. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः परमात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/45. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

Lord Ram is the 'Paramatma' or the supreme Atma or the supreme Lord God of creation. Refer also to verse no. 4/1-4, 4/7-8, 4/36.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/45).

४६. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो ज्ञानात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/46. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

Lord Ram is the 'Gyan-Atma'—i.e. he is the personification of the pure Consciousness that is deemed to be knowledgeable, enlightened, wise, omniscient, all-knowing, sagacious and erudite. In other words, ignorance and delusions do not come within earshot of Lord Ram. This stanza might also be interpreted as to mean that Lord Ram is a personified form of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment) as well as Atma (pure consciousness and the 'true self' of all the living beings. Hence, Lord Ram is Truth personified as Gyan and Atma are truthful. Refer verse no. 4/6, 4/8, 4/21-22.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/46).

४७. ॐ यो वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः सच्चिदानन्दा—द्वैतैकरसात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

4/47. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being), who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM', himself personified.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

Lord Ram is a personification of the virtues of 'Sat, Chit and Anand'—i.e. he is truthfulness, consciousness and blissfulness personified.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/47).

5. The erudite, sagacious, wise and enlightened person, who is deeply steeped and expert in the knowledge of Brahm and repeats these forty-seven divine and holy Mantras of Lord Ram daily, with due sincerity, consistency and devotion, in order to adore, worship and honour Lord Ram, is able to please the Lord very much.

The Lord gives such a person his divine vision; the worshipper is able to establish a direct connect with the Supreme Being.

Such an exalted and fortunate person obtains the essence of eternity which is known as Amrit (or the elixir of eternal life). In other words, such a wise, enlightened and self-realised and Brahm-realised person is able to obtain supreme, absolute and eternal bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity for himself that accompanies spiritual evolvment. As a bonus, he gets liberation and deliverance from this world, and ensures emancipation and salvation for his soul. Such persons obtain oneness with the supreme Lord by merging their Atma with the supreme Atma of creation (5).

Thus ends Canto 5 of Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

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Section 2—Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad

Canto 6

[This Canto outlines the divine spiritual glories of the great ‘Tarak Mantra’ of Lord Ram which is the six letter Mantra ‘Raam/Raan(g) Raamaaye Namaha’, as well as of this Upanishad. It enumerates the great benefits awarded to those who diligently study and implement its teachings.]

1. After the above discourse, sage Bharadwaj approached sage Yagyawalkya once again and requested—‘Oh Lord! Please be kind to enumerate the great glories and the divine powers of the magnificent Mantra of Lord Ram that is honoured as the ‘Mantra-Raj’ because it is like a King amongst all the Mantras.’

Yagyawalkya replied—‘The Supreme Being who is self-illuminated, who is most brilliant, radiant and splendorous, who can be known by personal experience and not by teaching or hearing, and who is the unique and most magnificent super Consciousness personified—he is regarded as being represented by the first letter of Lord Ram’s six letter Mantra (1).

[Note—The monosyllabic Mantra Raam/Raan(g) is equivalent to the word OM that is universally used in all the hymns and refers to the supreme Brahm. The six letter Mantra that is cited in this verse is ‘Raam/Raan(g) Raamaaye Namaha’—(रां रामाय नमः). Raam/Raan(g) + Raa + Maa + Ye + Na + Maha = 6. Refer Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 22; Ram Rashaya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 16; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1, and Canto 4, verse no. 14.]

2. The central part of this Mantra (i.e. the word ‘Raamaaye’) refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm (personified as Lord Ram) who is himself ‘Akhand’ (i.e. constant, unwavering, non-dual, unfractioned, indivisible and immutable) and an

embodiment of 'Anand' (bliss, happiness, joys, beatitude and felicity) that is also Akhand.

Those who are wise, erudite, knowledgeable and enlightened realise or recognize this Brahm as a divinity that is a personified form of the virtues of 'Sat-Chit-Anand'—i.e. Brahm is an image of Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss (2).

3. The third and last part of the Mantra (i.e. the word 'Namaha') is a respect paid to the supreme transcendental Brahm referred to in the earlier parts.

Hence, those who are wise, erudite, Brahm-realised and enlightened understand that this third word (Namaha) also refers to the same Divinity that is implied in the earlier two words, and which is 'Purna Anand'—i.e. an image of Anand or bliss, happiness, joys, beatitude and felicity that is wholesome and complete in all respects. [In other words, when the spiritual aspirant worships the entity referred to in this Mantra, he is overwhelmed by the fact that it is a source of completeness and undiluted bliss. The devotee of Lord Ram adores and worships the Lord as the supreme transcendental Brahm personified, as the cosmic supreme Consciousness personified, as supreme Bliss personified, and as the supreme Truth personified. This Mantra is therefore called the Tarak Mantra as it provides true liberation to the aspirant from all the fetters that had been dragging him down and had pinned him to the world of spiritual miseries and torments.]

All the Gods and wise men as well as those who seek Moksha (emancipation and salvation) constantly remember this exalted Lord and mentally bow before the Lord who provides them with their goal of attaining Moksha (3).

4. Those self-realised, wise and erudite spiritual aspirants who do daily (regular) Japa (repetition) with this six letter divine 'Mantra-Raj' (the Mantra which is the best amongst all the Mantras) dedicated to Lord Ramchandra¹ with due diligence, faith, commitment and devotion become absolutely spiritually clean and purified as if they had been put in fire which had burnt all their impurities and taints, making them absolutely clean, untainted, immaculate and holy².

Such an aspirant becomes as empowered, exalted, holy and divine as if he was the son (i.e. a personification or representative) of the Fire God, the Wind God, the Sun God, the Moon God, Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer and protector of creation), Rudra (Lord Shiva's angry form responsible for annihilation of creation), and all other Gods at once.

All the Gods recognize him as one who is an expert in the knowledge of Brahm, and honour him as such.

All that he does in any season or time is always successful.

He gets the reward of studying the Ithihas and Purans (ancient religious historical and mythological Hindu scriptures).

He gets the same spiritual benefits by doing Japa with Ram's Mantra as is derived by successfully repeating Lord Rudra's (Shiva's) hundred thousand divine names, called the 'Rudra Sahastra Naam'.

He is deemed to have repeated the Pranav Mantra, i.e. OM, for one thousand million of times.

He purifies and makes holy ten generations before him and ten generations to come after him.

He becomes the most purified and holy in his own generation by eliminating the bad affects of all his sins and misdeeds.

He becomes most exalted, holy and auspicious.

He obtains the elixir of life called Amrit. [This elixir known as Amrit is a metaphor for nectar and all the best of the virtues in this world. It provides the aspirant with exemplary peace, tranquility, bliss, happiness, joys, eternity and imperishability.]

There is a scriptural saying that such a person is able to obtain all the auspicious fruits that are got by worshipping and paying homage to Lord Ganesh (the deity who is worshipped before all other Gods during any endeavour to ensure its successful completion). [This stanza can be interpreted as follows also—‘Such a person is honoured first amongst all his compatriots and peers. He becomes the leader of men. He is counted as the first amongst wise and enlightened as well as empowered and blessed men.’]

All the fruits that are obtainable by worshipping and paying homage to Lord Shiva, the various Shaktis (cosmic divine powers of the Supreme Being manifested as various Goddesses) as well as the Sun God are obtained by the aspirant who does Japa with the Mantra of Lord Ram and honours the Lord. [The Sun God is the main deity to whom worship is offered daily by the use of the Gayatri Mantra that is dedicated to it. This ritual of worship is called Sandhya—i.e. the obeisance that is paid to the Sun God three time of the day when one phase of the day meets the other. That is, at dawn, noon and dusk.]

Similarly, all the fruits that are obtainable by offering worship and paying homage to Lord Vishnu and his divine forms by his followers are also got by him (i.e. by the aspirant who uses the Mantra of Lord Ram for doing Japa and offers his worship to the Lord). This is expected as Lord Ram is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.] (4).

[Note—¹The word ‘Ramchandra’ has two parts—viz. ‘Ram’ which is the spoken form of the Beej Mantra ‘Raam/Raan(g) dedicated to Lord Ram, and ‘Chandra’ refers to the Chandra-Bindu, which is also known as ‘Naad’ and ‘Bindu’. This Chandra-Bindu is placed on the top of an alphabet to give it a nasal sound representing the cosmic background ethereal sound called the ‘Naad’ which is represented by the divine word OM that is universally used as the Beej Mantra for the supreme transcendental Brahm. The Chandra-Bindu is written as a crescent-shaped bowl with a dot hanging on its focal point, and it is placed on the sign of OM to complete the pronunciation of the word ‘OM’.

In brief, the word ‘Chandra’ when added to the word ‘Ram’ becomes ‘Ram-Chandra’ which is a Mantra in its own right. It replaces the word ‘Raamaaye’ in the six-letter Mantra referred to in this Canto. Thus, the new six-lettered Mantra would be ‘Ramchandra Namaha’. Ra + Ma + Cha + Ndra + Na + Maha = 6.

Refer Canto 2, verse no. 1 which describes this Mantra also being a Tarak Mantra.

²The fire is unforgiving; anything put in it is not spared. Pure gold is put in the fire to purify it. The fire is used to burn all the impurities and extrinsic elements present in gold to bring out the purity of the metal. The ‘fire test’ is used as a metaphor for the test of purity and to establish beyond doubt the trustworthiness, the truthfulness and immaculacy of any given entity. The Beej Mantra of the Fire is the Sanskrit alphabet ‘Ra’ (as in rung), and it is also the root from which the first part of Lord Ram’s Mantra, i.e. ‘Raam’ is made. Hence, the basis of Lord Ram’s Mantra is the Beej Mantra of the fire element. In other words, the fire element is hidden in this Mantra. So when the six letter Mantra of Lord Ram is used to do Japa, the hidden fire in it would silently do its job of burning all the spiritual imperfections, taints, corruptions, impurities and other negative factors present inside the bosom of the aspirant and help his to cleanse his inner-self involuntarily. It is like the case of taking any medicine which silently does its job once it enters the patient’s body.]

5. The divine Mantra of Lord Ram has thousands and thousands of times more glories, majesty, magnificence, divine powers and spiritual values than the Mantras dedicated to Lord Ganesh¹.

The six-lettered Mantra of Lord Ram (as described in verse nos. 1-3) is the essence of Amrit, the nectar or elixir of life, eternity, peace, contentedness, bliss, felicity and beatitude (5).

[Note—¹Lord Ganesh is also known as Shadaanan and Vinayak, the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati. He is said to be the wisest and most honoured of the Hindu Gods and is always worshipped in the beginning of any endeavour or enterprise, whether it pertains to the mundane worldly affairs or to the spiritual realm. This is done to invoke his blessings which preempt any evil forces from throwing a spanner in the wheel of the successful completion of the exercise.

He is also known as ‘Ganpati’ as he is the chief amongst the Gods as well as amongst the attendants of Lord Shiva.

An entire Upanishad named the Ganapati Upanishad is dedicated to this deity. It is the 25th Chapter of this volume.

The great metaphysical truths about Brahm have been taught by Lord Shiva to Ganesh elaborately in Cantos 1-4 of Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

6. This six-lettered Mantra of Lord Ram is like the infallible multi-purpose herbal medicine that provides a sure cure for all spiritual ailments that afflict the creature.

It is honoured by the title of ‘Mantra-Raj’, literally the ‘King of Mantras’, as it is the best amongst all the Mantras dedicated to all the Gods, and it wields all super-natural powers, authority and majesty like a king who wields unquestioned authority and sway over his kingdom (6).

7. It can be used for doing Japa and honouring the Lord at all times—i.e. in all the days, all the months, all the seasons, and all the year round.

It is so powerful and potent that it can burn anything. [In other words, the Mantra of Lord Ram is as powerful and purifying as the blazing fire which burns all impurities of anything that is put in it, or even if anything comes in its contact. Like the fire, the Mantra of Lord Ram burns or eliminates all the worldly impurities, taints and corruptions that tarnish the Atma of the spiritual aspirant, thereby cleaning his soul and bringing out the natural shine, purity, holiness and divinity in it. It transforms an ordinary man into a divine and holy being who is mystically empowered and spiritually elevated. It turns a new leaf in his life—i.e. it helps him to overcome all his worldly miseries and misfortunes, it helps him to find rest and tranquility, it helps him to turn his life from one big forest of pains and torments into a garden of bliss and happiness. It scrubs off the thick layer of dark spiritual faults that surround the aspirant’s Atma and lets him access Mukti for himself. It burns all the fetters that tie down the aspirant’s soul to this body as well as to the world of delusions and ignorance, thereby setting his soul free, and allowing it to fly off to its freedom. It provides the aspirant Mukti and Moksha—i.e. it gives him liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.]

It negates or offsets the affects of all the negative weights represented by the accumulated grossness (sins etc.) that have been added to the scale¹ of his spiritual life over past generations, and instead makes his life so light and sublime that it becomes equivalent to the sky in its subtlety² (7).

[Note—¹The word in the text is ‘Tula Raashi’ which literally refers to the Libra sign of the Zodiac. But here the word ‘Tula’ is used to indicate a scale used to weigh things or materials of varying quantities. The word ‘Raashi’ also means a quantity. Hence, the meaning fits well into place.

Therefore, the term ‘Tula Raashi’ is used here to signify that all the accumulated negative qualities and other factors of his life, of whatever quantity and intensity, when placed on one side of this scale can easily be offset by the good affects of the devotion for Lord Ram and the Japa of the Lord’s Mantra that they have on the aspirant’s life.

²It is important to note that the reference to the sky is not without significance. The sky is pregnant with so many natural and artificial impurities that it can hardly be called clean and sublime from the ordinary man’s perspective. But when one ponders deep he finds that all these impurities do not affect the basic nature of the sky of being uncorrupt and pure. For instance, the dark cloud makes the sky appear dark too, but once the cloud is removed the sky regains its pristine cleanness. The colours of the sky changes during the course of the day but science has enlightened us that these colours are not natural to the sky but are caused by scattering of the sun’s light by the dust particles in the atmosphere. The chimneys of the numerous factories bellow a continues stream of noxious smoke into the sky, but a few miles away from them the sky is as clean as if there were no chimneys around at all. The sky harbours uncountable bodies in its belly—right from our own earth to far away stars and black holes. All live in the bowl of the same sky but without creating even a ripple in its vast and fathomless ocean of ether. Similarly, an aspirant who becomes Brahm-realised lives in this world but is untouched by its delusions and unaffected by its tumultuous events.

Besides this, Brahm is compared to the sky because of the fact that the former is as fathomless, as vast, as subtle and sublime, as eternal and infinite, as unchanging and steady, as all-pervading, all-including and all-encompassing as the sky element. Hence, the Brahm-realised person too becomes all-accepting and all-compassionate by nature. He accepts everything that comes his way, without distinction, and treats each of them as an image of Brahm. In other words, he is all-accepting as the sky which also accepts everything that is put into it.]

8-9. Such horrible sins as killing of a thousand Brahmins, being ungrateful to a person who has given knowledge and wisdom (such as one’s Guru—i.e. teacher and moral preceptor), theft of gold (or any kind of theft), drinking wine (or getting addicted to intoxicating things which results in one losing his mental control and become indulgent and deluded), being lustful towards a Guru’s young wife [8], and other such numerous horrible sins and misdeeds, whether big or small, are nullified by this Mantra of Lord Ram¹. [In other words, the divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram is powerful enough to protect the spiritual aspirant from the horrific consequence of sins—both of omissions as well as of commissions.]

Hence, one should do Kirtan (loud singing) with the Mantra of Lord Ram which has such magnificent virtue as being able to eliminate all the sins and their evil affects as well as completely purify the practitioner or worshipper (refer verse no. 13 below) [9]. (8-9).

[Note—¹In this context, please refer to note of verse no. 3, Canto 2 of this Upanishad which explains the hidden meaning of this blanket pardon given to those who worship Lord Ram and uses the Mantra for doing Japa.]

10. Even the ghosts, evil spirits, demons, fiends, devils, ogres, hobgoblins, or Brahm-rakshas (Brahmin who becomes a demon upon death)—verily, they too accept the divine powers of Lord Ram’s majestic Mantra and submit before it. [In other words,

even such powerful but evil and malignant forces of creation as represented by these entities can be overcome by the positive effects of the powerful Mantra of Lord Ram. A person who uses the Lord's Mantra has nothing to fear from these evil entities; they cannot harm him in any way.] (10).

11. This Mantra of Lord Ram can bestow upon its worshippers the benefit of obtaining all possible worldly 'Aishwarya' (majesty, glory, magnificence, fame, name, power, authority, potentials, sway and influence over others) while they live in this world, and helps them to obtain the highest stature in the heaven upon death.

It blesses them with the greatest of spiritual boons in the form of obtaining access to the Supreme Being or Brahm. This is called 'Kaivalya Pad'—i.e. the most exalted stature which is one of its own kind, and is without parallel. [This is called Kaivalya Mukti whereby the individual Atma of the spiritual aspirant merges with the supreme Brahm to become one with the latter. When this comes to happen, the creature finds permanent freedom from the cycle of birth and death in this gross world which is ensnaring by its inherent nature.] (11).

12. This Mantra of Lord Ram affords protection from all sorts of cruel and inimical elements that might be a cause of pain, miseries and torments to the worshipper, whether they be in the village (where he lives, in the form of his enemies and those who are jealous of him, keep ill-will for him, are malicious towards him and hate him), or in the forest (in the form of wild animals), and all types of other inimical elements that are cruel and malevolent towards him.

The Mantra also eliminates the sin of drinking wine and imbibing other intoxicating things (12).

13. This Mantra of Lord Ram affords protection against the bad affects of eating things not worthy of eating (refer verse nos. 8 and 17), and learning or being aware of something that is not worthy of being learnt or being aware of.

All the horrible consequences of such things can be negated or offset by doing Kirtan of Lord Ram's Mantra (refer verse no. 9) (13).

[Note—The edicts and proclamations of the Upanishad should be understood in the correct context and with proper wisdom. When it says that Lord Ram's Mantra gives protection against the bad affects of eating things not eatable it does not mean that one should eat poison and test the veracity of this statement—for he would not survive to prove or disprove this principle. The idea is that should one happen to eat some kind of food that is not obtained by rightful means by mistake or negligence, or because one was not aware of its origin or because he had to eat it in order to survive, then he can atone for his sin by taking the recourse of this Mantra of Lord Ram. It shows that the man is sincerely regretful for what he had to eat under the prevailing circumstances, or had eaten it by mistake but now wishes to atone for his sin.

One should be careful to not stretch things to absurd proportions just for the sake of argument and attempting to ridicule the scriptures by undertaking to have a too literal meaning of the scriptures instead of understanding their hidden meaning and their intentions in the correct spirit.

Similarly, if one happens to become aware of something that is not the righteous thing to be known or learnt or be aware of, such as how to steal or kill or the art of cheating others, then one can be protected from their inherent negative effects on one's Atam if he turns his mind away from this knowledge by endeavouring to forget about it, and instead focuses it on the positive aspects of life and the holiness of his own self by remembering the divine Mantra of Lord Ram. The reading of the Upanishad would have already made him enlightened about the fact that his 'true

self', i.e. his Atma which is pure consciousness, is none but the supreme Lord Ram or Brahm personified himself. The use of the holy Mantra of Lord Ram serves to remind him of his basic divine and holy nature and heritage. Any conscientious man who is aware of his responsibilities and standing in society would obviously not do anything to demean and demote himself and become a subject of censor and ignominy.

The positive energy and vibrations generated by doing Japa or Kirtan with this Mantra would wash off or peel off the tainted coat of negative energy and negative vibrations that surrounds the Atma by a person's actions or deeds done out of ignorance or due to influences of various delusions.

The general meaning and understanding of the word *Japa* is 'constant repetition of any holy name of the God or any divine word or Mantra'. This verse tells us that if that is not possible for a man, or if he is not interested in it, then the next best option for him is to read good books. This will have similar good effects on his mind as doing 'Japa'. Because if the mind is not kept busy, it will gravitate towards corrupt and pervert thinking; it cannot sit idle. If it is not possible to leash it by means of chanting or repetition of 'Mantras', then at least it should be reined in by reading good books instead of allowing it to wander aimlessly here and there like a vagrant indulging in useless roaming about. Remember, an idle mind is the workshop of devil. See also Trishikhi Brahmno-panishad, verse nos. 2/28-34 of Shukla Yajur Veda in this context. An English version of this Upanishad has been included in a separate vol. no. 3 published by this author in this series of the anthologies of the Upanishads classified according to their respective Vedas.

The *Shandilya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 2 says that Japa is one of the ten Niyams or spiritual observances that any spiritual aspirant should practice. It then defines Japa and its types as follows—"Japa is to honestly practice (repeat and meditate upon) the Vedic Mantra (hymn) that has been prescribed by one's Guru (moral preceptor). Japa is done in two ways—one is verbal or audible, and the other is non-verbal or mental or silent. The mental or silent form of Japa is done by repeating the Mantra mentally in a silent mode without uttering a word audibly, and involves concentration of the mind and turning its thoughts inwards. The verbal or audible form of Japa is again of two types—viz. one that is done loudly and the other that is simply muttered. The Japa done while muttering the Mantras is thousands of times more beneficial than doing Japa loudly, and mental Japa that is done silently is far better than even the one done by slowly muttering and it's multiple times more beneficial."

The *Kirtan* is a sort of a vocal Japa where the Lord's name or his divine hymns are sung or chanted aloud by a single person while he is alone, or in the presence of others as during religious congregations. When Kirtan is done in an assembly, usually the leader of the group says the leading line which is then repeated in chorus by others. Kirtan is generally very charming to hear and it benefits a large number of people, because, first, it is chanted or sung aloud, and second, it is captivating because of its mellifluous music. Whereas Japa is a personal affair, Kirtan becomes more often than not a community affair.

The basic difference between *Japa* and *Kirtan* is that while the former is done silently the latter is done aloud. The Kirtan generates vibrations of positive energy that radiate out in all the directions by the means of the sound waves that travel in all the directions from the place where the loud chanting or singing of the Lord's holy name is being done. While Japa benefits only one single individual, Kirtan benefits a large number of people and helps to charge the environment with positive vibrations. In some aspects Kirtan is an easier method for focusing one's energy on the divine Brahm as it involves the faculty of speech and even the organs of the body because it involves loud chanting and singing which involves the mouth and the faculty of speech, along with clapping of the hands and sometimes dancing in ecstasy. During Japa it might be hard to focus one's mind on one object of worship because the mind has a natural tendency to be restless and wander about, and this tendency is taken care

of during Kirtan as now loud singing or chanting as well as clapping of the hands and oftentimes dancing is undertaken, and this helps the mind to be more active and feeds its tendency to be restless. Hence, Kirtan is a less difficult way of focusing the mind on the Lord than doing silent Japa.]

14. The horrible consequences that a srotriya Brahmin who indulges in such ignoble deeds as stealthily stealing gold or gems (or for that matter any other asset) belonging to someone else should suffer from are eliminated or prevented by the virtue of the great purifying and neutralizing effects of the Mantra of Lord Ram.

[That is, should an exalted person of the high stature of a Brahmin who has studied the Vedas (Srotriya Brahmin) commit some grave sin as stealing something, he can be exonerated of the sin if he decides to repent and take the spiritual recourse of surrendering before the supreme Lord and repeats his divine Mantra to purify his inner-self. But again, as in all the previous cases of sins being forgiven, the regret must be sincere, and the desire to repent and relent most honest, in order to benefit from this pardoning clause prescribed in the Upanishad. Frankly, this would involve accepting one's guilt and returning the gold or the gem to the rightful owner if is at all possible. If that would mean punishment of some kind, then it has to be accepted. The provision of granting a pardon as prescribed in this Upanishad should not be taken as a blanket license for committing theft and evil deeds, for that is not at all the intention. The pardoning is given as a caveat that the sin is never repeated under any circumstance in the future, that one is sincerely repentant and needs an avenue for redemption, and if it is at all possible then all attempts must be made to compensate the offended party to the best of one's ability.] (14).

15. The grave sin of killing (or harming in anyway) of a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a Shudra (who form the four basic classes of Hindu society)—i.e. any living being for that matter—is pardoned or the evil consequences of such horrific sin remitted if one takes the spiritual recourse of Lord Ram's holy Mantra and surrenders before the supreme Lord.

Similarly, all the grave consequences that accrue due to a man's indulgences in worldly 'Moha' (worldly delusions leading to numerous attachments, affections, longings, desires etc. for material sense objects and their comforts and pleasures; to be subservient to the gross body and its desire for self gratification) are also dispensed with as a result of the grace of the powerful, mystically empowered, divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram (15).

16. Those who are sincere devotees of Lord Ram and worship the Lord through his divine and holy Mantras (i.e. the six-letter Mantra as mentioned in verse nos. 1-3) are able to overcome the evil affects of such horrendous crime as being lustful towards one's own mother (16).

17. The accumulated negative affects that a man is subjected to and suffers from by being in the company of persons who are highly sinful is also eliminated by the good and positive affects of the Lord's holy and mystically empowered divine Mantra.

Similarly, all the evil affects that accrue due to wrong speech or talk (such as speaking a lie, using uncouth words, or using words that harm the interest of others), wrong way of sleeping (such as sleeping at the wrong time or with the wrong person), wrong seat or posture (literally wrong 'Aasan', such as adopting the wrong posture during meditation or any other religious exercise, or sitting with the wrong person),

and wrong food (refer verse no. 13) are immediately eliminated as a good and positive effect of the mystical powers of the divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram (17).

18. Such grave sin as killing of one's father and mother in a premeditated form are pardoned and its most horrible evil affects eliminated by the good and positive affects of systematic use of the holy and divine Mantra of Lord Ram with the aim of overcoming the bad affects of this horrible sin (18).

19. It is said that one can do atonement for one's sins by observing penance at the holy site called 'Prayag'. [This site is located at the confluence of three holy rivers—Ganges and Yamuna as well as the mythological river Saraswati which is said to have gone underground. It is located in the present-day city of Allahabad in northern India.]

Well, there is another way of doing the same—and it is to systematically use Lord Ram's divine and holy Mantra for the expiation of sins. [In other words, the term Prayag which is synonymous with atonement for sins by doing penance is also applicable to the holy Mantra of Lord Ram. Or, the Mantra of Lord Ram is like the pilgrim site known as Prayag, and is equally powerful and holy for the purpose of expiation of sins. Just like one's sins are washed off by taking a holy dip in the waters of the holy rivers present in the terrestrial city of Prayag, one can also get rid of all his spiritual impurities by taking the shelter of Lord Ram and cleaning his inner-self and his Atma by using the Lord's Mantra. It must be noted here that this Mantra is as purifying as the fire element because the very first letter 'Raam/Raan(g)' of Lord Ram's Mantra is also the Beej Mantra of the Fire God.]

Hence, the divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram is mystically empowered to eliminate all sins and bestow spiritual purity and holiness on the worshipper and devotee of the Lord (19).

20. The Mantra of Lord Ram is a combined form of all the holy sites. It is like the Kurushetra itself personified (refer Canto 1, verse no. 1). [In other words, the spiritual benefits derived by the use of Lord Ram's holy and divine Mantra are equal to going on pilgrimage to all the holy sites. The Kurushetra is regarded as one of the holiest of the holy sites—hence, its comparison with the Mantra is to highlight the latter's spiritual importance and prowess.]

The holy Mantra of Lord Ram is powerful enough to destroy all the evil consequences of sins that are done or contemplated upon by the use of one's mind, i.e. those sins that are done willingly, consciously, thoughtfully and in a premeditated manner, as well as those sins that are not actually done but thought of and planned in the mind (20).

21. The divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram bears the same fruits and has the same mystical benefits that are derived by doing the seven types of great fire sacrifices and other religious sacraments¹ using the seven types of offerings prescribed for such occasions², as well as by doing the Chandrayan sacrifice in a variety of ways³.

Hence, the divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram is potent enough to destroy all the sins and eliminate all their evil consequences just like the way it is done by following the above method of doing various sacrifices and penances (21).

[Note—¹The *seven great fire sacrifices* are the following—(i) The seven Paak Yagyas are the fire sacrifices done for the purpose of worldly gains and material prosperity. They are also called Kaamyeshthi Yaga, or literally that which is done

with the aim of fulfilling some specific desires or aspirations. They are performed in the Garhyapatya Agni or the fire of the household with cooked offerings such as boiled grains mixed with Ghee (clarified butter).

These seven Paak Yagyas are the following—Huta, Prahuta, Aahuta, Shulagava, Baliharana, Pratyavarohana, and Ashtakaahoma.

(ii) Since doing Homa by the offering of a Havi is an integral part of Yagya or the fire sacrifice, the latter is classified into seven types depending upon the type of Havi offered. If the Havi consists of rice, barley, oat, milk and clarified butter, then the seven types of fire sacrifices are called the following—Agnyaadheya, Agnihotra, Darshapuranmaas (also called the Prakriti or original fire sacrifice), Chaturmaas, Aagrayan, Niruddhapashubandha, and Sautraamani.

All these fire sacrifices are performed in the three main fires—viz. the Garhyapatya, the Dakshinagni and Aahavaniya.

(iii) If the Havi is the juice of the Soma plant, then the fire sacrifice is called the Soma Yagyas—so called because the extract or juice of the Soma plant is offered as an offering. These seven Soma Yagyas are the following—Agnisthoma, Atyaagnisthoma, Ukthya, Shodashi, Vaajpeya, Atraatra, and Aptoryaama.

The *Agnisthoma*—This is the first of the Soma Yagyas where the sanctified liquid extracted from the herb called Som is used as offerings to the sacred fire and the Gods. It is spread over five days and requires an attendance of sixteen priests. It is performed in the spring season annually. Its climax is reached when the Soma juice is extracted at midday from the herb.

The *Atyaagnisthoma*—as the name itself suggests, this is a more intense form of the Agnisthoma sacrifice. The prefix ‘Atya’ means great or intense or extended form.

The *Ukthya Yagya*—This is the fire sacrifice in which the hymns of the Sam Veda are used for recital and offering of oblations to the sacred fire.

The *Shodashi Yagya*—As the name suggests, it is done continuously for sixteen days of the lunar calendar. It starts on the dark-moon day and finishes on the full-moon day. The word ‘Shodasha’ also refers to the sixteen purification rites enjoined for a twice-born from birth till death. It also means observing the sixteen obligatory steps in formal forms of worship—such as Awaahan (invocation of the deity), Aasan (offering of seat to the deity), Ardhya (offering oblations), Padya (washing of feet), Achaman (sipping of sanctified water to cleanse the mouth), Madhupark (offering of desserts or mouth sweeteners), Snan (ablution; bathing), Vastraavharan (clothing), Yagyopavit (wearing of the sacred thread), Gandha (offering perfumes), Pushpa (offering of flowers), Deep (showing ceremonial light), Naivaidhya (offering fresh oblations to the deity in the form of sweet pudding or porridge), Tambul (betel leaves), Parikrama (circumambulation), and Vandana (offering prayers).

The *Vaajapeya Yagya*—This is performed by one who desires unlimited dominion. This sacrifice had many special features and the number 17 plays a dominant role—for there are 17 animals that are sacrificed, 17 objects are distributed as fees for the priests, and it lasts for 17 days culminating in a chariot race in which the patron who does the fire sacrifice is made to win at any cost.

The *Aptoryaama Yagya*—This is a modification of the Agnisthoma Yagya and is done for the fulfillment of desire. The chief patron who does this sacrifice is expected to give one thousand cows as gift or charity. A fully decorated chariot is donated to the chief priest.

The *Atraatra Yagya*—This is form of Soma sacrifice but done in one day only. An ewe or ram is sacrificed for Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of speech, wisdom and knowledge.

Other forms of classification of the Fire Sacrifices—(i) Some fire sacrifices are to be done regularly and daily. They are called Nitya—for instance, the Agnihotra.

(ii) The Naimittika is the fire sacrifice done for a special cause—for instance, the fire sacrifice called Kashaamavatishti that is done for the protection of the household against the danger of fire.

(iii) The Kaamya is the fire sacrifice that is done for fulfillment of specific desires—such as the Kaamesthi Yagya.

(iv) The Aishtika is the fire sacrifice in which the Havi (the offerings) consist of materials like rice cakes (called Purodaasha), clarified butter or Ghee (called Aajya), and sweet pudding or porridge (called Charu).

(v) The Pashuka is the fire sacrifice in which the offering is an animal. For instance, the Ashwamedh Yagya.

(vi) The Saumika is the fire sacrifice in which the offering consists of some juice or extract. The Soma Yajyas come under this category.

²The *seven offerings* are called the Samidhas. They are used as offerings during fire or other religious sacrifices. The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, section 1, verse no. 8 refers to the seven types of Samidhas (fuel for the fire sacrifice; the firewood) and seven types of Yagyas (fire sacrifice). Now let us see which are these seven Samidhas and seven Yagyas. Since the term Homa and Havi are an integral part of the fire sacrifice, they should be understood as well in order to get a comprehensive picture.

The Samidha is the fuel that is needed to keep the fire of the sacrificial pit lit. It is a general term for the firewood. Wood from seven types of trees are used for this purpose as follows—Ashvattha (*Ficus religiosa*), Bilva (*Aegle marmelos*), Chandan (sandal wood), Devdaaru (pine), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Nayagrodha (Indian fig tree), and Palaas (*Butea frondosa*).

The wood from the following trees are not to be used for the purpose of Samidha—Bibhitak (*Terminalia bellerica*), Kapittha (wood apple), and Neem tree.

Each stick of the firewood should not be thicker than the thickness of the thumb, must have the bark on them, and should not be eaten by wood-worms or insects, or infected by any kind of germs—i.e. should be fresh.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Brahman 5, verse no. 5 says that a Sanyasi should wear the Bhasma (the sacred ash) derived from a fire sacrifice in which Samidhas have been offered.

³*Chandraayan/Chandrayan*—The word means ‘following the phase of the moon’. The Hindu scriptures have prescribed a number of methods of atonement for one’s misdeeds and expiations for sins. The Chandrayan is the universal penance for expiation of almost any kind of sin—especially where no specific remedy is prescribed.

It is so-called as during this exercise one follows the phase of the moon in his eating habits. Starting with fifteen morsels of food on the full-moon day it is gradually reduced by one morsel per day till the new-moon day when not a single morsel is eaten by the aspirant. Then from this day onwards, one morsel per day is increased till the full-moon day when once again he eats fifteen morsels. This is one cycle of the penance. It can be repeated as many times as desired according to the intensity of the sin to be atoned for. This penance is also called ‘Pipillikaamadhyā’ or ‘middle of an ant’ exercise because it starts and ends with full fifteen morsels of food with nil food in the middle.

There is a variation of the Chandrayan described above. In the modified version, the penance is started with one morsel on the full-moon day, gradually increased to fifteen morsels on the new-moon day and then progressively reduced by one morsel each day till the full-moon day when once again only one morsel is eaten. This is called ‘Yavamadhya’ or ‘middle of the wheat grain’—as this grain is thickest at the center and tapers off at the two ends.

In the third variation, eight morsel of food is eaten each day for a month’s time. This is called ‘Yati-Chandrayan’—or the Chandrayan that is prescribed for wandering ascetics who beg for food for sustenance.

The size of the morsel of food is approximately that of a big myrobalan fruit. A person who undertakes the penance called Chandrayan should tonsure the head, do

initial fasting as a preparatory step, offer libations of clarified butter (Ghee) and water to the Gods, consecrate the food before eating it, and worship the Moon God.]

22. Whatever remnants of sins that persist inspite of one's best efforts to completely eliminate them, such as by giving donations of gold (for noble causes) of the amount that equals one's own body weight, or making such other great charities and giving away of alms—these residual sins and their lurking consequences are removed by the grace of the divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram (when it is practiced systematically). This Mantra provides the spiritual aspirant complete purity and cleansing of sins—both of omissions as well as of commissions (22).

23. All the sins that a person might commit in the third phase of life (i.e. during old age and when he is nearing death when he is not expected to commit any sin, but instead is expected to guard against them), or any remnants of earlier sins that might not have yet been done away with and linger on till his old age or till the time of his death—verily, such sins or their remnants are also forgiven and remitted on the strength of the divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram when it is eagerly and sincerely remembered and invoked. [Once again, if a person sincerely repents for his sins before death, then the Upanishad provides him with the remedy for his spiritual malady—and it is to surrender himself before the Lord, and concentrate his mind in doing meditation and contemplation upon the supreme Brahm using the Mantra of Lord Ram. This Mantra would cut through his sins like burning acid cuts through metal, and remove the dark coat of spiritual faults that prevents the dying man's emancipation and salvation. This is the fundamental reason and the basic mechanism by which those who die in Kashi are provided with Mukti or Moksha by Lord Shiva. This has been elaborately described in this Upanishad in Cantos 1 and 4.] (23).

24. It is this divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram that can prevent a man from drifting away to an uncertain destiny in the third phase of his life if he fixes his mind and heart on it, if he attaches himself to it. [That is, the boat of his life casts its anchor and is firmly moored on the banks of spiritual liberation and deliverance instead of drifting away in the choppy waters of the uncertain spiritual future. In other words, by taking the refuge of the Mantra of Lord Ram, the apirant find rest, peace, calmness and tranquility of the mind and the soul. He becomes assured that his emancipation and salvation are ensured, and that he would not have to take a birth and undergo the horrors of another cycle of having to cope with the miseries of this world and the pain of death again like the way he had undergone during his current life. If a man does Japa with Lord Ram's Mantra, uses it regularly to worship the Lord, and ties himself to it in a symbolic manner, then he is prevented from getting lost in the huge ocean represented by this deluding world and an uncertain future destiny. His liberation and deliverance from the uncountable sufferings become a certainty.]

A man who is not fortunate enough to have studied the scriptures in his life or have had the privilege of hearing discourses gets the same spiritual benefit if he is preached this divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram. This would help him reap the same benefit that is got by doing all sorts of penances and sacrifices to rid one's self of sins and their consequences (24).

25. Any ill affects of wrongly or incorrectly using the Beej Mantras of the supreme Brahm, or the evil consequences that accumulate by doing misdeeds on a regular basis

in life, whether it is done by men or by women, are eliminated or destroyed by the grace and the good influences of the divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram (25).

26. The divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram is the medium for worshipping the Lord, paying obeisance to him, and obtaining his divine grace and blessing.

It helps to overcome the fear from famine, drought and other misfortunes that might happen in the life of the aspirant (26).

27. This divine and holy Mantra of Lord Ram is a personification of the Lord, and as such is very munificent and benevolent towards his devotees, bestows upon them all round welfare, well-being, cheerfulness, joys, happiness, calmness and peacefulness. It helps them to overcome the restlessness and agitations caused by anger and wrathfulness.

None of the other Mantras have the same glory, the divine powers and the majesty as that possessed by this single Mantra of Lord Ram (27).

28. This Mantra is quick to please Lord Ram very much if it is sung or chanted aloud in a systematic manner. It bestows the worshipper with a long life and all sorts of worldly Aishwarya (majesty, fame, grandeur, prosperity, authority and power) while he is alive, and upon death it blesses him with the attainment of the supreme abode of Lord Vishnu (i.e. helps him to obtain heaven; helps him in his spiritual liberation and deliverance) (28).

29. This is the essence of all that has been said by me (sage Yagyawalkya). The letters of this divine and holy hymn or Mantra dedicated to Lord Ram are the ones that are incanted by the Gods in the heaven; they are the ones that reverberate in the sky in the form of the heavenly sound (known as the cosmic Naad which is the music of the Gods in the heaven).

Those who are wise and erudite believe that the letters of this divine and holy Mantra have revealed themselves in the form of the hymns of the Vedas and all the other scriptures of various denominations.

This glorious and divine Mantra—which is as brilliant and magnificent, as radiant and splendorous as the celestial Sun—is able to provide the spiritual aspirant with the divine vision of the exalted and holy abode of Lord Vishnu which itself is as glorious, as splendorous and as brilliant as the celestial Sun. [That is, a spiritual aspirant is able to access heaven, which is a metaphor for the exalted stature of existence when one finds eternity, fulfillment, the highest degree of bliss and complete spiritual contentedness. if he uses this holy, mystically empowered and powerful Mantra for his spiritual endeavour of obtaining emancipation and salvation. It bestows upon him the radiance and splendour that is like that of the Sun. This Mantra is itself glorious and splendorous like the Sun.]

This mystically empowered Mantra is like the mystical eye that enables the spiritual aspirant to see (realise) the Truth and visualize the splendorous abode of Lord Vishnu in the heavens. It bestows upon the aspirant the divine vision by which he can see beyond the gross world, and peer deep inside it and peep behind it to see the subtle and the sublime world of the divine Spirit, or the 'world of consciousness'. [That is, with the aid of this Mantra the spiritual aspirant is able to become 'self and Brahman realised'. He is able to have a divine vision of the Supreme Being who had not only manifested as Lord Ram on this earth but is present in the subtle heart of all the creatures as the self-illuminated and glorious Atma which is like the brilliant and self-

evident Sun that is present in the sky. It must be noted here that the Sun is regarded as the ‘eye’ of the supreme Brahm. Its light and brilliance is a metaphor for intelligence, erudition, sagacity, knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment because these virtues help one to see the things in the correct perspective and peer deep inside the surface to unravel the greatest secrets that are not easily known from the outside. The Mantra virtually acts as the spiritual eye of the aspirant that enables him to see beyond the gross world and have a divine insight into the essence and subtle aspect of everything.]

It is like the nectar that is imbibed by those who are erudite, wise and enlightened. It makes a man wide awake (or awakened) to the Truth and Reality; it makes him self-realised and Brahm-realised.

It bestows upon him the exalted and supreme abode of Lord Vishnu—i.e. it gives him an exalted spiritual stature by blessing him with liberation and deliverance, by granting his soul emancipation and salvation.

OM salutations! This is the great teaching of this Upanishad. It is the truthful Upanishad and what it says is the truth! Amen!’ (29).

Thus ends Canto 6 of the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 14

Shandilya Upanishad

This Upanishad derives its name from sage Shandilya who approached the ancient sage Atharvan to learn the details of the various aspects of Yoga (meditation) and Brahm, the invisible but the divine and sublime Supreme Being. The knowledge was then passed on to the line of disciples of sage Shandilya who then named this Upanishad in the honour of their Guru.

The Upanishad has three Cantos of which the first one is the largest, occupies the greater part of the text, and deals with the concept of Yoga in a comprehensive manner.

Canto 1 has eleven sections and a total of ninety-seven verses. It deals comprehensively with the philosophy of Yoga and its practice. It explains the various terms associated with the philosophy of Yoga with a metaphysical perspective, and a reading would show how implementing these in practice can actually lead to an overall improvement in the life and personality of the practitioner.

In Canto 1, section 1 opens with sage Atharva telling sage Shandilya about the eight-fold path of Yoga, and then describes the ten aspects of Yam (self-restraint of the sense organs and the mind). Section 2 deals with the ten kinds of Niyams (spiritual orders and regulations). Section 3 outlines the eight Aasans (sitting postures) of Yoga. Section 4 is complicated and gives details about the various Naadis (nerves and veins), the Kundalini (the coiled subtle energy center at the base of the spine, called the ‘serpent power’ because of its coiled nature and its latent dynamism), and the ten

vital winds called the Prans, and it explains how these Naadis are de-clogged and activated with the help of the energy of the Kundalini and the vital winds, along with the process to do so. Section 5 deals with the eligibility for Yoga and then goes on to describe the preliminaries of Pranayam (breath control). Section 6 compliments the previous section and completes the discussion on Pranayam. Section 7 is dedicated to Hath Yoga and describes how to cleanse the blocked Naadis, the method of doing Pranayam, rules governing food during Yoga, various Bandhas (closure of body apertures) and Mudras (postures), and the manifold benefits of Yoga such as attainment of various Siddhis (mystical powers). Sections 8-9 describe the five kinds of Pratyahars (restraining the mind and withdrawing it from involvement with the sense organs) and Dharnas (convictions and beliefs). Section 10 narrates the two kinds of Dhyana (remembrance and concentration of the mind), while section 11 deals with the eclectic concept of Samadhi or total absorption in meditation.

The second and third Cantos primarily deal with the esoteric concept of Brahm. The second Canto is the shortest with only one section having six verses, while the third and the last Canto has two sections with twenty-one verses. Hence, there are in all fourteen sections and one hundred twenty-four verses. Now let us have a bird's eye view of what the Upanishad deals with.

Canto 2 is pre-eminently a summary of Advaita Vedanta and deals with the eclectic concept of the non-dual Brahm, the Supreme Being and the cosmic Consciousness which is the universal theme in all the Upanishads. It outlines some of the unique qualities of Brahm and asserts that it is a divine entity that cannot be defined, is beyond the faculty of speech and the comprehension of the mind, and is invisible but nevertheless omnipresent in this creation.

Finally, Canto 3 builds up on the theme of Brahm and in section 1 answers the question as to how the one and non-dual Brahm can assume the form of this multifaceted world of such immense diversity. Section 2 elucidates the different meanings of the term Brahm.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Canto 1/Section 1

[This section opens with sage Atharvan telling sage Shandilya about the eight-fold path of Yoga, and then describes the ten aspects of Yama which is self-restraint of the sense organs and the mind. It is in the form of a prose and describes all the terms in a holistic manner.]

1. Once upon a time, sage Shandilya¹ approached the great ancient sage Atharva² and requested him to preach him on the various aspects of Yoga as a means of realizing the Atma, the soul or the pure consciousness which is also called the 'self'.

Shandilya requested sage Atharva, 'Oh Lord! Please teach me about the eight-fold path of Yoga that can help me to realise the Atma and its essence.'

The wise and enlightened sage Atharva replied, 'Oh great sage! Yoga (meditation and contemplation) has eight limbs or aspects or branches, called 'Ashtaanga Yoga'³. These are Yam (self-control), Niyam (observation of spiritual

laws or rules), Aasan (sitting postures), Pranayam (breath control), Pratyahar (restraint of the mind), Dharna (belief), Dhyana (concentration of mind; remembrance) and Samadhi (trance-like state of permanence in Yoga).

Yam and Niyam are of ten types each, Aasans are of eight types, Pranayam has three phases, both Pratyahar and Dharna have five types each, Dhyana is of two types, while Samadhi is of only one type with no variations.

The ten types or aspects of Yam are the following—Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truthfulness), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (abstinence, continence, celibacy), Daya (mercy), Saralta (simplicity, humility), Kshama (forgiveness), Dhairya (patience), Alpa-ahar (moderation in eating), and Pavitra (purity and cleanliness).

[Now, each of these terms are being defined—] ‘Ahimsa’ means not harming or causing pain to any creature, at any time, and by any means—not by one’s thoughts or involvement of the mind in any way, not by speech or words, not by the body and its actions. [That is, non-violence should be holistic and comprehensive in nature—it is not limited to only avoiding physical cruelty or aggression but also includes mental and verbal aspects.]

‘Satya’ means to tell, honestly, truthfully and with the greatest sincerity one can have, whatever is for the good and true welfare of the other person, whether he likes it or not. This would involve the mind and its thoughts, the speech and the words used to tell the truth, and the body that implements this truth in the shape of deeds done by it and actions taken by it. [That is, Satya involves not telling things simply because they might appear pleasing to the hearer, or said out of some vested interest at stake, but to say things which are genuinely in the interest and long-term good of the other person. Such things might be unpleasant to hear in the beginning and might even cause rebuke or ill-will for the speaker of the truth, but they give the speaker or the advisor great mental and spiritual satisfaction for having spoken the truth without deceit or fear, besides helping to create positive vibrations around him, and ushering in an atmosphere of trust and brotherhood.]

‘Asteya’ broadly means non-stealing, and it includes the idea of keeping one’s self aloof from the wealth of others, of not being attracted towards such assets that do not rightly belong to one’s own self, of eyeing the wealth of others with envy and jealousy, of having a greed for them, yearning for them, and waiting for an opportunity to either harm them or deprive the other person of his possessions, or usurping and grabbing the assets rightfully belonging to others by any crooked or deceitful means one can think of. This neutrality and non-lusting must be genuine and sincere, and should involve one’s mind and its thoughts, one’s speech, as well as one’s body and the deeds done by it or actions taken by it. One should be sincere in not being tempted by the wealth of others, and of course this would involve the mind and the sub-conscious which must be duly trained and cultured. [That is, one must never be envious of other people’s prosperity and acquisitions; one must never allow the mind to ever contemplate of harming these assets or plan to grab them by force or conceit. Similarly, one must never allow the speech to ever utter a word of jealousy and say anything that might harm these assets simply because they belong to others, or create prejudice against the rightful possessor of such assets. One must not allow the body to do anything that would in anyway, directly or indirectly, cause harm to the assets that belong to others. Since the general meaning of the word ‘Asteya’ is ‘non-stealing’ it follows that even mental greed or yearning for something that belongs to others, and imagining how good it would have been if it belonged to me, is as good as the actual stealing of it. When the Upanishads talk about implementation

of any principle, they imply a wholesome attitude and a holistic approach towards it, and not only physical aspect of it such as its literal implementation which is devoid of the spirit of the doctrine. Not physically able to steal anything but be mentally obsessive about it is as good as actually stealing it. In other words, the purity of mind, sub-conscious and intellect are as important as the physical act of abstaining from stealing.]

‘Brahmacharya’ is to abstain from all sexual activities or any kind of indulgences and unrestrained behaviour involving the mind, the speech as well as the physical body and its sense organs under all circumstances. [That is, mere observance of physical celibacy is not enough. One must observe total control over the mind and its faculties so that they are not allowed even to think of any lustful subject or indulge in any inauspicious, unrighteous, unethical, immoral and improper thoughts related to sense gratification or attractions of the material sense objects of the world. One must never think or talk about sensual subjects that arouse passions and disturb the tranquility of the mind. One must never allow the gross organs of the body to be attracted towards objects of self gratification, or of sensual pleasures and comforts. In short, all sensual attractions, all forms of indulgences, all instances of temptations, all examples of self-gratification, and all sorts of unrestrained behaviour of the mind, the speech and the body are covered by the term Brahmacharya. It means total and comprehensive self-restraint or self-control in all spheres of life, and not just of the organs of sensual pleasures.]

‘Daya’ refers to having compassion and mercy towards all the creatures, to be graceful and kind towards all, from the lowly and the humblest to the highest and the exalted.

‘Aarjav’ or ‘Dhairya’ means to have exemplary tolerance, fortitude, courage, forbearance, resilience and patience of mind, to be immensely steady in one’s thoughts and behaviour, to restrict one’s speech and desist from speaking any wrong word against anyone or to anyone, and to keep the body under strict control and not react under any kind of provocation or situation, whether favourable or unfavourable. It implies that a person remains completely neutral and equanimous when faced by favourable and expected circumstances, or by unfavourable and untoward ones.

‘Kshama’ implies to be truly forgiving and un-affected by any offense caused by the other person, to bear with stoic calmness, equanimity, forbearance and a sense of neutrality all sorts of behaviours one has to face from others, whether done inadvertently or purposely, whether such behaviour is favourable or unfavourable, whether it is likable or not. One must be exemplarily calm, unruffled and be forgiving towards others, whether one is praised and honoured by them, or criticized and humiliated by them. One must be sincerely forgiving for any kind of mischief, any kind of misdeed, kind of transgression, any kind of provocative behaviour, any sort of insults, aspersions, asides or insinuations inflicted or cast upon him by other person, directly or indirectly, or by situations created by his adversary that lead to him being subjected to humiliation and insult. Kshama involves remaining unruffled and completely calm, both emotionally as well as sentimentally, under all prevailing situations and under all instigations. One must not harbour any animosity, ill-will, a sense of grievance, a feeling of hatred or a desire for revenge against anyone, or for any deed done by the latter, which has in any way harmed one’s own interest or even has been a cause of annoyance for him. [Therefore we see that Kshama, Daya and Dhairya go hand in hand; one must accompany the other to give meaning to what is being said in this great Upanishad. It has already been emphasized that a wholesome

approach is needed when one reads the Upanishad and hopes to benefit from this eclectic and grand philosophy promoted by it.]

‘Dhriti’ is having equanimity, neutrality, fortitude, firmness and steadiness of mind under all circumstances, even when one is subjected to immense emotional turmoil, both of the positive kind such as having happiness and joys, as well as of the negative kind such as being subjected to immense anguish and pain. [That is, one must remain unruffled and maintain one’s poise and calm under opposing situations—such as the one when he suffers from some great financial loss or loses his dear and near ones on the one hand, or when he begets some great fortune or meets his beloved ones unexpectedly on the other hand.]

‘Alpa-ahar’ is to eat with moderation or restraint. It implies eating only so much as to keep one-fourth of the stomach empty. It also implies eating such things that are soothing for the system and non-irritating by nature, things that are invigorating and energizing for the body. Such eatables are foods that are soothing for the digestive system, as well as sweet, pleasant and comforting for the body in general. Some of such eatables are clarified butter (Ghee) of the best quality, unadulterated milk, and other such things.

‘Shauch’ means to be clean and purified both externally as well as internally. While external cleanliness can be done by rubbing the body with clay and washing off the dirt with water, internal cleanliness and purity is achieved by keeping the mind, the sub-conscious and the intellect free from all sorts of taints, corruptions and negativities, and instead concentrating their efforts towards auspicious and righteous endeavours such as on spiritualism and attainment of the Truth. [Both sorts of cleaning are necessary. One should keep the physical body clean because it is the residence of the Atma, the pure ‘self’, and if the residence is dirty and filthy it would create a negative environment for the Atma, causing the latter restlessness and having a negative impact on its nature. Further, the body is regarded as the temple of the Lord because this Atma is a miniature form of the cosmic Atma known as the ‘Parmatma’, the Supreme Being. Just like a man keeps his place of worship, the ‘shrine’, physically clean so as to maintain its sanctity, it is equally important to keep one’s body clean as it is the abode of the ‘personal deity’ known as the Atma. But this body is driven by the mind and its various faculties, and therefore to ensure that the personal shrine of the Atma in the form of the physical body is able to maintain its sanctity and credibility it is imperative to keep the internal apparatus clean and uncorrupt. If the mind and its components are not clean then no matter how clean the external body may be it is of no good to the spiritual aspirant, for sooner rather than latter the body would fall prey to the many temptations of the corrupt world and its attending delusions. Therefore, all efforts of the mind should be diverted away from the falsehoods of the material world of the sense objects and focused on the Atma and the universal truth of the conscious ‘self’.] (1).

[Note—¹*Shandilya*—The word ‘Shandilya/Shandilya’ means the son of sage Shandila. In ancient scriptures the name of sage Shandilya appears at various places, the earliest reference being in the Shatpath Brahman (9/4/4/17; 10/1/4/10) which belongs to the Shukla Yajur Veda. It is believed that it was compiled around 3000 B.C.

Shandilya was a great authority of the fire ritual, and in fact the fire which he worshipped has been named after him as Shaandila. He was a pupil of sage Atharva from whom he learned this present Shandilya Upanishad, and his main disciple was named Kushri. According to other lists of lineage, his teachers included Vaatsay, Kaishorya, Kashyap, Vaishtapureya, Gautam etc.

Since the Shandilya Upanishad was taught to him by sage Atharva, it obviously follows that the two sages were contemporaries of each other.

The Chandogya Upanishad also refers to sage Shandilya in its Canto 3, section 14 wherein the sage taught the knowledge of the divine Being known as Brahm which have a clear resonance in Cantos 2 and 3 of our present Shandilya Upanishad.

The great epic Mahabharata mentions sage Shandilya many times as being a sage who attended the court of king Yudishthira (Sabhapurva, 4/17). He had propounded the laws governing giving of donations (Mahabharata, Anushashanpurva, 65/19).

Sage Shandilya is credited with the composition of the treatise on Bhakti or devotion, called the Bhakti-sutras—the essential principles that govern the attainment of Bhakti. Besides it, the Shandilya Upanishad as well as Shandilya Sanhita are also attributed to him.

According to the Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1, of the Atharva Veda, he was one of the sages who had approached Hanuman, the wisest, the highly enlightened and the most dedicated devotee of Lord Ram, to enquire about the profound metaphysical philosophy related to the Lord.

²*Atharva*— Sage Atharva is the ancient sage who first revealed the fourth Veda called after his name, i.e. the Atharva Veda. He was the son of Brahma, the creator, according to Vedic mythology. He first brought down fire from the heaven to earth, and hence was the first sage to have propagated the worship of the sacred fire. The word ‘athar’ is the absolute word for the fire element, and hence this sage was named ‘Atharvan’ to commemorate this auspicious deed of his. He made the supreme Fire God, who is synonymous with the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being called Brahm, make this earth as his habitat, thereby paving the way for the forthcoming generations to utilise the stupendous powers and potentials of this fire element in practical terms here on earth itself. Since he brought the fire down on earth, he was also the first to initiate the process of worship of this element, both in its sublime form as the Fire God and its more tangible and gross form as the sacred fire worshipped during formal ritual of the fire sacrifice as well as in other informal forms as done by various sections of society in their daily lives. In fact, sage Atharva was considered as the Fire manifested, so pure and holy he was.

When he brought the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire from the heaven, he offered Soma (the extract of a herb called Som and used as a holy and sanctified liquid-offering meant to be offered to the Gods for their eternal life and sustenance) to him to please him and to show respect to this God who was now the guest of honour for Atharvan. In order to please him further while offering Soma to him, the sage chanted the hymns that he had learned from his father, the creator Brahma. This started the practice of offering of Soma to the sacred fire during the ritual of the fire sacrifice along with the chanting of hymns of the Atharva Veda.

According to the Purans, his earthly wife was Shanti, the daughter of Kardama Prajapati. He is regarded as a personification of the Fire God, and is often invoked in conjunction with another great sage named Angiras (who was another son of Brahma). In this form he is called ‘Atharvangiras’ (Atharvan + Angiras) and is regarded as the father of the Fire God to commemorate the fact that these two sages are responsible for the honour and exalted position that the Fire God occupies in the pantheon of Gods, and also the fact that they were responsible for propagating the worship of the fire as the most holy and the most sacred form of worship of the Supreme Being.

According to Mundakopanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 1, Atharva is the eldest of the six mental-born sons of Brahma. Brahma had first taught him the best metaphysical knowledge called Brahm Vidya, and Atharva had later taught it to Angiras, his younger brother and first disciple (Mundakopanishad, 1/1/2). The descendents of Atharva came to be known as Atharvaan, and those of Angira as Aangiras. One of the many important sages preached by sage Atharva was Shandilya/Shandilya, son of sage Shandila, and this teaching is contained in the

present Upanishad called the ‘Shandilya Upanishad’ dedicated to sage Shandilya in his memory.

Since sage Atharva had started the practice of worship of the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice and had used the initial Mantras taught to him by his father Brahma, the Mantra of this Veda came to be known after him as ‘Atharvaa’, and since his brother Angira had carried forward this practice started by his older brother by actually invoking these Mantras during formal sacrifices held from time to time after the first exercise, the Mantras came to be known after both the brothers ‘Atharvaangiras’.

The Mantras of the Atharva Veda which were initially pronounced by sage Atharva came to be known after him as ‘Atharvaa’ or ‘Atharva’, and those by the two brothers jointly as ‘Atharvaangiras’.

According to Mahabharat, the great epic related to Lord Krishna penned by sage Veda Vyas, Atharva had searched out the fire concealed in the ocean (Mahabharat, Vanparva, 222).

Some of the Upanishads taught by sage Atharva are the following—Atharva Veda’s Prashna Upanishad, Mundak Upanishad, Atharva Shikha Upanishad and Shandilya Upanishad—all belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition.

Since he was the worshipper of the Fire God, it is natural for him to worship the Sun God as a manifestation not only of the supreme Brahm but also of the Fire God. The hymns dedicated to the Sun God as contained in the Surya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, which is the seventh Upanishad of this Veda, is attributed jointly to sages Angira and Atharva. Refer verse no. 1 of Surya Upanishad.

³*Astanga Yoga*—Some of the Upanishads that deal with this philosophy of Yoga are the following—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda = *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse nos. 11-14; (ii) Atharva Veda = *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 2.

The chief exponent of Yoga was sage Patanjali, and he had crystallized the principles of Yoga in his Yog Sutra which contains 185 Sutras or formulas or keys for doing Yoga. Yoga is one of the 6 schools of Indian Hindu Philosophy. We shall now briefly see the essential elements of Patanjali’s Yog Sutra.

Patanjali is considered the grandfather of Yoga. Here we shall see in brief his basic ideas of Yoga, and we would observe that they are more philosophical in their content, import and application than the mere physical exercise involved in doing routine Yoga (meditation). Patanjali’s philosophies on Yoga are universally applicable to all the Upanishads, whether they are mere philosophical treatises or the ones dealing with only meditation exercises in detail. In the context of Upanishads on Yoga, let us have a brief glimpse on what sage ‘Patanjali’, has to say on the subject.

‘Patanjali’ has enumerated eight-fold path of Yoga, called Ashtanga Yoga—or the Yoga with 8 limbs or branches. Each phase of his prescription is designed to enable the practitioner to attain the supreme consciousness by quieting the mind and merging it with the truth which is universal, all pervading and infinite.]

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Canto 1/Section 2

[This section describes the ten types of Niyams or observances. Like the previous section, it is also in the pattern of a prose.]

1. The term ‘Niyam’ (literally meaning certain rules and regulations that one is strictly expected to follow in order to be successful in one’s endeavour) applies to the following observances—Tapa (austerity, penance and sufferance for some noble and auspicious cause), Santosh (contentedness), Astik (to be a believer), Daan (to give

charity and make alms), Ishwar-poojan (worship of God), Siddhanta-srawan (listening to the tenets and doctrines of the scriptures being explained), Hri (shame, prudence, modesty and self-respect), Mati (thoughts, intellect, sense, understanding, inclination, convictions, desires of the mind, and being mindfulness of one's duties and ethical behaviour), Japa (repetition of Mantras), and Vrat (religious fasting, observing austerity, keeping righteous vows and strict self-control or self-restraint).

[Now, each of these terms would be explained in a holistic way.] The term 'Tapa' in the context of Yoga (meditation) is to observe various religious sacraments such as the 'Krischa Chandrayan'¹ which helps the body to become thin, energized, fit, reactivated and detoxified, as well as shed its unnecessary flab and burden of ailments.

'Santosh' means to be satisfied and contented with whatever is available by providence, and never to greed or yearn or wish for more.

'Aastik' (believing) implies that one should sincerely believe in what the Vedas have said about religion and other spiritual matters.

'Daan' is to give alms to the poor, make donations and charities to the deserving, with due respect to the dignity and self respect of the recipient or the beneficiary, without expecting anything in return. These charities and donations must be made out of the wealth that has been obtained by rightful means, and which rightly belongs to the person who gives such alms, or makes donations or charities. [In other words, if charities are made to humiliate others, to demean their spirits and social standing, to show them that they are underprivileged, unfortunate and inferior to the donor, to create a situation when the other members of the society become lazy, indolent and unproductive in the expectation of getting largesse without making efforts to meet their requirements by doing deeds, or to show off one's wealth and majesty, or to reap some sort of worldly fame and name as a philanthropic person etc., or if such charities or alms are made out of assets acquired by unlawful and unethical means—then such alms, charities and donations are deemed to be null and void.]

'Ishwar-poojan' is to honour, to offer respectful worship and to pay sincere obeisance to the Supreme Being in his various manifestations, such as Lord Vishnu (the second of the Trinity Gods, the sustainer and protector of creation, and the Lord who had manifested as various incarnations on earth) and Lord Shiva (the third of the Trinity Gods, the concluder of creation and the patron God of ascetics) amongst others. Such worship and honour should be done cheerfully, with great devotion and faith, and by following the proper sanctified method for this purpose as narrated in the scriptures.

'Siddhanta-srawan' is to attentively hear the tenets and doctrines of the Vedas and the Upanishads being explained by those who are well-versed in them, those who are highly erudite and extremely learned in the finer nuances and intricacies of these great scriptures.

'Hri' (shame, modesty, self-respect and dignity) is to feel ashamed at one's own self for doing something that goes against the eclectic doctrines of Dharma (ethics, morality, righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety and correct thought and action). Therefore, it also entails that one avoids doing anything that is regarded as unholy, lowly, demeaning, degrading and despicable by the Vedas as well as by traditional wisdom and universally accepted convention.

'Mati' (thoughts, intellect, sense, understanding, inclination, convictions, desires of the mind, and being mindfulness of one's duties and ethical behaviour) is to sincerely wish and have an inborn inclination to follow the tenets of the Vedas. It would include proper training of the mind-intellect apparatus to think and contemplate

rightly, correctly and with a positive attitude about the right things and in a right perspective. One should therefore turn away from those things that are demeaning and degrading for the soul, and which undermine the exalted stature of one's divine 'self'.

'Japa' is to honestly practice (repeat and meditate upon) the Vedic Mantra (hymn) that has been prescribed by one's Guru (moral preceptor). Japa is done in two ways—one is verbal or audible Japa, and the other is non-verbal or mental or silent Japa. The mental or silent form of Japa is done by repeating the Mantra mentally in a silent mode without uttering a word audibly, and involves concentration of the mind and turning its thoughts inwards. The verbal or audible form of Japa is again of two types—viz. one that is done loudly, and the other that is simply muttered. The Japa done while muttering the Mantras silently is thousands of times more beneficial than doing Japa loudly, and mental Japa that is done silently without even opening the lips is far better than even the one done by slowly muttering the words, and it is multiple times more beneficial.

'Vrat' (observance of religious vows) is to diligently, steadfastly, honestly, consistently and regularly follow the different eclectic principles, the doctrines and the tenets of the Vedas and the Upanishads—to avoid things that are proscribed by them, and do things that are prescribed by them (1).

[Note—¹The word 'Chandrayan' means 'following the phase of the moon', while 'Krischa' means to become thin and lean. Hence, the term *Krischa Chandrayan* means to make the body thin by strictly restricting the diet according to the established system of doing the Chandrayan Vrat. Hence it involves restricting one's food intake by strictly following the phase of the moon—reducing it gradually during the waning phase of the moon, and increasing it in a step-by-step reverse order in which it was reduced during the waxing phase of the moon.

The Hindu scriptures have prescribed a number of methods of atonement for one's misdeeds and expiations for sins. The Chandrayan is the universal penance for expiation of almost any kind of sin—especially where no specific remedy is prescribed.

It is so-called as during this exercise one follows the phase of the moon in his eating habits. Starting with fifteen morsels of food on the full-moon day it is gradually reduced by one morsel per day till the new-moon day when not a single morsel is eaten by the aspirant. Then from this day onwards, one morsel per day is increased till the full-moon day when once again he eats fifteen morsels. This is one cycle of the penance. It can be repeated as many times as desired according to the intensity of the sin to be atoned for. This penance is also called 'Pipillikaamadhya' or 'middle of an ant' exercise because it starts and ends with full fifteen morsels of food with nil food in the middle.

There is a variation of the Chandrayan described above. In the modified version, the penance is started with one morsel on the full-moon day, gradually increased to fifteen morsels on the new-moon day and then progressively reduced by one morsel each day till the full-moon day when once again only one morsel is eaten. This is called 'Yavamadhya' or 'middle of the wheat grain'—as this grain is thickest at the center and tapers off at the two ends.

In the third variation, eight morsel of food is eaten each day for a month's time. This is called 'Yati-Chandrayan'—or the Chandrayan that is prescribed for wandering ascetics who beg for food for sustenance.

The size of the morsel of food is approximately that of a big myrobalan fruit. A person who undertakes the penance called Chandrayan should tonsure the head, do initial fasting as a preparatory step, offer libations of clarified butter (Ghee) and water to the Gods, consecrate the food before eating it, and worship the Moon God.]

Canto 1/Section 3

[This section has fifteen verses and narrates the eight types of Aasans (sitting postures) of Yoga (meditation). Refer also to (i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 35-52 describes seventeen Aasans; Mandal Brahmin, Brahman 1, section 1, verse no. 5. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 15-17; Yog Kundali, Canto 1, verse nos. 5-6; Yog Tattva, verse no. 29; Yog Shikha, Canto 1, verse no. 84. (iii) Sam Veda = Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-13. (iv) Atharva Veda = Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 87.]

1. There are said to be eight principal Aasans or sitting postures to be adopted while doing Yoga or meditation and contemplation. These are the following—Swastik, Gomukh (to sit like a cow), Padma (the lotus posture), Vir (the warrior's posture), Singh (to sit like a lion), Bhadra (to sit like a gentleman), Mukta (to free one's self from the sensual urges) and Mayur (to sit like a peacock).

In the Swastik-aasan, the two legs are folded in from the knee joint and the soles of the feet are placed on the knees of the opposite side. With the legs thus bent and the soles resting on the knees, the practitioner sits erect with a straight back (1).

2. The Gomukh-aasan is to sit like a cow. This is accomplished by bending the body forward and folding in the two legs from the knees so that the left side of the buttock rests upon the right ankle joint and the right buttock on the left ankle joint. [Obviously, to sit like the cow, the body would be in a horizontal position and while the hind part rests upon the folded-in legs as mentioned above, the front part would rest upon the hands that too would need to be bent in at the elbows with the palms of the hand lying flat on the ground in the front. The head is held slightly elevated as compared to the horizontal position of the backbone.] (2).

3. Oh Shandilya! The Padmasan is to sit like a lotus. In this posture, the legs are folded in from the knees and the soles are placed on the thighs of the opposite side. Then the body is held erect and the big toes are grasped by the hands of the opposite sides. [In other word, first the left sole is placed on the right thigh for instance, and then its big toe is clasped by the left hand. The same thing is done with the right sole and its big toe. As a result, the hands would need to be crossed over each other in front of the navel. The rest of the body meanwhile is held ram-rod straight.] (3).

4. The Virasan (to sit like a warrior) is done by folding in the two legs from the knee and resting the hind parts of the two thighs on the calves of the same side. The upper part of the body, from the hip-bone upwards, is held erect. [Hence, the body rests on the folded-in legs with the two knees touching the ground in the front and the hind part of the body supported by the feet held parallel to the backbone so that its their ankle joints touch and extend support to the rear of the buttock while the toes lie flat on the ground, pointing forwards towards the knees so as to form a base for keeping the body in balance. It is a modified version of kneeling down where the calf and the posterior part of the thigh are at right angles to each others, because in the case of the Viraasan posture the weight of the body lies not on the knees but on the feet that are tucked below the buttocks with their soles pointing outwards, the ankle joint pressing

against the lower end of the buttock, and the toes flat against the ground, so as to act as a prop that supports the hip and the backbone from the rear of the body.]

5-6. Now, Singhasan is being described. [It is how a lion sits. It is modification of the Virasan described in verse no. 4.] The right ankle joint is made to touch the left ankle joint, and the palms are placed on the knees of the respective side with their fingers open and spread out over the knees like a palm-fan. [Obviously, to sit in this way is to adopt the Virasan posture with two caveats—one is that the two ankle joints should touch each other as they support the buttock and backbone at the rear side of the body as described in the formation of the Viraasan posture, and the other is that the open palms of the two hands should be placed, facing down, open the two bent knees, with their fingers spread out on the knees like a palm-fan.] [5]

The practitioner should sit still with the mouth open and eyesight fixed or focused on the tip of the nose. [In other words, he must stare straight ahead at a point directly in front of the nose.]

This is called the 'Singh-Aasan' and acclaimed ascetics always laud it. [6] (5-6).

7. The Siddhasan is adopted by pressing the anus with the left leg (i.e. by its ankle joint) and placing the right leg on the testicles (i.e. pressing the groins with the ankle joint of the right leg). The eye sight is fixed at a point between the two eyebrows. [Though not mentioned, the backbone and the head are held straight in a line in this case as well.] (7).

8. To sit in the Bhadrasan, the two ankle joints are tucked below the testicles and pressed against them, while the rear end of the two legs (i.e. the soles of the feet) are clasped firmly by the hands (taken behind the body). [For doing this, the legs would have to touch each other, bent at the knees and folded in, with the calf pressed against the posterior of the respective thigh. This would enable the ankle joint to be pressed against the testicles from below. Then the hands are taken back and the soles clasped from the rear of the body. Meanwhile, the spine, neck and the head are to be held straight in a line.]

This Bhadrasan is able to overcome the bad affects of all sorts of poison and get rid of different kind of diseases (8).

9. To sit in a Muktasana posture, the suture running along the central part of the testicles is pressed from the below by the left ankle joint (by folding in the left leg), and then this ankle joint is pressed by the right ankle joint (by folding in the right leg). [It is a variation of the Bhadrasana posture. Whereas in the latter case the two ankle joints are held close to each other, side-by-side, and press the testicles simultaneously from below, in the present case of the Muktasana the testicles are pressed at the center from below by only the ankle joint of the left leg and then this ankle joint is further pressed by the ankle joint of the right leg. The back and the neck are however held erect in this case as well.] (9).

10-11. The Mayurasana (literally, to sit like a peacock) entails putting the palms flat on the ground, pressing the elbows against the abdomen on either side of the navel, and then balancing the body in a horizontal plane with the hands and open palms resting flat on the ground to act as pedestals. [10] In this posture, the head and the legs are turned upwards and away from the ground. The body is held parallel to the ground

and is like a log of wood that is supported by two pedestals that are formed by the forearms and the palms. This posture resembles the outline features of a peacock.

This 'Mayurasan' has the potential to destroy all sins. [11] (10-11).

12. By practicing these Aasans all the diseases present in the body are eliminated along with all the toxins or other poisonous elements that may be present inside the body. [That is, these physical exercises help to revitalize and re-energise the body, detoxify it and rejuvenate it.] (12).

13. If a man is unable to follow any one of the rigid Aasans described above, he should then adopt any sitting posture that is convenient to him. In other words, the Aasans are to be calibrated according to the needs and convenience of the practitioner of Yoga (13).

[Note—This is very important and indicates that the Upanishads do not prescribe the rigidity of the Aasans as a means of inflicting torture on the aspirant. The toughness of the Aasans is based on the age-old wisdom that the more severe the ailment the equal severe is its remedy to affect a cure. Even modern medicine accepts that the potency of the medicine and the duration of the treatment is directly proportionate to the disease and its severity. But if any of the Aasans cause stress or distress to the practitioner then it would be counter-productive and hence should be avoided. The main idea is to sit calmly and steadily with a focused mind and controlled body, to focus on meditation and contemplation, to rein in the restless and wayward mind along with the equally restless body and its wayward sense organs. If this is accomplished by other means or Aasans than the ones mentioned in this section, then all is well and good. It is no sense in doing one of these Aasans with the body being subjected to such inconvenience that it remains fidgety, and the mind on its edge.]

14. An aspirant or practitioner who has successfully mastered the technique of these Aasans should be deemed to have conquered or obtain control over all the three worlds¹ (14).

[Note—¹The three worlds usually refer to the terrestrial world, the lower heavens and the upper heavens, or the heavens and the nether world. In brief, he is able to exercise his control over all spheres of life. From the metaphysical perspective it means that he can control his involvement with the physical material world during the waking state of consciousness called the Jagrat state, he can control his involvement with the world of dreams during the dreaming state of consciousness called the Swapna state, and he can even control his deep sleep state of consciousness called the Sushupta state. In other words, he is a self-realised person whose Atma, whose 'true self' which is pure and uncorrupt Consciousness, has become awakened and vigilant. No delusions of any sort, whether pertaining to the physical world or the imaginary world of dreams or to the neutral world of indifference would ever move him or affect his composure under any circumstance.]

15. When one has successfully observed the various principles of Yam and Niyam (as describes in sections 1 and 2 above) and mastered the art of doing various Aasans (as described in verse nos. 1-11 of this present section no. 3), he should then endeavour to practice 'Pranayam' or breath control exercises. By practicing it, the Naadis (various tubular ducts in the body; the nerves, veins and other ducts that carry life-forces in the body) are cleaned and detoxified, thereby revitalizing and re-energizing them (15).

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Canto 1/Section 4

[This section deals with three important concepts pertaining to Yoga—(i) one is the Naadi, or the various tubular ducts in the body through which all the life forces flow inside the creature's body, and how to clean, de-clog, re-vitalise and re-activate them, (ii) the other is the Kundalini which is a coiled subtle energy center at the base of the spine, and (iii) the third is the Vital Winds or Prans present inside the body that keeps it alive and active.

The Upanishads that deal with *Naadis* are the following—(i) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 5-22 ½, 35-42, 46-47, Canto 5; and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 15-21. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 67-76, 88-89, 99; Subal Upanishad, Canto 9 (which elaborately describes the relationship between Naadi, the vital winds and the sense organs). (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kshuriko, verse nos. 8-20; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 61 (consciousness moves in Naadis during sleep), Canto 5, verse nos. 22-31, 54, 67; Yog Tattva Upanishad; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 50-60; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 17-27, Canto 6, verse nos. 4-19, 22, 41-47; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 10-18 in relation with the activation of the Kundalini (which is the spiral dynamic energy center at the base of the spine) and doing Pranayam (breath control). (iv) Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse nos. 1, 9-11; Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 2, stanza no. 20 (it lists fourteen main Naadis).

The Upanishads that deal with *Kundalini* and its activation are the following—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 7-8, 43-46, 65-74, 76, 82-84; Dhyanbindu Upanishad, verse no. 66-69; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 82-139; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 81-84. (b) Sam Veda's Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 36-39. (c) Atharva Veda's Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 2, stanza no 12.

The Upanishads that describe the *vital winds or Prans* are the following—(i) Sam Veda—(a) Chandogya Upanishad in its Canto 3, sections 13; Canto 5, section 1, verse nos. 1-15; Canto 5, sections 19-23 (describes how the five winds are satisfied; it also enumerates the Mantras pertaining to the five Prans); and Canto 7, section 15, verse no. 1; (b) Jabal Darshan panishad, Canto 4, verse no.23-24; (c) Maitrayanu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6-7 (which describes the functions of these winds). (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda—(a) Subalo Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no.1-14; (b) Paingalo-panishad, canto 2, verse no.3; (c) Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 5, 8-9; Canto 2, verse nos. 54, 77-87; (d) Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse no. 26; Canto 4, Brahman 2, verse no. 4; Canto 4, Brahman 1, verse no. 3; Canto 5, Brahman 13; Canto 6, Brahman 1. (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda—(a) Dhyanbindu Upanishad, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-60, 95-100; (b) Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 28; (c) Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 166; (d) Amritnado-panishad, verse no. 33-38; (e) Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 17-19; (f) Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 165 and Canto 5, verse no. 2; (g) Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 3, Anuvak 3, 7; (h) Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 10; (i) Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 2 (especially describes the three methods to control the Prans); (j) Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse nos. 11-12, 14-18 (which describe the fingers that are directly related to the five principal winds and the Mantras of these winds). (iv) Atharva Veda—(a) Prashna Upanishad, Canto 2-3;

Mundak Upanishad, Canto 3, section 1, verse no. 4; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 12-13; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 25-32, 50-53 (its verse nos. 52-53 avers that for a self-realised ascetic, the terms Pran and consciousness are the same). (v) These vital winds have also been elucidated upon in sage Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no. 38-39.]

1. Sage Shandilya asked sage Atharva, 'Oh Lord! What is the way to clean (purify, de-clog and revitalize) the Naadis? How many Naadis are there (in the body)? How were they created? How many vital winds flow in them? Where are they located? What are their functions? In short, please enlighten me about all the things worth knowing in this body.' (1).

2-3. Sage Atharva replied, 'This body measures ninety-six fingers in length. The Pran or vital winds are longer by twelve fingers as compared to the length of the body. A practitioner of Yoga or meditation who is able to establish a synergy or compatibility between the vital winds and the fire element that is inherently present inside the body is called a skilled ascetic and a successful practitioner of Yoga.

[The wind is usually more forceful and powerful than the fire element as a strong wind blowing fiercely can blow out even a raging fire. If the latent fire in the body is weakened, it results in low heat, strength, vitality and energy levels. This manifests in many ways—such as low appetite and weak digestion, low vision and inability to perform mental tasks requiring constant supply of energy, lethargic bowel movement and poor circulation of blood, low vitality and lack of animal heat, and such other vital signs of life that depend upon heat and energy inherent in the fire element. Therefore it is necessary to keep the vital winds under control so that the life-giving fire is not suppressed or blown out completely. Since the vital winds which also sustain life and are synonymous with life are equally important as the fire element, a proper balance is to be struck between the two so that one does not prove inimical to the other but exist in a cooperative manner to help the body function in prime shape. In order to bring this about, both the wind element and the fire element are to be in equal intensity, or the wind element should be a notch less powerful than the fire element. This is because if the fire element is active and strong enough, it would not only keep the body warm and sufficiently energized but also consequentially keep the winds active and energized by keeping them warm. Cold wind is counterproductive to life while warm wind fosters life.] (2-3).

4. The location of the fire element in the body of humans is like a triangle which is glowing and radiant as a piece of hot, molten gold.

In four-footed creatures (the land-bound animals) it is square in shape, while in birds (that have wings and fly in the air) it is circular.

The fire element is subtly present here as an auspicious flame of fire that remains hidden from view but is nevertheless the most important element of the body (4).

[Note—The area of the midriff around the middle of the abdomen is said to be the abode of the fire element. Its apex is near the navel and the lower end is in the region of the groins.]

5. The middle of the human body is located at a spot that is two fingers above the anus and two fingers below the genital (i.e. in the exact center of the groin).

For four-footed creature (animals) the middle of the body is located in the region of the heart, while in the birds it is the center of the abdomen itself that forms the middle of their body.

This middle part of the body is generally nine fingers high and four fingers wide. It is shaped more or less like an egg (i.e. it is oblong, with the broad end towards the navel and the tapered end pointing towards the lower end of the body) (5).

6. The navel is located at its center at the top. The navel is circular in shape and there is wheel with twelve spokes located in it.

The Jiva (the living being) is impelled or coaxed or driven by the force of this wheel to move around (in this world), and the numerous good and bad deeds and their attendant consequences that he has accumulated over his past act as the motivating factor¹. [This is called the 'Nabhi Chakra' and it is one of the subtle energy centers of the body. The Nabhi Chakra is said to be the center of energy that is akin to the Sun, and by inference it means that it is the one center that keeps the wheel of life turning in the body just like the celestial Sun keeps the wheel of life moving in this world by providing the latter with light, energy, heat and warmth. If the Sun decides not to shine, the life on earth would be wiped out in a jiffy. This is exactly what is meant here in a metaphoric manner. Since all the Naadis have their center in the area of the navel, and since it marks the area of the body in the abdomen where all the major organs of digestion, excretion, reproduction, etc. are located, it is the one point in the body that acts like the hearth in the household. If the fire in this heart is allowed to die, the house would freeze cold and its inhabitants would also die due to the freezing temperatures and lack of cooked food.]

Even as the spider moves around and remains trapped in the net made from a thread created by its own self, the creature remains trapped and keeps on roaming in this world because of a net that he has cast around himself and which is his own creation. It is web which completely traps him. [This net or web represents his numerous latent desires, his hidden passions and temperaments called his Vasanas and Vrittis respectively that act as inspirations for his many deeds and actions, which in turn produce their own chain of consequences, leading to a complex structure which is similar to a complex web created by the spider. Again, just like the spider is the one which can gobble up the net and free its self, the creature is the one who can actually bring about his own freedom by eliminating the web of this world by trouncing his Vasanas and Vrittis, and overcoming their delusory affects upon himself.]

The Jiva or the living being rides on the various Prans (vital winds) present in the body. In other words, the subtle and invisible entity that lives in the body and is recognized as the Jiva or the living being depends upon the vital winds that are present inside the body to become active and make its presence felt inside the gross body which would be otherwise completely inane, lifeless and dead. The gross body would show no signs of life if there was no Jiva or the living being residing inside it, and this Jiva in turn depends upon the vital winds to become active and show signs of life as reflected by the activities and movement of the gross body. The presence of the signs of life in the body—i.e. the recognition of the body as a 'Jiva' or living being—depends upon the presence of the vital winds inside it. [Life exists in the gross body and the latter is kept alive by the presence of the various vital winds inside it. The word 'Jiva' literally means one who is alive. Hence, the factor that makes the body alive and active, the element that helps the 'self' or the Atma of the creature to show activity and agility is the wind element. If the wind element leaves the body, the latter would be dead and of no good. This fact has been emphasized in Chandogya

Upanishad, Canto 5, section 1, verse no. 6-15; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 3; Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse nos. 8-14.] (6-7).

[Note—¹*Wheel*—References: (a) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no. 3-4, 6; Tripdvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph 3-14 (which describes the ‘Sudarshan Chakra’ of Vishnu). (b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, 6; Canto 5, verse no. 12; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.]

8. The region of the Kundalini lies below the navel and above the groins.

The Kundalini has eight coils, and together they represent eight sorts of characteristics or inherent nature exhibited by the Kundalini.

[The *Kundalini* is a coiled subtle energy centre of the body that lies at the base of the spine, called the Mooladhar Chakra—or the whirling energy center that forms the base of the body. The Kundalini blocks the lower end of the spinal cord by one of its ends. When it is aroused or activated during Yoga, it is heated, and its trapped energy is released into the Sushumna Naadi, the central duct passing through the spinal cord. This energy is also called the Kundalini and it passes through the various Chakras en-route to the top of the head. While doing so, all the Chakras are opened like a bud opening under pressure. When the energy of the Kundalini reaches the top of the head, the practitioner experiences extreme sense of ecstasy, called the exhilaration of self-realisation when he feels extremely blissful and contented. Usually, the energy would revert back to its original position when the ascetic wakes up from his meditation session, but with sustained practice the Kundalini can be trained to remain perpetually whirling in the top of the head, i.e. in the Shasraar Chakra which is like a wheel having a thousand spokes. { ‘Sahastra = a thousand; Ara = spokes of the wheel; Chakra = wheel. } According to the Tantra philosophy it is like a lotus with a thousand petals. In Yogic parlance, when the Kundalini is stationed in this region of the head, the practitioner of Yoga is said to live in a state of Samadhi—i.e. a state of trance when he experiences bliss and contentedness, and is unaware of anything, including his own body. From practical angle this is because the nerves of the brain are subject to subtle vibrations which have the effect of massaging and titillating them. Refer verse no. 10 below.]

This Kundalini lies in a dormant state at the base of the spine (in the region of the body called the Mooladhar Chakra). During Yoga involving various meditation exercises, the vital winds called the Pran and the fire element present inside the body are systematically controlled and harnessed. This results in the food (nutrients) and water (the fluid components of the body in which the food is dissolved—e.g. the blood, mucous, various enzymes and hormones etc.) present in the body too being regulated properly. The vital winds spread uniformly inside the body, and the fire element is also equally distributed. In other words, the entire internal apparatus of the body is brought under control.

It is then that sufficient energy is generated and the vital wind called the Apan Vayu (which is present in the lower end of the body to help downward movement of the food in the intestines, its digestion and its final excretion, as well as in the mouth to help imbibe food and water), which is heated by the regulated fire element, enters the Kundalini. This helps to establish a seamless link between the Apan Vayu that is present in the mouth and the one that is present in the lower end of the body.

The Apaan Vayu rises up along with the Kundalini from the back of the body (because the energy of the Kundalini rises up through the Sushumna Naadi which is present in the spinal cord which itself lies along the backbone) to reach the mouth, and finally goes right up to the top of the head to reach the Brahm-Randhra.

[The *Brahm-Randhra* is a hair-like slit in the skull on the top of the head. At the height of Yoga, the energy of the Kundalini is thrust out of the body through this slit by the heated and pressurized Apaan Vayu. According to Yoga philosophy, this is how the ascetic leaves his body to find Mukti or liberation and deliverance from all fetters represented by the gross body and its organs. Refer verse no. 10 below.]

The glorious and divine radiance of the Kundalini is revealed in the form of a subtle and sublime entity that is radiant and splendorous, and that majestically resides in the subtle space of the heart called the 'Hridaya Akash'.

[This entity is the Atma or the pure consciousness which is self-illuminated and shines in the subtle heart much like the celestial sun which shines in the sky. The allegory here serves to highlight the fact that the Kundalini has the same energy and importance as the sun, and just like a wise man can utilize the sun's light, heat and energy for his all round benefit, the energy and the potentials of the Kundalini too can be utilized by a wise aspirant for his spiritual welfare. Another purpose is to emphasize that the Atma is as splendorous and radiant as the Kundalini and the sun, but like in the case of the Kundalini which needs to be activated to be of any good for the aspirant, the Atma too needs to be properly cultivated and realised to be of any spiritual good of the aspirant. Otherwise, both the Kundalini and the Atma would remain neglected and dormant in the body while the person continues to suffer from all sorts of spiritual ailments. It would be an ironical situation wherein gold lies hidden inside the house while a man suffers from financial problems.] (8).

9. There are fourteen main Naadis (tubular ducts through which the vital life-forces flow inside the body) that surround the Kundalini.

These Naadis are the following—Ida, Pingla, Sushumna, Saraswati, Varuni, Pusha, Hastajivha, Yashaswani, Vishwodari, Kuhu, Shankhini, Payaswani, Alambusa, and Ghandhari (9).

10. Wise ascetics assert that out of them the Sushumna Naadi is the main one, and it is capable of bearing the world (i.e. life) as well as is the path by which the ascetic attains Moksha (liberation and deliverance). [See the note of stanza no. 1 of verse no. 8 above.]

This Naadi lies at the rear of the anus and goes up the spinal cord to reach the top of the head where the Brahm-Randhra is situated. [See the note of stanza no. 2 of verse no. 8 above.]

It is clearly visible, very fine, and honoured as a pathway to Brahm who is worshipped as Lord Vishnu by his followers. [In other words, the Mantras used for doing Yoga (meditation and contemplation)—which would help in concentrating the mind and energy of the body for the purpose of activation of the Kundalini, which in turn would help the practitioner in realizing the bliss of experiencing Brahm or cosmic Consciousness—would be the Mantras of Lord Vishnu.] (10).

11. The Ida Naadi is situated to the left and the Pingla Naadi to the right of the main Naadi called the Sushumna Naadi. [The Ida and the Pingla are intertwined around the Sushumna.]

The energy of the Moon flows through the Ida Naadi, while that of the Sun flows through the Pingla Naadi.

[Now, the two opposing characteristics represented by the Moon and the Sun are being enumerated—] The Moon has a predominance of Tama Guna, while the Sun is dominated by the Raja Guna. [The Tama Guna is a metaphor for darkness and inertia, and that is why the disc of the Moon has no light of its own, and except for the full-moon night its disc is always darkened to some extent. Besides this, the Moon always shines in the night which is the period when the creature wishes to rest and shed all activities. On the other hand, the Raja Guna is associated with light and a desire to rise and be productive. This is why the Sun is self-illuminated and energetic, and its rise is associated with activity and productivity.]

The Moon is associated with Amrit or the ambrosia of life and bliss, while the Sun is linked to the scorching poison. [The soothing rays of the moonlight have a cooling effect on the scorched earth that was heated by the Sun during the day, and these rays are able to provide comfort and solace to the tormented creature. On the other hand, the sun's rays are ferocious and cruel by nature, and they can scorch and burn if not guarded against. The white colour of the Moon's disc is said to be due the colour of the Amrit or elixir of life and bliss stored in it by the Gods, while the Sun is said to the celestial cauldron of fire.]

These two join hands to bear the whole time between them. [That is, the full day is divided between the Moon and the Sun, and there is no phase of time beyond them or which does not fall within their jurisdiction.]

Since the Moon and the Sun symbolically move along the Ida and the Pingla Naadis as cited above, it follows that the Sushumna Naadi is the one that actually bears or holds and enjoys everything governed by time. [In other words, it is around the Sushumna Naadi that the life of a creature revolves. It is this Naadi that sustains life and consciousness in the body of the creature, where the body itself is a world in miniature form and the creature is the Atma or the pure conscious soul that lives in this world. In simple terms this is brought about by the fact that the Sushumna Naadi is the central nerve of the spinal cord, and it is through this Naadi that all the impulses of the body move from one point to another. The nerves take all the impulses to the brain, and the latter's instructions to all the organs of the body. Should the Sushumna Naadi fail, the entire circuit would be disrupted and the 'world' (here represented by the 'body') would be 'dead' as far as the 'Jiva' (here the living being represented by his Atma) is concerned. It is like the case of the main overhead high-tension electric wire snapping and plunging the entire city in darkness.]

Behind the Sushumna Naadi is located the Saraswati Naadi, and to the side of it is the Kuhu Naadi.

The Vaaruni Naadi is situated between the Kuhu and the Yashaswani Naadis.

The Payaswani Naadi is situated between the Pusha and Saraswati Naadis.

The Yashaswani Naadi is situated between the Gaandhaari and the Saraswati Naadis.

The Alambusa Naadi is located in the center of the Kanda. [The 'Kanda' literally means a root or tuber, and it is shaped like a short carrot or turnip. Its pointed end faces downwards towards the male genitalia and its upper rounded end is near the navel. The Alumbusa Naadi runs along its center.]

The Kuhu Naadi is spread below the Sushumna Naadi till the area of the genitals.

The Vaaruni Naadi is spread in all the directions below and above the Kundalini.

The Yashaswani and the Saumya Naadis go up to the big toes of the two legs.

The Pingla Naadi goes upwards and reaches the right nostrils.

The Pusha Naadi rises behind the Pingla and goes up to the right eyes.

The Yashaswani Naadi goes up to the right ears.

The Saraswati Naadi goes up to the upper surface of the tongue.

The Shankhani Naadi moves up from below and reaches the left ear.

The Gaandhaari Naadi moves up behind the Ida Naadi and goes up to the left eye. [The Ida Naadi itself goes up to the left nostrils.]

The Alambusa Naadi radiates above and below the base of the anus.

Other minor Naadis are located inside or around these primary fourteen Naadis. There are finer Naadis inside them as well.

Just like the leaf of the banyan tree is covered by a network of veins and capillaries, the Naadis too cover each area of the creature's body¹ (11).

[Note—¹Refer verse no. 13 below which says that there are in all seventy-two thousand Naadis through which the vital wind called the Samaan Vayu distributes nutrients extracted from the food eaten and digested inside the body to all its corners. Hence we conclude that the Naadis listed in verse no. 9 are only the chief ones, whereas the total numbers of Naadis are seventy-two thousand.]

12. The ten Prans or vital winds symbolizing life-forces of the body that constantly move in the Naadis are the following—Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana, Vyaana, Naaga, Kurma, Krikara, Devdutta, and Dhananjaya (12).

13. The Pran (i.e. the chief vital wind) moves or is located chiefly in the mouth, the nose, the throat, the navel, the big toes of the feet, and below and above the Kundalini.

The Vyaana moves or is located chiefly in the ears, the eyes, the waist region, the thighs, the nostrils, the throat, and the hip region.

The Apaana moves or is located chiefly in the anus, the genitals, the thighs, the stomach, the testicles, the hip area, the navel, and the midriff where the fire is present (refer verse no. 4 above).

The Udaana is present and moves about in all the joints of the body.

The Samaana is present and moves about in the hands and legs (limbs) and all other appendages of the body. It also helps in equal distribution of the nutrients of the food that has been digested inside the body by the help of the fire element to all parts of the body through the network of seventy-two thousand Naadis. Hence, the Samaana wind also moves in all the seventy-two thousand Naadis and works in close association with the fire element. [There are fourteen chief Naadis listed in verse no. 9, while the closing stanza of verse no. 10 asserts that there are numerous other Naadis that form a network of Naadis exactly like the veins and capillaries seen in the leaf of a banyan tree.]

The other vital winds such as Naaga etc. are subsidiary in nature and they live and move about in the skin, bones etc.

The vital winds that live in the stomach and middle part of the abdomen (i.e. the Apaana and the Samaana) help to separate the water (fluids, enzymes, digestive juices etc.) present in the stomach from the nutrients of the food eaten (after the food is digested), and then take the nutrients through the Naadis to all the parts of the body (while the fluid portion and the grosser aspect of the food left after digestion and extraction of nutrients are taken to the organs of excretion, i.e. to the kidneys and the rectum respectively).

The Apaana Vayu keeps the internal fire responsible for cooking and digesting of food eaten burning. The food eaten is literally placed on the top of the water, and the water is placed on the fire which is stoked from below so as to heat this water which in turn cooks or digests the food eaten. [This is a simple kitchen of the body. The fire of the hearth represented by the abdomen is the triangular fire area mentioned in verse no. 4. The air needed to keep the fire burning and the grate of the oven ventilated is the Apaana wind. The stomach is the pot. The fluids present in it are the water. And the chewed or pulverized food that is put in the stomach is the raw material from which the nutrients are needed to be extracted. Once this is done, the Samaana wind would take these nutrients to the different parts of the body, while the waste matter is taken to the kidneys and the anus for excretion.]

The fire element present in the body is protected by the Apaana wind as the latter helps to keep it lighted and prevents it from being extinguished. [As in the instance of the cooking of the food cited above, the Apaana wind, which is predominantly present in the lower part of the abdomen, keeps the fire alive by fanning it from the below.]

This fire when stoked by the Pran Vayu (the vital winds) gathers heat and brings to a boil the water element present in the middle part of the body (i.e. the stomach) so that the vegetables and cereals that enter the stomach are properly cooked by it—i.e. the food is properly digested and its nutrients separated from the grosser aspects of the food such as the sweat, the urine, the blood, the semen, the various juices and other fluids present in the body (viz. the bile, the pancreatic juices, the various digestive enzymes, the mucous, the hormones etc.).

Once the process of digestion and separation of the subtle aspect of the food (i.e. its life-sustaining nutrients) from the grosser aspects (e.g. the sweat, urine, blood etc.) is complete, the Samaana wind takes over. In association with the Pran wind (i.e. the breath), it takes the vital nutrients thus segregated to all the corners of the body via the medium of the Naadis. The Pran wind meanwhile moves in and out of the body in the form of the breath. [It will be noticed here that the Pran wind, or the breath, acts like a pump that works from the surface and provides the other winds the necessary suction power to move against the forces of gravity and lift the nutrients as well as certain of the grosser parts of the food that are important for the body, such as the blood, the mucous, the bile and other juices, the hormones etc. to the upper parts of the body against the usual downward pull of gravity. This upward pull exerted by the Pran wind also helps the Apaana wind, whose natural inclination is to move downwards and out of the body, to remain inside the body and even move upwards to keep the fire element lighted, besides being able to activate the Kundalini during the process of Yoga.]

The vital winds eliminate the wastes present inside the body, such as the stool, urine, sweat etc., through the nine openings of the body into the space outside it. [The nine openings of the body are called its Doors, and they are the following—two nostrils, two ears, the hair follicles, the pores of the body, one mouth, one anus and one urinary organ which doubles up as the reproductive organ as well.]

[Now, the functions of the vital winds are being enumerated—] The Pran wind is responsible for breath and expelling mucous in the form of cough.

The Apaana wind is responsible for expelling stool and urine from the body.

The Vyaana wind is responsible for accepting or giving away anything.

The Udaana wind is responsible for lifting the body.

The Samaana wind is responsible for nourishing the body (as it takes the nutrients to all the parts of the body).

The Naag wind is responsible for belching and excreting of contaminated or polluted wind through the throat and mouth.

The Kurma wind is responsible for closing and opening of the eyelids.

The Krikar wind is responsible for hunger and appetite.

The Devdutta wind is responsible for creating laziness, lethargy and inertia.

The Dhananjay wind is responsible for creating cough and other types of mucous that help to expel infection from the body (in association with the Apaana, the Naag and the Pran winds (13).

14. In this way, a wise and erudite practitioner should first become well acquainted with the Naadi complex and the Pran complex before attempting to cleanse, purify or de-clog the Naadis (14).

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Canto 1/Section 5

[This section outlines the rules to be followed by a spiritual aspirant who wishes to clean the Naadis and undertake to do Yoga. The process of Pranayam is outlined as well.]

1. A person who wishes to practice the teachings of this Upanishad (that pertain to the cleansing and detoxification of the Naadis and the activation of the Kundalini so as to help him realise Brahm) should first make himself eligible for it by observing the tenets of Yam and Niyam (as outlined in sections 1 and 2 respectively of this Canto 1). He should discard all company and step on the path of truthfulness (i.e. take the exclusive recourse of truth in the pursuit of one's objective in life, even if it entails the greatest of hardships and problems).

The spiritual aspirant should learn to exercise control over anger, remain ever diligent in serving the Guru (moral preceptor, spiritual guide and teacher), remain obedient to and under the guidance of one's parents, and learn the practical aspects of spiritual life, how to observe the various religious sacraments, keep the different vows, do the various fire sacrifices etc. by staying near someone who is very careful himself in observing the laws of conduct sanctioned by the scriptures for the Ashram (phase of life) to which he belongs (i.e. a person who is conscientious and upright in his behaviour and thoughts, and who diligently follows the laws of Dharma and strictly adhered to religious conduct).

Then he should go to a 'Tapovan'—i.e. a forested or any green area that is serene and pleasant as well as conducive to doing Tapa (austerity, penance and other spiritual practices). This area should be rich in fruits, edible roots and water—as these are needed to sustain one's self in the absence of facilities that were available in the household, as also to prevent the hassle of worrying for basic needs of food and water.

The aspirant should select an auspicious place here in the Tapovan which is open and wide enough so that it can resonate with the loud chanting of hymns dedicated to Brahm, the Supreme Being, and where other people of the same temperament and spiritual bent of mind live. The place should be well-endowed with fruits, edible roots and stems, flowers and water etc. It should be near a shrine or a river bank.

Should he be inclined to establish a permanent place for himself and also to help other like-minded people who cannot endure the hardships of a forest life but

wish to lead a life of frugality and austerity nevertheless, he must select a place that can foster a spiritual environment and erect a monastery there. It could be in a quiet area of a village or a town.

The place selected should be of even dimensions—i.e. it should neither be very high nor too low (i.e. it should be on even ground), and also neither should it be too long nor too wide (i.e. it should be, as far as possible, a square piece of land).

The place of his residence should have a small door. It should be plastered with cow's dung mixed with the cow's urine, and should be completely safe.

The aspirant should live in such a pleasant and comfortable place and start studying the Vedas and other scriptures along with practicing Yoga on a regular and sustained basis (1).

2. He should first worship and pay his obeisance to Lord Ganesh, and then to his chosen deity (Godhead) by bowing before him and offering his oblations to him.

Then he must sit in one of the Aasans described earlier (in Canto 1, section 3). He should sit on a soft seat, face towards the east or the north, and strive to master the art of doing the various Aasans successfully.

Then he should sit erect with the neck and the head in a straight line, and focus his sight on the tip of his nostrils. He must strive to visualize the presence of the Chandra Mandal in the region of the forehead that lies between the two eyebrows (i.e. he should mentally perceive the subtle presence of the Moon with its glorious moonlight in this area of the head, which is called the Agya Chakra).

Simultaneously, he should enjoy the vision of the essence of Amrit (ambrosia) through his eyes. [When he is engrossed in concentration as described in the aforesaid stanzas, tear-drops emerge in his eyes, and these are likened to the drops of nectar that gives bliss and happiness.]

[Now the three phases of Pranayam, or breath control exercise, are being described—] The practitioner should then inhale air through the Ida Naadi (left nostril) gradually over the duration of twelve Matras.

[The word 'Matra' means a measurement of time, a fraction or part or quantity of the whole. That is, the time taken for inhalation is the approximate time that one would take to repeat the Beej Mantra of the chosen deity twelve times. For instance, if one is worshipping Lord Ram, then the time taken to inhale air should be the time taken to silently repeat the Beej Mantra 'Raam/Raan(g)' for Lord Ram. Ordinarily, one Matra is equivalent to one second. Hence, the total time taken for inhalation is twelve seconds. The process of inhalation is known as 'Purak'—meaning to supply and overcome deficit. Here the body is being supplied with a fresh stream of oxygen-rich air.]

The inhaled wind is retained in the stomach (i.e. inside the body) and the practitioner should visualize its mixing with the fire element present inside the body. This fire element has flames leaping from it, and is complete with the Reff and the Bindu.

[This esoteric reference to the 'Reff' and the 'Bindu' pertains to the sound of OM which is the cosmic vibration that resonates in the body when it is full of air. The OM is the cosmic vibration that exists in the ether in the outer space of the sky, but when the body is filled with wind it resembles this sky filled with ether, and therefore the reverberations of the cosmic sound are replicated inside the body as well. The best evidence of the presence of this cosmic sound in the body is when one closes one's ears with the fingers. A sort of distant roar is heard which resembles the roar heard near a raging fire. This roar is created by the clash of the fire element and the wind element. It is akin to the cosmic vibrations in ether and hence compared to

OM. It is this sound which is heard during the second phase of Pranayam when the inhaled wind that is now trapped inside the body clashes with the internal fire element. The 'reff' or 'reph' referred to here is a burring, a whirring and a guttural sound represented by the sound of the letter 'R' which is the Beej Mantra or the basic Mantra of the fire element in its primary form. The word 'Bindu' is indicative of the point source, the 'dot' from which the spark of life emerged in creation. Hence it refers to the pure cosmic Consciousness that lives subtly in the body of the creature as his Atma. This second phase of Pranayam is known as Kumbhak—or filling the pot. The 'pot' here is the abdomen, and the 'filling' is done with the wind.]

Finally, the withheld wind is exhaled through the Pingla Naadi or the right nostrils.

[This is the third phase of Pranayam, and is known as Rechak or purging wherein the polluted air from within the body is purged by exhalation. It is 'purging' because this wind takes all the pollutions that it can gather from the inside of the body as it moves out just like the chimney of a factory removes toxic fumes from the premises.]

The process is reversed now—with the Purak (inhalation) being done through the Pingla, followed by the Kumbhak (holding the wind inside the body), and the Rechak (exhalation) being done through the Ida. [Refer also to verse no. 1, section 7 of this Canto 1.] (2).

3-4. This exercise of Pranayam should be continuously practiced for a period of forty-three days, or for three, four or seven months, or for one full year.

It should be done thrice daily during observation of the sacrament of 'Sandhya'—i.e. at dawn, at noon, and at dusk. During each cycle, Pranayam should be done three, four or six times. [In other words, Pranayam is done thrice daily, and each time it is done three times, or four times, or six times.]

This practice helps to clean and purify the Naadis. [That is, Pranayam helps to de-clog the congested Naadis in the body and helps in easy flow of Pran forces in them. This results in re-energizing the worn-out tissues of the body, and re-activates its dormant vigour and vitality. In other words, the body is rejuvenated.]

The benefits are immense—the body feels light, the face becomes radiant and glows, and the internal fire element is revived (and this shows in the form of renewed vigour, vitality, strength and energy as well as restored appetite). From the spiritual perspective, the practitioner is able to hear the Naad (as described in verse no. 2 above in the context of Kumbhak) (3-4).

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Canto 1/Section 6

[This section continues with the topic of Pranayam and Naadi cleaning initiated in previous section no. 5.]

1-2. Pranayam is to bring together the Pran and the Apan winds. It has three phases called the Rechak (exhalation), Purak (inhalation) and Kumbhak (holding the breath inside the body). Since the ethereal word OM too has three syllables (A, U and M) and it is the supreme Mantra that is universally used for doing mediation and contemplation, Pranayam is deemed to be equivalent to OM. [The Mantra used for Pranayam is OM.] (1-2).

3-4. The practitioner should sit in the Padmasan or any other Aasan (described in Canto 1, section 3) convenient to him and meditate, or focus the attention of his mind, as follows—There is divine goddess known as Gayatri who has a divine presence at the tip of the nose. She is surrounded by a halo of silvery white radiance that resembles the brilliance of moonlight. Her countenance is reddish in hue. She is sitting on a divine Swan. She holds a Danda (a scepter or small baton indicating her authority and power) in her hand. She is of a young age, and is an image that represents the first letter ‘A’ of the divine and ethereal Mantra OM. [The goddess referred here represents Brahma the creator. She is the female manifestation of Brahma and represents his Shakti or divine cosmic powers to create. The letter ‘A’ of the word OM also symbolizes the initial phases of creation. The colour red or copper-colour represents the Raja Guna, the second of the three primary qualities in this world, and it creates a tendency for creation and production. That is why the colour of the blood is red.]

The second letter ‘U’ of this Mantra OM is manifested in the form of the goddess known as Savitri; she represents the second phase of OM. She has an auspicious body that has a white or fair countenance. She is also of a young age and sits atop the legendary bird known as Garud. [Garud is the heron or eagle who is regarded as the vehicle or mount of Lord Vishnu.] She holds a Chakra in her hand. [The Chakra is a serrated discus held by Vishnu and is his weapon. Hence, this goddess is deemed to be a female manifestation of Vishnu; she represents the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being to sustain and protect what has been created. The colour white represents the Sata Guna, the best of the three primary qualities in this world, and it creates a tendency for sustenance, development and protection.]

Finally, the last letter of the Mantra OM, which is ‘M’, has assumed an image of a goddess known as Saraswati; she represents the final phase of OM. She has a dark countenance, rides a bull, is aged, and holds a trident in her hand. [Obviously, she represents Lord Shiva, the God who is assigned the task of bringing the creation to a conclusion. This is clearly evident in the fact of her holding a trident. The colour dark or black represents the Tama Guna, the lowest of the three primary qualities in this world which creates destruction and ruin.] [3.]

So we see that the three letters A, U and M constitute the divine and ethereal Mantra OM, and their symbolic representations in the form of the three goddesses encompass the entire creation because they represent the three phases of creation—origin, development and conclusion respectively.

Though the word OM has been hypothetically divided into three letters but when said or pronounced it is deemed to be a monosyllable and pronounced as one single uninterrupted primordial sound ‘OM’. Hence, OM is known as the ‘Ekaskshar’—literally meaning ‘one letter’. [It is like the rumble of the cloud’s thunder—it is an unbroken sound that arises in the vast bowls of the sky, spread out, and gradually subsides to finally vanish into the bowls of the sky. No one can describe this sound except in general terms, and no one can segregate it into compartments.]

In a similar manner, the single source of this entire creation is also an entity that is one non-dual and universal, but which is visualized as having various phases or dimensions. This cosmic and universal divinity which is represented by the Mantra OM is also known as the ‘Ekaskshar’—literally meaning here ‘one that is imperishable; an entity that is one, non-dual, immutable, indivisible, eternal, infinite and imperishable’. It is in the form of a supreme source of ‘light’ that is self-illuminated and universally present. [4.] (3-4).

5. [Now, the process of Pranayam is being described.] Once one is able to successfully focus one's mind and contemplate in the manner outlined above (in verse nos. 3-4), he should inhale air through the Ida Naadi (the left nostrils) in a time that is equivalent to sixteen Matras (i.e. sixteen seconds)*. During this time, he should focus his attention on the first letter 'A' of the word OM.

The Khumbhak (holding of the air inside the body) should be done for duration of sixty-four Matras (i.e. sixty-four seconds)*. During this time, one must focus one's attention on the second letter 'U' of the word OM.

Finally, the air should be exhaled through the Pingla Naadi (right nostrils) in a time that is equivalent to thirty-two Matras (i.e. thirty-two seconds)*. During this time, one must focus one's attention on the third letter 'M' of the word OM. The letter 'M' is to be visualized in the form of an image. [This applies to all the three phases, and the images that are to be visualized are described in verse nos. 3-4.]

This cycle must be repeated again and again. [Earlier, verse no. 2 of section 5 of this Canto 1 has said that the inhalation and exhalation must be alternated between the right and the left nostrils, and verse nos. 3-4 have described the frequency of doing Pranayam—i.e. it should be done for 43 days, or for 3, 4 or 5 months, or for one full year. It should also be done thrice a day—dawn, noon and dusk, and each time the cycle is to be repeated 3, 4 or 6 times.] (5).

[Note—*Compare with verse no. 3-4, section 5, and verse no. 2, section 7 of this Canto no.1. It should be understood that the varying figures as to the number of Matras, or the duration for which the various phases of Pranayam ought to be done, is to indicate that there is no rigid rule which is inviolable and which must be strictly adhered to, but one should adjust his timing as per his convenience and aptitude for Yoga. This fact has been expressly endorsed in verse no. 7 of section 7 of this Canto 1. As a general rule, the timing for the Purak, the Kumbhak and the Rechak phases follow the following ratio—1:1:1; or 1:2:1; or 1:4:2; or 1:2:3.]

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Canto 1/Section 7

[This section describes Pranayam and its benefits in substantial detail.]

1. When the practitioner has sufficiently mastered the art of doing various Aasans and breath control exercises (as outlined in the above sections), he should simultaneously endeavour to dry up or burn the various impurities and grossness that clog his Sushuma Naadi. [This clogging of the Sushumna Naadi hampers the free flow of the vital life-sustaining factors such as the various vital winds called the Prans from freely flowing inside it, besides blocking the rise of the Kundalini energy from the lower end of the body to the head. In other words, when this chief Naadi is blocked due to any cause, the body suffers from free flow of vital life-forces inside it.]

This is brought about by diligently doing regular Yoga (meditation and contemplation) accompanied by constant practice of exercising self-restraint over the sense organs of the body, by being of a broad and compassionate heart as well as having a kind temperament and a graceful disposition that seeks well of all the creatures, and by eating in moderation (i.e. by exercising control over one's taste buds, observing fast and other restraints to help the body get rid of its accumulated toxins).

One must sit in the 'Baddha Padmasan'¹ and inhale air through the Chandra Naadi (i.e. the Ida Naadi; the left nostril). This air should be held inside the body during the phase of Khumbhak according to one's abilities, and then exhaled through the Surya or Sun Naadi (i.e. the Pingla Naadi; the right nostril).

Then the Purak (inhalation) should be done through the Surya Naadi, followed by the Kumbhak phase, and finally the Rechak (exhalation) should be done through the Chandra Naadi. In this way, the Purak and Rechak should be alternated between the Chandra and the Surya Naadis, and the Kumbhak phase lies in between them. [Refer verse no. 2, section 5 of this Canto 1.]

There is the following verse in this regard—'First the Purak should be done through the Ida Naadi and Kumbhak accomplished. It should followed by the Rechak through the Pingla Naadi. Then the process should be reversed by doing Purak through the Pingla Naadi and Kumbhak accomplished. It should followed by the Rechak through the Ida Naadi.

By diligently and constantly practicing Pranayam daily in the above manner, all the Naadis of the ascetic are thoroughly scrubbed clean and purified or detoxified in a wholesome manner in a period of three months (1).

2. Kumbhak should be practiced four times during the course of a day—in the morning (dawn), at noon, in the evening (dusk) and at midnight. The time taken for Kumbhak should be around eighty Matras (roughly eighty seconds)¹ (2).

[Note—¹Compare with verse no. 3-4, section 5, and verse no. 5, section 6 of this Canto no.1. It should be understood that the varying figures as to the number of Matras, or the duration for which the various phases of Pranayam ought to be done, is to indicate that there is no rigid rule which is inviolable and which must be strictly adhered to, but one should adjust his timing as per his convenience and aptitude for Yoga. This fact has been expressly endorsed in verse no. 7 of section 7 of this Canto 1. As a general rule, the timing for the Purak, the Kumbhak and the Rechak phases follow the following ratio—1:1:1; or 1:2:1; or 1:4:2; or 1:2:3.]

3. In the lower form or initial or primary stage of Pranayam, sweat breaks out on the body of the practitioner. In the middle or second stage of Pranayam, the body begins to shake or shiver. And in the higher or evolved stage of Pranayam, the body of the practitioner lifts from the ground (i.e. it begins to levitate) (3).

4. When the sweat breaks out on the body as a result of the strenuous efforts of Pranayam, the practitioner should rub it on the body itself (instead of wiping it off with a cloth) as this has beneficial effects for it makes the body of the ascetic strong and robust besides making it light (4).

5. In the earlier stages of practicing Pranayam, milk and clarified butter are prescribed as the best food for practitioners of Yoga. Later on when one becomes steady in one's practice, no rigid rules are needed for food. [This is because by that time the practitioner would have experienced the benefits of milk and its products, and develop a special liking for them, so much so that he would not want anything else even if given a choice. He would not need to coax his mind and body anymore to accept milk or its products; rather they would willingly accept them.] (5).

6. Even as a lion, an elephant or a tiger can be gradually tamed over a period of time by perseverance and patience, the vital winds too can be reined in by the practitioner of Pranayam in a gradual manner, and by persistence and constant practice.

On the other hand, if a man is impatient and wishes for a quick result, the winds would do more harm than good to him; they would ruin him; they would make him diseased (6).

7. Hence, one should feel at liberty to do Rechak according to one's natural convenience and inclination. Similarly, Kumbhak and Purak should also be according to one's comfort and aptitude. By practicing Pranayam in a manner that suits one is the best way to do it, and it also produces better results in a comparatively lesser time (7).

8. By doing Kumbhak according to one's abilities, the fire element inside the body is strengthened, the cosmic Naad (which is the ethereal sound that reverberates in the cosmos) is heard due to the de-clogging and cleansing of the different Naadis, and the body is made disease-free (refer verse no. 13/6).

[The composite process of Pranayam helps to scrub the Naadis clean. These Naadis are like the ventilation ducts of the body. When they are scrubbed clean, the flow of Pran or vital winds is aided. This stokes the fire element present in the body and strengthens it. This fire was weakened and hitherto suppressed due to overburdening of the body by rubbish and toxins. The raging of the fire whips up currents of air, and anyone standing near such a fire can hear a roar or whirring sound. This is heard by the practitioner of Yoga, and it is visualized as the cosmic sound that is produced in the ether by the wind that blows in the deep recesses of the sky. It is conceptualized as OM. In the higher stages of Yoga, it is this whirring sound that is heard by the ascetic, and it is created by the rekindling of the dormant fire element that is already present inside his body.] (8).

9. By doing Pranayam in a systematic and regular manner, all the different Naadis present in the body of the ascetic become cleaned and purified (i.e. they are scrubbed and detoxified).

The vital wind then is able to easily open the mouth of the Sushumna Naadi and enter it (9).

10. When the vital winds become steady in the body (i.e. when the practitioner is able to control them through the three phases of Pranayam), the Mana (mind) too becomes steady and gets rid of its inherent restlessness.

When the Mana is steady it is called the state of 'Manomani'—literally the state of mind when it is not subject to fluctuation, when it is not in a flux, and when it is as controlled as the wind. [Both the mind and the wind have a natural tendency to be restless. They are like two sides of the same coin. So when one is controlled, its counterpart is also reined in.] (10).

11. [Now, the different Bandhas are being described. These Bandhas are the closing of the various apertures of the body by which the wind can escape during Pranayam. Some of the Upanishads that describe the various Bandhas are the following—Yoga Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 41-52; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 44-45, 68; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 73-78 ½; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 112-121; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 101-111, Canto 5, verse nos. 37-39.]

The practitioner should do Jalandhar Bandha¹ at the end of the Purak (inhalation). [That is, this Bandha should be done during the time of Kumbhak so that the trapped wind does not escape outside.]

The Uddiyan Bandha² should be done at the end of Kumbhak and the beginning of Rechak (exhalation) (11).

[Note—¹The *Jalandhar Bandha* has been described in the Yoga Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 51 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which says that it is the constricting of the muscles of the throat that is done at the end of Purak (inhalation of breath or air) so that the inhaled air is prevented from escaping. Refer also to Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 109-111.

²The *Uddiyan Bandha* has been described in the Yoga Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 47-50 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. To quote—“To do Uddiyan Bandha, one should sit steadily in the Vajra Aasan posture and put the hands on the bent legs. The heels are pressed against the genitals from below and this helps to exercise great pressure on the Kanda area—i.e. the Mool Kanda, or the area around the groins. While doing this, the muscles of the abdomen are forcefully pulled inwards and upwards along with similar attempt to constrict the muscles of both the throat and chest. In brief, attempt is made to constrict the entire muscular system of the lower part of the body and the chest area so that great pressure is exerted on the wind that has entered the Sushumna Naadi, thereby facilitating its upward movement in this Naadi.

By practicing this exercise, the Pran (vital winds) are able to get absorbed in the tissues of the abdomen in a gradual manner. This helps to eliminate all diseases of the stomach and abdomen. This is because this exercise tones up the muscles and invigorates them, providing them with new energy and strength to function with renewed vigour. When the tissues are well ventilated and energized, when their toxic wastes are removed by the scrubbing affect of the Pran rubbing against them, they would too regain their lost strength and energy to function in a prime shape. That is why this exercise should be practiced regularly and persistently.” Refer also to Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 106-107.]

12. In order to restrain the wind from moving out of the body, the aperture at the lower end of the body (the anus) is constricted along with the simultaneous constriction of the throat. When the abdominal muscles are pulled in from the anterior side of the abdominal cavity towards the spine, the Pran Vayu (the vital winds) can enter the Brahm Naadi (the Sushumna Naadi) and flow in it.

[The Sushumna Naadi is called the ‘Brahm Naadi because it leads up to the top of the head where the Brahm-Randhra is situated, and where the practitioner can experience the ecstatic feeling of Brahm-realisation.] (12).

13. When a skilled ascetic is able to lift the Apan wind (which is naturally located in the lower end of the body, especially the intestines) from the lower end of the body along with the simultaneous lowering of the Pran wind (i.e. the breath which is naturally located in the upper region of the body, especially the chest), the two mix and create a situation that helps to harmonize the various functions of the body and its tissues. The evident benefit for the aspirant ascetic is that he is able to overcome the crippling effects of old age and remain in a perpetual young age of roughly sixteen years. [His body is rejuvenated, his internal organs are revitalized, and his latent energy, vitality and vigour represented by the fire element that had become cold due to the debilitating effects of aging is re-kinkled—refer verse no. 8. The combined

affect on the body is that all its internal organs regain their toned condition like that of a young man of roughly sixteen years.] (13).

13/1. The practicing ascetic should sit in the Sukhasan (i.e. a sitting posture that is convenient to him) and draw in air (i.e. do Purak) through the right Naadi (i.e. the right nostril) and fill every pore of the body from the tip of the hair on his head to the tip of the toe nails (i.e. he should do comprehensive Kumbhak). After that, the air should be let out (i.e. he should do Rechak) through the left Naadi (i.e. through the left nostril).

This process helps in scrubbing and cleaning of the skull along with all the Naadis of the body (13/1).

13/2. Another way of doing Pranayam in practical terms is to inhale wind slowly through both the nostrils simultaneously while making a muttering and humming sound. [This is the first step of Pranayam called Purak. The sound referred to here has two meanings—one, it is the repetition of some Mantra, e.g. OM, and second, it might refer to the sound produced during the normal breathing process but is not paid attention to under normal condition. The idea here is to focus one's mind on doing Pranayam inspite of remaining busy in the hustle and bustle of life. In fact, the Pranayam that is being prescribed here is meant for doing throughout the day, and it implies that the practitioner of this holistic way of doing Pranayam may be externally engaged in so many varied activities of life but internally he is at peace with himself because such concentration of mind is only possible when the mind and the inner-self are calm and undisturbed.]

Then Kumbhak should be done according to one's ability to hold the air inside the body conveniently. Finally, the air should be exhaled through the Ida Naadi (i.e. the left nostril).

This process can be done even while standing or walking. It helps to overcome excessive cough and ignite the fire of the stomach (i.e. increase the dormant appetite) (13/2).

13/3. The third method of doing Pranayam is to accept or inhale air (i.e. do Purak) through the mouth (instead of the nose) while making a hissing sound. Then Kumbhak is done according to one's convenience and ability. Finally, Rechak (exhalation) is done through both the nostrils simultaneously (instead of through one of the two nostrils).

This helps in overcoming excessive hunger and thirst, as well as laziness and drowsiness (13/3).

13/4. The fourth method of doing Pranayam is to accept or inhale air (i.e. do Purak) through the tongue. [The mouth is wide open and the tongue is protruded out. This sort of inhalation is done by a panting animal or a man after he has done some vigorous activity. The moist surface of the tongue directly absorbs oxygen from the air and it is a quicker method of ventilating the body and oxidizing the tissues.]

Then Kumbhak is done according to one's convenience and ability. Finally, Rechak (exhalation) is done through both the nostrils simultaneously (as done during the third type of Pranayam described in verse no. 13/3).

This helps in controlling and curing a number of diseases such as enlargement of glands and inflammation of skin, spleen diseases, fever, bile, disturbed hunger and appetite etc. (13/4).

13/5. Now, the two aspects of Kumbhak are being described. Kumbhak is of two types—(i) Sahit (inclusive; in association with another entity), and (ii) Keval (exclusive; standing alone).

The ‘Sahit Kumbhak’ is one that is linked with the other two phases of Pranayam, viz. Purak (inhalation) and Rechak (exhalation). In other words, the Sahit Kumbhak is one that is flanked by Purak and Rechak; it is in between these two phases of Pranayam. It does not persist for any length of time as it has to give way to Rechak. And it also depends upon the Purak for drawing in air for the purpose of filling the body.

On the other hand, the ‘Keval Kumbhak’ is a stand-alone process that is independent of the other two steps of Pranayam. [That is, the wind is allowed to remain inside the body and circulate in it for protracted periods and for as long a duration as the ascetic wants it to remain inside the body. He does not feel the need to exhale or inhale. The Kumbhak of this sort may extend for many hours or even days together when the body is in a state of suspended animation. Since breathing is stopped, an ascetic who is skilled in Keval Kumbhak might be buried in the ground for long periods but he would not die, for when he comes out of the ground he would be able to revive his sense organs and resume all the external activities of the body by resuming breathing.]

Till the time one becomes an expert in doing Keval Kumbhak he must regularly and diligently practice the Sahit form of Kumbhak. Once the ascetic is able to master the art of Keval Kumbhak, there is nothing that is not accessible to him in all the three worlds (i.e. in the terrestrial world, in the heavens and in the nether world), or there is no mystical power that is not within his reach.

The Kumbhak is so powerful and effective that it is alone capable of activating the Kundalini¹ (13/5).

[Note—¹The Kundalini is the coiled subtle energy center at the base of the spine. Under ordinary situation it blocks the lower end of the Sushumna Naadi, thus preventing the vital winds called Pran from freely rising up this Naadi and reaching the upper reaches of the head where the ascetic is able to experience the bliss of Brahm-realisation. In more practical terms, since this Naadi is the main nerve passing through the spinal cord, its blocking impedes the free circulation of vital impulses from the various organs of the body to the brain and back to those organs. Naturally, this hinders the proper functioning of the body and creates a sort of log-jam. It is just like the case of the main ventilation duct of a house being clogged by soot or other impurities which has a negative effect on the freshness of the air inside the entire house.]

The Kumbhak phase, when done systematically and for a prolonged period of time, helps to heat the wind trapped inside the body and build up pressure. The result is that the Kundalini is jerked and vibrated sufficiently enough to prod it into life. It straightens and opens the mouth of the Sushumna Naadi so as to allow the subtle energy of the Kundalini to enter it along with the heated Apan and other winds which push it from below. This energy and winds then travel upwards towards the head, and on the way they rupture or open other Chakras or energy centers of the body. The cumulative affect is that all the hitherto closed energy centers of the body are opened and a huge burst of subtle energy that was dormant and latent is now released. The result is obvious to imagine—the practitioner experiences renewed vigour and vitality surging through his veins and nerves.]

13/6. Once this process is mastered and the ascetic becomes skilled in doing Keval Kumbhak, his body becomes lean and muscular (i.e. he loses excess flab and becomes

vigorous, full of vitality, agility and sprightliness). His face and general countenance becomes cheerful and pleasant. His eyes become clear (i.e. his vision improves, both physically and metaphorically). He can hear the Naad (i.e. he can hear the cosmic primordial sound roaring in his hears—refer verse no. 8). He becomes free from all the diseases. He is able to exercise full control over the 'Bindu' (literally meaning a 'drop' and but implying control over one's sexual impulses, i.e. he is able to practice continence and sexual abstinence by being able to control the flow of his sperms). The fire burning in his stomach becomes robust and re-activated (i.e. he regains his lost appetite and is able to digest food properly) (13/6).

14. The 'Vaishnavi Mudra' (posture of one or the other individual organs of the body) is one in which the ascetic's internal sight (i.e. his thoughts and sub-conscious mind) is focused on his spiritual objective, and his external sight is fixed in such a way that his eyelids stop flapping (closing and opening). This is the Mudra that is recognized and lauded by all the scriptures dealing with Tantra form of ritualistic worship as the secret of spiritual success and the one that aids the aspirant in obtaining his objectives (14).

15. The ascetic whose vital winds and sub-conscious become one while his thoughts are focused internally in contemplation during meditation (i.e. when he adopts the Keval Kumbhak and stops to breathe; when he is not even aware whether or not his body is inhaling or exhaling air so much is he submerged in meditation), and at the same time his motionless and half-open eyes look blankly downwards at an imaginary spot in his front, but do not see anything else—verily, this state is called the 'Khechari Mudra'.

[In other words, during this Mudra, the internal component of the mind called the sub-conscious, and the external component called the conscious aspect of the mind are both in a state of non-activity and neutrality. The ascetic is so lost in meditation and contemplation that he forgets to even breathe, and though his eyes are half-open he sees nothing because his mind is defunct. It is the mind that registers any sight when it interprets the incoming sensory impulses gathered by the organ of sight known as the eye. The eye merely gathers the impulses that are analyzed and interpreted in the brain as a 'sight' of an object. It is the brain or the mind that actually 'sees' something, and the eye is merely an instrument to gather information about objects that have a physical form, colour and dimension, and then transfer this information to the brain and let it interpret as sight of that object.]

Since during this Khechari Mudra the ascetic is focused on the 'self' which is the auspicious Atma and the pure consciousness, since his inner being and external being have merged into one unit and harmonized with each other, this Mudra is also known as Vaishnavi Mudra. [In other words, both the terms apply to the same Mudra, and in both the cases the aim of doing this Mudra is auspicious and holy.]

When this Mudra is successfully done, the practitioner is able to experience the presence of the supreme and self-illuminated divine entity that is so unique and paradoxical that it cannot be limited by either defining it as being a 'Shunya' or as being 'A-shunya'.

[The divine entity that is implied here is the 'consciousness' that resides in the subtle inner self of all living beings as their Atma or their pure 'self'. The word 'Shunya' literally means a void or vacuum or non-existence, implying something that is as subtle and sublime as for instance the air element or the sky element that are surely present but cannot be seen, touched or grasped to ascertain their physical

existence. On the other hand, the word 'A-shunya' is the opposite of 'Shunya'—i.e. it is an object that is not subtle, and therefore it is gross. In other words, the entity referred to here is so unique that it possesses paradoxical qualities—it is both subtle as well as gross, and at the same time it is neither subtle nor gross. It is beyond definitions; it transcends fixed boundaries and criterions. Its existence cannot be denied, but at the same time there is no method of physically testing it in material terms to prove its existence. All these criterions apply on the Atma—it is a subtle entity that no one can ever see but without which both the gross body consisting of the external sense organs, as well as the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect complex of the creature would be of no consequence. The vital winds that are called Pran remain active in the body because of this undefined 'consciousness'. A dead body too is filled with the wind, but does it show any life? A balloon is filled with air, but can it be called a living being?

Hence, the supreme essence of life that 'illuminates' this dark world by infusing it with 'life' is the divine entity experienced when the ascetic is successful in doing Vaishnavi or Khechari Mudra.] (15).

[Note— The word Khechari is derived from the root 'Khe' which stands for the sky, and 'Chari' means to move, to wonder or to roam. Therefore, the combined word 'Khechari' means one who can move in the sky.

This Mudra has been graphically described in Gherand Sanhita, Chapter 3, verse no. 25-28, besides the Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 40-42, the entire Canto 2 of the Yog Kundalini Upanishad; and Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 81-93 of Krishna Yajur Veda; as well as in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 52-64 of the Sam Veda tradition, in Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, verse no. 2/1/8 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and in Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 14-15.

The *Khechari Mudra* is amongst the best and toughest body postures that can be adopted by any ascetic, but at the same time it can empower the practitioner with stupendous mystical and occult powers and potentials. It involves elongation of the tongue by constantly pulling it out and making it flexible by constant flexing, rolling and shaking from side to side. The nerves and veins at the lower end of the tongue, i.e. in its tendon, are cut so as to make them senseless. To obtain success in this, the tongue is smeared with butter and stretched by holding it with an iron tong. This results in the tongue getting sufficiently elongated as to reach the inner opening of the mouth by inverting it backwards, and then it is tucked at the base of the upper palate to close the opening of the nostrils at the roof of the mouth cavity. When the elongated and backwards bent tongue is stuffed here, these openings of the nostrils are closed by it, thereby blocking the flow of air (breath). Meanwhile, the sight is fixed unwaveringly at a point midway between the two eyebrows.

It is believed that the Khechari Mudra, along with the Vajroli Mudra, was made popular by sage Matyseyanandranath (10th century CE), the great ascetic of medieval times and the moral preceptor of the famed ascetic Guru Gorakhnath.

The *Beej Mantra* of Khechari Yoga has been described in Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 17-20, and Canto 3, verse no. 1.

The *benefits* of Khechari Yoga have been listed in—(i) Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, section 4, verse nos. 15-17, 39-42/2. (ii) Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-4, 21-24, 49. (iii) Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 52-64. (iv) Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 81-93. One such practical benefit is the natural way of contraception as clearly described in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 52-64; and Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 81-93.]

16. An ascetic who remains steadily concentrated on his meditative posture (of Khechari Mudra as outlined in verse no. 15) as evident from his unblinking and half-

open eyes, with the mind and the sub-conscious focused on his spiritual objective, and the sight steadfastly fixed on the tip of the nose, is able to attain steadiness and stability in his meditation. When he is successful in attaining this stage, he is now deemed to be ready to exercise control even over his Surya Naadi (i.e. the Pingla Naadi or the right nostril) and the Chandra Naadi (i.e. the Ida Naadi or the left nostril) so much so that the flow of life-forces (vital airs) through them is stopped by him and they become defunct for all practical purposes.

[In other words, once Khechhari Mudra is successfully practiced, the ascetic is now able to implement the next phase of Yoga—and it is to stop the flow of air or wind through the nostrils. He can now stop breathing, and this means that he can exist in a state of perpetual ‘Keval Kumbhak’ (refer verse no. 13/5) when the inhaled air is held inside the body for prolonged periods of time without the need to exhale it. The ascetic does not feel suffocated or bloated at all. The trapped vital winds begin to circulate freely inside the body.]

The extremely sublime, most subtle and indefinable entity on which the ascetic has focused his attention while undertaking this process of Yoga, which is the aim of his spiritual pursuit for which he has stepped on this path in the first place, is a divine entity, a sublime essence called the ‘Tattwa’ that is self-illuminated, radiant and glorious. This ‘Tattwa’ (the sublime essence) is devoid of all forms of grossness that are associated with all external things in this world of material sense objects.

Oh Shandilya! You must know it in this truthful way (16).

17. The ascetic focuses the pupils of his eyes on the sublime light or illumination that glows on the tip of his nose during his meditative posture as described above. He is in a completely relaxed state of the mind, and when he views this glorious light and focuses his eyes on it, the eyebrows are slightly raised in a stance that indicates his extreme sense of stunned astonishment and exhilaration at being able to visualize this sublime light that is not ordinarily visible, and at being able to experience the thrill and ecstasy that accompanies this exalted state of existence.

This is the preliminary stage of his spiritual practices, and it helps him to obtain the ‘Unmani’¹ state in a short time (17).

[Note—¹The *Unmani* state is a higher and exalted state of existence of the consciousness when it rises above the mundane and the gross, and lives in a sublime state. The word itself has two connotations—one is to rise and lift up, and other is to become indifferent to things that are gross and unattractive. The ascetic who practices the form of Yoga outlined in this Upanishad is able to ‘lift’ his ‘self’ from the gross level of existence, ‘rise up’ and reach an exalted state of existence when he is able to ‘see’ the sublime Tattwa, or experience the presence in his own inner self the eclectic entity that is the essence of existence and which in common parlance of Vedanta and metaphysics is known as the ‘conscious self’ or the pure conscious Atma. This Atma is the essence or the Tattwa that is self-illuminated and that is witnessed in the higher stages of Yoga as described in this verse. It is the realisation of this Atma that is the aim of all spiritual pursuits, and it is this realisation of the Atma that is the cosmic Truth known as Brahm which gives the feeling of unmatched exhilaration and ecstasy to the ascetic. That is why he is stunned and his eyebrows are raised in a crooked stance. He had never ever experienced this scintillating source of light earlier in his life, and when he actually ‘sees’ it, he is taken by surprise and utterly stunned and dazzled by its mere presence.]

17/1. Since this eclectic state is easily reached when one successfully practices the Khechhari Mudra, it is advisable for all spiritual aspirants to implement this Mudra.

He first reaches the Unmani state of eclectic existence, and then progresses to reach a higher and more sublime state of exalted existence called 'Yog-Nidra'¹.

A successful aspirant who has achieved the state of Yog-Nidra—or when he can assume the virtual state of remaining asleep vis-à-vis this gross world and the gross body while being active in doing Yoga—acquires such stupendous mystical powers and potentials that he no longer remains under the jurisdiction of Kaal, or the factor of time and circumstance. [In other words, the state of beatitude and felicity that he reaches, the bliss and spiritual ecstasy that he experiences are not limited to the time till he does Yoga. They become perpetual for him; they become a part of his life. He can conquer death and decay because he can now control his breath and remain in the state of Keval Kumbhak as described in verse nos. 16 and 13/5 respectively.] (17/1).

[Note—¹The word 'Yog' of course means meditation and contemplation, while the word 'Nidra' means to sleep. Hence, the combined word *Yog-Nidra* implies that eclectic state of existence in which the aspirant is virtually 'asleep', i.e. he is in a state of suspended animation when all his external organs are literally defunct, his mind does not register any external impulses, and his sub-conscious too goes into hibernation while doing Yoga. He is not actually sleeping in the conventional sense because he is actively doing Pranayam and Khechari Mudra of Yoga, but 'virtually' sleeping. This 'sleeping' or 'Nidra' state that is obtained as a result of 'Yoga' is named after the latter—i.e. it is called 'Yog-Nidra'. While in the case of ordinary sleep the man's mind is active as it might dream of an imaginary world, but in the case of Yog-Nidra, there is no such world. Hence, the latter closely resembles the third state of conscious existence called the Sushupta state because in both the cases the mind and the sub-conscious are defunct or relegated to the background and the man lives in a state of virtual non-existence.

The difference between the Yog-Nidra and the Sushupta state of existence are two-fold—(i) One is that while the latter case is part of the process of physical sleep when the eyes are closed shut and the man neither visualizes or experiences anything, in the former case this is not true as the eyes are half-open, the practitioner sees a source of light at the tip of his nose, and he is not asleep in the conventional sense of the term 'Nidra'. While a man is actually asleep during the Sushupta state, also called the 'deep sleep state of consciousness', as this state is reached after crossing the Swapna or dreaming state of a man's sleep, in the case of Yog-Nidra the body is not asleep and even the eyes are half open.

And (ii) the Sushupta state is short-lived as sooner or later the sleeping man reverts to his old ways of life when he wakes up, being subjected to all sorts of mental turmoil and agonies, remains engrossed and submerged in the material world of grossness and has no idea of spiritual ecstasy and bliss, but in the Yog-Nidra state this situation does not arise. Since here the breath is stopped as described in verse no. 16, and the ascetic is able to maintain a stable state of the vital winds by being in a Keval Kumbhak state as described in verse no. 13/5 as a result of stoppage of breath, the Yog-Nidra can last indefinitely. Since this stage is reached by practice of certain stringent exercises of Yoga, e.g. the Khechari Mudra and Pranayam, the ascetic becomes trained enough to maintain the calmness and peace of his mind even when he is not actually practicing the Yoga or is in the eclectic state of Yog-Nidra.

In other words, the experience of bliss, the state of mental peace, the sense of spiritual ecstasy, beatitude and accomplishment etc. that he finds in the Yog-Nidra state becomes natural to him and it lasts even if he wakes up from his meditative trance as compared to ordinary sleep when he might reach the Sushupta state or the deep sleep state of consciousness for some moments but when he wakes up to the realities of this physical world he forgets his earlier state of peaceful existence and begins to be tossed and turned by the events of this world.]

18. Oh Shandilya! Concentrate your mind and remain focused on the eternal source of spiritual energy that resides in your own self (i.e. remain submerged in meditating upon the pure consciousness that shines inside).

Keep the mind and its sub-conscious aspect energized and actively involved in this practice. Look at the subtle and sublime aspect of yourself by employing your faculties of mind and intelligence, and turn inwards instead of outwards in order to attain success in your spiritual endeavours. This would help you to remain happy and joyous; this will enable you to lead a cheerful life full of contentedness and bliss.

[That is, do not allow yourself to lose sight of your spiritual goal that is eternally divine and sublime by nature, and never lose guard and become involved in things that are gross and impermanent. Never lose hope by initial setbacks, but persevere and remain focused. Strive to realise the pure consciousness that is eternal and sublime by nature with the aid of Yoga, and this realisation would illuminate your inner-self with a glorious light by removing the darkness of ignorance and delusions regarding the Truth that has mired your existence till now. By following and implementing the teachings of this Upanishad you would be able to live a fulfilled life full of spiritual contentedness, happiness and cheer. You would not want anything of this perishable gross world as you would have tasted the supreme nectar of eternal spiritual bliss and happiness that would make all the pleasures and comforts of this material gross world taken together as tasting bitter, sour or bland in comparison.] (18).

19. One must visualize that the Atma or pure consciousness is established in the subtle space of the sky (i.e. in the subtle heart). As a result, this subtle sky or heart becomes illuminated and sublime due to the august presence of this divine and holy entity.

This noble and grand idea must be extended to cover the entire creation; it should be holistic in its import and reach. Hence, one must practice to cultivate the eclectic idea that everything in this existence or creation is filled with the same subtle space of the sky, and therefore the same Atma is also established in the entire creation. In other words, the Atma that resides in the subtle space of one's own heart is the same that resides uniformly throughout the length and breadth of this existential world. Think that there is nothing besides it (a vacant space and the Atma) in this world or creation (19).

[Note—There is spin-off of this notion of the Atma living in a subtle sky at the macro level of creation. The sky is a vacant space; it has no solid existence like wood or iron. To say that the entire creation is filled with the space of the sky and that the Atma, which is pure consciousness, lives uniformly in it is a metaphoric way of saying that the world is hollow from the inside, there is nothing worth bothering in it, and the only thing that is of any consequence in this void is the pure conscious Atma. If the Atma is removed from this creation the latter would be reduced to a huge vacant space with no life in it.

It is just like the case of candle burning inside a large empty hall—where the 'candle' is the self-illuminated Atma, the pure consciousness, and the 'emptiness of the hall' is the vast creation which would be dark, empty and foreboding without this only source of light called the Atma.]

20. A wise ascetic should not worry or bother about the external world (i.e. the gross exterior world of material sense objects and the equally gross body and its sense organs) as well as the internal world (i.e. the subtle world of the mind and intellect

along with the various internal needs of the body). That is, he should become absolutely neutral and indifferent. He must abandon all sorts of worries and remain submerged in the thoughts of the eternal consciousness. [Since it is the mind that is the cause of all worries and thoughts, when it is focused on the Atma during meditation and contemplation it is natural that all worries, real or imaginary, would have no existence. The result would be that the ascetic would be in a perpetual state of bliss and happiness.] (20).

21. Even as camphor vanishes put in fire and salt when it is put (and gets dissolved) in water, the mind and the sub-conscious of an ascetic who is perpetually submerged in doing Yoga, who remains in a state of meditative trance, who is ever contemplative, also merges and becomes one with the supreme Tattwa or essence of creation, the universal Truth and Reality of creation. [This Tattwa is the pure super Consciousness that is the universal Truth of life and existence. Without this Truth the creation is null and void.] (21).

22. The term 'Mana' applies to being aware of or conscious of anything that is worthy of being known, or to perceive something that can be learnt by the application of the mind and sub-conscious.

Therefore, in the state of existence when the mind becomes defunct or non-active as during Yoga, the ascetic would not perceive anything, he would not be aware of anything. Except by neutralizing the faculty of the mind that makes a creature aware of anything or perceive something in this world, and at the same time diverting one's attention from the world with its countless sense objects and temptations as well as tribulations, there is no other way of becoming neutral, detached from, indifferent to and unaffected by the circumstances of existence; there is no other path by which one can remain emotionally steady, calm and unmoved; there is no other way by which all worries and concerns could be overcome; there is no other options that can help one to remain focused on one's spiritual goal without being subjected to innumerable distractions and disturbances that constantly bombard one's mind and the inner-self. [That is, it is of paramount importance that one exercises stellar control over one's Mana.] (22).

23. By voluntarily and purposefully eliminating the objects that attract the attention of the mind, one is able to free the latter from the former's hooks. This helps one to get rid of the Mana; it helps the ascetic or any spiritual aspirant to dissolve the Mana. [When the attention is diverted away from the object of desires, the mind would stop thinking about it, and this is equivalent to eliminating the Mana—i.e. the thoughts of the mind and emotional attachment of the heart with the object of desire—from interfering with one's spiritual resolve, and attempting to tamper with it or break it.]

When the Mana is eliminated or dissolved, what remains is only one sublime entity known as 'Kaivalya'. [When all desires pertaining to this body and the world, both at the gross level as well as the subtle level are done away with, what remains is the sublime entity called pure conscious Atma and the Truth. Since it is one of its kind and non-dual, it is honoured by the epithet 'Kaivalya'—literally meaning exactly this, 'one and only one'.] (23).

[Note-- How the Mana creates the world has been explained in Yogshika Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 6, verse nos. 58-61, 70.

How the Mana acts as a fetter has been elucidated in the Yogshika Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 59-61.

How the Mana can be controlled or dissolved or disassociated from its involvement with the world has been explained in the following Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition also—Kathrudra Upanishad, verse nos. 39-40; Yogshika Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 62-65, 69-71.]

24. Oh great sage! There are two important ways to eliminate or dissolve the ‘Chitta’—the sub-conscious, the memory and the aspect of the mind that thinks and focuses on anything or event. One is ‘Yoga’, and the other is ‘Gyan’.

Yoga in this context is to destroy or eliminate the various ‘Vrittis’ of the Chitta. [The word ‘Vritti’ refers to the numerous natural inclinations and tendencies of the mind that are inherent in all the living beings. It is these Vrittis that hook the mind to the material objects of the world. Once the Vrittis are done away with, the mind would no longer be attracted to the world and its material sense objects.]

Gyan is to see the truth about anything in its essential form; Gyan is to have the deep insight into things and be able to see or peer behind the veil to uncover the secret that lies behind it; Gyan is to see beyond the apparent and realise the hidden truth and unravel the esoteric secret of an entity. [In the context of one’s spiritual pursuit this means that one is able to see the falsehood and impermanence of the gross world along with its deluding and entrapping nature, and on the other hand realise the ‘truth’ about the subtle and sublime entity known as the Atma which is the pure consciousness that is not visible or tangible in the conventional sense but is nevertheless the only worthy thing that is honoured by the title of being the ‘Absolute Truth’ in this entire creation. The obstacle in this realisation are the vagrant Chitta and fickle Mana that do not know what to pursue and what not to. Hence, once they are controlled the aspirant’s spiritual path becomes free from all impediments, and self-realisation or Truth-realisation becomes a reality.] (24).

[Note—The Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 67 describes how to overcome the various habitual faults of the mind, called the Chitta Vrittis.

Chitta is an integral component of the Antahakaran or the ‘inner self’ of a living being. This has been described in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shaarirako Upanishad of, verse no. 4; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 101-102; (b) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, Canto 2, verse no. 3; Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6.]

25. When the Mana (mind) is brought under one’s strict control, when one establishes and asserts his authority over its wayward nature and natural habit of remaining restless and in a constant state of flux, it is certain that the Mana can be calmed down and tamed. In other words, it is not that one cannot tame or control the Mana; the Mana cannot supersede one’s will-power and determination should one decide to put the Mana under leash.

As soon as the restless and fidgety nature of the Mana is calmed down or brought under control, the world with its tempting material objects and their charms is automatically eliminated. [Verse nos. 23-24 above describes how.] (25).

26. Just like the case that the world would gradually come to an end should the sun’s movement across the sky stop or when it stops shining, so is the case with the world that would also come to an end or cease to exist as soon as Vairagya (total renunciation, detachment and dispassion towards the material world and its sense objects) sprouts in the heart and mind (the Mana) of an aspirant as a result of company of scriptures (i.e. by studying them) and by the communion of wise and

realised saints (where these scriptures are explained and discussed so as to clarify doubts about them in the mind of the spiritual aspirant).

[This is because it is the mind that is actually responsible for making the creature aware of the world. This is evident when we are lost in our thoughts—the world flows by but we are totally oblivious of it. Suppose a man is thinking of something, then he might appear to be intently looking at a particular object because his eyes are directed towards it but his mind does not register the sight and therefore the man does not actually ‘see’ that thing in spite of his eyes being wide open and directly looking at it. It is the mind that actually sees, hears, tastes, feels or smells anything, it is the mind that actually inspires a man to do anything, to go anywhere, to accept or reject anything, to speak or not to speak anything, and so on and so forth. It is the mind that tells him that the world is attractive and must be sought; the same mind can create distaste for the world or outright hatred for it if it is not favourably inclined towards the same world.]

Hence, when the man develops detachment from the world and its illusionary charms that comes with understanding of its true nature, he would be disenchanted with it and develop disinterest in it. The man seeks this world and its material objects with the main objective of finding happiness, joy, pleasure and comfort. When he discovers that he is being taken for a ride by the illusionary charms of the equally illusionary world, when he learns that whatever happiness or comfort that he finds in this world are inherently transient and impermanent as well as illusive by nature, when he is enlightened that this world is delusory and hollow from the inside, and there is nothing of any worthwhile in it—it is then that he loses his interest in it, and instead turns his attention towards the entity that would give him eternal, sustainable, truthful and real happiness and peace, real tranquility and bliss. He then strives to find out the truth, and for it he turns towards the scriptures that expound upon this Truth. He also seeks the company of wise and enlightened souls who have understood the scriptures and have implemented their teachings in their personal lives to actually verify and establish this Truth. This is how true Vairagya or renunciation and detachment towards everything that is delusory and impermanent develop in the spiritual seeker’s heart and mind—i.e. his Mana and Chitta combine.] (26).

27-29. First of all, one must develop total and sincere disinterest in all the attractions of the material world and its sense objects. He must control his various Vrittis which are nothing but the natural tendency of the mind to swerve towards the comforts, pleasures and charms of the world along with the desire to gratify the urges of the sense organs of the gross body. [These Vrittis are inherent to all the living beings and an integral part of their overall mental setup. Refer verse no. 24 above.]

Then, as a second step, the aspirant should practice constant, consistent and persistent ‘Dhyan’—i.e. he should focus his mind and its faculties on the Truth and always contemplate upon it and remember it. [27.]

This is to be accompanied by having a firm faith and unwavering conviction in the existence and the truth of the universal ‘Tattwa’—literally the only universal essence and the inviolable elementary spiritual truth of existence. [This ‘Tattwa’ is the Atma or the pure consciousness that is the only spiritual ‘truth’ in creation. This ‘consciousness’ is called the subtle and sublime Atma when it resides in the body of the individual creature, and it is known as the supreme transcendental almighty and all-pervading Brahm when it is considered in its macrocosmic and all-encompassing form. The word ‘Tattwa’ means something that is fundamental to and at the very foundation of everything else; something that is basic and essential because without it

all the rest of the things would lose their meaning and existence; something without which nothing else matters.]

Regular and persistent practice of Dhyan and meditating upon the Tattwa, i.e. regularly doing meditation and contemplating upon the spiritual Truth with a firmness of mind, faith in the scriptures and advice of learned people, and steadiness of purpose, it is possible that the movement of the Pran (vital winds) inside the body stops. In other words, the Pran Vayu, the vital winds present inside the body as well as the breath, is brought under one's control. The air is pulled in (inhaled) gradually by the process of Purak (as described in verse no. 5, section 6, and verse nos. 1-2, 13/1-13/4) and then retained inside the body for prolonged periods of time in the state of Kumbhak. That is, the practitioner reaches the state of 'Kaivalya Kumbhak' (as described earlier in verse no. 13/5, 17/5). [28.]

In this way, constant focusing of attention on meditation and contemplation helps the spiritual aspirant to remain in a perpetual state of meditation when the mind is completed annihilated and all its activities stopped. That is, the Mana is brought under one's control (as described in verse nos. 18-25).

When the aspirant utters or repeats the Mantra OM in the later and higher stages of Yoga as described herein above, he is actually able to experience the reverberations of the subtle vibrations emanating from this cosmic sound of OM. He is able to experience the resonance of OM throughout his being; he feels submerged in a sea of cosmic vibrations surging all around him. This helps him to realise and learn about the essential meaning of the term 'Sushupta' state of consciousness which is also called the deep sleep state.

He becomes so exhilarated and consumed by the thrill and ecstasy produced by the resonance of OM that he forgets about the movement of the vital winds in his body. These vital winds called Pran come to a standstill because of the sudden surge of thrill radiating through the being of the spiritual aspirant. [The stoppage of the flow of the vital winds here is caused by the spasmodic tautness of the muscles due to excessive thrill and ecstasy that comes with titillation created in the body by the vibrations of the nerves by the sound of OM.]

For so long as the aspirant continues to chant or repeat OM, the thrill and its accompanying ecstasy continues unabated, and with it follows the holding of the breath and its natural spin-off in the form of Kaivalya Kumbhak. [29.] (27-29).

30. When the 'Ghanti' (the epiglottis) located at the rear end of the palate, i.e. the root of the tongue, is pressed carefully by the tip of the tongue (by inverting the latter—a process described in detail in Yog Kundalini Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 29-49), the Pran Vayu (the vital wind; the breath) is controlled and its movement stopped. It can now be diverted into the cavity of the skull, i.e. the Pran Vayu enters the upper part of the head. [When the flap covering the wind pipe is carefully pressed, the air in the lower part of the body is eased into the cavity of the skull instead of moving out of the nose.] (30).

31. Gradually by constant practice, the Pran (breath; the vital wind) loses its vigour, force and strength while it moves in the area between the 'Ghanti' described above and the tip of the nose, a distance of roughly twelve fingers. [That is, by constant practice of Yoga, the breath is so trained that it begins to move progressively slowly while being inhaled and exhaled. This happens because the metabolic rate decreases during, and as a result of, Pranayam and other Yogic exercises when the breathing becomes shallow and slows down considerably.]

So, the flow of the Pran can be controlled by constant and persistent practice (31).

32. When the sight of the ascetic or practitioner of Yoga becomes fixed at a hypothetical point in the vacant sky situated at a distance of roughly twelve fingers away from the tip of the nose, it is said that then the movement of the Pran Vayu becomes still.

[This refers to the Unmani Mudra described in verse nos. 16-17. It is a virtual trance-like state of the mind when it registers nothing and goes virtually into hibernation. With the metabolism almost at a standstill, the practitioner feels no need for breathing vigorously. The breath first moves slowly, almost in an imperceptible manner, and with practice it can be completely stopped. The latter state is the 'Keval Kumbhak' Mudra described earlier in verse no. 13/5.] (32).

33. When the spiritual aspirant is able to have a divine vision of the 'Tarak Brahm' (i.e. when he is able to experience the supreme ecstasy and bliss of conscious realisation) that comes when the mind is focused in the region of the forehead located between the two eyebrows (the area of the cerebrum) while practicing Yoga, all the activities that are related to this gross world are stopped, and the mind begins to find its rest and peace. All the numerous desires, wishes, aspirations and longings of the mind are eliminated; it wants nothing more.

[This is because it is the mind that actually receives and analyses the different inputs having their origin in the external world. It is the mind that then instructs the body to do anything in response. It is the mind that motivates the aspirant to perform deeds and act in a particular way in this world. With the mind becoming defunct, or when it becomes absolutely calmed down and loses all interest in the external world, it is obvious that the activities of the world would come to a naught.

Secondly, when the mind remains focused in doing Yoga, when its attention is fixed on something in which it begins to find greater and more enduring bliss and enjoyment, it would no longer wander here and there in the external world like a vagrant. The mind swerves towards this material world of sense objects because it finds happiness and joy in it; it finds pleasure and comfort in it. When the mind, on the other hand, keeps its self busy in concentrating in doing Yoga and finds a greater source of comfort and bliss in it than what it got out of the external world, it would easily turn towards this new source. So, when the mind finds that by focusing its attention and efforts in the various meditative exercises give it a greater degree of bliss and ecstasy, it would stick to them and abandon the world.] (33).

34. When the ascetic is able to experience that supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness that is most auspicious by nature, that is revealed only in the form of Pranav (represented by the cosmic sound of OM), and in which there is no trace of doubts or confusions whatsoever—it is then that the Pran is said to stop its movement.

[When the practitioner of Yoga hears the cosmic Naad, which is visualized and described in the form of the monosyllabic word OM, while meditating, he is so overwhelmed by the thrill created by its resonance that he experiences a stupendous amount of spiritual bliss surging through his entire being, overflowing him and completely submerging him in its tide.

He becomes absolutely certain about it because of the fact that he has experienced it first hand and not only heard of it.

The Pran's movement stop because of the ecstasy that accompanies the hearing of OM and the titillation that it creates in the nerves, as the practitioner is so absolutely stunned and dumbstruck by this experience that his muscles and brain stop functioning. This may be a momentary experience in the beginning, but over time and practice it becomes robust and permanent.] (34).

35. Oh sage! When the spiritual aspirant is able to experience the presence of the vacant space of the subtle sky in the region of the heart, the Mana (here referring to the 'heart' because it is the latter that is associated with emotions, sentiments and various longings and infatuations that a creature has or develops in life) becomes free from all Vasanas, and instead begins to gain composure and calmness of demeanours.

When the heart too becomes vacant of emotions and desires along with the annihilation or dissolution of the mind, it is then that all the worldly Vasanas (worldly desires, passions, yearnings and longings) are truly dispensed with. It then becomes possible to remain focused on one's spiritual goal.

When this stage is reached, the movement of the Pran, or the vibrations of the Pranic energy inside the body of the ascetic, stops.

[The word 'Mana' here refers to the heart as well as the mind. It is the heart that shows various emotions and sentiments; it is this aspect of the heart that endears something to a man or makes him long for it or be infatuated with it. If the heart is not involved, the mind would not be fully able to focus its self on anything. Even those things that are the direct function of the mind and are its exclusive domain too depend on the heart. For instance, study and learning are functions exclusive to the mind, but then it is normal to say 'learn a thing by heart'. But the heart depends on the mind too. Even if the heart is very fond of anything or strongly longs for a particular thing, the mind can always supersede it and firmly deny access to the much-wanted thing should it decide that it is not in the interest of the creature.

So, it is during the higher stages of Yoga that the heart too becomes vacant of emotions and desires along with the annihilation or dissolution of the mind. When they work in tandem it is then that all the worldly Vasanas (worldly desires and longings) are truly dispensed with. It then becomes possible to remain focused on one's spiritual goal of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation.] (35).

36/1. In the above manner, there are a number of ways prescribed by different wise men by which a spiritual aspirant can exercise control over the movement of his Pran. In other words, by constant practice and employing a method best suited for his individual needs and temperaments, he can control the flow of the vital winds, and along with them the various life-factors that require regulation and regularization (36/1).

36/2. The aspiring ascetic should constrict the Kundalini and pull it upwards. This would open the hitherto-closed door for his Moksha (liberation and deliverance).

[This refers to the activation of the Kundalini and opening of the clogged Naadis in the body. The Kundalini is a coiled subtle cosmic energy center of the body that lies at the lower end of the spinal cord, blocking it with one of its ends. The subtle energy of the Kundalini represents the dynamism of the consciousness present in the body of the living being. The Naadi is the general term used for all the tubular ducts present inside the body through which all the life sustaining energy and impulses flow in the body. During Yoga, when the vital winds are heated and activated, they shake the Kundalini and loosen it up. Then they push up through the Kundalini which opens

the blocked mouth of the Sushumna Naadi, the main nerve of the spinal cord, and snakes up it to finally reach the top of the head.

The combined force of the vital winds and the dynamic energy of the Kundalini opens-up or unties the various Granthis (knots) and Chakras (subtle energy centers of the body lying between the lower end of the body and the top of the head) en-route to the top of the head. With these openings, a burst of immense spiritual energy is experienced by the ascetic. The Pran or life-consciousness reaches the top of the head, and when all the conditions are favourable and enough pressure is built up, it finally escapes out of the body through the Brahm-Randhra, the hair-like slit present on the top of the skull. It is called 'Moksha', because the Atma, the consciousness present in the gross body of the ascetic, finds its permanent freedom by breaking free from the fetters of the gross body and escaping into the vast fathomless sky much like a caged bird finding its freedom when it escapes through the trap-door of the cage.

It is called 'Moksha' also because it is the final escape of the consciousness along with the vital winds or Pran which, having escaped from the confines of the gross body through the Brahm-Randhra, merges with the cosmic wind or the air element present outside the body to become one and inseparable from it. The 'Pran' will no longer re-enter the body—meaning its liberation is once and for all; it is its final freedom from confinements and limitations which are against its natural temperament and habit of being free and unbound. [A simple illustration would help explain this concept. When we blow air (breath) into the rubber balloon, it swells up and acquires a shape quite different from its original form as a piece of lifeless latex. The fully blown balloon jumps and hops to indicate that the air that is trapped inside is restless to get out of its prison in the form of the body of the balloon. If we leave this balloon for a long time we would observe that the air gradually seeps out of it on its own. If we keep the air agitated by constantly punching and kicking the balloon, it burst out with force. The point of the matter is that the air resists being bounded and butted, it needs freedom—this is because the air or the wind element is habituated to being free, unshackled and unbound; it is its natural habit and temperament to be free and unshackled.]

The Atma, which is the 'true self' of all living beings and is pure consciousness, is also a synonym of Pran, along with the vital wind and other life-factors in creation which are generally regarded as Pran of a creature, as both the terms mean 'life'. Hence, when it is said that the 'Pran' escapes from limitations or confines of the gross body to enlarge and expand to cover the whole space of the sky once it comes out into the open sky outside, it is implied that the Atma—the 'self' of the ascetic—too has found its Moksha.

Prior to this final freedom, when the Pran had reached the area of the forehead between the two eyebrows en-route to the Brahm-Randhra the aspirant is able to experience a thrilling sensation which gives the aspirant extreme bliss and ecstasy. This is the moment of self-realisation when the ascetic experiences the bliss that is associated with being near and close to the cosmic source of beatitude and felicity called Brahm. This experience is a fore-runner and acts as a prelude for the final bliss, beatitude and felicity that awaits him when his Pran would escape from the Brahm-Randhra to give him freedom from all his agonies and torments.] (36/2).

36/3. The Kundalini lies in a dormant or sleeping state by covering and blocking the mouth of the path (i.e. the Sushumna Naadi) through which it would have to finally move out in the aspirant's ultimate quest for Moksha, or spiritual liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

The Kundalini wraps around this path like a serpent coiled around a tube, tightly clasping it in its embrace and blocking its opening with its hood.

[As stated in verse no. 36/2, the Kundalini represents the dynamic aspect of the consciousness present in the body of the creature. Normally for the un-initiated creature it is lying in a 'sleeping state' which is a metaphoric way of saying that the ignorant creature is unable to know or recognize his true astounding potentials. He does not know that a mighty source of spiritual and mystical power is hidden inside his own body much like the musk hidden in the belly of the musk-deer. It only requires igniting and then nothing would be beyond reach. This ignorance is the reason why the creature is always under pain and suffers from this or that agony; this is the reason why he feels that he is powerless and crippled; this is the cause of his fetters and bondages to this world and the body; this is why he needs the prop of various rituals and doing so many things in order to find ways to free himself from the shackle of this body and the world.

But once enlightenment and awareness dawns upon him he realises that should he fire up this Kundalini by means of the process described in the Upanishads, his deliverance and freedom is certain and within his reach. This ignorance of one's spiritual potentials is metaphorically called the 'sleeping Kundalini', while its removal and the dawn of enlightenment and awareness of one's inherent spiritual strength is called the 'rising of the dormant spiritual energy' in the form of the awakened Kundalini.

The Kundalini is visualized in the form of a snake that lies coiled when asleep. When it is coaxed with a stick it rises up and holds its hood to hiss violently. The same thing happens with the Kundalini. When it is coaxed with the heated vital winds during the process of Yoga that is especially designed to activate the Kundalini, the latter is shaken and stirred. It stands up like a snake holding its hood high and hissing. The heat and the pressure exerted by the vital winds help to push the energy of the Kundalini into the Sushumna Naadi. This is called the opening of the pathway to Brahm because this Naadi leads up right up to the top of the head where the ascetic experiences the bliss of Brahm-realisation.] (36/3).

36/4. An ascetic who practices regularly to make the Kundalini activated, and keep it activated, is able to attain Mukti (liberation and deliverance as narrated above).

If the Kundalini (i.e. the subtle cosmic energy that is present inside the body as the dynamism of pure consciousness) rests in the area above the throat, the ascetic is able to find Mukti. Such an aspirant finds enlightenment and self-realisation.

On the other hand, if the Kundalini remains below the throat the aspirant remains mired in ignorance and delusions. Such a man remains trapped and bonded in fetters of ignorance. He cannot find freedom from his spiritual shackles.

[In other words, if the ascetic is able to focus his attention in the forehead and contemplate upon the supreme consciousness that is a fount of extreme bliss and happiness, he finds liberation and deliverance from the uncountable torments and agonies that are inherent to this gross world. This is because he would have reached the sublime state of self-realisation; he would have risen above the mundane world and meditate on the sublime consciousness by focusing his mind on higher goals of life symbolized by the upper part of the body above the throat, as it is 'head' or 'chief' area of the body where the commanding centre called the brain is situated. He is able to attain enlightenment and self-realisation.

On the other hand, if he remains mired in the lowly affairs of the gross world as symbolized by the attention being focused in the lower part of the body below the

throat, the aspirant is deemed to be living in a spiritual void surrounded by delusions and ignorance. Such a man would be more concerned with filling his stomach, looking after the needs of his body and enjoying the pleasures of the sense organs rather than pursuing anything of higher value in spiritual terms. The enlightened man on the other hand would be least bothered about the grosser aspects of creation represented by the lower part of the gross body, and more concerned with noble and auspicious thoughts and pursuance of sublime goals of life symbolized by the upper part or the head where the brain is located. It is here that Brahm is said to have his symbolic abode in the body of the creature.] (36/4).

36/5. The Kundalini energy rises up and arrives at the head through the Sushumna Naadi instead of the other two paths open to it, i.e. the Ida and the Pingla Naadis. Therefore, the Sushumna Naadi is the one that takes the aspirant to the divine and supreme abode of Lord Vishnu.

[The Sushumna Naadi goes right up to the top of the skull, while the other two Naadis stop much below it. Refer verse no. 11 of section 4 of this Canto no. 1. It is in the region of the head that the supreme transcendental Brahm is said to have his abode. Lord Vishnu is none other than Brahm personified. So, since the Sushumna Naadi helps the ascetic in his 'self' realisation and Brahm realisation, it is said to be the pathway that leads one to the divine abode of Lord Vishnu. This is why the Sushumna Naadi is also called the Vishnu Naadi as well as the Brahm Naadi.

Besides this, meditation and contemplation are exercises that require intense concentration of the mind and intellect. When the combined efforts of the mind-intellect lead to self-realisation and experiencing of bliss, it is most convincing for the ascetic. This is true enlightenment as it does not require further testing and proving. It is a sublime state of consciousness that is a metaphor for Brahm-realisation.] (36/5).

37. The entire process of meditation (Yoga) involving the vital winds (Vayu) should be done with true dedication and faith, with proper coordination of the mind-intellect, the heart and the gross organs of the body. A wise and erudite practitioner should not allow his mind to swerve towards anything else or think of anything other than concentrating on the process of Yoga. He should not allow the mind to be distracted by anything that would disturb its focus and meddle with its concentration on Yoga. He should restrain the natural tendency of the mind to be attracted towards material comforts and pleasures of the world, or to strive for gratifying the sense organs of the body, and avoid the rigors demanded by Yoga, especially the process of Pranayam, or the process by which the vital winds are control and their powers harnessed for the purpose of reaching one's spiritual goal.

[In other words, the process of Pranayam which involves control of the vital winds and harnessing their stupendous powers and potentials to help the spiritual aspirant realise the glorious consciousness with its radiant splendour should involve a proper coordination between each individual unit of the body. It should be taken in a holistic manner and done with firm determination to reach one's desired spiritual objective. Yoga should be done with full concentration and sincerity, and not just to while away the time. It should be done with faith and conviction, and not merely to test its efficacy or veracity.

Besides this, the aspirant must watch out for any signs of distractions of the mind and the heart which together are called the 'Mana', or any indication that they are not fully focused on and committed to his spiritual goal. This is important because the Mana is the instrument which is needed by the aspirant to succeed in his spiritual

endeavours, and if this instrument is blunt and not working in its prime shape, reaching one's objective would be impossible. If the vehicle is rickety, if its parts are not working properly, reaching one's destination becomes uncertain and riddled with problems. Hence, if the mind is not fully controlled and focused in Yoga, if the heart is not fully involved and committed to Yoga, the result would be far below expectations, and the efficiency with which the vital winds can be controlled to aid in one spiritual pursuit would also suffer in equal proportion to the degree of distraction.] (37).

38. It is wrong to suggest or say that one should not worship Lord Vishnu on a particular day or night. Rather, Lord Vishnu should be worshipped at all times, and not only in the day-time or in the night-time. [In other words, it is incredulous and nonsensical to suggest that worship or honouring of the Supreme Being is prohibited on any particular day or night as it is inauspicious for such worship or honour. The Lord can be shown respects anytime, at all times. Whenever the Lord is shown respect that time itself becomes auspicious. Again, it is equally incongruous to say that the Lord should be worshipped only in the day, or only at a fixed time of the day. The Lord can be worshipped and paid obeisance to any time of the day or night.] (38).

39. Oh Shandilya! The divine entity (here referring to the pure consciousness called the Atma) that lives in the subtle space of the heart is the one that drives the five sense organs, and is also the entity that kindles enlightenment and wisdom in the aspirant.

[The gross body has five sense organs of perception such as the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin. These sense organs are made functional and active only as long as there is 'life and consciousness' in the body, for a dead body does not see, or hear, or smell, or taste, or feel anything though all these five organs are present in it. Hence, it is the pure conscious Atma, which incidentally is also the 'true self' of the creature that actually makes these five organs work and carry on with their assigned duties or functions. The same argument applies to the five organs of action such as the hand, the leg, the mouth, the genital and the excretory.

Similarly, it is the Atma, the pure consciousness residing inside the gross body, that inspires a man to think, to ponder, to contemplate, and to research the 'truth'. A dead body or one from which the consciousness has left would not think or meditate. Hence, it is the Atma residing in the subtle space of the heart that is responsible for a creature's desire to acquire truthful spiritual knowledge, and to be successful in actually acquiring it. In other words, it is the Atma that kindles the desire in a man to become wise, erudite and enlightened, and abandon the darkness of ignorance and delusions.]

The Khechari Mudra is also dependent upon this divine entity that resides in the subtle space of the heart of the spiritual aspirant. [Again, it is the consciousness present in the body that not only inspires but actually enables the man to undertake the arduous exercise of doing Khechari Mudra, which incidentally is the toughest of all the Mudras of Yoga, and then gives him the courage, energy and strength to persevere with it till success is completely achieved.

In short, it is the pure conscious Atma that provides the impetus for all that the creature does. It is the Atma that not only drives his gross body but also his spiritual inclinations.]

Hence, you (Shandilya) must always strive to remain focused on this divine entity. In other words, you must never lose sight of the pure conscious Atma that

resides in the subtle heart while you do anything in this world. This Atma must be your spiritual goal in all meditative and contemplative exercises (39).

40. The vital wind (breath or Pran) flows continuously between the left and the right Naadis (i.e. between the Ida and the Pingla Naadis representing the left and the right nostrils respectively). In other words, the vital life-consciousness flows in the Sushumna Naadi as it lies between the Ida and the Pingla Naadis that lie to its left and right respectively.

The Khechari Mudra is also focused on this area. That is, the mind is focused on the life-consciousness that flows through the Sushumna Naadi while one does the Khechari Mudra. The point where the mind is to be focused during the Khechari Mudra is the tip of the nose as well as the central point between the two eyebrows that lies at the root of the nose. There is no doubt about it (40).

41. The area between the Ida and the Pingla Naadis is like the yawning depths of the fathomless cosmic sky which devours anything that falls in it. This air or wind that enters this area is devoured by it. In other words, when the ascetic is deeply engrossed in doing the Khechari Mudra when his mind is totally focused in the area mentioned here, his breathing stops. The ascetic enters in a deep trance-like state. [Refer verse no. 15-19 of this section no. 7. The area referred to here is the point in the forehead that lies between the two eyebrows and at the root of the nose. It can be compared to the cosmic 'black hole' which is so mysterious and powerful that it swallows even the light that attempts to pass through it. It is a complete vacuum which would not allow anything to escape its grasp.]

The Khechari Mudra is also established there or done there, and it is here that the 'Truth' is also found. [The 'Truth' referred here is the awareness of the self and the pure consciousness that is realised when the mind is focused in the area referred to in this verse. The Khechari Mudra is the meditative posture that helps the ascetic in this realisation and experiencing the glorious radiance and magnificence of the Atma and the 'self'. This is why the 'third eye of wisdom' is said to be located in the forehead between the two eyebrows and at the root of the nose. Refer verse no. 42/1 below.] (41).

42/1. Between the Chandra (Moon) Naadi and the Surya (Sun) Naadi is situated an area that hangs in space without support. It is a vacant sky, and the Khechari Mudra is symbolically established there, or it is here that one focuses one's attention while doing the Khechari Mudra. It also implies that when one mind and attention are focused in the area between the Chandra and Surya Naadis while one does the Khechari Mudra, he is so lost in meditation that this world and the body cease to exist for him. He becomes light and subtle to such an extreme that all his sense organs, along with the mind itself, goes into a virtual sleep-like state called the 'Sushupta state' when nothing matters for the ascetic; it is the state of existence when he is completely neutral and disinterested in everything in this gross world. He is like a man suspended in the void of the deep sky high above the earth between the moon and the sun. It is a state of total numbness of the senses that are accustomed to being attracted towards the grosser aspects of this creation.

[The idea expressed in this verse is exactly the same as in verse no. 41. The 'Chandra Naadi' is the Ida Naadi, and the 'Surya Naadi' is the Pingla Naadi—refer verse no. 11 of section 4 of this Canto 1. The area between them is neutral as the heat of the Sun is neutralized by the coolness of the Moon. It is like the center of a bar

magnet which is neutral, and it neither attracts nor repels anything. When the ascetic becomes focused on this area, he lives in a state of trance which is like living in suspended animation. It is like being in the deep space of the sky much above the earth's gravitational pull when everything is suspended in mid-air.

The word 'Khechar' refers to someone who lives or moves in the vacant space of the sky, e.g. the bird. The metaphysical import of this vacuum is that when the ascetic is successful in doing the Khechhari Mudra, he becomes emotionless and completely neutral. He loses all interests in the world and its material sense objects. He is totally oblivious of his own body. He is just like an object hanging without support in the sky; he is like the earth hanging without support between the sun and the moon.

Modern science has established that all the celestial bodies of the solar system, such as the earth, the moon etc. stay in their respective position in the bottomless bowls of the cosmos due to some invisible force of Nature called the mutual gravitational pull exerted by one on the other, and by the sun on all of them. The sun itself is held in position by some greater force operating at the level of the milky-way or the galaxy of which the entire solar system is a minute and fractional part.

Hence, a delicate balance is established between the gross and the subtle. The invisible force that helps to establish this balance is the 'Truth' that even modern science has accepted. Even as science endeavours to find the grand Truth behind all physical phenomena, metaphysics too strives to find the Truth behind all mystical experiences and observations. It is this mystical and unexplained 'Truth' that is being referred to in verse no. 41 above.] (42/1).

42/2. The Khechhari Mudra is successfully accomplished when the tongue is sufficiently elongated and made flexible by a complicated process of piercing it, rubbing it and pulling it over time so that it can be inverted and tucked inside the throat, and then made to wriggle into the cavity of the skull from the inside. During this arduous enterprise, the eyesight is fixed in the central point of the eyebrows. [The detailed process of elongation of the tongue and how it is tucked inside the throat to accomplish the Khechhari Mudra is described in Yog Kundalini Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse nos. 28-49.]

When both the tongue as well as the subtle aspect of the mind are focused in the subtle sky represented by the hollow space of the skull, and when the tongue develops a natural tendency to move up instead of downwards, it is only then the aspirant can hope to taste the nectar of Amrit.

[In other words, if the tongue derives pleasure in talking about spiritual matters or about things concerning higher, sublime and subtle values of life, when the tongue desires to taste the nectar of spiritual bliss and ecstasy that drips during moments of self-realisation when the pure consciousness is experienced or witnessed first hand, when the tongue wishes to talk about the eclectic and sublime consciousness and ways to realise it instead of wasting time in talking about mundane matters of the deluding and material world which is perishable and entrapping, when the tongue has no interest in either talking about worldly things or has any desire for tasting delicious things of this gross world, it is only then that the spiritual aspirant can ever hope to find truthful bliss and happiness.

As long as the tongue has a tendency to move 'downwards', which is metaphoric way of saying that the aspirant is attracted to this gross world for he wishes to taste its delicious things and talk about its material gross things, but as soon as the aspirant develops a taste for higher values of life and wishes to taste the nectar or

Amrit of eternity, bliss and beatitude got from self-realisation which is experienced when he gets acquainted with the pure consciousness that resides in his inner-self, the tongue is metaphorically said to be moving 'upwards'. While the latter tendency of the tongue is a metaphor for the aspirant's Mukti or liberation and deliverance from the gross world, the former tendency is equivalent to his remaining bound in fetters and shackled to the deluding world and its temptations.] (42/2).

42/3. [Verse nos. 42/3-42/4 describe the Yoga exercises that aid in attaining success in the Khechari Mudra.]

The practitioner should sit in posture so that the left leg is bent inwards from the knee and its heel presses against the anus, while the right leg is stretched straight out. This right foot is then grasped by both the hands. [This is called the Mool Bandh.]

Air is first filled inside the body (i.e. Purak is done) by inhaling it through both the nostrils, and then its flow is stopped by constricting the muscles of the throat (i.e. Kumbhak is done). [This is called the Jalandhar Bandh.]

This helps to establish the vital air that is held up in the upper part of the body. [When breathing is stopped, the air inside the body remains static and trapped in the upper part of the chest. This is called the Uddiyan Bandh.]

This process helps to destroy all torments and miseries (i.e. it helps to eliminate all bodily ailments by helping to cleanse the Naadis, oxidize the tissues, revitalize them, detoxify the body, and rejuvenate the dormant energy inside it). Having successfully mastered this technique, even poison can be neutralized by the internal powers of the body. [In other words, the body becomes so strong and robust internally that it can fight infections and harmful chemicals that might gain entry in it by any means. The immune system is bolstered and the body rarely falls ill.]

Such grave diseases as tuberculosis (or the decay disease), inflammation or enlargement of glands or any other organ or tissue of the body, tumors, piles, fistulas, fissures or any other disease of the anus or rectum, as well as incurable diseases of the skin are cured by this method.

In fact, this Yoga exercise by which the practitioner is able to control the vital winds enables him to completely eliminate the fear of death. [This is achieved for two reasons—one is that the body becomes strong and cleansed of impurities, its nerves and veins are de-clogged, its vitality, vigour and energy are restored, its immune system gets a boost, it becomes strong and robust internally so much so that it can easily withstand the rough and toil of the rigours of life without falling prey to various diseases that drain the body of its strength and cause pre-mature aging. With regular and persistent practice of Yoga, the natural decay process of the body is controlled, and though the aspirant's age increases with the normal passage of time, the body still retains its younger form of his early years without showing signs of aging.]

The second reason is that self-realisation and enlightenment is a natural accompaniment or natural reward of Yoga when the practitioner realises that his body is not his 'true self', but the latter is the Atma or the pure consciousness that resides in the body. This Atma is an eternal and imperishable entity; it is sublime and subtle as opposed to the body which is gross and perishable. It is the body that dies, and not the Atma. Hence, there is no question of either fearing from death or actually dying.] (42/3).

42/4. [The next step is a modified version of the exercise described in verse no. 42/3.]

The next higher stage of controlling the vital winds and adopting the Bandhas described above in order to attain success in Khechari Mudra entails folding in of the left leg from the knee joint and pressing its heel against the testicles from below. The right leg is bent from the knee and placed on the thigh of the left leg. The vital air (breath) is filled inside the body (i.e. Kumbhak is done), the chin is pressed on the left side of the chest in the region of the heart (so that the muscles of the throat are naturally constricted and breathing restricted), and the mind is focused on contemplating upon the Atma, the pure conscious 'self' that resides in one's inner-self.

This contemplative and meditative exercise helps the spiritual aspirant to attain mystical powers that are invisible and intangible but divine and super-natural (42/4).

43. The air should first be inhaled or pulled in from the outside (i.e. Purak should be done), and then it should be held in the stomach (i.e. Kumbhak should be done).

After that, instead of exhaling this air, it should be consciously diverted to the region of the navel, the tip of the nose and the big toes of the two legs. This would need concentration of mind and great effort (43).

44/1. A practitioner of Yoga who does this exercise (described in verse no. 43) daily during the evening hours (i.e. at dusk) is freed from all diseases besides feeling relaxed and rejuvenated (44/1).

44/2. By fixing the sight (i.e. the attention of the mind) in front of the nose it is possible to control the flow of air (i.e. it is possible to control breath).

When the vital air/wind is made to remain concentrated in the center of the navel (or when the practitioner of Yoga focuses his mind in the navel and imagines that the inhaled air is circulating in the navel during the phase of Kumbhak), all the diseases are eliminated.

When this vital air/wind is consciously moved down from the navel and made to remain concentrated in the big toes of the legs (i.e. when the practitioner of Yoga uses the powers of his mind to visualize that the vital wind moves down from the navel, and instead of getting exhaled through the nose it goes to the big toes and gets localized there during the next phase of Kumbhak), the body feels very light. [This is the reason why, according to Hindu tradition, a string is tied tightly around the two toes of a man's dead body to prevent the legs from lifting from the ground. Obviously, should this ever happen it would be extremely embarrassing and awfully frightening for all those present around the dead body.] (44/2).

45. A man (who practices Yoga and) who always draws in air (virtually 'drinks or imbibes' air) through the tongue, and is able to consciously taste the nectar-like sweetness of the fresh air, is never tired, never feels exhausted or weary.

[This practice refers to an aspirant who practices Pranayam by inhaling air through the mouth instead of the normal system of inhalation done through the nose, and consciously experiences the flow of wind over the tongue, enjoying the massage that this flow gives to the nerves and tasting its refreshing pristine taste rich in rejuvenating natural gases and pure micro-elements, is able to fine-tune his body faster and more effectively than the conventional method of the normal breathing process. His tissues are rapidly oxidized and re-energized. This is because the fresh air that is drawn in through the mouth comes in contact with the wet surface of the

tongue which is rich in veins and nerves. The oxygen and other re-vitalizing elements in the air are absorbed faster and directly in the blood supply of the body when they come in contact with the wet surface of the tongue that is rich in veins. Similarly, the nerves too get instant massage and feel refreshed with a surge of renewed energy.

This process of direct dissolving of rich gases into the blood stream is expressed in the terms of the tongue tasting the nectar-like taste of fresh air. It is also a metaphoric way of saying that the practitioner is able to enjoy the benefits of regulated Pranayam instantly and with vivid results. This instantaneous rejuvenation process helps the body to overcome fatigue and listlessness faster as compared to the normal process when the same oxygen and other re-vitalizing elements would get absorbed in the blood supply in a long-drawn process after entering the body. This is why when a man has done some strenuous exercise such as lifting a heavy weight he pants with an open mouth.]

When such breathing is done regularly, the practitioner never feels hot; he does not have a burning sensation in the body. [This is also because of regular and faster ventilation of the body. Open mouth and wet tongue helps to keep the body cooled.]

All his diseases are eliminated soon. [When the body is well oxidized, when its tissues are well-detoxified, when they work in their prime condition, when the body is well ventilated, it is natural that infections and diseases would be kept at bay.] (45).

46. A Brahmin (or any wise, learned and self-disciplined man) who drinks fresh air (as described in verse no. 45) at least twice a day regularly, at dawn and at dusk, the patron Goddess of speech and knowledge makes her auspicious appearance in his speech within a period of three months. [That is, an aspirant who practices Pranayam by inhaling air through the mouth instead of the normal system of inhalation done through the nose, is able to fine-tune his faculty of speech and the organs associated with it so much so that his voice becomes sweet, he is able to coordinate his thoughts and speech so that he speaks articulately and effectively, he is able to keep the mind and intellect pruned and well organized, and is honoured and praised as a good orator and preacher.] (46).

47. If this exercise is practiced by an aspirant for a continuous period of six months, all his diseases are eliminated or at least ameliorated.

A wise and seasoned practitioner of Yoga (i.e. Pranayam) who drinks air through the tongue (i.e. who inhales air with the mouth open) and keeps it localized or focused at the root of the tongue (i.e. who practices the Jalandhar Bandh and keeps the vital winds called Pran focused in the upper part of the body, especially the region of the forehead) is able to drink or imbibe Amrit, the nectar of spiritual realisation and enlightenment (i.e. he is able to experience the bliss and ecstasy that comes with enlightenment and realisation of the consciousness in higher stages of successful Yoga).

This success bestows all-round auspiciousness to him; it provides him with welfare and stands him in good stead (47).

48. If the aspirant (i.e. the practitioner of Yoga) is able to hold the vital air that flows through the Ida Naadi (i.e. the left nostril) and concentrate it in the middle of the two eyebrows so that the mind becomes focused here—and he does this exercise regularly, then he is entitled and empowered to break through all hurdles or barriers in

his spiritual pursuits. He is also entitled and empowered to partake of all the food meant for the exalted Gods¹. [Refer also to verse no. 50 herein below.]

Besides this benefit, he is able to get rid of all diseases from which he might be suffering at that time (48).

[Note—¹The food eaten is digested by the juices in the body and made available to the various organs and tissues. By carelessness and unorganized lifestyle the body's functioning becomes worn-out, its immune system takes a beating, it becomes disease-riddled, and the digestion is weakened. With Yoga these shortcomings are taken care of and the body is rejuvenated. With improved digestion the body gets better and proper nourishment. The Gods are said to reside in the different organs of the body of the man because the body is a microcosm of creation. Whatever the man ate was eaten by these Gods. These facts have been explicitly mentioned in the Aiteriya Upanishad of Rig Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5. Now therefore, the intention of this verse is that by doing Yoga the man's body starts working properly and all that he eats is properly digested and its nutrients duly absorbed by the tissues. This helps the Gods living inside the body in a subtle form fully satisfied, and this is depicted by the man remaining happy and cheerful as well as free from all diseases.]

49. If the aspirant (i.e. the practitioner of Yoga) inhales air through both the Naadis (i.e. through the Ida and Pingla Naadis symbolizing the left and right nostrils respectively) and keeps this air/wind localized in the two halves of the pot-like abdomen (i.e. holds the breath in the two lobes of the lungs which occupy the two sides of the abdominal cavity) for a suitable period of time, he is freed from the shackles of all his diseases (i.e. his ailments are eliminated, and he regains his health) (49).

50. An aspirant (i.e. the practitioner of Yoga) who practices the exercise of drawing in or attracting air through the tongue and keeping it held in the abdomen three times a day (dawn, noon and dusk) for a continuous period of three months is entitled and empowered to break through all the hurdles or barriers in his spiritual pursuits. He is also entitled and empowered to partake of all the food meant for the exalted Gods. [Refer above to verse no. 48 and its accompanying note also.] (50).

51. A person who does regular Yoga by holding the vital air/wind on the tip of the nose with full concentration for a period of one Muhurta (roughly for period of one hour and forty-eight minutes) daily, all sorts of fevers from which he might be suffering are calmed down and got rid of. All sorts of poisons or toxins in the body are neutralized. Spiritually, all the sins and their negative affects that have accumulated for many generations are eliminated (51).

52. [This verse describes the various benefits got by learning to exercise restraint over the different organs of the body, both the gross organs as well as the subtle ones.]

By exercising restraint over the pupils of the eye and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to gain all types of knowledge. [This means that one must see only things worth seeing, and pay attention to details even in things that are seen in order to learn from what is seen or observed. On the other hand, if the sight is focused on wrong things one would learn things that are demeaning for the soul.]

By focusing the mind on the tip of the nose (as done during meditation as described in earlier verses of this Canto, especially in reference to Pranayam and Khechari Mudra), and visualizing the presence of consciousness there, one is able to

have knowledge of the Indra Loka. [Indra is the king of Gods according to the Purans, and from the perspective of metaphysics he is the chief Pran or vital life-forces of the body that control its independent units. This is because the word 'Indra' is derived from the word 'Indri' meaning 'organs of the body'. Hence, Indra Loka refers to the comprehensive knowledge of the mundane gross world as well as the sublime subtle world.]

By focusing the mind below it and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to gain knowledge of the Agni Loka. [This refers to concentration on the point in the forehead between the two eyebrows. It is here that one experiences the radiance and splendour of consciousness shining through and lighting the inner-self of the spiritual aspirant. The concentration of the 'Chita' or the mind and its sub-conscious during meditation and contemplation helps one to become 'enlightened and self-realised', and this is equivalent to removal of darkness of ignorance and delusions. Since darkness can only be eliminated by 'light and illumination' which are an integral part and characteristic feature of the fire, it is metaphorically said here that when one is successful in concentrating one's attention 'below the tip of the nose', i.e. at the root of the nose and at the point where it meets the two eyebrows, one is enlightened and self-realised. All his ignorance and delusions are burned in the 'fire' of knowledge.]

By focusing the mind in the eyes and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the world. [This is obvious. The implication is that the eyes are able to see and register anything seen only as long as the mind pays attention on the thing seen. If the mind is not focused on the object seen, the eyes may be looking intently at it but for all practical purposes the man would not see it and would not be aware of it. The eyes are able to see only the grosser aspect of the world, that aspect which has a form and size. Hence, this stanza has two meanings—one is that with the eyes the aspirant is able to see not only the external features of the world but also the truth behind the external façade which is often misleading, and two, that he also able to have a deep insight and develop a foresight.]

By focusing the mind on the ears and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Yam Loka. [The word 'Yam' refers to death as well as self-restraint of passions. The phrase 'Yam Loka' also refers to hell and its sufferings, as well as the world after death. Now, a man is able to hear anything only by the organ of the ear. The ears make him aware of the wailings and cries of suffering creatures, which in turn would enlighten him of the pain and agonies that are so characteristic of this mortal world. The ears help him to hear and then learn about the cause of these sufferings on the one hand, and the ways out of it on the other hand. In other words, the ears make him aware of the sufferings if one is not following the rules of Nature and allows himself to be indulgent in this mortal gross world of material sense objects on the one hand, and then it also makes him aware of what is good and what is not when he hears the teachings of the scriptures through the medium of the ears on the other hand. But all these are made possible only as long as the mind registers what the ears hear, and enables the ears to pay attention at what is being heard or said. If a man is so stupid that he does not grasp what he hears, or if he does not understand the profound meaning of the various scriptures being preached or explained to him, then he may have spent his whole lifetime hearing them but it is as good as not having heard them at all. Similarly, if a man hears the cries and wailings of all those suffering around him, but still have no awareness of the reality of this horrifying world, then he too has not heard anything.]

By focusing the mind on the side of the ears and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Raksha Loka. [The word 'Raksha' refer to the devils and demons. In other words, if a man has a natural tendency to be cunning and find pleasure in attempting to secretly hear what other people are saying, if he enjoys spying and eavesdropping unnecessarily and without any justified reason, then he is virtually hearing things not meant for him, and such deceitful and improper behaviour makes him no less than a devil in disguise. Such people are suspicious of everyone and can never be relied upon much like demons and devils. They are backstabbers and backbiters; they create ill-will by spreading rumours and divulging things that are supposed to be kept under wraps. Words that are not meant to be heard or paid attention to by one but still registered by the mind and the sub-conscious are like words of ghosts and phantoms, and therefore the ear that hears such words are hearing demons and devils speak. In brief, this stanza teaches the spiritual aspirant not to pay attention on things not meant for him or heard by him, not to waste his energy and precious time on hearing nasty and deceitful things, or things that are not within the definition of righteousness, propriety and probity.]

By focusing the mind on the back of the body and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Varun Loka. [Varun is the patron God of water. This stanza refers to the positioning of the kidneys which lie in the posterior side of the lower abdomen. This stanza refers to the awareness in a man which sub-consciously tell him when the urinary bladder is full and needs to be emptied.]

By focusing the mind in the left ear and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Vayu Loka. [Sound travels through the medium of air. So, this statement refers to the fact that if the mind is attentive enough it can hear anything that is said or any sound that is made even at a long distance as the air would carry it to his ear. Special reference to the left ear may also refer to the leftist social principles of which a man is aware. It implies that he is concerned about the welfare of all in the society and not self-centered and selfish. Besides this, it is pertinent to note here that inhaling vital air first through the 'left' nostril or the Ida Naadi while doing Pranayam is stressed in Yoga. Hence, the reference to the 'left' ear also means that the aspirant begins to hear the roar of the cosmic wind blowing in the distant horizon when he is in deep contemplative state of Yoga.]

By focusing the mind in the throat and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Chandra Loka. [The word 'Chandra' means the moon. The reference here is to the Jalandhar Bandh when the aperture of the throat is closed during Yoga and the Pran or the vital winds move through the Ida Naadi, which is also called the 'Chandra Naadi', to reach the Agya Chakra located in the forehead between the eyebrows where the ascetic experiences extreme ecstasy and bliss that comes with awareness of the pure and sublime consciousness that resides in the body itself. This is equivalent to his tasting the nectar of bliss that drops from his head into the throat during this stage of Yoga. This nectar is called Amrit and it is stored in the moon which is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of eternal and undiluted bliss and happiness that the Gods drink. Hence, this stanza refers to the experiencing of extreme bliss and ecstasy of spiritual realisation when one is successful in meditation and contemplation. It also might refer to the fact that the ascetic's words become full of wisdom and erudition besides being sweet and pleasant to hear as symbolized by the presence of Goddess Saraswati on his

tongue as referred to in verse no. 46 above in this section no. 7 of the present Canto 1.]

By focusing the mind on the left eyes and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Shiva Loka. [Lord Shiva is the God who brings about the conclusion of creation. The term ‘left’ refers to one being adversely inclined towards anything, or not being favourable to any given thing or event. It is only when the mind is not in favour of anything or situation that the man would think of eliminating it or concluding it. Since Lord Shiva is the patron deity of conclusion of the world, the symbolism is clear—that if the mind is not favourable to anything, or when one does not see anything favourably, he would be inclined to eliminate it by shunning it completely. When the mind does not register anything, it is as good as being concluded as far as the creature is concerned in spite of its presence and the creature actually looking at it.]

By focusing the mind on the head and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Brahm Loka. [This has reference to the area of the head where the brain is located. The brain is the only entity in the body that thinks and has intelligence; hence it is a symbolic abode of the Supreme Being. The Aiteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 3, verse no. 12 describes how Brahm, the Supreme Being, had entered the body of the man at the time of creation by entering it through a hair-like slit on the skull, which came to be known as the Brahm-Randhra. Yoga Upanishads describe how the Pran of the ascetic experiences the presence of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, when it enters the region of the head above the root of the nose. It is then that the practitioner of Yoga becomes self-realised and enlightened. When the time comes, the Pran escapes through this Brahm-Randhra into the outer sky, thereby providing the man with his final liberation and deliverance, called his Mukti. Hence, this stanza refers to Brahm-realisation, or experiencing the presence of cosmic Consciousness leading to enlightenment and self-awareness when the mind is focused on doing Yoga in its heightened and most refined form.]

By focusing the mind on the sole of the foot and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Atal Loka. [The genesis of creation describes that the lower worlds were created from the feet of the Viraat Purush who is the all-encompassing macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being. This stanza refers to this fact because the human body is a microcosm of the same Viraat Purush. In more practical terms it means that one feels the ground below one’s feet only because the mind enables the soles to be aware of its presence, or only as long as there is conscious life in the soles. When the mind is diverted somewhere else one would not be aware of the ground on which one walks.]

By focusing the mind on the toes of the leg and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Vital Loka. [The Vital Loka is an extension or projection of the Atal Loka, and is a part of the seven types of lower worlds. The toes are like the feelers of the leg which resemble the shortened tentacles of an insect by the help of which it gets the hang of things in its front. The idea here is that even though the soles of the feet might have life in them that enables a man to feel the ground under his feet, but the toes might be paralyzed and unable to feel any sensation at all, as happens during frost bite. In short, the idea is that each unit of the man’s body is kept alive and functioning only as long as the mind and its sub-conscious decides it to be so. Otherwise that particular organ is as good as dead. From the metaphysical perspective it means that the creature’s body or any of its organs is worth its while only as long as there is life-consciousness in it.]

By focusing the mind on the ankle-joints and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Nital Loka. [This is the third of the seven lower worlds.]

By focusing the mind on the calf and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Satal Loka. [This is the fourth of the seven lower worlds.]

By focusing the mind on the knee-joint and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Mahaatal Loka. [This is the fifth of the seven lower worlds.]

By focusing the mind on the thighs and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Rasaatal Loka. [This is the sixth of the seven lower worlds.]

By focusing the mind on the hip-joint and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Talaatal Loka. [This is the seventh and the last of the lower worlds.]

By focusing the mind on the navel and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Bhu Loka. [This is the terrestrial world. The 'Bhu Loka' is the first of the seven upper worlds. The probable reason to say that by focusing the attention on the navel one is able to have knowledge of the Bhu Loka is that it is through the navel that the man's body derives its nourishment when it is in the mother's womb, and the navel is said to be the center from where all the Naadis (nerves and veins) originate and then radiate to all the parts of the body. These Naadis make a man aware of the world around him and enables him to live in it. All the internal gross organs of the body, such as the intestines, the kidneys, the pancreas, the genitals, the liver, the heart, the lungs etc. are also located in the area of the body of which the navel is the epicenter. Hence, the navel is the part of the body that makes a man aware of the terrestrial world around him.]

By focusing the mind on the stomach or the cavity of the abdomen and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Bhuvaha Loka. [The 'Bhuvaha Loka' is the second of the seven upper worlds. This is the world above the earth and is the lower heaven. It is here that the sky has its beginning above the surface of the earth. The cavity of the stomach and the abdomen are like this sky because they are nearer to the navel which represents the terrestrial world or the surface of the earth.]

By focusing the mind on the heart and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Swaha Loka. [The 'Swaha Loka' is the third of the seven upper worlds. This is the middle heaven where the junior Gods live. The heart is emotional and is easily taken for a ride. It rarely thinks of spiritual matters though it is here in its subtle sky that the 'spirit' lives in the form of the Atma of the man. The Gods that live in the heaven are also noble 'spirits' who have not found total emancipation and salvation because had they achieved this ultimate destination they would not have existed as 'Gods' in the first place. These Gods are also emotional and have their own passions, longings, preferences and biases like the heart of the man. Just like success in any venture in this material world is said to be quite dependant upon the help provided by these Gods, the involvement of the heart is absolutely necessary if one needs to be totally focused on the task at hand. Otherwise he would be doing it 'half-heartedly'. The involvement of the heart in the process of learning is also evident when we say that the subject is to be learnt 'by heart', though technically it is the brain that actually does the learning job.]

By focusing the mind on the upper area of the body above the heart and below the throat, and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Maha Loka. [The 'Maha Loka' is the fourth of the seven upper worlds. The word 'Maha' means 'great or greater' like we have 'Greater London'. It is an extension of the Swaha represented by the heart. The probable reason of equating the upper area of the chest above the heart to this 'Maha Loka' is that the broader face of the cone-like heart faces up while its tapering end is pointing downwards.]

By focusing the mind in the Kantha or the throat region and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Janaha Loka. [The 'Janaha Loka' is the fifth of the seven upper worlds. It refers to the area of the world which is inhabited by creatures who speak, as the voice is located in the throat. A man is made conscious of the presence of life in any part of the world only when he hears about it, or when it is spoken about. Similarly, one makes companions and expands his reach in this world by using the faculty of speech to make his views and intentions known. Hence, it is appropriate to call the throat as being the medium by which one becomes aware of the Janaha Loka, and gains knowledge of it.]

By focusing the mind in the middle of the two eyebrows in the forehead and visualizing the presence of consciousness there one is able to have knowledge of the Tapaha Loka. [The 'Tapaha Loka' is the sixth of the seven upper worlds. The word 'Tapa' refers to observing stringent austerity, doing penance and suffering hardships for some noble cause. Meditation and contemplation envisages strict control over the numerous dalliances of the body and its natural desire for seeking gratification as well as pleasures and comforts of the material world. To do Yoga, especially the one of higher spiritual dimension as described in this Canto which involves concentration of mind in the forehead between the two eyebrows so that spiritual awakening is made feasible and one can experience the presence of the consciousness there (refer verse nos. 17-23, 33, 48), is equivalent to doing Tapa as it requires strict discipline and self-control. Those spiritual aspirants who do Yoga are actually doing Tapa for their spiritual liberation and deliverance.]

By focusing the mind in the head (i.e. the upper area of the head where the Sahastraar Chakra and the Brahm-Randhra are located, and where Brahm is said to have his divine abode in the man's body), and visualizing the presence of consciousness there, one is able to have knowledge of the Satya Loka. [The 'Satya Loka' is the seventh and the last of the upper worlds. It is called 'Satya' meaning 'truthful' because it is here that the ascetic comes face to face with the cosmic 'Truth' in the form of Brahm. More practically it refers to the brain with its intellect and the faculty of thought with its magnificent ability to separate the wrong from the right, to distinguish between what is false and what is true, to show the creature the right and auspicious path to his welfare and good. It is the higher level of the intellect that distinguishes a man from an animal, and an evil and sinful man from a noble and holy one. No other organ, singularly or in conjunction with others has this ability. So, since intelligence and consciousness go hand in hand, and since the Supreme Being is the most wise and intelligent entity in creation, the head is regarded as the abode of Brahm. The mind and intellect drive all the activities of the man, and are regarded as the 'captain' or the 'chief commander' of the entire setup known as the body of the man just like the Supreme Being is the chief commander of the vast creation. From the metaphysical perspective, when the aspirant realises the presence of this cosmic divinity in the form of pure consciousness residing in his inner-self along with the understanding that his 'real self' is this sublime consciousness that is eternal and

imperishable, and not the gross body in which this consciousness lives, as also the fact that both the body as well as the rest of the world are gross, perishable and therefore false and deluding, he is deemed to have realised the spiritual 'truth' of existence. When this happens it is metaphorically said that he has had knowledge of the 'Satya Loka' or the truthful nature existence.]

By focusing the mind on what is Dharma and what is Adharma (i.e. when the mind is able to distinguish what is right and proper, and what is not), the man is able to know of the past and the future. [When he analyses his present situation, good or bad, and researches on the factors which result in creating a similar situation, he can intelligently trace back to his past to visualize what he must have done sometimes long ago due to the effect of which he is in a particular situation today. This would also help him to predict his future as every action has a predictable result, and thereby help him devise methods to improve his future based on his present experience and its analysis. This has a solid scientific backing when one can confidently deduce the past as well as precisely predict the future course of events if one knows the present and has the statistical data as well as the knowledge of the various equations and reactions necessary for such deductions. In the metaphysical realm, the scriptures provide the information on what actions produce what results. This is the meaning of 'Dharma and Adharma' here. While 'Dharma' refers to things that are auspicious, proper and righteous, Adharma means just the opposite. When a man is wise he would study the scriptures and would immediately come to know which right or wrong action or deed of his in the past has landed him in his present situation, and what he must do now to determine the future he wishes for himself. Hence, the meaning of this stanza becomes abundantly clear and obvious to him now.]

When the man's mind is focused on and pays attention on the voices of different creatures, he is not only able to know what they are saying but also learns different languages, accents and dialects. [This stanza also means that when one closely listens to what others are saying he is able to have an in-depth knowledge of things yet not known to him as well as understand the hidden meaning of what is being said.]

When a man is able to focus his mind and pay attention to the theory of deeds and their consequences, and how they affect a man's destiny and future, he is able to learn about his past life. [When a wise person gains knowledge of how various deeds and their cumulative results affect a person's present life, he can look back and confidently deduce about his past life based on the present situation of his life. For instance, if he learns that a particular disease is caused by overeating or indulging in something and finds that he is suffering from the same disease, he can very safely deduce that he had been committing the same mistake in some time in the past. And, he also becomes wized to the fact that even if he is healthy now but commits the same mistake that produces a particular disease then he is sure to suffer from it in the future. In other word, a wise and erudite man can determine with logical and statistical certainty what his future and destiny would be depending upon what his deeds are, or what his past life was based on his present.]

By thinking the way others think, a wise and erudite man is able to know and analyse their thought processes, and even predict their behaviours based on this analysis.

By fixing the mind on the physical characteristics of others, a man begins to imitate them. [For instance, if a man thinks that wearing a particular set of clothes would make him look smarter, he would start wearing them himself. If he thinks that walking in a specific manner with a particular swagger would make him appear cool

and modern, he would adopt it. The simple implication in all these stanzas is that a man becomes what he thinks of, where his mind is focused.]

By fixing the mind on acquisition of strength, a man acquires bodily strength and physical prowess like the one possessed by Hanuman and other strong beings. [Hanuman is a character from the legendary story of Ramayana. He was instrumental in Lord Ram's search for Sita and the victory of the demon Ravana. Hanuman is regarded as singularly one of the most brave and strong companions of Lord Ram. This happens because when the mind is focused on physical strength and fitness, it would strive to make the man do everything to make the body strong and fit. Like any other decision of the man when it is the mind that decides what he does and what he shuns, it is the mind that is instrumental in his attaining strength and physical fitness.]

By focusing the mind on the Sun, a man acquires knowledge of all the Bhuvans (worlds) that are lighted by the Sun. [This is a metaphoric way of saying that if a man looks up and gets interested in astrology and astronomy he will be able to learn about the higher worlds above the earth, about the solar system and other celestial bodies in the heaven. The Sun lights up the entire sky, and not only the earth. Hence, he would gain knowledge of the worlds and subtle forms of life beyond the earth.]

Similarly, if his mind is focused on the Moon, he would acquire knowledge of the stars and other heavenly bodies of the sky during the night.

By focusing the mind on the Dhruv star (the Polar Star), a man is able to learn about the movement of stars and other planetary bodies in the sky. [This technique was used in earlier times to navigate during the night. The locations and movements of the different constellations in the sky are deduced with relation to the Polar Star.]

When the mind is focused in one's own welfare he is able to find out the truth that serves his purpose. [From the metaphysical angle this is very important observation. When a man wishes to find out what is really good for him, he discovers the truth of the Atma and the real path to his spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. He also discovers that the world which he finds so real and pleasurable is actually playing spoil-sport as far as his true spiritual welfare is concerned as the world would keep him trapped in its endless net of delusions and temptations. By remaining enamoured by this cunning enchantress, the man can never find true peace and happiness. The knowledge of this 'truth' is what really serves his self interest, and this knowledge like any body of knowledge comes only when the mind is focused and alert.]

By focusing the mind on the Nabhi Chakra (i.e. the whirling subtle energy center located in the region of the navel), one is able to have knowledge of the construction of the physical body. [This is because the embryo derives its nourishment from the mother through the placenta attached to the navel. All the Naadis have their origin in the Nabhi Chakra. It is the de-facto center of the physical body as all the major organs, both internal as well as external, are located in the region of the abdomen around the navel. If the abdomen is removed, nothing would remain of the body.]

By focusing the mind on the pit of the throat, thirst and hunger are controlled. [This refers to the process of Pranayam and its accompanying benefits as described earlier in verse nos. 13/3-4 of this section no. 7, Canto no. 1. It also refers to the Khechari Mudra and the Jalandhar Bandh as described in verse nos. 11,30, 42/2-3.]

By focusing the mind on the Kurma Naadi, one obtains stability and restfulness. [Refer Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 13 which describes the functions of different Naadis. The Kurma Naadi is responsible for the opening and closing of the

eyelids. The obvious inference here is that when one is able to control his eyes he would be able to control what he sees of the world, and thereby control his awareness of the world itself. Besides this, it is required in the Khechari Mudra of Yoga that one keeps his eyes fixed without blinking on the tip of his nose as well as remain mentally focused on the central point of the eyebrows. The practitioner is supposed to keep his eyes in a half-open and half-closed position in order to attain higher echelons of spiritual bliss—first it is done consciously as a special effort, and in due course it becomes natural to him. Refer above to verse nos. 15-18, 32-34, 44/2 of this section no. 7.]

By focusing the mind on the pupils of the eye, one is able to attain mystical powers. [Refer verse no. 17 of this section 7, Canto 1.]

And finally, by focusing the mind in the subtle sky or subtle space present inside the body, a man is able to move in the greater sky of the creation. [This refers to the process of controlling of the vital winds through Pranayam and diverting the energy of the Kundalini upwards, as well as to the Khechari Mudra that is described in detail in this section above. Refer specially to verse nos. 39, 42/2.]

In this way, by focusing the mind and visualizing the presence of consciousness in various units of the body, the aspirant is able to have different experiences of the same divinity in different forms with different dimensions. He obtains access to various mystical experiences by focusing the mind on different levels of existence (52).

[Note—Refer to last stanza of verse no. 1 and full verse no. 2 of section 8, Canto 1 of this Upanishad below in the context of the present verse no. 52.]

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Canto 1/Section 8

1. Now the concept of 'Pratyahar' is being described. It is of five types as follows—

Generally speaking, Pratyahar is to exercise restraint on the sense organs of the gross body by preventing them from naturally moving outwards towards their respective sense objects in the external world and remaining indulgent or engrossed in them. Pratyahar is to consciously and diligently strive to turn the efforts and energy of the sense organs of the body inwards towards one's inner being, towards one's truthful 'self', towards realisation of the truth of the Atma, the pure conscious Spirit, by being meditative and contemplative in a purposeful and fruitful manner.

In order to make this happen, the aspirant should understand and inculcate the wisdom that whatever is seen is nothing but the Atma or pure consciousness, and that if anything lacks the Atma then it is not the truth. The awareness that whatever is perceived in the external world by the organs of perception in the body is due to the presence of Atma or consciousness or 'life' in these organs, and that this world exists only as long as there is Atma in it (i.e. as long as there is life in the body as well as the world in which it lives) is known as Pratyahar.

Not to be interested in and bothered or concerned about the results of the deeds done daily by the aspirant is known as Pratyahar. [In other words, one is observing Pratyahar if he is not worried about the rewards or punishments of the deeds that he does as a matter of his duty. He should do deeds in this world without expecting any fruits from them. This is doing deeds with exemplary detachment and dispassion. Since all deeds are done by the gross organs of the body, being detached from the deeds, or not being mentally involved in them, is equivalent to having

restrained the organs from involvement with the external world of sense objects because these organs would not expect any self-gratification or deriving any personal gain as a reward of doing these deeds. Neither would the organs shun doing any deed for the fear of punishment. The net effect would be that the man would do all his duties with the greatest neutrality and in an un-biased way. He would be more interested in doing his duties diligently and to the best of his might and abilities so that the thing done is perfect as far as possible rather than having half his attention fixed on their results, and getting nervous and distracted as a consequence.]

To be completely free from all sorts of Vasanas (passions, lust, desires, aspirations and yearnings) regarding the various material sense objects of this mundane world is also called Pratyahar. [Vasanas are generated when the sense organs find the world succulent and juicy. When the man trains himself to become dispassionate and detached from all temptations and enchantments of this deluding and entrapping world, it is natural that the organs lose interest in the world. It is the mind that directs the organs of the body to do anything, and when the mind has decided that it is worthless to pursue this material world, and that no permanent peace, bliss and happiness is ever possible in this world and its material sense objects, it would direct the organs to keep themselves away from all involvement with this world.]

To focus the mind and its sub-conscious in the eighteen subtle places of the body so that the energy and dynamism inherent in the living being are directed to nobler causes of the spirit instead of frittering them away in pursuing this illusive and demeaning gross world is also known as Pratyahar. [The eighteen subtle points are listed in verse no. 2 below. This edict is an extension of the first one that ordains restricting the sense organs of the body from moving outwards towards the gross world of material sense objects, and instead turning those organs inwards and directing their efforts to aid the aspirant in his spiritual practices such as meditation and contemplation.] (1).

2. The eighteen points where the mind should be focused and consciousness visualized to be pulsating (i.e. present in a vibrating form) during meditation are the following—the big toe of the foot, the ankle, the calf, the knee, the thigh, the anus, the genital, the navel, the heart, the pit of the throat, the palate in the mouth, the nostril, the eye, the center of the eyebrows, the forehead, and the top of the head.

One must concentrate on all these points of the body and experience the pulsations of life-consciousness in them. [In this context, refer verse no. 52, section 7, Canto 1 above of this present Upanishad.] (2).

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Canto 1/Section 9

1. Now, the concept of ‘Dharna’ (to bear; to have a firmness of conviction and belief) is being narrated. It is of three types as follows--

To focus one’s Mana (thinking mind and emotional heart) on the Atma or the pure consciousness that is the true inner-self of the aspirant, and to be unwaveringly firm in this belief that the Atma is one’s true self, is called the first type of Dharna.

To have a firm belief and be convinced that the subtle space of the heart, called the ‘Hridaya Akash’, is the same as the eternal, vast, infinite and fathomless sky present outside the body, called the ‘Vahaya-kash’, is the second type of Dharna.

To be convinced that the five principal elements of creation, viz. the earth, the water, the fire, the air and the sky which, though subtle in themselves, are the ones that have revealed themselves in the gross form of all that exists in this creation is called 'Dharna'. In other words, to be able to have a firm belief that all that is visible in this gross world are nothing else but the same five subtle elements of creation appearing in these myriad and varied forms is called Dharna. Hence, Dharna is to have a firm conviction that all that is visible in this world are actually images of these five primary elements of creation that have assumed different forms. [By extension, Dharna is to have a firm belief that all life and all creatures that exist in this world are nothing but the same cosmic Consciousness called the Atma that is revealed in each of their forms.] (1).

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Canto 1/Section 10

1. Now, the concept of 'Dhyan'¹ is being described. It is of two types as follows—

The first is called 'Saguna Dhyan' and the second is called 'Nirguna Dhyan'.

'Saguna Dhyan' is to think about, contemplate upon and remember something as having a physical form with specific features; it is to think of the divine Being in the form of an image having gross physical features and characteristic attributes.

'Nirguna Dhyan' is to think of and contemplate upon the same sublime divinity in its subtle form that is invisible and is known as the Atma or pure consciousness. This Atma is in the form of an ethereal spirit that has no grossness, physical features or characteristic attributes to define it (1).

[Note—¹*Dhyan*— The word *Dhyan* literally means 'to think or to cogitate'. It is profound and abstract meditation that revolves around reflection and thoughts that are focused on the Divinity said to be concealed inside the bosom of all the creatures as their pure consciousness that in turn is the supreme cosmic power in creation known as Brahm. Usually the energy of this cosmic Consciousness is lying latent and unused in the own body of the creature simply because it is in a dormant form and un-ignited much like the fire lying dormant in the firewood or charcoal and needing some prodding to leap back into life with all its glorious potentials and splendour. Dhyan envisages the concentration of the stupendous powers of the faculties of the mind to deeply contemplate and fixedly ponder on the great spiritual truths of creation as envisioned by the scriptures to unravel their enigmatic secrets. This is done by fixing the powerful forces of the mind which is aided by the physical contribution of the body in this auspicious endeavour in the form of various meditative exercises, onto a spot called the 'Bindu', literally the point source of spiritual energy located in the heart as the 'Atma or soul' of the creature, as also in the centre of the eyebrows as 'awareness and enlightenment', from where the great mystical powers in creation spring out and spread into the outside world. It envisions the use of various Yoga techniques to contemplate and meditate upon the various aspects of spiritualism with the objective of unfolding the magnificent treasure of spiritual enlightenment and unleashing of the astounding mystical powers that are inherently present in the Atma but tacitly concealed hitherto, leading to self and Brahm realisation, to the awakening of the universal powers of the Spirit.

Dhyan means both contemplation as well as meditation. The word also means 'attention; focus'. So this word is generally understood in common parlance to be similar to contemplation and meditation, concentration and focusing of the conscious mind. It covers both the terms in its ambit.

The appropriate word for contemplation in Sanskrit would be 'Manan and Chintan' which will roughly mean 'deep thought, reflection, pondering and application of mind'. The Upanishads stress on this 'Chintan-manan' aspect of the mind-intellect when it talks about 'Dhyan'. Greatest of scientific discoveries were made more by intuition than anything else. That is why intuition is closely related to the so-called 'sixth sense' in a man, i.e. a state when the intuitive man knows what is the correct path to chose from a variety of options, and more often than not, he is correct. We can say that this 'intuition' is the guidance provided by the subtle soul/Atma of the creature. Not everybody is equally intuitive by nature; this is because some persons, by virtue of their past actions and deeds have a thicker layer of Vasanas and Vrittis surrounding their Atma while others have a thinner layer so that the voice coming out of the Atma is easily heard in the latter case while it is muzzled and suppressed in the former case.

The great exponent of Yoga, sage Patanjali, in his magnum opus 'Yogsutra' has described 'Dhyan' as concentration. Dhyan is that state in which the inner mind tries to see the reality behind things. This 'thinking' process links it with contemplation while concentration function links it with meditation. According to Agni Puran, contemplation with a calm mind is Dhyan while Garud Puran has defined it as concentration on the Brahm. Dhyan, therefore, leads to enlightenment. Woodworth, in his book 'Psychology', writes that the mind concentrates on one impulse at a time and neglects others. So, Dhyan in this context means 'to become alert and activated for doing a work or seeing an object exclusively'. Dhyan is momentary in the beginning, but it becomes permanent later on with practice. Sidney Smith defines Dhyan as 'to forget everything else except the main objective'. Charles Dickens views Dhyan as 'useful, harmless, definite and a beneficial process of the mind'. According to Bergansa, 'suppression of external distractions is essential for the deepening expansion of Dhyan'. Edgar Casey says that 'Dhyan brings to the fore the latent powers of creativity in a person. This creativity improves and enriches his physical, mental and spiritual aspects'. John White in his renowned work 'The meeting of science and spirit' has enumerated many benefits of Dhyan— promotion of physical health, reduction of tension, anxiety and aggressiveness, it leads to self realisation and self improvement and development. He further says that the benefit of meditation are the following— feeling of tranquillity, freedom, reduction of tiredness and depression, relief from pains, increase in positive traits such as sympathy and empathy for others, believe in divinity and purity of self etc. Michael Murphy and Steven Donovan, in their research work titled 'The physical and psychological effects of meditation' have mentioned that meditation/Dhyan helps to regulate and control electrical and chemical activity of the brain, the rhythm of the heart, regulates blood pressure, the skin's ability to resist infection and it regulates general metabolism.

The great philosopher sage Sankaracharya has explained that the many Vedic rituals such as sacrifices had been transformed as mental concepts for contemplation and meditation by Chandogya Upanishad because any defect in the performance of a ritual according to the Vedas, however small and inconsequential, could devalue and derail the whole process. Further, elaborate rituals required huge preparation and expenditure. So he prescribed that meditation was far better, safer and surer means of attaining the same benefits that elaborate sacrifices offered. Contemplation and meditation are equally efficient in spiritual pursuit of the aspirant. Nevertheless, the former (contemplation) has intellect and mind as its main focus while the latter (meditation) concentrates on the mind and body to be effective. Sacrifices, as compared to them, are merely physical rituals.

As is evident, the chariot moves in the proper direction when all the horses are controlled simultaneously. So a holistic and an all-inclusive, well synchronized and homogenous approach is needed by a seeker/aspirant to attain success in his endeavour to get liberation and deliverance from the horrible torments agitating him as well as to attain emancipation and salvation for its soul from this world.

The concept of Dhyan has been described in detail in *Chandogya Upanishad*, Canto 7, section 6 and 18 of the Sam Veda tradition, and *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which is expressly dedicated to it. Verse no. 1 of Dhyan Bindu Upanishad refers to the concept of Dhyan Yoga and gives its spiritual importance. The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 7, verse no. 8 says that the Hans and the Param Hans Sanyasis are required to do only Dhyan as a means to obtain Mukti or spiritual salvation. Refer also to the *Tejobindu Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 36.]

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Canto 1/Section 11

1. Now finally, the concept of ‘Samadhi’ is being narrated in brief.

It is a state of exalted and sublime existence when the Jiva-Atma and the Parmatma have become one—i.e. when the individual soul has become indistinguishable, inseparable and indivisible from the cosmic Soul of creation.

It is an exalted and sublime state when there is no distinction between the three basic units of creation that makes one aware of its existence—viz. the one who is the observer or seer of anything, the thing observed or seen, and the medium used in the process of observing or seeing. [For instance, when a man sees an object such as mountain, he is the seer, the mountain is the object seen, and the eye and its faculty of sight is the medium used in this process. Similarly, when a man hears some music, he is the one who hears, the music is the object heard, and the ears are the medium to complete the circuit or make hearing possible. During Samadhi all these three merge into one point—the spiritual aspirant reaches a state when all barriers between his individual self and the cosmic Self are removed and his Atma becomes one with the cosmic Atma that is all-pervading in this creation. The gross body which separates them is relegated to the background and rendered inconsequential; the Atma transcends the grossness of the body and assumes its primary cosmic form which is all-pervading and free from all encumbrances. It is like the air trapped in a mud-pot merging with the outer air when the pot is broken. Hence, Samadhi is a transcendental state of dissolution when all artificial distinctions and illusionary boundaries are done away with.]

Samadhi is marked by a state of extreme blissfulness, felicity and beatitude when all that remains and matters is the pure and sublime consciousness (1).

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Canto 2/Section 1

[This and the following Cantos are an exposition of the concept of ‘Brahm Vidya’—or the sublime knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm.]

1. When sage Shandilya had studied all the four Vedas but still could not grasp the Brahm Vidya¹, i.e. inspite of delving deep into the four primary scriptures he could not understand what Brahm stood for and what is its form and nature, he approached the most exalted sage Atharva and requested him—‘Oh Lord! Please preach me on

Brahm Vidya (i.e. enlighten me about the concept of Brahm) so that I can have spiritual welfare and derive benefit from it.’ (1).

[Note—¹*Brahm Vidya*—All the Upanishads are basically dedicated to this eclectic philosophy. It is called ‘Brahm-realisation’ and it marks the culmination of one’s spiritual quest. However, besides the present Upanishad, some of the other Upanishads which can be cited here are the following—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Kaivalya Upanishad, Brahm Upanishad, Panch Brahm Upanishad, Akchyu Upanishad, Tejobindu Upanishad, Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1-5, and Brahm Vidya Upanishad. (b) Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1-2; Atma Upanishad; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 4; Canto 4, paragraph no. 1. (c) Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad. (d) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Brihad Aranyak Upanishad.]

2. Upon this request, sage Atharva began his discourse—‘Oh Shandilya! Brahm¹ (the supreme transcendental and divine Being; the super Consciousness; the principal Authority and the Supreme Being of creation; the absolute and the only truth of creation) exists or is revealed not only in the form of ‘Satya’ (Truth) and ‘Vigyan’ (truthful and in-depth knowledge) but also in the form that is ‘Anant’ (endless, infinite) as well as other forms. [There is another way of reading this verse as follows—Brahm has endless and infinite forms, and one of them is Truth, and the other is Knowledge.] (2).

[Note—¹Brahm is a most enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious entity of creation, an entity that is the object of all metaphysical research and discussions. All the Upanishads as well as the primary scriptures known as the Vedas are primarily focused on Brahm and attempt to understand it, but the fact is that they all fail in this attempt. All they say at the end is ‘neti-neti’—i.e. Brahm is neither this nor that; ‘Brahm is not this, it is definitely not this’, they declare.

There are legends of Upanishads that do not tire in enumerating the grandness and the majesty of Brahm and its divine and unparalleled virtues. Some of these Upanishads are the following, though it cannot be concluded that this is a complete list because all the 108 Upanishads deal with this single divine entity—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 15-19, Canto 3, verse nos. 17-22; *Kathrudra Upanishad*, verse no. 12, 27-28, 30-31, 42; *Taittiriya Upanishad* Valli 3, Anuvak 10, verse no. 2-5; *Skanda Upanishad*, verse no. 13; *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 4; *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 16, 20-21, 26, 29; Canto 3, verse no. 2; and Canto 4, verse nos. 31-32; *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 35; *Saraswati Upanishad*, verse no. 50-52; *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*.

(b) Atharva Veda’s = *Mundak Upanishad*, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak 2, section 2, verse no. 7, 9-11; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 3-5, 7-9; *Atharvashir Upanishad*, Kandika 4 (full); *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8 which is fully dedicated to enumerating the grand virtues of Brahm; Canto 9, verse nos. 3, 19-22; *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 4, Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; *Shandilya Upanishad*, Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 2-5, and Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 1-8, 11-14; *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 27-31, 67; Canto 5, verse nos. 10, 20-21, 65-67; Canto 5, verse nos. 72-73, 76-77, 113; *Atma Upanishad*, verse nos. 1-D and 1-E, verse nos. 2-4, 9, 30-31; *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 13-16; Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16, 26, 28-30, 44; *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 6, 8-9, 16-17, 22; *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 7.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda’s following Upanishads—*Adhyatma Upanishad*, verse nos. 61-64; *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* Canto 2, Brahman 3 describes this Brahm’s two forms in detail.

(d) Sam Veda's *Chandogya Upanishad*, *Keno Upanishad* and *Avyakta Upanishad*.]

3. Brahm is an indefinable and incomprehensible divine but most esoteric and mysterious entity that surrounds everything in existence, in which everything is submerged. It is from this divine entity that everything comes into being, and it is in it that everything would finally collapse and end.

It is one by knowing which everything else becomes known.

It has no hands and legs, no eyes, does nothing, has no tongue, and neither does it have any form of physical gross body.

It is an entity so subtle and ethereal as well as mysterious, enigmatic and esoteric that it cannot be grasped, physically (because it has no gross body and form) as well as metaphorically (because he defies all understanding and transcends definitions).

Hence, it (Brahm) cannot be described or explained in any way whatsoever. [Any attempt to do so is only scrapping the surface without even being able to peel the first layer fully.] (3).

4. The speech and the mind return empty-handed in their failed attempt to have access to it (Brahm). [That is, the faculty of speech fails miserably in its attempt to describe Brahm, and the mind too fails equally miserably in its attempt to know or understand about Brahm.]

That (Brahm) which can only be known by the medium of true Gyan (enlightenment and self-realisation), that from which ancient wisdom and knowledge first came into being and then developed and spread, that which is unique, unparalleled and non-dual, that which is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent like the sky, that which is most subtle and sublime, that which is honoured by the epithet of 'Niranjan' (i.e. one that is without any blemishes and taints of any kind; one that is faultless and free from darkness), that which does not do anything or gets involved in any kind of deeds or actions on the physical plane of existence (though nothing happens without it or its inspiration), that which is the only and ultimate Truth and Reality in the entire creation, that which is an embodiment of pure and dynamic consciousness, that which is an image of extreme bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity, that which is only one, immutable and indivisible, remaining ever steady and unchanging, that which is auspicious, holy, sublime and divine, that which is extremely calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil, being unruffled and unaffected by anything, that which is eternal and imperishable—verily, it is this unique divinity that is known as the supreme transcendental Brahm.

Indeed it is you (Shandilya). Come to realise it (the truth about yourself as well as about Brahm) through acquisition of Gyan. [The 'true self' of all living beings is their Atma, the pure, subtle and sublime consciousness residing in their gross physical body. Brahm is also the same 'consciousness' but on a grand scale of the entire creation. The individual creature is Brahm in its microcosmic form. It must be emphasized here that when we talk of the individual creature we mean his 'Atma' and not the gross body. Hence, it is obvious that statement 'it is you' refers to the Atma, the 'true self' of sage Shandilya, and not his gross body. The gross body is erroneously regarded as the identity of the creature because of the simple reason that it is visible and easy to understand, while the Atma is invisible and non-tangible entity difficult to perceive and understand. Once this truth—that the 'true self' is the Atma, and that the Atma is a universal entity that uniformly pervades throughout this

world—dawns upon the mental horizon of the aspirant, he becomes ‘self-realised’. And since the ‘self’ is the pure conscious Atma, it follows that when one becomes ‘self-realised’ he is deemed to be ‘Brahm-realised’ too.

The statement ‘you are Brahm’ which leads to the realisation ‘I am Brahm’ are one of the few Mahavakyas, or the great spiritual truths, proclaimed by the Vedas.] (4).

5. It is one supreme Lord whose dynamic Shakti (spiritual energy) has been revealed in the form of the powers of the Atma.

He is all-knowing and omniscient in all matters.

He is the Lord of all that exists.

He is manifested as the Atma living in the inner-self of all living beings, and therefore he is a secret resident in the inner-self of all the creatures in this creation.

He is the origin of all living beings (as he is the supreme and ultimate Creator who has created even the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva).

He can only be known by Yoga (meditation and contemplation).

Being the supreme Lord and Creator he is the one who creates, sustains and then concludes this creation and everything in it himself (without any help).

Verily, this Lord (i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness) is known as the Atma or soul of the entire creation. You must be wise enough to understand that the supreme Brahm exists in the form of the Atma, the pure consciousness. [In other words, if Brahm is removed from this world nothing would remain. It is the ‘soul’ or the most essential and primary requirement for the creation to come into existence and to remain existing. Even if it ends, it is from Brahm that it would re-emerge in due course of time. It is said that Brahm is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent uniformly in this creation, and this refers to the Atma that secretly lives in the inner-self of all living beings. The Atma is the essence of life and existence; it is a metaphor for life and existence as much as is Brahm. Atma and Brahm are synonymous with each other.] (5).

6. Do not have any regrets, fears or consternations. Don’t think that Brahm is beyond your reach. You can overcome all your frustrations and dismay by acquiring specialized knowledge of the Atma, as it would enlighten you about Brahm.’ (6).

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Canto 3/Section 1

1. Having acquired the above knowledge from the exalted sage Atharva, sage Shandilya asked him once again—‘Oh Lord! How has this world come into being from that Lord who is so esoteric, mysterious and secret that nothing is known about him, the Lord who is known and represented by the ‘Akshar’ (here referring to the ethereal word OM which is a monosyllabic sound having no forms; the word also means one who is imperishable and not subject to decay and destruction), who does not do anything, who is most auspicious, divine, sublime and holy, who is the only supreme Authority in this creation, and who is revealed in the form of the Atma, the pure consciousness? How is this creation established in him, and how does it finally vanish or dissolve in him at the end?

It is very important to solve this riddle for me; it is necessary for me that I am enlightened to these facts.’ (1).

2-3. Hearing his earnest plea, the exalted sage Atharva replied—‘Oh Shandilya! It is true that the supreme transcendental Brahm is neutral and does nothing. It is also true that it is in the form of an ‘Akshar’ (here referring to the ethereal word OM which is a monosyllabic sound having no forms). In spite of these, Brahm has three subtle forms—called ‘Sakal’ (meaning Brahm having a visible form; or Brahm that has specific attributes), ‘Nishkal’ (having no visible form; having universal virtues in their most sublime form), and ‘Sakal-Nishkal’ (having both the characteristics of a Sakal and a Nishkal Brahm; a composite of both the values) (2-3).

4. Now, the ‘Nishkal’ form of Brahm is being outlined.

Brahm that is an embodiment of Truth, that is an image of extreme bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity, that does nothing and remains motionless, that is honoured by the epithet of ‘Niranjan’ (i.e. an entity that has no taints, blemishes, darkness and faults of any kind), that is universal and uniformly all-pervading and omnipresent, that is most subtle, atomic and microscopic, that has his mouth in all the four directions (i.e. is able to see, hear, feel, smell and taste everything that exists in any point in this physical world; one from whom nothing is hidden or kept secret), that is indefinable and indescribable, and that is eternal, imperishable and infinite—verily, this subtle, sublime, ethereal, universal, all-encompassing and all-inclusive divine formless appearance or revelation of Brahm is called its ‘Nishkal’ form (4).

5. Now, the form of Brahm known as ‘Sakal’ is being described.

Brahm that is identified with natural Avidya (ignorance), Mool Prakriti (primary Nature) and Maya (delusions), that which is said to have subtle qualities represented or symbolized by the three colours of red, white and black (standing for the Raja Guna, the Sata Guna and the Tama Guna respectively).

When the unqualified, formless and attribute-less divine Being (i.e. Brahm) is visualized as being surrounded by Maya (delusions), he is said to have acquired different colours, such as dark and yellow.

[It is like viewing something with tinted glasses. It is obvious and natural that the thing viewed would adopt the colour of the glass through which it is being viewed. Similarly, when the immaculate and ‘Niranjan’ Brahm is viewed through the veil of Maya around it, the colours of the latter would naturally affect the former, though of course these colours are not the natural and inherent colours or traits of Brahm.]

Assuming these two colours, the same Brahm is called Maheshwar or Lord Shiva (who is responsible for concluding this creation) and Isha or Lord Vishnu (who is responsible for sustenance and protection of the same creation).

[This stanza can be interpreted and read as follows as well—The same Brahm is seen as having a yellow colour to emphasize his role as the sustainer and protector of creation, and as having a dark colour to emphasize his role as the concluder of creation. That is why he is called ‘Maheshwar’ or the Great Lord because he performs two opposite functions simultaneously—one of sustenance and the other of conclusion of creation. The ‘yellow’ colour stands for sustenance and protection, while the ‘dark’ colour stands for destruction. They go hand-in-hand to suggest that what has come into being and so meticulously sustained and looked after would not escape destruction and conclusion in due course of time.]

This is the ‘Sakal’ form of Brahm (5).

6. Finally, the ‘Sakal-Nishkal’ form of Brahm is being described now.

The supreme transcendental Brahm had a wish to empower himself to expand and reveal his non-dual, single and unqualified form that was invisible and most subtle into numerous forms that had various qualities, were gross and visible. To make it possible he did Tapa (penance and austerity) for empowerment.

It was then that the triad of creation came into being due to this Tapa. This 'triad' assumed many forms, such as the three 'Akshars'¹, the three 'Vyarihitis'², the 'Gayatri Chanda' having three steps³, the three primary Vedas⁴, the three Varnas⁵, and the three Agnis or sacred Fires⁶.

This supreme Lord who is known as 'Bhagvan'⁷ is the supreme Authority in creation. He is endowed with all glories and majesties; he is all-pervading, omnipresent, all-encompassing, universal and uniformly distributed throughout the whole creation; he resides in the subtle heart of all creatures (as their Atma); he is full of maverick tricks and his ways are mysterious and unknown.

It is this Lord who has revealed himself as Brahma the creator of the visible world, as Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation, as Rudra who concludes this creation (so assiduously created by Brahma and so diligently sustained by Vishnu), as Indra (the king of Gods), as all other Gods as well as all types of living creatures in this creation.

It is this Lord that is present everywhere in this creation—in the front, in the rear, in the north (zenith), in the south (nadir), below and above, and everywhere else. In this holistic way, it is he who is everything and everyone in this creation.

It is this Lord who does everything out of his own free will and using his own powers (without any help whatsoever), and he is ever so graceful and benevolent towards his devotees.

It is he who had revealed himself as Lord Dattatreya⁸ who was glorious to look at, remained naked, was delicate and pure as the petals of the lotus flower, had four arms, was not at all fierce and fearsome, was free from all sins and evils, and was self-radiant with the glow of holiness and divinity.

Indeed, the above described form of Brahm is a composite of its Sakal as well as Nishkal forms. [All the glorious virtues of Brahm that are there in existence but cannot be physically perceived are its 'Nishkal' form, while that form which can be seen is its 'Sakal' form. For instance, the Atma is its Nishkal form while the creature is its Sakal form; Lords Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva are its Nishkal form while Lord Dattatreya is its Sakal form; the ethereal word OM is its Nishkal form while the Vedas are its Sakal form; the Vyarihitis are its Nishkal form while the earth and the sky is its Sakal form. The meaning is now abundantly clear. Both these forms compositely make up this vast creation—it has things that are visible as well as things that are there but not visible (6).

[Note—¹The word *Akshar* literally means a letter. Hence, the three Akshars are the three 'letters' of the word OM that stands for Brahm—viz. A, U and M, that symbolized the three aspects of the would-be creation—its origin, its expansion and growth, and its conclusion respectively.

²The three *Vyarihitis* are the first words pronounced by Brahma the creator at the beginning of creation—viz. *Bhu* from which the terrestrial world came into being, *Bhuvaha* from which the sky and the lower heaven came into being, and *Swaha* from which the vast heavens came into being.

³The *Gayatri Chanda* having three steps refers to the first and primary method of composition of verses having three lines in which the Vedas were originally revealed.

⁴The three primary *Vedas* are the *Rig/Rik*, the *Sam* and the *Yajur Vedas*.

⁵The three *Varnas* are the three classes in the society—viz. the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas.

⁶The three *Agnis* or sacred Fires are the following—the ‘Garhyapatya Agni’ which is the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice, the ‘Dakshinagni’ which is the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity; the fire lit at the site of a sacrificial fire ritual, near its south end, and the ‘Ahavaniya Agni’ which is the fire to invoke the Gods during a ritualistic sacrifice.

⁷The word *Bhagwan* refers to an enlightened being who possesses certain divine qualities not possessed by ordinary human beings, and which are even difficult for the Gods to have. The word has two parts—‘Bhag’ and ‘Wan’. The 2nd part ‘wan’ means ‘one who possesses’, while the 1st part ‘Bhag’ means ‘one who is like the receptacle or womb’ that harbours the following six qualities or virtues—(1) to have ‘Aishwarya’, which means to possess all the virtues that come under the category of having majesty, powers, wealth, fortune, opulence, flourish, supremacy, sway, dominance, glory, grandeur, omnipotence and other divine faculties in existence; (2) to have all Dharma, which means to possess all virtues that come under the ambit of righteousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, and nobility of thought and conduct; (3) to possess all the glories and majesties that come under the definition of the word Yash, i.e. to have great fame, glory, majesty and renown; (4) to have Sree, i.e. to possess all wealth, prosperity, pomp and circumstance, to have prestige, dignity, respect, honour, splendour and glory, as well as all other factors associated with those qualities mentioned in serial no. 1-3 above; (5) to have complete and comprehensive Gyan, i.e. to have true, deep, incisive, complete and all-incorporating knowledge, erudition, wisdom, skills, expertise and enlightenment; and (6) at the same time to have immaculate and the highest degree of Vairagya, i.e. to have complete renunciation, detachment, indifference and dispassion towards everything in this world. Hence, anyone who is endowed with the above six divine, eclectic and exemplary qualities is called a Bhagwan.

Conventionally, the word is used as a synonym for the words ‘Lord, God, Supreme Being’, and is used for someone who is glorious, divine, holy, majestic, honoured and revered.

⁸Lord *Dattatreya*—Lord Dattatreya is a fractional incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Verse no. 8 of this Canto establishes that Dattatreya was a manifestation of the Supreme Being.

A detailed life-sketch of Lord Dattatreya is given as a note of verse no. 4 of the Dattatreya Upanishad which is included in this volume as Chapter no. 30.]

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Canto 3/Section 2

1. Sage Shandilya once again asked the exalted sage Atharva—‘Oh Lord! Why is the supreme and transcendental Brahm recognized as being only having ‘One Rasa’ (i.e. having only of form inspite of it being manifested in the form of so many uncountable forms with as many uncountable attributes in this creation), and why is it known as nothing else but an embodiment of the Truth, Consciousness and Bliss?’ (1).

2. Sage Atharva replied—‘Oh Shandilya! Brahm expands or spreads its self without any external aid, and it is the one that makes other entities in this creation expand and spread when it so wishes. This is the reason why Brahm is honoured by the epithet of being ‘supreme’.

[In other words, Brahm does not need any help to fulfill its wishes to accomplish anything, and whatever happens in this creation is because of Brahm. It is Brahm that provides the inspiration, the impetus and the drive to do anything and

reach a destination. Brahm is most subtle, atomic and microscopic in its primary form, but it 'spreads and expands' to assume the form of this vast and endless world. Though Brahm is only 'one and non-dual', it metamorphosed into so many countless elements in this creation which are so varied and different from Brahm that they have no resemblance to Brahm in any way whatsoever but are Brahm revealed in their forms nevertheless. This is a unique achievement, and this is why Brahm is called 'supreme'. Though Brahm lives in this creation and is an integral part of each single unit of it, yet Brahm transcends all definitions by which this creation is known. Hence, Brahm is honoured by the epithet of being 'transcendental'.] (2).

3. [Then Shandilya asked—] 'Why is Brahm known as the Atma?' (3).

4. [Sage Atharva replied—] 'It (i.e. Brahm) lives inside each individual creature of this creation (in the form of pure consciousness and the true 'self' of the individual living being, as the quintessential element known as the soul of the Jiva, the living being, without which the latter cannot survive)¹, is the one entity that provides uniformity and non-duality to this creation², and is the one who accepts everything and dissolves them into one single indivisible whole³. This is why it is called the 'Atma' (4).

[Note—¹The word Atma means the 'soul' of any given entity, the essence and the fundamental aspect of anything without which that thing loses its existence, identity and bearing. The Atma is the fundamental essence in the body of all living beings, and without it no body would have any relevance in this creation. The entire existence of the Jiva revolves around the presence of the Atma. For instance, when a thing needs to be expressed or explained, different people would use different words and sentences and expressions to say it, but what matters is the essence of what is being said. This essence is the 'soul' of the thing said. If the soul is removed then all that is said is simply a jumble of words. Similarly, the body of a creature has any value only as long as it has life and consciousness in it, otherwise the gross body begins to decay rapidly, and no one would want to have anything to do with it.

Since Brahm is synonymous with 'consciousness and life' in this creation, and since the entity that infuses these basic characteristics into the body of the creature to make it possible for it to be called a 'living and conscious' being is known as the Atma, Brahm and Atma are obviously the same, albeit at different levels of creation. That is, while Brahm is 'consciousness and life' at the macrocosmic level of creation, its counterpart in each single unit of this living creation at the micro level is known as the Atma. Since this Atma is the essence of life and creation, it is the 'soul' of creation.

²Brahm in the form of the Atma is a universal entity because it is undiluted and elementary 'consciousness'. Let us take an example to understand this phenomenon. Water molecule consists of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen. This universal fact would never change no matter in which form water exists—as ice, liquid water, vapour, steam, cloud, river, ocean or glacier, or in the fundamental essence of anything that is in fluid form. Similarly, it is the Brahm in the form of the Atma that is the only unchanging element in the otherwise most fascinating world where no two things are exactly alike.

³Since everything has its origin in one single point from which they develop and expand, when they have to retract they would revert to this single point. To understand this concept we can take the example of a line or any other figure drawn on a piece of paper. When the pen touches the paper, it first makes a dot at the point where it first comes in contact with the paper. Then the pen moves on the paper and drags this point to any length and any shape or form one wishes to draw. But when one wishes to retrace these lines one would come back to the first point where the pen

had first touched the paper. Likewise, though the creation has progressed from its original place and assumed so varied a form that it defies description, yet when it begins its regression it would come back to this single point. This 'single' original point is Brahm. It is Brahm from which this entire creation emerged, then developed and expanded, and it is in this Brahm that it would finally collapse and merge to become one with it.

The instance of the water cited above can also explain this concept. Though water assumes so many forms and is known by so many names, its basic point of origin in two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen would not change. If a molecule of sea water is compared with that of the rain water, no difference would be found. In other words, they all revert back to their parent form as two gaseous elements known as Hydrogen and Oxygen.]

5. [Then Shandilya asked—] 'Why is Brahm known as the Maheshwar (literally the great Ishwar or Lord)?' (5).

6. [Sage Atharva replied—] 'It (i.e. Brahm) is known as Maheshwar because it exercises control and establishes its authority over even those who are most powerful and great in this world by the virtue of the inherent strength and astounding powers and potentials possessed and exhibited by words¹, by sound², and by the stupendous dynamic powers and subtle energy inherently possessed and exhibited by the pure consciousness (that is present in all the creatures as their Atma)³.

Brahm is the superseding cosmic almighty Authority in creation. All other Gods and Goddesses are but merely manifestations of this Brahm, and they are only fractions of Brahm. Therefore, these Gods and Goddesses cannot match Brahm in the least. They can, at the best, represent some or the other divine qualities or virtues of Brahm, but not Brahm in its entirety. Brahm is the God of all Gods; he is the supreme Authority; he is the Supreme Being.

This ability makes it (Brahm) superior to all others in creation, and that is why it is honoured by the epithet of being called a 'Maheshwar'—literally meaning the 'Great Lord' (6).

[Note—¹Brahm's first dynamic revelation was in the form of the cosmic ethereal sound which was heard by ancient sages and seers during their meditative sessions and which they conceptualized in the form of the word OM. It was a cosmic vibration reverberating and resonating in the ether, and it is the first sign of energy being generated and some dynamic activity and movement taking place in the otherwise neutral and static cosmic gel prior to the beginning of creation. These vibrations produced 'sound' which in its primary form is encapsulated by the monosyllabic word OM. This basic sound was analyzed and underwent the process of refinement to yield the alphabets of the language. These alphabets then formed words, and from the words came into being the scriptures and the spoken language. Both the scriptures and the spoken language helped Brahm to disseminate information and knowledge. Sound is still regarded as the basic sign of life anywhere. That is why when a patient is recovering from coma or some serious illness where he had lost consciousness, doctors ask him to say a word or two to be certain that everything is well with him. All the knowledge of this creation would have been null and void had there been no word to teach them or divulge them.

Huge armies are commanded by words; the teacher controls his students by words. Even the Lord himself is worshipped and shown respects by hymns or prayers which are nothing but words.

²Words need sound to be transmitted from the speaker to the target audience. It is sound that makes words reach others so that they can come to know what one wishes to express. Hence, dissemination of information and knowledge needs not only words

but sound as well. This sound has manifested itself as voice and the faculty of speech. Even if one were to assume that huge body of knowledge could still exist in the form of words written in the scriptures, but how would one explain then without the power of sound revealed in the form of voice and the faculty of speech, and how would the listener listen to what is being said if there was no such thing as sound to enable the latter to hear what is being spoken?

The importance of sound over words can be understood by one simple example. When the bell rings in a school, all the students know for instance that they are supposed to attend a particular class or that it is time to go on recess, though no one actually tell them to do so. If one hears a lion roaring in the forest one is chilled to the bone out of fear though the lion is not directly threatening him or speaking any specific language. When the army hears the bugle sound it knows that it is time to charge or do any specific duty as expected to be done when this sound is heard. When one hears the trundle of a train speeding past, even a blind man can know what is happening though no words are spoken.

Therefore it is clear that the supreme Lord exercises his overall control and authority in this creation by the way of sound and words.

³The power of the consciousness needs no introduction—because the very ability to speak comes from the power of the consciousness residing in the body of the speaker, and the power to understand what is being spoken too comes because of the same consciousness present in the hearer. Ascetics are known to possess stupendous mystical powers that are super-natural in nature. They remain silent but achieve stupendous spiritual powers that are simply miraculous by nature. In fact, abstaining from speaking and remaining silent for a certain period of time, for instance doing meditation and contemplation, is certainly more rejuvenating for a man than speaking for this length of time. It is known that some holy men who had no formal knowledge of the scriptures, i.e. who were not ‘lettered’ or good ‘speakers’ either but had attained self-realisation and kindled their latent spiritual energy were able to influence the course of human history by their silent lives and examples they set for others. It is said that if one faces an adversary with the strength of the soul at his command it is certain that the opponent would yield ground and the person would be able to win him over.]

7. [Sage Shandilya asked—] ‘Why is it (Brahm) known as Lord Dattatreya?’ [Refer last stanzas of verse no. 6 of section 1 of Canto 3.] (7).

8. [Sage Atharva replied—] ‘It is because sage Atri did very severe Tapa (austerity and penance) to wish for a son. Pleased by his sincerity and devotion, the splendorous and self-illuminated ‘Bhagwan’ (Lord God; the Supreme Being) blessed the sage and offered himself as his son. Thereafter, the Lord himself revealed as a son to sage Atri and his wife Anusuiya. In this way he (the Lord) became famous as Lord Dattatreya¹ (8).

[Note—¹The word ‘Dattatreya’ has two parts—‘Datta’ and ‘Treya’. The first half ‘Datta’ refers to the Lord who gives boons, and the second part ‘Treya’ refers to something that has three dimensions.

This latter part ‘Treya’ again has the following meanings—(1) It refers to Lord Shiva who has three eyes, and hence called ‘Trinetra’, because Shiva is also known as ‘Maheshwar’, the great Lord by which epithet the Supreme Being is honoured (refer verse no. 5-6). (ii) It refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm which has three forms known as Sakal, Nishkal and Sakal-Nishkal which incorporates in their ambit the entire creation, both the visible and the non-visible, the gross and the subtle (refer Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 2-6).]

9. A wise, erudite and learned aspirant who comprehends the hidden meaning of what has been said in this Upanishad, and understands the meaning of the various esoteric names of the supreme transcendental Brahm, is able to unravel the mysteries of Brahm. He is indeed able to understand and know everything in this creation. [This is because everything in this creation is a revelation of Brahm; whatever that exists is Brahm in that form.] (9).

10. Once this enlightenment dawns on the aspirant he is able to have a comprehensive knowledge of the 'self' and realise that his 'true self', i.e. his pure conscious Atma, is nothing else but Brahm personified. [This is because the term Brahm is synonymous with the cosmic Consciousness.]

Hence, a wise, erudite and enlightened spiritual aspirant who worships and pays his obeisance to the supreme Lord with this full wisdom and knowledge (about the Atma being Brahm personified) is able to understand and realise the truth of the eclectic statement 'I am the supreme Atma'. That is, he becomes 'Brahm-realised'. [This is because Brahm is the cosmic Atma or soul of creation. The word Atma refers to the essence of creation, the basic element without which nothing matters, nothing exists, nothing has value, and nothing else besides it is therefore true. This basic element and essence of creation is 'consciousness', and it is a synonym of Brahm at the cosmic and macro level of creation as well as of the Atma at the micro level of creation.]

A person who knows or is enlightened about Brahm in the above described form, and then makes the declaration as stated above is indeed able to truthfully say anything about Brahm. [Only a person who has personally attended an event is called an eye-witness to it. Similarly, a person who has personally experienced the presence of the cosmic consciousness known as Brahm in his own inner-self as the Atma, and realised that this Atma is his 'self', implying that 'he' is none but 'Brahm' himself personified is indeed fully qualified and in his right to teach and say anything about Brahm. Only a teacher who is well-versed in any subject is eligible and competent enough to teach on that subject, for the rest who pretend to know and teach the subject are nothing but imposters who are playing fool with others.] (10).

11. The following verses (Shlokas) are especially dedicated to the supreme Brahm and enumerate his divine glories—'The supreme transcendental Brahm is the Lord who had revealed himself in the form of Dattatreya and Lord Shiva. [For Dattatreya being a manifestation of the Supreme Being, refer to verse nos. 7-8 above. As far as Lord Shiva is concerned, the reason why he is known as 'Maheshwar' or the 'Great Lord' is because he is the Supreme Being, i.e. Brahm, personified.]

The manifestation of the Supreme Being as Dattatreya or Shiva has a body which is most holy, auspicious and divine ('Shivam'), is of a calm, blissful and peaceful countenance ('Shanta'), has a blue complexion like that of the gem known as 'Indra-Neel-Mani' worn by Indra (the king of Gods, hence named after him; the blue sapphire), and is the Lord of all ('Prabhu').

The Lord lives in the Atma or the inner-self of the living being; he resides in the inner-self all creatures as their Atma or soul.

Both in the form of Dattatreya as well as Shiva, the Lord is in the form of an 'Avadhut'. ['Avadhut' is the highest category of Sanyasi or an ascetic who has reached the highest echelons of spiritual realisation. This concept has been especially elucidated upon in the Avadhut Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, being its 24th Upanishad.].

As an Avadhut he remains naked ('Digambar'). [An Avadhut has developed the level of spiritual realisation when he deems himself to be as expansive as the sky, and therefore wraps his gross body not with artificial clothes but with the sky that surrounds him on all the sides.] (11).

12. In the form of Dattatreya and Lord Shiva, the Lord has ash of the sacred fire smeared all over his body, wears matted lock of hairs on the head, and is honoured by the eclectic title of 'Vibhu'—i.e. one who is almighty, omnipresent, all-pervading, all-encompassing, magnanimous, eternal, infinite, all-powerful, immovable, constant and immutable.

He has four arms. [This refers to Lord Vishnu, the second of the Trinity Gods and the sustainer and protector of creation. It ought to be noted that the word 'Vibhu' applies to both Shiva as well as Vishnu.]

He is of a cheerful disposition and countenance.

His eyes are like lotus flowers (12).

13. The Lord is a treasury of Gyan (truthful knowledge and wisdom, enlightenment and realisation) and Yoga (meditation and contemplation). [That is, nothing is not known to the Lord as he is omniscient and all-knowing on the one hand, and well-versed in the art and skill of doing meditation and contemplation, and remains deeply involved in it on the other hand.]

The Lord is the universal Guru (teacher, guide and moral preceptor).

He is very dear to Yogis (ascetics) and is their patron God.

He is always very benevolent and magnanimous towards his devotees and worshippers.

He is the universal witness of all in this creation; he is a witness to everything and every event in this creation.

He is the one who is served, honoured and worshipped by all mystics and those who have attained spiritual realisation (13).

14. The Lord is indeed eternal and truthful. He is the Lord of all the Gods. He is worthy of being always praised and worshipped; he is the only one who should be honoured and sought by all.

In this way, a person who constantly, consistently and persistently remembers and honours this Lord is able to certainly obtain Mukti (freedom, liberation and deliverance) from all sins and their consequences (14).

15. This is indeed the truth. This truth is endorsed by this Upanishad; it is this truth that this Upanishad preaches. Amen! (15).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 15

Param-Hans Parivrajak Upanishad

This Upanishad describes the special eclectic and divine qualities and unique characteristics of a Parivrajak (i.e. a Sanyasi; a renunciate ascetic, monk, mendicant or friar who had completely renounced the world) who has reached higher state of spiritual realisation when he becomes self and Brahm realised, is internally very pious, pure and holy, and hence honoured by the epithet of being a 'Param Hans'. This title draws its name from the legendary Swan which is regarded as pure, holy, discriminatory and the wisest amongst birds because it has the mystical ability to pick up water and leave behind water, or pick up pearls from an assortment of gems. The Swan lives in clean water and none of the impurities of the water ever affects it.

The Upanishad outlines the necessary qualities that entitle a spiritual aspirant to be called a 'Parivrajak' (a Sanyasi), and then elevated to the stature of being called a 'Param Hans Parivrajak' which is a rare honour, the method of attaining this exalted state of existence, his way of life, what his state of mind is, how he thinks and behaves, what is the significance and symbolism of his renouncing everything in this world, including the important signs of religion such as the sacred thread, the tuft of hair on the head etc., and other such relevant topics.

It also describes how the Sanyasi reaches the climax of his spiritual pursuit by obtaining Mukti or Moksha which is liberation and deliverance from delusions and ignorance that leads to emancipation and salvation of the soul by realizing who or what the supreme transcendental Brahm essentially is, and how his own 'self' is this Brahm personified.

The text is in the form of an interrupted long prose. Therefore, for the purpose of this narrative it has been divided into seven paragraphs based on one major central idea that is covered in a particular paragraph.

It is a revealed Upanishad as it was preached by the primeval Lord known as Adi-Narayan (i.e. the primary form of Lord Vishnu which is also known as the Viraat Purush) when he was approached by Brahma, the creator of this world, to learn about the concept of a Param-Hans Sanyasi.

There are a number of Upanishads that deal with the concept of Parivrajak or Sanyas and various related topics. Some that are obviously very relevant to this present Upanishad of ours are the following—Param Brahm Upanishad, Brahm Upanishad, Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Sanyas Upanishad, Yagyawalkya Upanishad, Bhikshuk Upanishad, and Hans Upanishad.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. Once upon a time, Brahma (the creator of this world) went to his father, the Lord known as Adi Narayan¹, bowed reverentially before him, and asked, 'Oh Lord! I have come to learn about the four Varnas (classes in Hindu society²) and the laws governing them by hearing about them from you.

Now I wish to learn about the qualities and characteristic features of those exalted people who are called ‘Param Hans Parivrajak’³ (literally meaning a class of enlightened and realised ascetics, monks, mendicants or hermits who have totally renounced this world and its delusions, and have reached an exalted state of spiritual awareness which makes them both ‘self’ as well as ‘Brahm’ realised). Who is eligible to become a Parivrajak (or a renunciate person who has renounced all his attachments with the material world of sense objects and has therefore become completely detached from it and dispassionate towards it; such persons are called a ‘Sanyasi’)? What are the special characteristics and virtues of a Parivrajak (Sanyasi)?

Out of them, who is called a ‘Param Hans’ (literally meaning someone who has risen above the ordinary class of being a Sanyasi, and has reached the pinnacle of spiritualism when he becomes so holy and pure that he is compared to the divine Swan⁴ and given the honourable title of a ‘Param Hans’), and why is he called so?

How does one achieve the stature of being called a true Parivrajak; what is the way or the method to reach this most exalted state of existence for a spiritual aspirant (who wishes to obtain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for himself)?

Please be kind and gracious to tell me all about it.’

Hearing this earnest plea of Brahma, Lord Adi Narayan began to preach as follows—(1).

[Note—¹Lord *Adi-Narayan* refers literally to Lord Narayan who is the most ancient and the primary as well as the primordial Lord of creation. Here the term refers to the Viraat Purush, the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Vishnu from whom Brahma, the creator, was born atop a divine lotus that emerged from Vishnu’s navel as he reclined on the bed of the coiled body of Sheshnath, the legendary serpent who floated on the surface of the Kshirsagar, the cosmic ocean of milk.

²*Varnas* = References—(i) Atharva Veda’s = Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 5, verse no. 8; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 1, stanza no. 2, Canto 2, stanza no. 1, Canto 5, verse no. 1; Ashram Upanishad. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s = Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 3. Reasons for classification—The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 10 states the reason for the classification of the society in four classes.

The Subalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse 6, and Canto 2, verse 1 describes the origin of these four classes in society.

The Hindu society has been divided into four sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These four sections are— (a) Brahmins*—the learned and teaching class; a wise one well-versed in the knowledge of the ultimate Truth about the supernatural Being called Brahm. They also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas—they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas—they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life. And finally (d) the Shudras—the service class of people whose main function was to free the other three classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

Yajur Veda 31st Chapter, 11th Mantra says that Brahmins are the mouth of society, the Kshatriyas are its arms, Vaishyas are its stomach or abdomen, and Shudras are its legs. The body is regarded as a symbol of the society. As is obvious in this analogy, all these four units of the body must function properly and in close

cooperation with each other in order that the body can survive and live comfortably and carry on with its assigned duties in an orderly fashion. The mouth is important because it is the medium by which the body takes food and speaks; the arms procure food and gives protection to the body against enemies; the stomach digests food and supplies the whole body with the energy needed by it; the abdomen holds all the internal organs; and the legs carry the body wherever it wants to go such as the place where food is available. Since food is the basis necessity of life, this instance is cited here. And the logic can be extended to everything else. Each component of the society must work properly in order that the whole society survives; each component is as vital as the other; each has its own importance in the bigger picture.

*The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahman.] An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject. The eclectic virtues of Brahmins have been expounded in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 5 as well as in Canto 3, Brahman 8, verse no. 10

These four classes of the human race were created from the single father, the Viraat or Brahma. Their origins are indicative of the different jobs that they were assigned so as to enable the creator perform the task of governance just like a king assigns separate jobs to his different ministers. But it must be clearly understood here that each class of the human race was like a part of the body of the Supreme Being, and even as a man feels disfigured and handicapped as well as feels the pain equally if his leg is cut off from the rest of his body as he feels when his arm or head is severed, the Lord feels betrayed and hurt when even one of his sons is subjected to humiliation and pain. The four classes had specific jobs cut for them so that the society could function smoothly.

The Brahmins have their origin from the mouth of Brahma the creator. Since the mouth is used to give advice and teach others, the primary job of the Brahmins was to act as moral guide to their brethren. The four Vedas, which are repository of all knowledge that exist, were also created from the mouth of Brahma; hence these Brahmins were considered most wise and learned. The arms are metaphors for strength and powers; they are used to protect and help others. Hence, the Kshatriyas, who were created from the arms of Brahma, were those sons of his who would give the needed protection and security to their other brethren. In order to feed his creation, Brahma had to toil and labour to provide for the maintenance and financial and material well being of the society for merely teaching and protecting would not suffice without some one to take care of the other necessities of life. So he created the Vaishyas from his thighs, symbolising labour, to pick up the mantle of mundane affairs of life. But there must be someone who would do the daily chores, such as tilling the fields, doing the harvesting, washing and cleaning, and all other such odd jobs. This was assigned to the Shudras created from Brahma's feet symbolising service.

Paingalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 7 and Canto 2, verse nos. 3 describe how the three basic Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama were used by the supreme Brahm to create different types of creatures in this creation.

None of these classes were meant to be inferior or superior to one another; they were all parts of the body of the same Brahma. In fact, the leg bears the burden of the body; just imagine what would have happened if Brahma had not created

anyone from his legs? How would the Brahmin walk, how would the Kshatriya fight, and how would the Vaishya do his commercial activities if he could not walk? Similar arguments can be applied to other classes. See also Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 1/4/11-15 which describes their origin in graphic details, and also Aeitereyo-panishad, 1/1/4.

Reasons for classification—The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 10 states the reason for the classification of the society in four classes.

The Subalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse 6, and Canto 2, verse 1 describes the origin of these four classes in society.

³*Param Hans Parivrajak* = The phrase has three words, viz. 'Param' meaning supreme, the most exalted, the most acclaimed, the highly realised and one who has reached the highest echelons of achievement in his given field of interest; 'Hans' means a Swan, and its significance and symbolism is explained herein below; and 'Parivrajak' meaning a Sanyasi or a renunciate person who has developed total dispassion towards this material world and realised the futility of either pursuing it or enjoying it because it is illusionary, deluding, entrapping, and the cause of all his miseries and torments.

In other words, a Param Hans Parivrajak is a Sanyasi or a monk, a hermit, a friar, a mendicant or an ascetic who has completely disassociated himself from any involvement with this artificial world of materialism, and has instead focused his mind and intellect on the Truth which would provide him eternal peace and beatitude. He has reached the pinnacle of self-realisation which makes him aware of the truth of the supreme transcendental divinity known as Brahm, and he is called a 'Hans' because he has washed off all his worldly impurities and cleansed his inner-self just like a Swan that floats in the water of a lake without the impurities of the water affecting its cleanliness even slightly. Such a man lives in this world but is aloof from it; he lives amongst all the delusions but is not at all affected by them. Besides it, he has developed the wisdom and the erudition to discriminate between what is good and what is not, what is true and what is false, what is liberating and what is ensnaring just like the Swan which has the legendary ability to pick up pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk leaving behind water and other adulterants in it.

⁴*Swan* = The enlightened and realised person thinks of himself as a Swan and feels exhilarated that he is not an ordinary man bogged down by worldly fetters, but an exalted soul that is like a Swan.

The bird *Swan* or Hans is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or Pran passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature's inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

A wise man is expected to pick up the truth and leave aside the non-truths from the basket full of worldly charms of astounding proportions and myriad forms of temptations present in this creation.

Those wise men who have developed the level of wisdom, erudition and sagacity that they can discriminate between what is good and what is not, what is true and what is false, what is liberating and what is ensnaring for their soul are also honoured by the epithet of being a 'Hans' (Swan) because they are just like the Swan which has the legendary ability to pick up pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk leaving behind water and other adulterants in it. Even amongst such wise and enlightened men, those who have realised the 'truth' about their own self in the real sense, i.e. have become 'self-realised' and hence 'Brahm-realised' truthfully, and have consequentially attained the highest level of enlightenment and wisdom are called 'Param Hans'—literally meaning those who have accessed the 'supreme type of enlightenment'.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hans' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hans' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse no. 63).

Hans, the divine Swan, is also one of the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu had once appeared as a divine Swan to preach the four celestial sages Sankaadi who were the mental sons of the creator Brahma.

It so happened that Sankaadi approached Brahma and wanted to know how can someone, who wished to have Moksha (final liberation and deliverance from this material world; freedom from attachment to the sense objects of this world; emancipation and salvation), effectively control his mind and sub-conscious and divert them away from the material charms of the world and its sense objects, and towards the inner self where the Atma, the pure consciousness, resides?

Brahma was confused and did not have the answer. So they meditated upon Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, from whom Brahma was born. Thus Vishnu appeared as a divine Swan. The sages could not recognise the Lord in that form and asked who he was. Then Vishnu, in his form as a Swan, preached the great tenets of metaphysics and Vedānta to Sankaadi. Thus, this revelation of Vishnu as a Swan was an embodiment of the greatest and the most refined form of spiritual knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. Henceforth, Swan came to be known as a synonym for these eclectic and divine virtues. This story appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 11/13.

The Swan is depicted as a vehicle of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. In other words, those who worship Swan ride on the crest of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment.

The Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 82-83 of Sam Veda tradition describes this Swan in the context of Yoga.

The Dhyān Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 24 and 61-65, of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which primarily deals with meditation and contemplation on Brahm in order to obtain emancipation and salvation of the soul of the creature says that the supreme transcendental Brahm, known also as Pranav, resides in the heart of all the living beings in the form of a Hansa. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make

the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is a personification of Brahm and is like the divine Swan, but he was unaware of his divinity and sublimity, his exalted stature, till that was pointed out to him in this verse. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must do not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan. The highlight of its verse no. 63 is that it asserts that the Mantra 'Hans' is superior to the Gyatri Mantra.

The Yogshikha Upanishad describes in Canto 6, verse nos. 52-54 how the creature continues to do an involuntary Japa using the Mantra 'Hans' throughout his life while narrating how the creature continues to be buffeted and tossed around by the vital winds called Pran and Apaana.

The Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda has a number of verses dedicated to the concept of Hans and goes on to assert that it is the best Mantra with which a wise and enlightened ascetic should do Yoga (meditation) as well as Japa (repetition of Mantra). Such verses are nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64 and 78-79.

The Hanso-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans.

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 52, 54-55 describe the Hans Mantra besides asserting that the Atma, the pure conscious 'self' of the creature, is Hans (i.e. Brahm) personified.

References for the term 'Hans' or divine Swan—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hanso-panishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93. (d) Atharva Veda—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 4, 12-22, 26-27; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 10.]

2. [Lord Adi Narayan preached—] 'A wise and erudite aspirant should first acquire knowledge under the guidance of a learned and self-realised Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) of high repute. This would enlighten him of the reality of this world and its material objects so much so that he understands and realises that all the comforts and pleasures of the world in which he lives as well as the world where he wishes to go after death (i.e. the heaven where he wishes to go after having lived a righteous life to enjoy its heavenly comforts and pleasures) are actually like a burden on his soul. [In other words, by studying the scriptures himself and being enlightened about their eclectic principles upon being taught by his learned teacher who explains their hidden meaning to him, he realises the falsehood of this material world and the truth of the Atma which is his own 'self' and pure consciousness, and hence the futility of pursuing the world and the comforts and pleasures of the senses either in this life or in the after-life become evident to him. Therefore, once he has attained this spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the Truth, he shakes off the deluding, artificial and entrapping world, and instead endeavours to attain eternity and true happiness that comes with distancing one's self from all delusions that are typical hallmarks of this material world, and diverting one's attention towards the grand spiritual truths of creation. Of course, such efforts would help one to become 'realised and enlightened', and with it would come bliss and happiness of an eternal and infinite kind, the bliss and happiness that is sustainable and true.]

This wisdom and enlightenment fills him with total detachment towards the three overpowering desires that a man has in this world—viz. desire for a son, desire for material prosperity and acquisition of wealth, and desire for fame, power, authority and majesty in this world.

He also develops total disinterest in the three types of Vasanas (worldly passions and lust) and abandons them. These three Vasanas are the following—Lok Vasana, Deha Vasana and Shastra Vasana¹.

He treats all sorts of attachments, attractions and infatuations ('Mamatva') as well as ego, pride and haughtiness ('Ahankar') as being equivalent to vomit, and therefore most reprehensible, disgusting, and worthy of being discarded.

With this wisdom firmly ingrained in his sub-conscious, he completes his education under the able guidance of a learned Guru while strictly observing the eclectic principles of Brahmacharya. [This is called 'Brahmacharya Ashram' and is the first phase in the life of a man. 'Brahmacharya' is a life of strict self-control, abstinence and continence, not only in sexual terms but taken in a very holistic manner involving strict control over all the organs of the body and total abstinence from numerous indulgences. A student is expected to observe strict discipline in order to concentrate his energy on studies without distraction, as well as to inculcate the virtue of self control that would come in good stead to him later on in his life.]

Having graduated with these grand and magnificent spiritual values firmly established in his psyche, he enters the second stage of life as a householder, called 'Grihastha Ashram'.

On completion of the second phase as a Grihastha he should step into the third phase of life called 'Vaanprastha'—literally meaning 'heading for the forest'. [This is simply a metaphor for having turned his back to the humdrum world and spending the rest of the life in search of peace and serenity which are symbolized by the term 'forest'.]

Finally, at the culmination of this third phase he should become a 'Sanyasi' or a 'Parivrajak'. [That is, now he should be completely unattached with anything, even to the extent that he keeps no company and avoids pilgrim sites. For him, the search for the Atma is the ultimate pilgrimage and the body itself is the holy site where the Atma lives.]

This is the general rule, but in exceptional cases a man can enter the phase of Parivrajak (i.e. he can become a renunciate Sanyasi, or a monk, hermit, mendicant or friar) directly from the Brahmacharya or Grihastha Ashrams without having had to go through the traditional path or the well-established routine procedure, or the various phases or the stages that one has to pass through to become a full-fledged Sanyasi.

Hence, whether or not a person has observed religious sacraments and vows, whether he has studied the scriptures or is illiterate in such matters (i.e. is un-lettered, uninitiated, uneducated, does not follow the tenets of religion, has not observed any sacraments, is unaware of scriptural concepts such as the Atma and Brahm etc.), whether he has done the fire sacrifice or not (i.e. whether or not he worships the Lord by offering him oblations through the sacred fire as ordained by the Vedas; whether or not he has purified himself as symbolized by his worshipping the fire)—whenever sincere and true sense of renunciation, detachment, disinterest and dispassion sprouts in his heart, he can become a Parivrajak (a Sanyasi).

According to established tradition, when a man who belongs to either of the three phases of life called a Brahmacharya, Grihastha or Vaanprastha develops true and complete detachment from this world and is desirous of taking the vows of a Parivrajak, he should first take formal permission from his parents, wife, son(s), kith

and kin, friends and companions, as well as his followers or disciples or those who are dependent upon him in any way. Then he must do the 'Prajapatya Ishti Yagya'. [This sacrifice is a special fire sacrifice done at the time of breaking off all connections with this world and stepping on the path of Sanyas. It is meant to offer oblations to Prajapati Brahma, the creator, and requesting the Lord to take care of those the aspirant leaves behind as well as of himself.]

But this principle does not apply on a man who wishes to take the vows of a Parivrajak way of life directly (i.e. even before or during the above three phases) without bothering to undergo the formal process. [This is because he is so eager to renounce this world, he is so eager to search the Truth and discard the falsehood, he is so eager to find liberation and deliverance that he does not wish to waste time in formalities and seeking permission from anyone. He need not wait for someone's consent or approval to become a Sanyasi; what if his parents or wife or son do not agree and create a hurdle in his spiritual path? Besides this, he has come to realise that all relations are limited to the gross body as the Atma has no relations whatsoever, for it is an eternally free and independent entity. The wise and enlightened aspirant has already understood the truth of the statement that the body is not his true identity, and neither is it that of the person from whom permission is sought. So, who should seek permission from whom, and who is empowered to refuse? So, why should he waste time and energy on pretensions and falsehood; why should he appear to be courteous and nice by asking permission from anyone, or appearing to be apologetic for his leaving his kith and kin alone? The very fact that true enlightenment has arisen in his bosom that has motivated and inspired him to throw away the falsehoods and artificial relations of the world, and instead move towards the great relationship that his Atma has with the supreme Atma known as Brahm would automatically make him free from all obligations of having to seek permissions or observing formalities in order to renounce the world and its shackles. He feels absolutely independent and unbound by any fetters to this world. Since self-realisation that attends achievement of true spiritual wisdom and enlightenment has taught him that his 'true self' is the Atma and not the gross body, and that all relationships are limited to the gross body and the Atma has no kind of relations, he feels not at all obliged to seek anyone permission to break free from all bondages pertaining to the body, and 'relationships of the world' are like these bondages. The Atma is as free and unshackled as the air element. So when the Atma flies free, it need not have any regrets or feel apologetic.]

Therefore, instead of doing the Prajapatya Ishti Yagya he must do the fire sacrifice called the 'Aagneya Ishti Yagya'. [This is the oblations paid to the Fire God or the Fire Element which is now requested to take up residence in the inner-self of the aspirant. This is a symbolic sacrifice to signify that the aspirant has burnt all connections with the external world, has burned all his spiritual impurities, has empowered himself with the power, potentials and authority of the Fire which is enshrined in his bosom, and now onwards he would worship the Atma as an embodiment of the holy Fire. Now onwards, he does not have to worship the sacred fire externally, but he offers his oblations and worship to it inside his own body. For such worship, whatever he eats or drinks is like an offering and oblation. Similarly, each of his breath is also like an offering. Indeed, this form of internal fire sacrifice and symbolic worship is regarded as the being of the best kind and the wisest way of worshipping the Supreme Being. This concept is further elaborate in the following paragraph.]

The Fire is the 'Pran' or life (both of the entire creation at the macro level of existence, as well as of the individual man at the micro level of creation, because

without the warmth, energy and light provided by the fire no life is feasible). It is on the strength of the fire that the Pran Vayu (the vital wind) carries out its various life-infusing and life-sustaining functions, and it is on the strength of the fire that the air shows movement. [The vital winds in the body are the ones responsible for all the small and big functions carried out by the different organs of the man's body. The 'fire element' plays a very important role in the body as is evident from the fact that if the fire element decides to calm down, or the body becomes cold, all its activities would automatically come to a standstill, and the man would die. A warm body is equivalent to a living body, while a cool body is a corpse. On the more physical plane we observe that when a fire burns, a breeze begins to blow, indicating 'movement' in the otherwise static air element. The fire heats the air and creates convection currents which make the otherwise static air move. This is most evident in hot summer afternoons when hot winds pick up speed and develop into a storm as the temperature rises during the afternoon hours on the plains and deserts. The 'fire element' is a metaphor for dynamism, vigour, vitality, energy, strength and life.]

An aspirant should offer three types of symbolic oblations to this fire sacrifice. These three symbolic offerings are the three Gunas such as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna that are inherent to all living beings in this world. [In other words, he must burn all the three distinguishing qualities that are inherently present in all living beings, and which decide their behaviour, thought process, personality, character traits etc. A Sanyasi should develop complete equanimity and total neutrality in all matters. He must show no good, bad or mediocre behaviour that is determined by any of these Gunas; he must have no emotions determined by the dominance of one or the other of these Gunas; he should not harbour any specific qualities that can be used to ascribe him with some particular distinctive characteristic. He must live a life of anonymity, equanimity and total neutrality. Thus, offering of the three Gunas to the fire is a metaphoric way of saying that a true Sanyasi dissolves his individuality and personal identity to become universal like the Atma which he has now recognized to be his 'true self and identity'.]

Then he must smell the fire while saying the following hymn—'Oh Fire God! The Pran (i.e. the life or 'consciousness' as well as the vital winds or airs present inside my body) is the cause of your origin. [That is, it is because my body has 'consciousness' in it that it is said to be alive, and a living body is the abode of the fire element, for as soon as the life or consciousness leaves the body it becomes dead, and the fire element immediately leaves it too. The word 'Pran' also means the vital winds or airs that keep the body alive and active. The vital winds control and regulate the body by controlling and regulating the functioning of all the individual organs of the body. Since it is an established fact of science that air is needed to start the fire and keep it burning, and that no fire can survive without air, this stanza also means that it is the presence of the vital winds, collectively called the 'Pran', which helps the 'fire of life' burning inside the body. This physical fact and relationship between the air element and the fire element is depicted metaphorically by saying that the 'Pran is the father of the fire element'. Just like a father who not only provides the spark that produces the child but does his best to ensure that his off spring does not die a premature death, the air element present inside the body also ensures that the fire of life burning inside the body of the Sanyasi is not blown out. In other words, the Pran ensures that life is not snuffed out of the Sanyasi before its time for his Atma to emerge from the prison of the gross body to merge with the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma, a development that provides the Sanyasi with his final Mukti or

Moksha, i.e. when he finds his final spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.]

Being aware of this fact, please enter it and subtly establish yourself in the Pran. [That is, the fire element is invited to establish its self in the body of the aspirant in a symbolic manner so that his vital winds are kept energized and strengthened, and he is given sufficient vigour and stamina to bear with the harsh realities of a Sanyas way of life during which all the physical comforts of the world are lacking.]

Since you (the Fire God) have come into being from the Pran (consciousness and vital airs that give life as explained above), and since you are requested to take up your abode in it, you are also requested to impart your glorious illumination and dynamism to it. [In other words, you must provide my consciousness represented by my Atma with divine illumination in the form of truthful knowledge, intellect, wisdom, erudition, sagacity, and the mental ability to discriminate between the truth and the false. At the same time as this, you must also ensure that my vital winds or airs that sustain my physical body are not deprived of the necessary dynamism, strength, vigour, vitality and energy.] Bless me so that I can obtain better results in my spiritual pursuits and attain greater heights of spiritual success. Let me be blessed with enhanced energy, strength, courage, stamina, vigour and drive to be able to move steadily ahead in my endeavours and reach the pinnacle of success in it. [When the Pran or life-consciousness present in the body is fully strengthened, the aspirant would be empowered to pursue meditation and contemplation without any hindrance, such as lack of sufficient energy and strength needed to cope with the strenuous demands of Yoga. Re-vitalized Pran would ensure re-vitalized body, and with the body in a proper condition the rigours of life as a Sanyasi would be easy to cope with.]

Oh Fire God! You are earnestly requested to establish your esteemed self in the Pran which is regarded as your origin. [The word used in the text is 'Yoni', meaning a womb. The embryo is conceived and nourished in the mother's womb, and the latter is therefore regarded as the place from where the former originated. In the case of the fire element, this symbolic womb is the Pran or life-consciousness because if there is no consciousness in this creation there would be no life, and hence there would be no need or use of the fire. 'Pran' also means the vital airs or winds, and these airs or winds keep the fire element alive and active inside the gross body. As has been explained above, both the factors of 'consciousness' and the 'vital airs' are used as synonyms for 'Pran' in this verse. Therefore, both are regarded as the affable and doting 'father' of the fire element in a symbolic way. In the present context, the aspirant requests the fire element to subtly establish its self in his body so that he can easily cope with the rigours of the Sanyas way of life. He would not get proper nourishment because he would have to depend upon begged food, he would not have proper clothes to keep himself warm, or warm bedding to sleep upon, he would not have the comforts of a home and hearth, and therefore would be left on the mercy of the elements. Weakness of the body would also make his vital winds weak, and hence it is very important to invoke the blessings of the Fire God so as to overcome these and other such grave hurdles of the Sanyas way of life. If the internal fire is burning robustly, it would be so much the easier for him to overcome all the problems that he might have to face during the rough and tough life of Sanyas. Again, a well-kindled fire would speed up his progress in Yoga and help him achieve success in such practices as activation of the Kundalini and raising of the vital winds from the lower parts of the body to the head where he expects to experience the bliss of realisation of consciousness.]

So, please go there (in the Pran) and take up your honourable residence in it. [The word used in the text is 'Gachha' which means 'to go'.]

With this prayer, the aspiring Parivrajak should say 'Swaha²' to finish his invocation and offerings. [The word 'Swaha' is said while making offering to the sacred fire as it represents the mouth of the Fire God. When the worshipper has sufficiently pleased the Fire God, the latter opens his mouth to accept the offerings made by the worshipper.]

For the purpose of performing the above worship fire is needed, and it should be obtained from the household of a Srotriya person (i.e. someone who performs daily fire sacrifice according the principles laid down in the Vedas, and uses the latter's hymns for this purpose). After obtaining it, the aspirant should smell it (as described above in this paragraph). [The 'smelling' is done as a mark of showing affection and reverence. It is like the modern practice of kissing some dear one on the cheek in western culture, and on the head in Indian culture where the father or anyone elder than the person touches the latter's head and smells it as a formal gesture of blessing, love and affection.]

In case formal fire is not available due to any reason, or when it is not practically feasible to perform the fire sacrifice in its physical form, and the aspirant is very eager to become a Parivrajak without delay then he should complete the ritual by simply using water (in the place of the fire).

He should think that the water element known as 'Apaha' personified as the Water God is the primary origin of all the other Gods, including the Fire God. Hence, he should worship the Water God as follows—'Oh Water God! You are a personified form of all the Gods taken together. Therefore, I am offering my oblations to you (and it would be equivalent to offering it to each of the Gods at once).' Then he should say 'Swaha' and make the offering.

Once the offerings to the Gods is complete, he should pick up the remaining material used for such offerings, including Ghee (clarified butter) used for the purpose, and accept them (eat them) himself. [This is to signify that all the Gods reside in his own bosom. It indicates that they have accepted his gesture by imbibing the food offered to them. At the same time it also signifies that the spiritual aspirant is aware of the fact that the supreme God resides in his own self as the Atma to whom he is finally making his offerings by the symbolic gesture of eating all the remaining things himself. It has been said in the Upanishads that the body is a microcosm of the entire creation, and that all the Gods, who incidentally represent the forces of Nature in a personified form, took up their residences in this body at the micro level of creation just like they lived in the heaven at the macro level of creation—refer Rig Veda's Aiteriyo-panishad. Therefore it is not inappropriate to say that the offerings are made in a symbolic manner to all the Gods living inside the body of the Sanyasi.]

This process is used by those who follow the path prescribed for warriors, or those who wish to abandon the physical gross body by fasting, or those who wish to leave the mortal world by entering water and submerging (drowning) in it, or those who wish to cremate their gross body themselves by entering a fire that is voluntarily lit by themselves.

It is ordained that if one is really interested and sincere then he should not wait for formalities to be completed, and instead accept the vows of Sanyas mentally, or even by saying so and making a declaration to this effect (2).

[Note—¹The *three Vasanas*—(a) *Lok Vasana*—this is the desire and greed for wealth, fame, sense objects of the material world, territorial gains, authority and powers, majesty, pomp and pelf etc. The Vasanas relating to the world are the various

attractions and allurements that his apparently enchanting and captivating world presents to a person. It also refers to the various and endless responsibilities and obligations, real and imaginary, that a person has, or imagines he has towards this world.

Sometimes the Lok Vasanas overlaps the Deha Vasana as often they are interconnected. For example, one's 'Vasanas' pertaining to one's son, property, material wealth and other assets which a person has acquired by the efforts made by his body and which help him to get established in this world and enjoy enhanced comforts and pleasures as well as respect and honour that such acquisitions entitle him to in this physical world also come under this category of Vasanas. All such relationships that exist in this world, such as his relatives, his contacts, his friends, his peers and compatriots, along with his obligations, his contracts and his responsibilities related to them are called Lok Vasanas. It would also include all things done by him in this world to appease those who are related to him with this body.

(b) *Shastra Vasana*—this is the desire and yearnings related to scriptures and ancient literature, such as a desire to become an expert in them and be recognised as such, the desire to study them more and more, acquiring scholarship and literal expertise in them with its accompanying fame, renown, glory, honour, respect and financial prosperity, become much sought after and acquire a wide follower-ship based on these qualities and honours bestowed upon them by the world by the virtue of their unique abilities and expertise of the scriptures etc. But usually such knowledge is superficial, and the so-called expert of scriptures relies more on their letter rather than on their spirit, engrossing himself in endless discussions and debates leading to confusions and contradictions instead of solving them. The scriptures are vast and like a fathomless sea. Trying to realise the Supreme Truth by delving into the depths of the scriptures is like an attempt at extracting a single piece of pearl by churning the whole ocean. Though it is theoretically possible in thousand of years of continuous effort, but practically it is impossible and incredulous to even think of such a success; it is a too far-fetched notion. It is rare to find a truly wise and enlightened soul amongst worldly scholars and orators, for the latter's erudition is limited to gaining fame and name and nothing more.

(c) *Deha Vasana*—this is the insatiable desire and passion related to the gratification of the sense organs, such as becoming licentious, engrossing oneself in enjoyment of worldly sensual objects, and all other types of indulgences and gratifications. The 'Vasanas' pertaining to the body also relate to the attachments that one has with one's son, property and wealth which a person has acquired and enjoyed with his body, and the world around him—his relatives, his fame, his contacts, his friends, his obligation, contracts and responsibilities. It also means gratification of the sense organs of the body as well as to appease those who are related to him with this body so that they continue to serve and help him and give comfort and pleasure to his body.

Now, when we talk of the Atma as pure consciousness or an embodiment of light, the question arises 'how can we obtain the clearest perception of that reality?' The greatest exponent of Vedanta philosophy, sage Adi Sankaracharya prescribes the following four paths—(i) discrimination between the eternal and truthful, and the non-eternal and non-truthful, (ii) renunciation of desires for sensual gratification and enjoyment of pleasures from this materialistic world, (iii) development of six divine eclectic wealth—self control, surrender, faith, forbearance, peace/tranquility and poise of the mind, and (iv) sincere desire for liberation and deliverance, because it is only then that the creature will try to find ways to achieve it.

(ii) Another classification is based on the proportion of *bad* or *good* qualities inherent in and integral to the nature of a man. Therefore, there are broadly classified into Good Vasanas, and Bad Vasanas depending upon the proportion of good quality and the bad quality that is inherent in the man and forms his innate character. These

qualities are called the Gunas, and they are three in number—viz. Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. Hence, we have *Satvic Vasana*, *Rajic Vasana* and *Tamsic Vasana*.

The *Satvic Vasanas* are those desires that are determined by the predominance of the best quality called Sata in a man. Such a man is inclined to do auspicious deeds and take noble actions. He is naturally inclined to and attracted towards those things in this world which help him to cultivate higher values in life, such as the desire of serving others selflessly, being compassionate, relinquishing one's right for the general welfare of others, spending time in finding ways to achieve knowledge of the 'self', study of the scriptures and generally spending life in noble thoughts and deeds, etc.

The *Rajic Vasana* is the middle path which creates desires for name, fame and power and their accompanying laurels and majesty. Such tendencies need commensurate actions so that they can be effectuated. Hence such a man would be engrossed in the world and its activities; he would serve others but would have a certain degree of self-interest in whatever he does; he would judge everything but with himself as the overriding factor. He would study the scriptures but not for his spiritual well being but to gain money and fame and a large follower-ship.

Finally, the lowest of them is the *Tamsic Vasana* which makes a man pervert, sinful, selfish, indulgent and indolent to the extreme. He would snatch other's right in order to fulfill his own desires; he would study the scriptures only to find fault with them and ridicule them. He would not have any qualms in making others suffer by his actions and derive immense satisfaction and pleasure in it. He would have no scruples and a sense of probity and propriety in what he does in order to satisfy his desires, wants, yearnings, aspirations and expectations.

It ought to be noted that there are no water-tight compartments in these three types of Vasanas; they are diffused and more often than not difficult to differentiate one from the other. Their intensity may change with the change in the person's attitude and the level at which his thought processes as well as his mind and intellect operate as he develops wisdom and knowledge.

Vasanas arise due to one's desire to gratify the natural instincts of the sense organs. Such as for example, the eye has a natural urge to see beautiful objects. So if a man falls prey to this urge, his mind and intellect would come into play and the man would then try everything in his means and power to acquire that object which pleases the eye, thereby dragging other organs in this quagmire. Each organ would then make its own demand, and the demands never cease but go on multiplying in a compound manner. Actions prompted by the element of ego and egocentric desires such as the attitude of 'I, Me and Mine' leave in their wake a chain of desires and wants which keep us prodding, propelling and compelling to satisfy them, and the chain of Vasanas is set in motion.

So the easy way to stem the surge of Vasanas and finally obliterate them is to first analyse one's natural inclinations and tendencies, and then slowly divert them from lower level to a higher level by conscious effort and diligence. One of the methods to do this is to do deeds but without expecting any rewards from them—which is at the core of Karma Yoga. With this attitude, the accumulation of Vasanas is gradually exhausted. Another way is to acquire truthful knowledge by studying the scriptures directly or getting to know about their great tenets and teachings from others. This helps to remove 'Agyan' or ignorance of the reality and truth which is at the very root of the creation of Vasanas in the first place. If one becomes wise and gets acquainted with great metaphysical truths about the 'self' and the Atma along with the nature of existence and its essential form as well as the real goal of human life in spiritual terms, it would be natural and logical that he would be more inclined to overcome all sorts of Vasanas, including the Satvic ones. In fact, he would have no Vasanas at all.

The Vasanas have been described in detail in the *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 70, and Canto 4, verse nos. 16, 20, 23.

In Mukthiko-panishad, canto 2 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Lord Ram explains to his most ardent devotee, the wise and enlightened Hanuman the concept of Vasanas and how to purge and control them in order to attain emancipation and salvation.

The Yog Kundalini Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 3, verse nos. 18-19 describes what is known as the 'good Vasana'.

How to overcome the Vasanas—Generally speaking, the drag of Vasanas (i.e. inherent tendencies, notions, innate habits, desires, yearnings etc.) of a creature, which create a hindrance in its contact with the pure self, can be overcome by the following four methods—(i) Method of persuasion—the creature tries to convince itself through reasoning, discrimination, self analysis and gentle prodding that its true identity is not the body but the soul or Atma which is the real and truthful self. (ii) Method of purification—the creature loves itself so much that its mind is blocked from all other love. This can be purged by thinking of the wider world as the beautiful extension of the self. Thus, selfishness is gradually reduced and it is replaced by love, compassion and graciousness. (iii) Method of eradication of desires—this can be done by selfless action and removal of ego. (iv) Method of forceful confrontation—the seeker should confront its mind about its wayward behaviour and force it to overcome past habits and tendencies. Efforts should be made to control the mind's restlessness—diligently, courteously and persistently.

²*Swaha*— The word *Swaha* is used to offer any offering to the ritualistic fire during the fire sacrifice. It represents the mouth of the Fire God. When the worshipper has sufficiently pleased the Fire God, the latter opens his mouth to accept the offerings made by the worshipper. The offering is in the form of clarified butter, cereals, sweets and fruits etc. With each offering, the word is pronounced to symbolize acceptance of it by the Fire God.

The word means 'hail, hail to you; may a blessing rest upon you!' *Swaha* in mythology is a personification of the oblation offered to the fire sacrifice. *Swaha* is also depicted as the daughter of Daksha Prajapati and wife of Agni, the Fire-God; she is said to preside over burnt offerings. Her body consists of the four Vedas and her limbs are the branches of the Vedas, called Angas. In some texts, *Swaha* is also depicted as the wife of Rudra Pashupati.

It must be noted that the word *Swaha* is usually pronounced while making offerings to the fire pit of the fire sacrifice, but more broadly it means submission, humility and offering the best that one has to the chosen deity. In the case where this word is said while offering prayers to the chosen deity by using Mantras, it means to offer one's own self with the greatest of reverence, humility and submission before the Lord being worshipped.]

3. After having taken the vows of Sanyas in a systematic manner by offering oblations to the Atma (i.e. worshipping the pure 'self' and being firmly convinced that this Atma is the supreme Brahman personified), purging it of all worldly impurities (symbolizing various Vasanas and Vrittis or worldly desires, habits and obligations pertaining to this world that all human beings have to a greater or lesser degree), and doing the 'Virja Hom' (the fire sacrifice done at the time of taking the vows of Sanyas, and offering oblations to the sacred fire) whereby the sacred fire element is established in his own Atma (as narrated in detail in verse no. 2 above), the aspiring Parivrajak (Sanyasi) should break off all connections with the world by passing on his responsibilities and obligations to his son. [It is like a ceremony of 'passing the baton'. It is a part of the cycle of creation whereby the old gives way smoothly to the new, and continuity is maintained without a hitch.]

In case a son is not available, then the same procedure should be followed for one's disciple or follower. If any disciple or follower is not available then the same

procedure should followed and the inheritance should be passed on to one's own Atma. [The Atma is a universal entity as it is pure consciousness that is uniform and universal in nature. The implication here is that in case no specific person is available to accept the inheritance or the legacy being left behind by the Sanyasi, he should leave it to the society as a whole. It is such a grand vision of inheritance envisioned and expounded by Upanishadic thinkers that has the essential idea which says that nothing belongs to a man, he should never think that he has exclusive right to anything because everything is to be left behind when one makes his final exit from this world. Since the Atma is a universal entity and all human beings have equal right over what the Lord has provided in this world, therefore whosoever enjoys the things left behind by the Sanyasi is deemed to be enjoyed by the Atma which is a personified form of the Lord himself. Unless the Sanyasi has developed this holistic, all-inclusive and equanimous view of creation, he has no right to be truly called a Parivrajak!]

He should pronounce the words 'Brahm Twam Yagyastwam' ('Brahm you are personified in the form of the sacred fire of the sacrifice') and remember Brahm with full devotion and submission. Then he should enter 'Savitri'¹. [That is, he should offer his oblations to fire, water and earth because they represent the Savitri as described in the note below. Or in case he wishes to leave his mortal body and obtain permanent Moksha (salvation and emancipation) as mentioned in the concluding stanzas of verse no. 2 above, he can enter the fire for self-cremation, the water for self-drowning, and the earth for burying himself in a dug-out or enter a cave never to come out again.]

{The following narrative outlines the reverse process of creation, or its regression in metaphysical terms²—} The aspiring Parivrajak should first think that the Mother of the Vedas and the one who has supported and sustained the Brahmins since the beginning of creation (i.e. the Gayatri Mantra and the Gayatri Chanda in which the Vedas were originally composed) has reverted back to its original, its principal primary and elementary form as the three Vyahritis. [These three 'Vyahritis' are the first words uttered by the creator, and they are 'Bhu', 'Bhuvaha' and 'Swaha'. It is from them that the rest of the world came into being; it is from them that all the alphabets of the language and the three steps of the Gayatri Chanda came into existence. The Gayatri Chanda is a special type of verse in which the first verses of the Vedas were composed. Hence it is called the 'Mother of the Vedas'. Since the Brahmin class used to exclusively study the Vedas and depended upon this study for their knowledge, sustenance and livelihood, it is said that the Gayatri supported them.]

Then the three Vyahritis should be merged with their primary forms as the three letters of the ethereal word OM (i.e. the letters A, U and M respectively). [That is, since Bhu is imagined as having its origin in the first letter 'A' of the word OM, it reverts back to it. Similarly, since Bhuvaha is imagined as having its origin in the second letter 'U' of the word OM, it reverts back to it. And finally, since Swaha is imagined as having its origin in the third letter 'M' of the word OM, it reverts back to it. Not only this, all these three letters A, U and M have no separate existence but in a composite form known as OM which is regarded as a 'monosyllable' implying that its sound is just like a single alphabet. In other words, the entire world is deemed to have had its origin in one point source known as the 'Bindu' or Brahm, and had expanded from it in its present form. So when regression takes place, it collapses back into this single point source known as Brahm.]

After that, the aspirant should carefully sip some water.

Then, while saying the Pranav Mantra 'OM', he should clip-off the tuft of hair (called the 'Shikha') from his head, tear the sacred thread (called the 'Yagyavit') that

is worn by him across his chest, and remove his clothes and lay them on the ground or throw them in the water of a river etc.

Having discarded all his possessions, he should say the Mantras ‘OM Bhu Swaha’, ‘OM Bhuvaha Swaha’, and ‘OM Swah Swaha’, and meditate upon his form that is like a new-born child. [That is, he should transform himself into a new-born child that has no hair on its head, wears no clothes, has no sacred thread yet, and is naked. This child is absolutely innocent and untainted by the corruptions of the world. Its heart is pure and pristine, and it remembers nothing of the past life nor bothers of the future. It is unconcerned by what is happening around it. It is fearless and careless. It is cheerful, happy and easy to please. The implication is that the Sanyasi should transform himself into an innocent and pure being that resembles a new-born infant or a very young child. The word ‘new-born’ aptly applies to him because he has just stepped in to the divine world of spiritualism after having discarded his past life.]

Then he should say ‘I have taken Sanyas’ three times, first mentally, then in a mutter, and then loudly. This is done to express his firm resolve to become a Parivrajak, to mentally prepare him for the new way of life, to express his intentions and then finally declare it loudly with certainty in his voice.

Then he should henceforth use the OM Mantra and always remember (i.e. keep his mind focused on) Pranav or the supreme transcendental Brahm. He should raise his arms and declare that he is granting fearlessness to all the creatures. No living being need fear him any longer. [This serves a dual purpose—it removes any trace of ill-will or animosity that anyone harbours against him, and it endears him to one and all around him. After all, when he has renounced the world, there is no reason why anyone should have any fear from him. Even if he was a king before taking to the Sanyas way of life, by making this declaration he expects that he is treated like an ordinary man by others. This is necessary in order to instill humility in him along with removal of any trace of ego and pride from his psyche.]

Then he should make the following declarations which encapsulate the great sayings, called the Maha Vakyas, of the Vedas—viz. ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ (I am Brahm), ‘Tattwamasi’ (You are that essence known as Brahm) etc. He should constantly meditate and contemplate upon these Maha Vakyas and research the Truth about himself. [That is, he must ponder deeply into the hidden meaning of the great tenets of the scriptures and strive to personally witness and experience the application of the truth of the Maha Vakyas. This can be achieved by concentrating upon his inner-self to realise the Atma or the pure consciousness that resides in his bosom.]

While so lost in his thoughts and full of contentedness and bliss, he should head in the north direction³ and spend his time wandering there. [That is, after taking Sanyas, he must go to the lofty Himalayan Mountains in search for spiritual solitude and peace, for an environment that is conducive to meditation and contemplation, and for being close to Mother Nature where he can feel the divinity close to him without any sort of disturbance from this world. The phrase ‘head north’ has a metaphoric meaning also which implies moving up in the direction of spiritual elevation, moving ahead to find liberation and deliverance by breaking free from the shackles of the gross world and entering the subtle world of the Atma, and to move away from the world of material entrapments and delusions into the world of spiritual freedom and bliss.] (3).

[Note—¹*Savitri*—The word ‘Savitri’ has a female connotation and is regarded in metaphysics as a personified form of the dynamism and energy of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being who is the Grand Lord of creation. Its male counterpart

is known as 'Savita'. Upanishads assign various interpretations to the word Savitri because the dynamism of Brahm has shown its self in myriad of forms.

In the chronology of genesis of creation it is said that from Brahm came into being the air or wind element, from the wind came into being the ethereal word OM, from the word OM came into being the Savitri (fire), from the Savitri came into being the Gayatri (Mantra of three steps), and from the Gayatri came into being the world (refer Atharva Shir Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 6).

The Savitri Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition says that if the Sun is the Savita, then its rays is Savitri (i.e. if the Sun represents the supreme Brahm, then the dynamism of Brahm is personified as its rays called Savitri—refer verse no. 6); if the Fire is Savita (Brahm), then the Prithivi or Earth is the Savitri (its dynamic ability to foster and sustain life on display—refer verse no. 1); if the Water God known as Varun is Savita (Brahm), then Apaha (the water element in a liquid form) is its Savitri (dynamic form—refer verse no. 2).

In Puranic lore, Savitri is the divine consort of the Sun God. It represents the dynamism and energy of the Sun on vivid display. It is the Fire God personified in the form of a Goddess because the Shakti, or the dynamism of the Supreme Being with which he created, sustains and would bring this creation to an end is represented in a female form of a Goddess known as Shakti. Brahm, the Supreme Being, uses his Shakti to achieve anything in this creation.

Similarly, the Water God who personifies the water element is also known as Savitri as water is regarded as a personified form of all the Gods at once. This is obviously because water is a pre-requisite for life and no life is ever imaginable without the presence of water in some form. It is the great elixir of life. This fact is endorsed by Param Hans Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 2 wherein it is stated that when an aspirant is taking the vows of Sanyas and fire is not available due to some reason then he can offer his oblations to the water which is deemed to be the element from which all other Gods have come into being.

The Earth is also known as Savitri as it the base that supports and gives abode to both the fire as well as the water elements. It is in the bowls of the earth that the fire and water live eternally.

If fact it is the Savitri that is regarded as the cosmic Mother from whom all the Gods were born. Refer *Savitri Upanishad*, verse no. 14.

An entire Upanishad is dedicated to the theme of 'Savitri' and it is named after this entity as Savitri Upanishad; it belongs to the Sam Veda tradition. Its verse nos. 1-9 are dedicated to defining what is Savitri and what is Savita, and verse nos. 10-13 asserts that the three steps of the famous Gayatri Mantra are actually metaphoric representations of the great Shakti (dynamism, strength, powers, potentials and energy) of the Savitri.

Savitri symbolizes the Shakti of the Supreme Being with special relation to this gross world where the creature lives, i.e. the earth. Hence, when we talk of the fire element and water element as manifestations of Savitri we refer to their forms as they exist on earth—as the subterranean water or fire inherent to earth. No life is sustainable without either of the fire, the water or the earth being present simultaneously.

In the Upanishads dealing with the concept of Sanyas it is prescribed that after the aspirant has duly worshipped the consecrated fire, either actually or in a symbolic manner, he should establish the divine Goddess Savitri in the Vyahritis. Refer *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 37.

²The *retrogression/conclusion of creation, or the various stages in the dooms-day* have been described in the Vishnu Puran, Chapter 6, Cantos 3-4. In the Upanishads, it has been outlined in the following Upanishads—(i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingal Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 6. (ii) Atharva Veda = Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 3, paragraphs 7-16 while describing the life spans of Brahma, Vishnu, Viraat and Adi-Narayan.

³The concept of going to the *north direction* to seek spiritual elevation and find Mukti (liberation and deliverance) has been explained in other Upanishads also—viz. Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 37, and Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15.

In the context of the Indian sub-continent where the Upanishads were first conceived and composed, going in the 'northern' direction refers to heading for the lofty heights of the Himalayan mountain range. It is here that great ascetics, sages, seers, hermits and mendicants used to live in early times. It has a dense population of enlightened and self-realised souls. This factor injected an aura of divinity and positivity to the northern direction. Further, the northern direction where the mountains and verdant pristine forests were located had the quality of being tranquil, lonely, serene, calm and peaceful that was very helpful for spiritual pursuits, such as doing Tapa (austerity and penance), Dhyana (contemplation) and Yoga (meditation). This is the reason why the green, cool and pleasant surroundings of the mountains and their forests were chosen by ancient sages and ascetics as their preferred habitat. This place was far away from the hustle and bustle and the restlessness of ordinary mundane life of the world, and was untouched by corruptions and worldly taints. It gave these holy people absolute peace and quietude that is so necessary for spiritual pursuit, mental peace and emotional solace.

The term 'northern' therefore symbolically represented the upward mobility of the soul when it sought to rise above the humdrum of worldly life, break free from all worldly shackles and entanglements, and seek its liberation and deliverance from the gross body as well as the gross world. It represented the quest for higher spiritual way of existence, a life of higher consciousness, awakening, realisation, wisdom, enlightenment etc. It represented a state of existence free from all moral and spiritual encumbrances represented by numerous taints, faults, corruptions and blemishes that are associated with life in this world. It would be a utopian and pristine pure form of enlightened existence much like the crystal clean and pristine environment of the mountains and its forests themselves.

The dimension, the intensity and the density of positive energy emanating from the pure consciousness is more in the northern direction as compared to other directions because of a greater population of self-realised and enlightened sages who lived in this particular region of the earth. The lofty peaks of the mountains are metaphors of high peaks of pure consciousness, or high intensity waves of consciousness that have peaked, and its accompanying high level of spiritual energy and positivity, while the valleys, depressions and gorges present elsewhere on earth symbolise just the opposite—low level of consciousness and its accompanying low level of spiritual energy.

The world below the northern direction, i.e. everywhere else other than the northern direction, is literally like a slum-ghetto in spiritual metaphor—it is riddled with all sorts of factors that tie down the creature to this deluding world and its entanglements; it keeps the soul trapped in shackles; it impedes growth and development; it breeds moral and spiritual corruption and degeneration. Indeed, it is so gross that it needs quite an effort on the part of the aspirant to break free from its fetters and rise above to his final freedom.

We can look at these two directions from another angle. As compared to the northern direction where the high mountains are located, the opposite direction of the south is where the 'ocean' (the great Indian Ocean) is present. Whereas the mountain represents 'high' ground to which a man rushes for his life out of fear of being drowned during floods and deluges, the ocean is the one that does the opposite—it submerges and drowns everything; everything sinks in its fathomless waters. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the northern direction provides the high moral ground for the creature, and moving towards this direction means spiritual progress whereby the soul is lifted from the bowls of low forms of gross life, and endeavours to reach for the higher form of existence symbolized by the lofty peaks of the mountains. On

the other hand, the southern direction is a metaphor for a lowly and gross form of existence that virtually drowns the creature in the quagmire of worldly delusions and its attendant problems just like the ocean sinks everything put in it.

The southern direction is a metaphor for spiritual downfall, degradation, degeneration and depletion of spiritual energy. The low-bound soul gets stuck in this marsh, gets dirty and corrupted, and thereby loses the pristine cleanliness and shine that it inherently possesses. The southern direction representing the gross and deluding world is entrapping for the soul, it's an impediment for the soul's liberation and deliverance, while the northern direction where high land and mountains are present represent the state of existence when the soul lives in a high moral ground, free from all taints and blemishes, and is equivalent to the soul's progress towards its ultimate aim of finding liberation and emancipation.

This being so, those enlightened souls who lived in the northern direction were deemed to be like 'radiant Gods' because of the high level of energy of the consciousness emanating from them and forming a bright halo around them. As compared to these enlightened souls, those who lived down in the pit of ignorance and delusions that was characteristic of this material world lacked this glow of divine energy, and hence were regarded as 'dark-complexioned'.

The other two directions, such as the east and the west, are dominated by plains and comparatively flat land in nature as compared to the mountains in the north and the ocean in the south. So they were represented by those who were ordinary humans, neither as brilliant as the ones who lived in the northern direction, nor as dark as the ones who lived in the southern direction.]

4. If one is not eligible or unable to take the vows of Sanyas in the format described above (in verse no. 3), then there is an alternative arrangement for him. It is being narrated now.

He should grant fearlessness to all the creatures by declaring—'OM salutations! Oh friends! Give me your protection; lend me your strength. You are like the weapon called Vajra that belongs to Indra, the king of Gods who had killed the demon Vrittasur with it. Grant me peace and serenity. Free me from sins.'

After having made the above request prefixed with the word OM*, he should pick up the external signs of a Sanyasi, such as a monk's stick made up of bamboo that is clean and not damaged in anyway (such as being eaten by insects), the waist-thread, the loin-cloth, the water-pot, and one piece of ochre cloth to wrap around the body. [*The intention of prefixing OM to the address made to friends implies that the aspiring Parivrajak is addressing them as visible manifestations of the supreme Brahm. This word 'OM' is prefixed to all prayers offered to all the Gods as a matter of routine but the intention is that these Gods are being honoured as Brahm in their form, or that the main supreme deity to whom a particular prayer is offered is Brahm and not the junior God who is mentioned by name in the prayer. The same principle applies here as well. After all, it is the same Atma or pure consciousness that resides in the bosom of all the friends of the Sanyasi to whom he addresses this prayer, and this Atma is none but Brahm personified. Hence, he is actually praying to Brahm through the medium of his friends and compatriots.]

Wearing them, he should approach a learned Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) to be formally initiated. He should bow before him in reverence and accept the Maha-Vakya (i.e. the great saying of the Vedas) 'Tattwamasi' ('that art thou'; i.e. the Brahm you are seeking is none but you; the essence of creation is you) as a Mantra from the Guru. [At the time of initiation into a religious fold, the Guru gives a certain Mantra to the disciple as a key to his success. Since the candidate in this case

is about to take the vows of Sanyas, the best Mantra is Tattwamasi because it enlightens him about the truth of his own self.]

Once again, this Mantra is prefixed with the divine word OM (to indicate that the teacher is addressing the supreme Brahm when he makes this declaration, and to establish its trustworthiness).

Then the aspiring Sanyasi should observe the following codes of conduct—he should wear only thin ochre clothes or a deer-skin, should avoid getting into water (such as river or a stream) or climbing heights (such as rocks or high mountains), should not take food even by begging from one house more than once (or should accept a little food from a few houses), take a bath three times a day (at dawn, at noon and at dusk), should spend time in studying and understanding the philosophy of the Vedas (i.e. should study the Upanishads in-depth), and constantly repeat the Mantra for Pranav (Brahm), which is OM.

Enlightening himself by acquiring comprehensive spiritual knowledge (got by diligent study of the Upanishads) and treading wisely on the path of Brahm-realisation, he should turn inwards and hide his emotions and feelings within. He should strive to become free from all attachments and affections of all sorts, and instead focus his attention on the Atma, the pure consciousness, by becoming spiritually oriented.

He should abandon the following negative traits—Kaam (worldly passions and lust), Krodh (anger, wrathfulness), Lobh (greed, rapacity), Moha (affections, infatuations, attachments and attractions), Mada (arrogance, hypocrisy, haughtiness), Matsarya (jealously and envy that lead to anger and wrath), Dambha (deceit and conceit, falsehood and lies), Darpa and Ahankar (pride, arrogance, conceit, rashness, boastfulness, false sense of grandiose), Asuya (malice, envy, jealousy, detraction), Garva (same as Ahankar and Darpa), Ichha (aspirations, desires and wants), Dwesh (having animosity, ill-will, jealousy, hatred and malice), Harsha (having joys, feeling happy and exhilarated as from some good news), Amarsh (intolerance and its attendant anger, wrathfulness and jealousy), Mamatwa (to have affections and endearment for anything or anyone; to be emotionally attached with something or someone), and other such worldly traits that are ensnaring by their inherent nature.

Instead of the above negative traits he should inculcate the following positive ones—He should arm himself with the eclectic virtues of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment) and Vairagya (renunciation, detachment and dispassion), should turn his back to material wealth and lust for sensual pleasures, should study all the Upanishads comprehensively with an open and receptive mind, should strictly follow the tenets of Brahmacharya (sexual abstinence as well as exemplary self-control over the sense organs to inculcate discipline), Aparigraha (giving away of assets or possessions; non-accumulation; renunciation of the highest degree), Ahinsa (non-violence, both physical as well as mental), Satya (truthfulness in a holistic way), and Jitendriya (one who has conquered the wayward tendency, the restlessness and rashness of the sense organs of the body; one who exercises exemplary self control over the gross organs of the body).

He should be free from any kind of 'Raag' (having any sort of infatuation, attraction, attachment, affection and favour) for anything or anybody or any situation, both internally (i.e. mentally and sub-consciously) as well as externally (i.e. natural tendency of the sense organs to seek self-gratification).

Being thus neutral and non-attached, he should beg for food in order to sustain his gross body by accepting food from any household belonging to any of the four classes of society without distinguishing between them just like an animal (such as

cow or other cattle) that accepts food from anyone who offers it something to eat, subject to the condition that this household does not belong to someone who has fallen from his lawful way of life, is sinful and is tainted in any manner. [This is because such food too becomes tainted as it is ill-gotten, and would be like poison for the eater.]

A wise person who follows this principle develops a sense of equanimity and treats everyone as being equivalent to Brahm; he distinguishes between none, as all are Brahm personified in his view (4).

5. He should treat gains and loses with stoic equanimity in all the planes of time (i.e. in the present as well as in the future; with the past he has no concern).

He should accept food in his palms during begging (instead of in a pot).

He should remain thin and take care not to add flab to the body (as the latter would make him lazy and prone to diseases).

Firmly established in the thoughts of 'I am Brahm' as taught to him by his Guru at the time of getting initiated (refer paragraph no. 4 above), he should roam freely around for a period of eight months. [This period is necessary for his acclimatization to the life of a Sanyasi. It's a buffer zone between his previous life as a householder accustomed to the comforts of the world and the warmth of the household hearth, and the life as a wandering friar who has no such privileges.]

When he has become firmly established in the path of Sanyas and has fully acclimatized himself to its rigours, when he has inculcated wisdom and enlightenment, he should enter the next phases of Sanyas and progressively move ahead by becoming a Kutichak, a Bhaudak, a Hans or a Param Hans in that order¹.

Having attained the exalted stature of a 'Param Hans Sanyasi' (the theme to which this present Upanishad is dedicated), he should discard the waist-thread (or waist-band), the loin-cloth, the staff and the water-pot by offering them to a water body nearby. While doing this he should offer oblations and say Mantras relevant to the occasion.

Having discarded all his external appendages that characterizes him as being a Sanyasi, he should roam freely everywhere like a naked child. [The word 'naked' is a metaphor for having nothing to hide, having no secrets and no remaining unbothered about having to observe the niceties of the formal world. A child is innocent, cheerful, carefree, pure-hearted, bears no ill-will against anyone, is easy to please, and is regarded as an image of God². Hence, when a Sanyasi or Parivrajak becomes one like a child he is deemed to be an image of God.]

During this period of his wanderings, he should stay in a village for only one night, at a pilgrim site for three nights, in a town for five nights, and in any one given area for not more than seven nights.

He should not have any permanent home of his own.

He should be of a steady and firm mind and intellect, not swayed by any emotion or circumstance.

He should not enjoy proximity with fire (even during the winters—to ensure his safety from being burnt unawares as well as to inculcate the habit of observing strict austerity and doing rigorous penance).

He should stay 'Nirvikaar'—i.e. he should not allow any taints and faults or shortcomings to affect or influence him in the least.

He should free himself from the burden of adhering to certain formalities and rules of life by not bothering to worry about them.

He should regard loss and gain equally, and remain emotionless, unaffected, stoic and neutral in both the cases.

He should beg for food like a cow just in order to maintain his Pran in his body. [To eat like a cow means that he calmly accepts whatever is offered to him, and that too directly in his mouth without storing it for further use. He should chew the food properly before allowing it to enter the stomach like the cow chews its cud.]

He should treat all water bodies as the water-pot.

He should stay alone in a serene, secluded and calm place.

He should never pay attention to any kind of benefit or gain as well as harm or loss.

He should sleep on the ground.

He should not shave.

He should free himself from the obligation of having to observe the various religious sacraments such as 'Chaturmaas'—i.e. the requirement that ordains a monk to stay at a given place for a period of four months during one year, usually during the rainy season. [This requirement has been envisaged by the scriptures as a means to give the body of the wandering monk some rest and to prevent him from being exposed to the vagaries of Nature—such as facing the risk of being bitten by insects which proliferate during the rainy season as well as from reptiles such as snakes which come to the surface when their holes are flooded with rain-water, being infected by germs during the dampness of the rainy season, being soaked by rain with the accompanying chance of falling mortally ill with nothing for protection, or even facing the harsh conditions of winter. But a Param Hans Sanyasi is given the freedom to act as he deems fit.]

He should only pay attention to things that are 'Shukla' or bright and illuminated by nature—i.e. things or subjects that are auspicious, righteous and spiritually uplifting.

He should have nothing to do with women, worldly wealth and material things, as well as a city or village.

In spite of being highly wise, self-realised and enlightened, having inculcated exemplary self control, he should nevertheless behave erratically and unpredictably like an ignorant man, like a vagrant, like a lunatic, or like a wayward man who has lost his bearings. He should not divulge his spiritual stature, either in the form of external signs or in the form of special and exclusive behaviour that is holy, pious and divine. [This is to ensure that he is left alone, and no one either bothers or dares to come near him to disturb his meditative and contemplative mood. Should he show off his elevated spiritual stature and mystical powers, people would swamp him in uncontrollable hordes to seek his blessings for their mundane worldly problems, leaving him no time for his spiritual pursuits and disturbing his peace of mind and demeanours.]

Treating day and night alike, he should always remain in a perpetual state of half-sleep and half-awake. [This refers to his mental state of remaining unconcerned with his surroundings and the world at large. 'Half-asleep' refers to his indifference to anything pertaining to the gross world, and 'half-awake' refers to his constant involvement and remaining engrossed in meditation and contemplation. This state is equivalent to the Turiya state of spiritual existence which also corresponds to the state of consciousness known as Samadhi. This is a state when one is half awake and half asleep in the sense that though he goes about the routine affairs of this world in apparently a normal way, internally he remains aloof and disinterested in anything. This is the higher level of existence when one has realised the super consciousness

that makes him immune to and disinterested in anything inferior and sub-standard. This is also called the ‘Unmani’ or indifferent state of the mind and the sub-conscious.]

Verily, he who remains absorbed in researching the truth about himself as well as about Pranav (Brahm)—that is, an enlightened Sanyasi who remains engrossed in contemplating upon the Atma which is pure consciousness and his ‘true self’, along with meditating and contemplating upon Brahm which is the cosmic super Consciousness and the universal Absolute Truth of creation—when such an enlightened and self-realised man follows the path of Sanyas, and finally leaves his gross body as a true and realised Sanyasi (or as a true Parivrajak), then he is indeed known and honoured as a ‘Param Hans Parivrajak’ (5).

[Note—¹These four types of Sanyasis are described in Sanyas Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse nos. 23-27; and Shatayani Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, verse no. 11.

²The fact that a *child* is an image of God is endorsed by the **Holy Bible** as follows—

“1: At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2: And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3: And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5: And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6: But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. [The Holy Bible, New Testament, Gospel of St. Matthews, 18/1-6.]”

“36: And he took a child and set him in the midst of them; and when he (Jesus) had taken him (child) in his arms, he said unto them (the twelve Apostles), 37: Whosoever shall receive one such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him (the Lord God) who sent me. [The Holy Bible, New Testament, Gospel of St. Mark, 9/36-37.]”

6. [Brahma (the creator) asked once again—] ‘Oh Lord, what is form of ‘Pranav Brahm’ (the cosmic Consciousness)?’

[Lord Adi-Narayan replied—] ‘Pranav Brahm has sixteen Matras or aspects. [These ‘Matras’ of Brahm are also known as ‘Kalaas’ of Brahm.]

There are four states of existence of consciousness, and each of them has four aspects, bringing the total to sixteen.

There are said to be four primary states of existence of consciousness—viz. Jagrat or waking state, Swapna or dreaming state, Sushupta or deep sleep state, and Turiya or post Sushupta state of existence of consciousness¹. Each of these primary states is further divided into four more subtle sub-classes of existence bearing the same names as the four primary states.

Hence, the first primary state of existence known as ‘Jagrat’ or waking state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

Similarly, the second primary state of existence known as ‘Swapna’ or dreaming state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

Likewise, the third primary state of existence known as ‘Sushupta’ or deep sleep state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

And finally, the fourth primary state of existence known as ‘Turiya’ or trans-Sushupta state of consciousness has four subtle secondary states as sub-divisions or sub-classes known as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta and Turiya.

Thus, the first primary state of consciousness known as ‘Jagrat’, when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the vast external ‘Vishwa’ or the gross world of material sense objects. This state in which the consciousness becomes aware of the external world includes four sub-levels, and each exists as a world in its own right. Hence, during the ‘Jagrat’ state we have the following four classes of Vishwa (external visible, gross world) known as ‘Vishwa-Vishwa’, ‘Vishwa-Taijas’, ‘Vishwa-Pragya’, and ‘Vishwa-Turiya’.²

The same principle is applied to the other three states.

Therefore, the second primary state of consciousness known as ‘Swapna’, when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the subtle world known as ‘Taijas’ (literally meaning an entity that is glorious, effulgent, radiant and splendid; here referring to the world of dreams which is more splendid, charming, magnificent and fascinating than the real gross world of physical gross existence). This state in which the consciousness becomes aware of the subtle world that is imaginary but appears to be true as it is created by the glorious creative abilities of the mind and the sub-conscious includes four sub-levels, and each exists in its own right. Hence, during the ‘Swapna’ state we have the following four classes of existence of Taijas world—‘Taijas-Vishwa’, ‘Taijas-Taijas’, ‘Taijas-Pragya’, and ‘Taijas-Turiya’.

Similarly, the third primary state of consciousness known as ‘Sushupta’, when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the subtler world known as ‘Pragya’ (literally meaning an entity that is inherently wise, all-knowing, omniscient, enlightened and erudite). In this state the consciousness is free to see its own self because it is freed from the distractions caused to it by constant inputs from the gross organs of the body in relation to the external world and from the mind and its sub-conscious engaged in imagining a fascinating world of dreams. Hence, the consciousness is able to turn peacefully inwards and see the world of its own, and it is therefore called ‘Pragya’ as it is the world of enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge and erudition as opposed to the gross world known as Vishwa of the Jagrat state, and the subtle world known as Taijas of the Swapna state. Now, as in the previous cases, this Pragya also has four categories as follows—‘Pragya-Vishwa’, ‘Pragya-Taijas’, ‘Pragya-Pragya’, and ‘Pragya-Turiya’.

Finally, the fourth primary state of consciousness known as ‘Turiya’, when considered on a macro plane or level of existence, produces the subtlest form in which the consciousness exists, the world known as the transcendental world or Turiya world. It is so-called because it crosses the outer limit of Sushupta in the sense that having reached this state, the consciousness does not have to revert back to the earlier three states of Sushupta, Swapna and Jagrat. It’s virtually a permanent state of bliss and ecstasy when no awareness of any thing in its gross form exists, and the bliss and ecstasy are irreversible. Like the earlier three cases, this state is also sub-divided into four categories as follows—‘Turiya-Vishwa’, ‘Turiya-Taijas’, ‘Turiya-Pragya’, and ‘Turiya-Turiya’.

Since consciousness and all forms of existence are nothing but Brahm, the super-consciousness, in all these forms, it follows that Brahm has sixteen Matras (or forms or aspects).

[Now, this concept of sixteen Matras of existence of consciousness of an ordinary Jiva or living being in this creation is applied to the grand metaphysical concepts of OM as well as the various states in which consciousness exists when an aspirant is engaged in meditation and contemplation. This helps to draw a parallel between them and establish a sense of seamless uniformity in creation. It also establishes the principle of non-duality by proving that it is the same Brahm that exists in all planes of existence, whether gross or subtle, where micro or macro level of creation is taken into consideration.]

The first letter 'A' of the divine word OM³ standing for Pranav is equivalent to the 'Jagrat-Vishwa' form of Brahm which is the latter's first aspect. [This refers to the first step of the Jagrat or waking state of existence of consciousness.]

The second letter 'U' of the divine word OM standing for Pranav is equivalent to the 'Jagrat-Taijas' form of Brahm which is the latter's second aspect. [This refers to the second step of the Jagrat or waking state of existence of consciousness.]

The third letter 'M' of the divine word OM standing for Pranav is equivalent to the 'Jagrat-Pragya' form of Brahm which is the latter's third aspect. [This refers to the third step of the Jagrat or waking state of existence of consciousness.]

The 'Ardha Matra'⁴ (half-syllable) of the divine word OM standing for Pranav is equivalent to the 'Jagrat-Turiya' form of Brahm which is the latter's fourth aspect. [This refers to the fourth and final step of the Jagrat or waking state of existence of consciousness, and precedes the Swapna state.]

The 'Bindu'⁵ (the dot; the point-source of creation) of the divine word OM standing for Pranav is equivalent to the 'Swapna-Vishwa' form of Brahm which is the latter's fifth aspect. [This refers to the first step of the Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness.]

The 'Naad'⁶ (the cosmic sound of creation; the dish-like sign placed below the dot on the top of a letter to represent the crucible of creation) of the divine word OM standing for Pranav is equivalent to the 'Swapna-Taijas' form of Brahm which is the latter's sixth aspect. [This refers to the second step of the Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness.]

The 'Kalaa' (the various forms or aspects of the gross creation when considered in a holistic and comprehensive manner) is equivalent to the 'Swapna-Pragya' form of Brahm which is the latter's seventh aspect. [This refers to the third step of the Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness.]

The 'Kalaa-teet' (the various forms or aspects of creation that transcends the known world and pertains to the subtle world) is equivalent to the 'Swapna-Turiya' form of Brahm which is the latter's eighth aspect. [This refers to the fourth and final step of the Swapna or dreaming state of existence of consciousness just prior to the Sushupta state.]

The 'Shanti' (the peace, calmness, serenity and tranquility that is obtained when the consciousness reaches the Sushupta state) is equivalent to the 'Sushupta-Vishwa' form of Brahm which is the latter's ninth aspect. [This refers to the first step of the Sushupta state of existence of consciousness.]

The 'Shanti-Ateet' (the peace, calmness, serenity and tranquility that is obtained when the consciousness reaches the higher state of Sushupta) is equivalent to

the ‘Sushupta-Taijas’ form of Brahm which is the latter’s tenth aspect. [This refers to the second step of the Sushupta state of existence of consciousness.]

The ‘Unmani’ (the state of existence in which the mind has lost all interests in the gross world and the gross body; it is usually employed in the context of Yoga—refer Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 17) is equivalent to the ‘Sushupta-Pragya’ form of Brahm which is the latter’s eleventh aspect. [This refers to the third step of the Sushupta state of existence of consciousness.]

The ‘Mano-mani’ (the higher state of existence in which the mind has lost all interests in the gross world and the gross body; it is usually employed in the context of Yoga—refer Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 10) is equivalent to the ‘Sushupta-Turiya’ form of Brahm which is the latter’s twelfth aspect. [This refers to the fourth and the last step of the Sushupta state of existence of consciousness.]

The ‘Turyaa’ (the first stage of Turiya state of existence that transcends the Sushupta state; the transcendental state of the mind and the sub-conscious; the so-called Vaikhari state in which a self-realised ascetic or hermit exists) is equivalent to the ‘Turiya-Vishwa’ form of Brahm which is the latter’s thirteenth aspect. [This refers to the first step of the transcendental state of existence of consciousness known as Turiya.]

The ‘Madhyamaa’ (the second stage of Turiya state of existence) is equivalent to the ‘Turiya-Taijas’ form of Brahm which is the latter’s fourteenth aspect. [This refers to the second step of the transcendental state of existence of consciousness known as Turiya.]

The ‘Pashyanti’ (the third stage of Turiya state of existence) is equivalent to the ‘Turiya-Pragya’ form of Brahm which is the latter’s fifteenth aspect. [This refers to the third step of the transcendental state of existence of consciousness known as Turiya.]

The ‘Paraa’ (the fourth and the final stage of Turiya state of existence that is the ‘supreme and most exalted’ state; the word ‘paraa’ means one that is supreme, most exalted and transcendental) is equivalent to the ‘Turiya-Turiya’ form of Brahm which is the latter’s sixteenth and final aspect. [This refers to the fourth and the ultimate step of the transcendental state of existence of consciousness known as Turiya.]

[Now, this concept is being explained in the context of OM. If it is deemed that the entire creation is incorporated in the ethereal word OM that is synonymous with Pranav and Brahm, then these sixteen Matras of Brahm vis-à-vis the four states of consciousness as narrated above can be applied to the different aspects of OM as follows—]

The four Matras or aspects in which the Jagrat state exists represents the four fractions of the first letter ‘A’ of the word OM. [These four Matras are ‘Jagrat-Vishwa’, ‘Jagrat-Taijas’, ‘Jagrat-Pragya’ and ‘Jagrat-Turiya’. Hence, the first aspect or Matra of OM represented by its first letter ‘A’ symbolizes these four sub-divisions of the Jagrat or the waking state of consciousness in this creation.]

The four Matras or aspects in which the Swapna state exists represents the four fractions of the second letter ‘U’ of the word OM. [These four Matras are ‘Swapna-Vishwa’, ‘Swapna-Taijas’, ‘Swapna-Pragya’ and ‘Swapna-Turiya’. Hence, the second aspect or Matra of OM represented by its second letter ‘U’ symbolizes these four sub-divisions of the Swapna or the dreaming state of consciousness in this creation.]

The four Matras or aspects in which the Sushupta state exists represents the four fractions of the third letter 'M' of the word OM. [These four Matras are 'Sushupta-Vishwa', 'Sushupta-Taijas', 'Sushupta-Pragya' and 'Sushupta-Turiya'. Hence, the third aspect or Matra of OM represented by its third letter 'M' symbolizes these four sub-divisions of the Sushupta or the deep sleep state of consciousness in this creation.]

And finally, the four Matras or aspects in which the Turiya state exists represents the four fractions of the Ardha Matra of the word OM. [These four Matras are 'Turiya-Vishwa', 'Turiya-Taijas', 'Turiya-Pragya' and 'Turiya-Turiya'. Hence, the fourth and final aspect or Matra of OM represented by its Ardha Matra symbolizes these four sub-divisions of the Turiya or the transcendental state of consciousness in this creation.]

The 'Brahm' that has been described above is known as 'Pranav' or cosmic Consciousness that is all-pervading, all-encompassing, all-knowing and the supreme transcendental Authority and the absolute Truth in creation.

It is this supreme transcendental Brahm that is worthy of being worshipped and sought by Param Hans Avadhuts (higher categories of Sanyasis or Parivrajaks) who have reached the transcendental stage of existence.

This transcendental knowledge is able to reveal the secrets and mysteries of Brahm; it virtually 'illuminates' Brahm and makes it known or accessible by way of realisation and enlightenment.

It is the way that leads to 'Videha Mukti'—or the form of spiritual liberation that transcends the level of gross existence and is not limited to just discarding the gross body upon death but actually being separate from the body even while living in it. Of course, the word 'Videha' means 'without the body'—but here it means to live in such a way that the spiritual aspirant is completely unaware of the existence or non-existence of the body. Since he has become exemplarily self-realised and enlightened, he has understood that his 'true self' is not the gross body but the Atma which is pure consciousness personified. This Atma, he realises, is different, distinct and independent from the body. [He thus feels no physical pain or discomfort; he feels no thirst or hunger; he has no attractions for the sense objects of the world simply because these are the functions of the body; he has no friends or enemies for they are also limited to the body.] (6).

[Note—¹The *four states of existence of consciousness*: They have been described in the following Upanishads amongst others—(a) Shukla Yajur Veda—Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 2/1/16-20, 4/3/9-38; Subalo-panishad, Canto 4 full as well as Canto 9, verse no. 1-7; Paingalo-panishad, 2/11-16; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4-2/5; Turiyateet Upanishad. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 59-64, 72; Canto 4, verse no. 11-20; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1, 20-21; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/12-93/15; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 4; Shaarirak Upanishad, verse no. 14; Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11. (c) Atharva Veda tradition—Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Atharvashikha Upanishad; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 1, 24-26; Canto 6, verse no. 4, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-16, 19-20; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-8.

The Atma or the soul which is pure consciousness and true self of the creature has many states of existence according to metaphysics—e.g. the 1st state called the waking state or 'Jagrat', the 2nd state called the dreaming or 'Swapna', and the 3rd called the deep sleep state of consciousness or 'Sushupta'. There is a 4th state also, and it is called 'Turiya', which is obtained as a result of going beyond the 3rd stage of

deep sleep, and it is a permanent state of bliss and felicity in which the conscious Atma usually lives in ordinary people who are said to be self-realised. Beyond this 4th state is the Turiyateet, literally the state which is beyond the Turiya state and in which the Atma (pure consciousness) is free from all the encumbrances and characters displayed by it during the other four states. Therefore, Turiyateet would be the 5th state of existence of the Atma, and the higher transcendental state when the spiritual aspirant experiences oneness with Brahm. Whereas the Turiya state is the hallmark of those who are self-realised, the Turiyateet state is the benchmark for those who are Brahm-realised.

To start with the understanding of these different states of existences of the consciousness, we have to begin with the fundamental two states in which the creature lives in this world. These two are the following—(1) the *waking* and (2) the *sleeping* states. For the purposes of analyzing the behaviour and existential states of the creature during these two fundamental stages, they have been classified into three distinct states as follows—the waking state called ‘Jagrat’, the dream state called ‘Swapna’, and the deep sleep state called ‘Sushupta. Beyond these three, there are two transcendental states called Turiya and Turiyateet states of existence of the consciousness in which self-realisation and Brahm-realisation are possible, or which mark the state in which those who are self-realised and Brahm-realised exist. We will now endeavour to analyse all these five states of existence of the conscious Atma in simple terms in brief.

According to the Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 11, there are three types of world that the Jiva lives in. They pertain to the three states of consciousness in this world. They are Vishwa (the world as the individual creature perceives it in its waking state of consciousness), Taijas (the world as the individual creature perceives it in its dreaming state of consciousness), and Pragya (the world as the individual creature perceives it in its deep sleep state of consciousness).

(a) The 1st stage is called waking or *Jagrat*. During this state, a creature’s sense organs that constitute its gross body are active and they receive inputs from the physical material world outside which they in turn transfer to the mind which forms the creature’s subtle body. This mind then filters through the clutter of information, then either orders the organs of action to respond accordingly, or it consults its supervisor, the intellect, for advice. Meanwhile, the mind stores all the information in its data bank for future reference much like the record room of an office. The true self of the creature, the pure conscious Atma, is like the King in whose secretariat the mind and intellect work, and therefore the Atma is the final Authority which takes the final decision and is responsible for all the things done by each of these individual entities. Even as the King cannot absolve himself for the sins committed by his subjects during his rule or plead ignorance of whatever is happening in his kingdom though he is not directly involved in them or in the day to day routine work of the kingdom as he stays in his palace and cannot be practically expected to control each movement in his kingdom, but he is morally responsible for them and cannot deny this responsibility. Similarly, the Atma of the creature is responsible for each and every thing that the creature does though the Atma is limited to its palace-like residence in the heart of the creature. So, the otherwise immaculate Atma is accused of things that body or mind of the creature does because the Atma is at the helm of affairs.

During this Jagrat state, the Atma interacts with the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of the gross body (i.e. the physical body). The sense organs of perception of the body collect information from the external world and pass them over to the mind, which in turn processes them and passes necessary instructions to the organs of action on the one hand, and files data for future reference in its memory bank on the other hand. The mind would also refer to the intellect those things which are not routine in nature. It is the transcendental state of supreme enlightenment and self-realisation.

The Jagrat state is when the consciousness is aware of the external world of material objects, and this is made possible through the medium of the sense organs of perceptions such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which enables the creature to respectively see, hear, smell, taste and feel this world. The creature's responses are carried out with the help of the organs of action such as the hands which receive, the legs that take him to the desired place, the mouth that helps him to speak and eat, the excretory organs that helps it to eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which helps him to recreate and enjoy the sensual pleasures of the world. These organs are located in the gross body, and since the world is experienced through them, the latter is also deemed to be gross. The coordination of all the perceptions and actions is done by the mind-intellect which is the subtle part of the body.

The first stage of Jagrat or waking state of consciousness has been beautifully described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 20; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-19, 31, 34-35.

The Jagrat state of consciousness has also been described in the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, verse no 5.

(b) *Swapna* or dreaming state is the 2nd state of consciousness when the latter has withdrawn its self from being actively involved in the outside world through the medium of the sense organs of perception and action. But the mind does not sleep and remains active as before, though this activity is at the subtle level of the sub-conscious. Here, the consciousness remains active through the medium of the vital winds, called the various Prans present inside the body, and moves in the different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body, such as the nerves and veins etc.) which keep the mind working. Refer Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 12, and Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 18; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 20; Krishna Yajur Veda's Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 58-60; Rig Veda's Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 19.

This Pran is deemed to be synonymous with the life factors and consciousness in the body as well as with the latent fire element present inside the body which gives the energy, strength and vitality to the body to live and remain active. If it were not for the fire element (Tej) and the wind element (Pran), the consciousness (Atma, the 'self') would have found it difficult to live in the body. In fact, the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 3 clearly states that the Pran in its manifestation as Agni or fire.

Since no external stimuli is being received from the outside world, the mind begins to replay what is stored in its memory bank and uses its stupendous abilities to imagine and recreate situations and circumstances in an imaginary world of dreams. Since the Atma living in the causal body depends upon the mind living in the subtle body to feel or sense anything pertaining to this world, for all practical purposes therefore the Atma begins to live in this new world of dreams conjured up by the mind and gets as involved in it as it was during the waking state. Since the mind is active here, the man remembers some of his dreams even when he wakes up. So as far as the Atma is concerned, the two states of waking and dreaming means the same—the world exists for it in both these two states.

During the sleeping stage, the Atma sees dreams. This is called *Swapna* state of existence of the consciousness. In metaphysical terms it is called *Supta*. This is the sleeping state of consciousness. Here, the creature is alive because it's Pran or the vital winds move around and remain active in its different Naadis (tubular ducts in the body such as the nerves which number seventy thousand).

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 2 very precisely describes what sleep is.

The Pran oscillates between the Jagrat and Supta states of existences (i.e. between the waking state of consciousness and the sleeping state of consciousness) as

described in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse no. 16-18, 34-35.

According to Paingalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 12, when the creature is in dreaming state of existence, his Prans (vital life-consciousness represented by the vital winds) moves along the various Naadis (tubular ducts in the body).

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in Canto 2, verse no. 61, describes how 'dreams' are seen.

(c) Beyond the second state of existence of consciousness is the third eclectic state called the *Sushupta* or deep sleep state. This has been elaborately dealt with in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 19; Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 14-15, 19, 21-30. During this stage the creature does not dream.

The *Sushupta* or the deep sleep state of consciousness is the 3rd state in which the mind has also become defunct, and the Atma has withdrawn itself into the exclusive domain of the causal body and lives in seclusion, disconnected with the external world because of the non-involvement of either the gross body or the subtle body. Here it is surrounded by the space of the subtle sky around the heart, called the *Hridya Akash*. During this state of existence, the vital winds, called the *Pran* or 'life' of the creature, keep on moving in the different Naadis (various ducts such as nerves and veins etc.) as during the dreaming state so as to keep the body alive as is evident from the fact that all the subtle and imperceptible functions of the inner organs of the body such as the liver, kidneys, heart, pancreas, digestive organs, lungs etc. continue uninterrupted as before, because if they cease to function the body would die. It is the mind now that has gone in a defunct state. But this phase is temporary and shows the true nature and fundamental characteristic of the Atma, which is blissful and peaceful, contented and fulfilled, not feeling restless and perplexed in any manner whatsoever because it is now not being disturbed by the mind's constant nagging. That is why a sound asleep man does not want anything, he does not feel anything, he is not worried about anything, he is not concerned about anything, and he does not remember anything. That is also why one feels very relaxed and refreshed after even a short deep sleep when the mind and the body both find their rest.

The *Prashna* Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 6 describes in clear terms why a creature stops dreaming.

(d) Then comes the 4th state of existence of the Atma, and it is known as *Turiya* state. This state is reached when the third state becomes a perpetual phenomenon instead of being only a temporary phase. Once this state of *Turiya* is reached, then even though the man might wake up from sleep and appears to be going about his normal duties in a routine manner in this world, his pure consciousness remains aloof and distanced from the sense organs of perception and actions as well as from the mind. This is the 'transcendental state' of existence of consciousness, and it goes beyond the third state of *Sushupta* or deep sleep state of consciousness. Here the spiritual aspirant lives in a state of perpetual *Samadhi*. That is, he remains in a constant state of blissfulness and meditation though he lives in this physical world and goes about his normal affairs like an ordinary man.

During this 4th state called '*Turiya*', the Atma acquires all the characters of the earlier three stages, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleeping states in their individual form as well as in a combined and composite way. In this state of spiritual existence, the consciousness exhibits all the traits of the earlier three states at the same time along with the unique traits which would obviously be a net result of the combined affect of all the individual traits that are so unique to each of the three earlier states of existence consciousness—viz. the waking state, the dreaming state, and the deep sleep state.

The 4th state of existence of the consciousness or Atma is also called the '*Turiya Chaitanya* state'. In this state, the creature exists in its purest form as the pure

consciousness which is undiluted, uninterrupted and unpolluted by any impulses or inputs from the external world. This results in its pristine and immaculate form as 'consciousness' to shine through (much like the flame of the candle which shines with all its brightness and splendour once the tainted glass covering around it is removed). This consciousness is the true 'self' of the creature and its real identity.

Thus, it is the Atma or the pure consciousness as the true 'self' of the creature that is the witness of the existence of the other three states in which the creature lives. This 'self' or Atma is imperishable and without a birth or beginning. This is because the other three states continue to appear and disappear in a rhythmic cycle as the creature wakes up to face the world after his phase of sleep is over, only to go back to sleep again when it is exhausted, and wake up again refreshed and rejuvenated from sleep. But the fourth state is like the Sun in the sky which is steady and shines constantly upon the world and lights it up. This Sun is unaffected by anything happening in this world and to this world, and remains completely dispassionate and detached from anything mundane and terrestrial. Nights and days appear and disappear in a cyclic manner, but the Sun remains the same. During the night it is erroneously assumed that the Sun is no more, but as science has proved the Sun is there in the sky though it might not be visible to the creature during that period of time called the 'night' as it is shining on the outer side of the globe. The day is comparable to the waking state of consciousness, the moon-light night to the dreaming state of consciousness when a man is able to see this world but with a different light, while the dark night when nothing is visible is comparable to the deep sleep state of consciousness when nothing of the external world is visible.

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 64, describes what the practical implication of this Turiya state of consciousness is.

The Subalo-upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 9, verses 1-7 elaborately describes the fourth state of existence of the consciousness called the Turiya state. It says that the bliss and happiness, collectively called 'Anand', which is found in the 4th state of existence of the consciousness called 'Turiya' when one experiences and witnesses the divine supreme transcendental Being (Brahm), also ends with Turiya. It is the 'final frontier', the ultimate goal that the soul strives to reach. So, when the fount of bliss (Anand) is reached in the Turiya state, nothing more is left to be achieved or acquired. As soon as a man abandons this supreme state of existence and wakes up into this mundane existential material world, he immediately loses that bliss which he was enjoying in the Turiya state. The word Turiya means 'fourth quarter', and once this segment is reached after crossing the first three quarters, there is nothing beyond it and the complete cycle is achieved. There is accomplishment of all that has to be accomplished; there is the 'final coming home, full cycle' for the soul. Everything comes to a full stop.

Being thus enlightened about the truth, the man moves ahead to the next phase called 'Turiya' state of existence. In this state, there is no fear of death, no sorrows, no torments, no sufferings and no perplexities pertaining to this world. It is marked by eternal bliss, peace, tranquility and happiness. In this state the man realises his truthful form, and thus all the causes for his taking birth are rendered null and void. That is, the seed in the form of his unfilled desires and hopes as well as the consequences of his past deeds is made sterile. The 'seed' does not find compatible ground to survive and sprout into new shoots. Therefore, the 'tree' in the form of this world and representing the endless cycle of 'tree-seed-tree' symbolizing birth and death is uprooted from its roots for ever.

This final quarter or state of existence called Turiya is marked by glorious virtues, such as of being equivalent to Amrit (the ambrosia of eternity and bliss), of being fearless, of being without any sufferings, pains, sorrows, torments, anguish, grief and distress of any kind, of being eternal, infinite and without an end and limitations, and of being in a state that has no 'seed' or cause from which a person would have to take any birth again. Such a person is called 'Turiya', i.e. one who has

crossed the barrier, one who has traveled full circle and has attained final liberation and deliverance. Hence, he attains the supreme transcendental Brahm. [In other words, as has been said above, he comes home after having traveled full circle, and therefore has no need to go over it once again in order to find his home where he would ultimately retire and take his final rest!]

²This concept can be understood by a simple illustration. Suppose there are four types of bottles marked A, B, C and D. Each type has four bottles, hence we have four bottles of type A, four of B, four of C, and four of D, bringing the total number of bottles to sixteen. Now we are provided with four coloured liquids marked L1, L2, L3 and L4, and are asked to fill the four bottles of each category with each of these four liquids. When the filling is completed and the bottles are lined up and labeled, we will have a total of sixteen filled bottles, grouped in four categories of four bottles in each category as follows—

The 1st bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'A' having liquid 'L4'.

Similarly, we fill the other group of bottles as follows—the 1st bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'B' having liquid 'L4'.

Next, the bottles of group C are considered. The 1st bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'C' having liquid 'L4'.

Finally we have the 1st bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L1', the 2nd bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L2', the 3rd bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L3', and the 4th bottle of type 'D' having liquid 'L4'.

Thus, we have a total of 16 bottles filled with these liquids.

In this example, suppose the four types of bottles stand for the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. bottle of type 'A' represents Jagrat, bottle of type 'B' represents Swapna, bottle of type 'C' represents Sushupta, and bottle of type 'D' represents Turiya.

Similarly, suppose the four coloured liquids stand for the name assigned to this consciousness in each of these states—viz. liquid of type L1 represents Vishwa, liquid of type L2 represents Taijas, liquid of type L3 represents Pragyā, and liquid of type L4 represents Turiya.

Therefore, we will have the following sequence—(i) Category A = 'Jagrat-Vishwa'; 'Jagrat-Tijas'; 'Jagrat-Pragyā'; 'Jagrat-Turiya'; (ii) Category B = 'Swapna-Vishwa'; 'Swapna-Tijas'; 'Swapna-Pragyā'; 'Swapna-Turiya'; (iii) Category C = 'Sushupta-Vishwa'; 'Sushupta-Tijas'; 'Sushupta-Pragyā'; 'Sushupta-Turiya'; and finally (iv) Category D = 'Turiya-Vishwa'; 'Turiya-Tijas'; 'Turiya-Pragyā'; 'Turiya-Turiya' = 16 states or aspects of the same consciousness.

An important point to note is that the existence of four sub-divisions in any one state of existence is a system adopted of grading the same consciousness into different subtle levels within the same state. It is like the system of grading students in school or college—those within the general grade 'A' are sub-divided into two or more categories such as A++, A+, A and A—.

³The concept of *OM* and *Naad* : Briefly, the monosyllabic word OM actually consists of three letters when analysed—viz. A, U and M. The letter 'A' stands for the origin of creation, the letter 'U' signifies the development and expansion of this creation, while the letter 'M' stands for conclusion. Other metaphysical connotations of these three letters have been elaborately described in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 74-79 and Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 3-10 of Sam Veda.

⁴The *Ardha Matras*/Maatraas—The *Ardha Matras* are the half-syllables used in Sanskrit language and placed above, below, before and after an alphabet to give it a proper sound. It gives the concerned alphabet a proper form besides giving a meaning to the word of which the alphabet with its *Ardha Matras* is a constituent part. According to the *Ram Uttar-Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 4/40, Lord Ram has been viewed as a personification of this ‘*Ardha Matras*’. It symbolises the fact that without him the creation loses its meaning, glory and existence even as a word loses its meaning and impact without the alphabets having proper *Ardha Matras*.

In the context of OM, the *Ardha Matra* refers to a half-syllable placed at the end of the third letter ‘M’ of OM in the form of a ‘Halant’ or a mark of an oblique line placed below M. In the symbol of OM, it is represented by a horizontal ‘S’ sign placed to the right groove of the symbol which represents the long vowel sound of ‘Ooo’ in Sanskrit (like in *boot*). Normally, the letter ‘M’ of the word OM is to be hummed in a prolonged sound stretching into infinity. But since it is not done and the worshipper becomes silent, it is called ‘half Matra’ or half syllable. It is tantamount to conclusion of the word OM, and since OM is envisioned as representing the whole gamut of creation, this *Ardha Matra* is symbolic of conclusion of creation. That is why it is accompanied by the universal fire of destruction called the *Samvartak Agni*.

The *Atharva-shikha Upanishad* of the *Atharva Veda* tradition, in its *Kandika 1* says that the *Ardha Matra* of OM represents the Moon God, the Mantras of the *Atharva Veda*, the Maruts (the Wind God), the *Viraat Chanda* and the *Samvartak Agni*. It is the fourth leg or *Paad* of *Brahm* and follows the third letter ‘M’ of OM.

The *Tripadvibhuta Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of the *Atharva Veda*, Canto 7, paragraph no. 68 says that Lord Vishnu represents the *Ardha Matra*.

⁵⁻⁶The *Bindu* and *Naad*—The word ‘*Bindu*’ ordinarily refers to a ‘dot’ placed on the top of a Sanskrit alphabet to produce the nasal sound of a resonating ‘N’ or of ‘M’—as in *ring* or *rim*. It is equivalent to the reverberations of primordial sound created at the beginning of creation, and from which the rest of the subtle forms of sound were generated. It is called *Naad* in this context of creation.

The *Naad* and *Bindu* are collectively called the ‘*Chandra Bindu*’. It is a sign resembling a concave crucible or shallow plate over which is placed a dot at its focal point. It is a ‘moon-like spot’ and hence called the ‘*Chandra*’ (moon) ‘*Bindu*’ (a dot). It is a nasal sound equivalent to the letter ‘N’ as in the words *can’t*, *mount*, *taint* or *taunt*. The Moon is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of *Amrit*, the elixir of life and the ambrosial fluid of eternity and bliss. The *Bindu* is a drop of this *Amrit*. Hence, in metaphysics the term *Chandra Bindu* is used to refer to the supreme transcendental *Brahm* and the spiritual state of realisation of pure conscious ‘self’ when the aspirant enjoys bliss and experiences a surge of ecstasy. This is a metaphoric way of saying that he tastes *Amrit* dripping from the Moon.

The concept of *Bindu* (a ‘dot’ or a ‘drop’) and *Naad* (the cosmic ‘sound’) have a close association with the concept of OM (the ethereal word representing the supreme transcendental *Brahm*) and its iconographic depiction as a symbol in the form of the sixth alphabet of the Sanskrit language, i.e. the long vowel sound ‘Ooo’ as in ‘*boot* or *root*’. Amongst the various *Upanishads* that describe this concept are *Naad Bindu*, *Dhyan Bindu*, *Tejo Bindu* and *Yogshikha* (Canto 3, verse nos. 2-11).

This OM is a representative of the supreme transcendental divine entity known as *Brahm* which predates this existence and lasts even after this world is concluded. In fact, this creation would fall back to merge into this *Brahm* and re-emerge from it at the time of a new beginning much like waves in an ocean rising and falling into the water again and again. This *Brahm* is in a neutral, a-dynamic and attributeless state in the period before the process of creation began. Then when the time came for the creation to come forth, energy and necessary strength and relevant power were needed. This is called ‘*Shakti*’ aspect of *Brahm* which was inherent to *Brahm* but in a latent form. The ‘point’ whereby this *Brahm* revealed his *Shakti* is called a ‘*Bindu*’. It

is also like a 'drop' of the cosmic sperm emerging from the cosmic Purush, the invisible Father of creation, which contain all the necessary energy, strength, vigour and vitality needed to initiate the process of creation. Hence, Bindu is Brahm's 'Shakti' aspect; it represents the 'dynamic principle of Brahm'. In Tantra literature, Brahm is treated as Shiva, and his energy is called a Shakti represented by the Bindu. Since OM is a symbol for Brahm, this Shakti was put on top of this symbol in iconography to depict this fact in visual term.

Now came the revelation of this Shakti—and that was done in the form of Naad, the 'cosmic sound'. Since only the invisible ether was present in the beginning, this Shakti caused a ripple in it which spread in the form of waves. Waves have kinetic energy and this set in 'motion' the process of creation. Modern science has shown that the origin of this universe was in a Big Bang, and this means that there was a 'single point' where this 'explosive bang' occurred—a clear reference to the concept of a 'Bindu' (point) and its accompanying 'Naad' (sound). It was from this Bindu that the cosmic debris spread out by the force of this explosion to distant corners of the available space to act as nuclei for the umpteen numbers of planets and star systems that would eventually evolve to form the universe as we know of it today.

Since Bindu was the energy of Brahm that was not visible, it is therefore the un-manifest dynamic force of Brahm and very closely associated with the latter; it is a part of Brahm. The Naad is a revealed form of this Shakti as it is the cosmic sound which can be actually heard. Since Naad had its origin in Brahm and is a manifested form of the stupendous energy contained in an un-manifested form in the Bindu, it is constantly associated with them much like the electromagnetic waves (Naad) of a radio broadcasting station, the speaker (Brahm, the consciousness) who broadcasts the news and the transmitter tower (the Bindu) are inseparable from one another.

The concept of 'Bindu' and 'Naad' can be understood in another plane also. The cosmic process of creation needed the injection of a cosmic sperm to initiate the process of the creation of the cosmic embryo. This sperm would come from the cosmic Father, i.e. Brahm. Brahm in the context of metaphysical interpretation of creation would be the 'causal body of the cosmos' because it is the 'cause' of it all. The 'drop' of sperm ejaculated by this Father (Brahm) had the stupendous creative power and energy that provided the necessary spark. The word 'Naad', in addition to its conventional meaning of 'sound', also means a big open concave 'bowl or dish or crucible' for storing liquid, which in the context of creation meant the cosmic womb of Nature. So, when the cosmic Father (Brahm) dropped one 'drop' of his sperm (Bindu) into the crucible (Naad), the cosmic conception was affected and the process was initiated. From this conception there emerged the Hiranyagarbha, the yellow egg of the cosmos, which in terms of Vedanta would be the macrocosmic 'subtle body' of creation. When this cosmic egg matured, the macrocosmic gross body emerged in the form of the Viraat Purush.

The stupendous and astounding powers that Brahm inherently possesses are highlighted in the context of the most fascinating, majestic and magnificently wondrous world it has created using its own energy called Shakti. Had this creation not been in existence, the powers of Brahm would not have come to the fore. In other words, the active principle of Brahm is revealed in the form of the Shakti.

Since the Bindu is regarded as the Shakti principle of Brahm in Tantra literature because it is this principal point from where the primary form of active and dynamic Brahm started to reveal its self in the form of Naad, it is likened to the 'fire element'. The Naad itself is sound and the latter needs the medium of ether to travel as waves and spread in all the directions. Therefore, Naad is likened to the 'wind element'.

For the purpose of Yoga practice, the Bindu is depicted as the dot present on the top of the symbol of Naad, i.e. the sixth Sanskrit alphabet 'Ooo', symbolising the focal point in the cosmic bowl from where this sound is generated and where the mind is supposed to be focused during meditation so that Naad can be heard. The

location of this Bindu in the body is the center of the two eyebrows where a practitioner of Yoga is supposed to focus his attention during meditation.

The Naad is the cosmic sound heard by an ascetic when he is in deep meditation mode. As any sound originates from a source and then radiates out in the form of waves much like ripples created on the surface of a calm lake when a stone is thrown in it, the Naad has its cosmic origin in the one-point source of sound energy called Bindu that has Brahm as its principal base.

From the perspective of the meaning of Naad as 'sound' we can have the following interpretation—all sounds have a 'point' of origin, the Bindu of origin. From this point source the sound waves spread out in waves in the ether present in space at the macro level of creation, and in the air in the immediate surrounding space at the micro level of creation. It can be compared to ripples arising on the surface of a calm lake when a stone is thrown on it. 'Energy' waves are created from the 'point' of impact and spread out in concentric layers just like the waves of sound travel in ether. This example would prove why and how the origin of Naad was envisioned in the Bindu (dot) by the ancient sage who had first visualised it.

The Bindu means a 'point source', and Naad refers to the 'un-manifest energy in the form of sound' that radiated out in the cosmic ether from this point source. Therefore, the Bindu would refer to the passive Brahm and the Naad would mean in this context the dynamic and active energy of this Brahm radiating out from this point source to all the directions of creation.

This Bindu or dot is the focal point from which the cosmic Naad or sound originated when the process of creation first started in what the modern science recognizes as the 'Big Bang'. This sound spread to all corners of the cosmos. The human skull is also slightly concave from the inner side, and the brain is located just below it. The implication is very obvious—this Bindu or 'dot' generated the cosmic Naad which is heard by the ascetic when he focuses his entire concentration in the head by diverting all his senses away from the external world and fixing their attention on one point in the head, called the Agya Chakra or still higher up in the Brahm Randhra Chakra.

It is just like fine tuning the antenna of the modern satellite discs used in television reception. The reverberation and vibrations caused by this cosmic Naad is very overwhelming for the ascetic and he literally drowns in its sound. The vibrations massage his nerves and relaxes them; he feels a sense of extreme ecstasy and bliss due to this, and that is comparable to the one obtained at the time of ejaculation of sperm during intercourse—hence the reference to the male phallus and the semen dripping from it. There is no vulgarity in this explanation. This citation is used to give a physical and verifiable idea of the extent of bliss and ecstasy obtained when the ascetic reaches the climax of Yoga so that he can hear the Naad.

This is also why this condition is compared to the 'cosmic union' of Shiva representing Brahm and his own energy personified as Shakti which produced this sound energy called Naad in the ethereal space of the cosmos. It was Brahm's ecstasy and bliss of self-realisation that produced a cosmic vibration which in turn set in motion the process of creation. According to Vedanta, Shiva is known as Brahm, while this Shakti is known as Maya. According to the Sankhya philosophy, this Shakti is called Prakriti in the context of Brahm who is called Purush here.

In Tantra worship, Bindu is regarded as Shakti, the dynamic aspect of Shiva, and the Peeth is the seat of this Shakti. There is another way at looking at these two words—Bindu represents the cosmic sperm which represents the dynamic energy, potentials and powers of Shiva, and the Peeth would then be the seat of this Shiva energy, i.e. the base of the Shakti.

Naad is a form of cosmic sound, and this sound is a form of energy created by vibrations in ether. In other words, during the process of Yoga, when the vital winds, especially the Apan wind is made to activate the Mooladhar Chakra by literally vibrating or shaking it into action, the latent energy trapped inside it is activated to

produce the sound much like striking of the tuning fork produces sound in a school physics laboratory.

This is another interesting analogy. The seed is round and small—almost like a Bindu or dot—when compared to the huge tree that it would produce. The sprout is like a Lingam or phallus coming out of it. [Refer Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3.]

The Naad or cosmic sound that is physically heard during Yoga is a manifestation of the dynamic forces or Shakti of Brahm, the energy present in this Naad is that dynamic force or Shakti itself. Taking a parallel from the physical world, the Naad is like the eye of the body but the eye function only because it has the energy to do so and has been empowered by the faculty of sight to see. In other words, the ascetic sees this living world characterised by the presence of sound as a revelation of Brahm who is universally and uniformly present throughout it in an imperceptible and subtle form. The fact that ‘sound characterizes this world as living as opposite to being dead’ is proved by the fact that there is utter silence in a morgue or grave yard whereas there is hustle and bustle of life in a busy city. For all practical purposes of Yoga as described in the Yogshiksha Upanishad, this Naad and its subtle energy called Pashyanti is located in the Mooladhar Chakra. [Refer Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 3, verse nos. 2-3.]

The concept of Naad and Bindu has been explained at length in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 105, 167, 178; Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 3, verse nos. 2-3, 11; Canto 4, verse no. 47; Canto 5, verse no. 28; and Canto 6, verse nos. 48-49, 71-73.

The relationship between Naad and Bindu has been elucidated in great detail in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 3, verse nos. 3, 11, and Canto 4, verse no. 47.

The relationship between the Bindu, Naad and the Mana has been described in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 6, verse nos. 71-73.

Naad Shakti or the majestic, dynamic and profound mystical and spiritual energy, powers and potentials of Naad have been expounded in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 105, 178, Canto 6, verse nos. 21, 48, 72.

The *Bindu Shakti* or the majestic mystical energy and spiritual potentials of the point-source from where the cosmic Naad is envisioned to have had its origin has been described in Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 49, 71, 73.]

7. Brahma asked once again—‘Oh Lord! How can one be called a ‘Brahmin’ if he follows the edicts of Sanyas and discards the sacred thread, cuts off the tuft of hair on the head, and abandons doing any of the religious deeds such as a fire sacrifice and observing other sacraments as required by the scriptures to be done by a Brahmin?’

Lord Vishnu (Adi-Narayan) replied—‘A true Brahmin is a wise and enlightened person who treats the Atma, the pure consciousness, as the non-dual Principal of creation (i.e. who regards the Atma as a personification of the supreme Brahm that is non-dual or Advaitya and the only supreme Authority of creation), and for whom being steady in his meditation and contemplation as well as spiritual pursuit is the symbolic tuft of hair—such a person is deemed to be cleansed and made holy by whatever he does. This is because all his deeds are deemed to be auspicious and holy. [That is, he need not do special deeds such as fire sacrifices or observing of sacraments in order to wash off his sins or any kind of spiritual taints that might be adhering to him.]

He is deemed to have completed doing all religious and auspicious deeds required to be done by a man.

It must be understood that such an enlightened man is indeed a Brahmin for he is dedicated and devoted to Brahm (the Supreme Being), he is no less than a God, he is indeed a 'Rishi' (or a great sage), he is a 'Tapasvi' (or someone who is well endowed with the glorious virtues of Tapa, i.e. austerity and penance, and is steadfast in observing its tenets), he is the best follower of the tenets of the scriptures and an excellent spiritual aspirant, he is therefore the Guru (guide, teacher and preceptor) for the whole world.

A truly wise, enlightened and self-realised aspirant who understands the implications and import of what has been said above realises the truth of the statement that the pure conscious Atma standing for Brahm is the true identity of his. And therefore such an enlightened man declares 'It (Brahm; Atma; Truth; Consciousness) is me'.

True Param Hans Parivrajaks are a rarity in this world. If there is one then surely he is a personification of the Vedas—i.e. he is eternally as holy, pure, auspicious and divine as the Vedas.

I (i.e. Lord Adi-Narayan; Lord Vishnu; the Supreme Being) reside in the inner-self of a great and spiritually enlightened man whose mind and sub-conscious is perpetually focused on me.

[That is, those who remain submerged in the thoughts of the Lord, who constantly meditate upon the Lord, who remain engrossed in contemplation upon the Lord, who think of no one else except the Lord, and whose entire life and its purpose is dedicated to the Lord, the Lord lives in their hearts as his own abode. In other words, the heaven that is imagined to be the divine abode of the Supreme Being is no where else except in the heart of the sincere devotees of the Lord. Such people become a living personification of the divine heaven or a pilgrim site because the Lord resides in their inner-self.]

Such a self-realised man in whose heart the Lord resides and who possesses the eclectic virtues mentioned herein above is indeed eternally contented.

He becomes immune to and is freed from being moved or influenced by heat or cold, praises or insults, happiness and joys or pains and sorrows. [This is because he has inculcated the grand qualities of equanimity, fortitude, forbearance, tolerance, dispassion, neutrality and indifference.]

He easily bears with criticism, slander, reproach and censure, as well as with all provocations, instigations and temptations to become angry and wrathful, seeking revenge or retribution. [That is, he is exemplarily forgiving and tolerant; he harbours no ill-will or animosity against anyone.]

He is free from the tainting effects of the six Urmis¹.

Similarly, he is free from the six Vikaars² that taint a man's thoughts.

He sees and treats everyone alike, without distinguishing between any two creatures. [That is, he has developed the holistic view that all the creatures are Brahm personified, that the same divine Atma or pure consciousness lives in all of them, and therefore one should treat all living beings equally with great respect and equanimity. One must not be partisan and biased in anyway; one should not show favour or dis-favour towards anyone; one should regard rich and the poor, the lowly and humble as well as the high and the mighty in equal terms.]³

He sees nothing else except the Atma (the universal Consciousness) everywhere.

The directions are his clothes. [That is, he prefers to remain physically naked because he wears the sky as his over-garment.]

He does not believe in formalities and external forms of worship, hence he does not follow the four ritualistic steps of doing a sacrifice—viz. ‘Namaskar’ or bowing before the sacred fire to pay respects, ‘Swaha’ to indicate that he does not offer any oblations to the physical form of fire because this word is uttered when one is offering an oblation to the sacred fire, ‘Swadha’ to indicate that he does believe in offering libations to the spirit of dead ancestors, and ‘Visarjan’ to indicate that he need not undertake the rituals for formally ending the sacrifice. [This is because he has established the sacred fire in his own inner-self at the time of taking the sacred vows of Sanyas—refer paragraph no. 2 of this Upanishad. He need not worship the spirit of dead ancestors because he has no relations in this world except the Atma, and the Atma does not die so there is no question of offering anything to a ‘dead’ entity. Besides this, he worships no one else except the supreme Brahm and his Atma.]³

He is beyond the purview of reproach, criticism and insult, and is immune to them.

He does not employ any Mantra (spiritual formulas) or Tantra (occult forms of worship) for attainment of his spiritual objectives.

He does not think of or worships any other God or deity.

He is so enigmatic and mystical in his ways that nothing can be known of him in certain and visible terms, nor is anything of him is hidden as his life is absolutely transparent. [Since his ways are mystical and mysterious, nothing can be certainly ascertained about him. And since he remains ‘naked’, there is nothing of him that is hidden, concealed or secret. The term ‘naked’ is a metaphor for openness and transparency. Hence, a Parivrajak presents a paradox.]

He remains above all and indifferent to all.

He is steadfast in his conviction that ‘I am Brahm’, and remains submerged in this eclectic thought.

He is eternally blissful as he remains engrossed and lost in the thoughts of the divine entity (Brahm and Atma) that is hallmarked by the virtues of being truly and eternally blissful (‘Sachidanand’), of being non-dual and unique (‘Advaitya’), and being a treasury of enlightened consciousness (‘Chidghan’).

A person who feels fulfilled and absolutely contented by realizing the supreme Brahm, known also as Pranav (and represented by the ethereal word OM), is indeed called a ‘Param Hans Parivrajak’.

Verily, this is what this Upanishad elucidates and declares; this is its proclamation and affirmation. Amen! (7).

[Note—¹⁻²The *six Urmis* and *six Vikaars* have been described in the *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 8-9 of the *Krishna Yajur Veda* tradition. These are the six faults associated with all those entities that take a birth and have a gross body.

These faults are the following—(i) That there is an ‘Asti’—i.e. to be in existence. [This is a major fault because whatever that exists in this world is an illusion created by the mind just like the existence of water seen in a desert mirage, ghost in the dark, a serpent in the rope, change in the moon’s surface during the lunar cycle, two or more suns when seen as an image in more than one mirror, the sun or moon being devoured by some imaginary demon during eclipses, the rising or setting of the moon or the sun, etc. There is another interpretation of the term ‘existence’—it is the existence of ‘duality’, the conception that there are two independent entities such as the Jiva or the living creature and the Parmatma or the Supreme Being, or the conception of ‘you’ and ‘me’, or ‘this’ and ‘that’. This is against the fundamental tenet of Vedanta which lays stress on ‘non-duality’ of everything which briefly states that whatever that exists is but one single non-dual Brahm revealed in that form. Therefore, the concept of ‘Asti’ has an erroneous, a fallacious and ill-conceived

foundation. Anything founded on errors of perception or misjudgment is bound to be faulty, distorted, and away from the reality and truth.

(ii) That there is a 'Jaati'—i.e. birth. This relates to the conception that there is a birth and that things are freshly born or reborn again. [This is a fault also because of two reasons. One, if anything does not exist as asserted by the first clause, then the question of its being born or dying does not arise. And two, even if we were to treat everything as Brahm personified—because it would be difficult to deny things physically seen and witnessed—then it is forgotten that Brahm does not take a birth, for it is eternal, infinite, imperishable and the 'one without a birth'. Therefore this very conception of having a birth has no sound footing; it is faulty. It is an upshot of faulty perception of the reality of Brahm and Truth.]

(iii) That there is a 'Vardhan'—i.e. there is increase, enhancement, expansion, growth. This relates to the conception that an entity increases, enhances, grows or develops. [This is a fault because for one, 'truth' never grows and develops, it is always constant, universal, uniform and never changing; and two, 'Brahm' also does not grow or enhance or develop or in any way change because it is the ultimate Truth in creation, and 'Truth' does not change.]

(iv) That there is a 'Parinaam'—i.e. result or consequence or effect or sequel. This relates to the conception that there is a sequel, a consequence, an affect, an upshot, an outcome, a result, a follow up or a fruit of certain deed that was done in the past. [This arises out of the fundamental error that one is the doer of anything, that therefore there is a consequence, a result or sequel of that deed—either good or bad—which cannot be avoided and must be either enjoyed or suffered. This is a fundamental error of conception because one is not a doer of anything because all deeds are done by the physical body which is not the 'self' of the person, for this 'self' is the pure consciousness called the Atma that lives as a distinct entity inside the body as its resident. Further, since there is no truth in what is seen in this world, the question of there being a birth, development and an end does not arise, and consequentially the question of anything being a Parinaam of any deed done in the past life also does not arise.]

(v) That there is a 'Kshaya/Kchaya'—i.e. decay and decline. This relates to the conception that there is a stage called the last stage when there is decay and decline. [This is an error arising out of the pervious errors because anything that is eternal, infinite, imperishable and truthful, for instance Brahm, never decays or declines, nor does anything that really does not exist, like this illusory world, can ever decay or decline. It is all imaginary, delusory and false.]

(vi) That there is a 'Naash'—i.e. destruction and ruin. This relates to the conception that there is finally destruction or termination. [This fault is a derivative of the earlier faults.]

“verse no. 9 = The six Urmis or faults of the body are the following—(i) 'Ashana' or hunger, the need to eat, and therefore the need for food (along with all the accompanying problems such as worrying about its production, safety, storage, procurement, cooking, proper digestion etc.); (ii) Pipaasa or thirst, and the desire to drink and therefore the need for liquids to quench the thirst (which create the same sort of problems that are associated with the need for food; (iii) Shoka or grief, distress and dismay (which have a profound negative impact on the overall mental, psychological and general metabolic health of the body); (iv) Moha or to have strong attractions or longing for anything or anyone, to be emotionally attached with anything, to be deluded, to be held under magical spell of anything or to be under its charm, to hallucinate as a result of these emotional faults (all of which makes a man a virtual serf of his emotions and tied down to the object of his adoration, thereby robbing him of his independence and peace, and more often than not becoming the cause of his interminable sufferings); (v) Jara or old age and its attendant decline of the body leading to its decrepit and weakened physical state when the body loses its strength, vigour and stamina, thereby becoming a burden on the person; and finally

(vi) Mritu or death of the body. All these factors create an immense amount of discomfort and horrors to the person (i.e. to the Atma that is the true identity of the person) to whom this body belongs.”

There also *other six faults* that are considered as *enemies* of a man—Kaam (worldly passions, lust, desires and yearning), Krodh (anger, indignation and wrathfulness leading to spite and ill temper), Lobh (greed and rapacity), Moha (ignorance based delusions, worldly infatuations, attractions and attachments), Mada (egoism, arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy) and Matsarya (envy, jealousy, malice, anger and wrath)—refer Mudgal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4 of Rig Veda tradition; and Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 10 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

According to Mudgal Upanishad, 4/7 of the Rig Veda tradition, the six delusions, called ‘Urmi’, that create fear, sorrows, agonies, sufferings and pains to a creature are the following:--(1) hunger, (2) thirst, (3) grief, (4) Moha (worldly attachments, illusions, entrapments), (5) horrors of old age, and (6) death.

The Naradparivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 7, verse no. 1 describes that a Sanyasi (a renunciate monk or mendicant or hermit or friar) must overcome the six Vikaars of his mind and should not allow them to create any consternation for him.

³There are a number of Upanishads that advocate internal forms of worship instead of all external forms of rituals and worships—viz. the *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda which deals with the eclectic philosophy of Sanyas expressly prohibits all external forms of worship in its Canto 5, verse no. 20.

Some of the other Upanishads are the following—(i) Sam Veda tradition—Maitreyu-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 21, 26; Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 50-59; and Sanyaso-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74-75, 97.

(ii) Atharva Veda tradition—Devi Upanishad, verse nos. 29-30; Narad-Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 75, Canto 5, verse no. 20, Canto 6, verse nos. 7, 37-38, 42, and Canto 7, verse no. 1; Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika (Canto) 4; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 (stanza nos. 1-3); Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, verse no. 7.

(iii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s following Upanishads—Pran Agnihotra Upanishad; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 69, 74; Canto 3, verse no. 26, 29-30; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 21-24.

(iv) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition—Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse nos. 5, 10, 13.]

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 16

Annapurna Upanishad/Annapurno-panishad

The ‘Annapurna Upanishad’ is a fairly long one with five Cantos having a total of three hundred thirty-seven verses. It is a dialogue between sage Nidagh, the ascetic disciple who wished to know how to obtain spiritual liberation and deliverance, and sage Ribhu, the enlightened one and the most exalted amongst those sages who were Brahm-realised.

This Upanishad is a brilliant exposition on the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta, the eclectic philosophy of non-duality, and it focuses on the Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’, the realisation of which is true and real Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance of the creature) from all the fetters having their origin in delusions and ignorance. Since this Atma is no other entity but the supreme Consciousness of creation known as Brahm, the Upanishad emphasizes that to be truly enlightened, wise and learned one must be self-realised and Brahm-realised simultaneously. In fact there is no difference between these two divine states of existences. The Upanishad describes how a fully self-realised and enlightened person feels, how he experiences a profound sense of blessedness when he has truly understood the Atma (the pure consciousness) and other spiritual Truths.

The Upanishad derives its name ‘Annapurna’ from the fact that it opens with the praises of Goddess Annapurna, the divine Shakti or the majestic power of the Supreme Being which provides nourishment to all, in the form of an invocation or introductory. The Mantra dedicated to Annapurna was divulged to sage Ribhu by his father, and it has twenty-seven letters. Ribhu had worshipped Goddess Annapurna persistently day after day using this Mantra, and she finally appeared before him to bless him and grant him the boon of ‘self knowledge’, or the divine and eclectic knowledge pertaining to the Atma, the pure consciousness. This made sage Ribhu ‘self’ and ‘Brahm’ realised, most fulfilled and attained soul.

Goddess Annapurna is none other than Goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer, nourisher and protector of this creation. It is Laxmi who fulfills all the desires of the creature and provides him with nourishment and welfare in this world. Hence she is honoured as ‘Annapurna’—literally one who fills the granary and provides food to this world. She represents the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being by which he takes care of this creation.

This Upanishad is an elaborate discourse on the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta—or the principles of non-duality, and how a wise and enlightened aspirant gains true knowledge and attains the state of true liberation and deliverance from all the spiritual fetters that tie down an ordinary creature to this gross world and an equally gross body. During its long rambling discourse, the text describes and explains many relevant spiritual and metaphysical topics, such as for instance the concept of various states of existences (such as Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupta, Turiya and Turiya-teet), the concept of ‘Bhrama’ (delusion and misconception about any given thing or situation; spiritual delusions), of what constitutes the various ‘Sankalps’, ‘Vasanas’ and ‘Vrittis’ (worldly volitions, passions and inherent mental tendencies brought to this life from the previous life) that a creature harbours in his inner self, and how to overcome them, the concept of ‘Mano-naash’ (conquering the mind and the sub-conscious and their stabilization as well as dissolution through diligent practice), of ‘Sanyas’ (the life of renunciation and detachment), of ‘Jivan Mukta’ (to

be spiritually liberated even while alive and having a gross body), of ‘Videha Mukti’ (to be spiritually liberated without the interference of the physical gross body), of how to overcome the various faults and temptations of this world, of what is really meant by the various names that are assigned to the basically indivisible and uniform ‘sky element’ known as the ‘Akash’ (such as the subtle forms of the sky known as Ghatakash or the sky present inside an empty pot, Mathakash or the space within the walls of a monastery etc), and many other such important topics that any student of metaphysics must be well conversant with.

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Canto 1

1. OM Salutations! The sage named Nidagh, who was an acclaimed Yogi (an ascetic well-versed in the principle and practice of Yoga or meditation), approached another sage named Ribhu¹, an attained soul who had become ‘self-realised’ and ‘Brahm-realised’, and was considered as the most exalted sage of his time, and reverentially prostrated in front of him to pay his respects.

Having shown his respects to Ribhu, Nidagh got up and stood in front of him once again (1).

[Note—Sage *Ribhu* and his disciple *Nidagh*—These two sages were known as Paramhans as they were highly wise, erudite, enlightened, self-realised and Brahm-realised. This fact has been asserted in the Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 7, verse no. 3. This particular Upanishad is Chapter 6 of our current volume.

Sage Ribhu is said to be one of the several mind-born sons of the creator Brahma. With this gene running in his blood, he was by nature wise, enlightened and self-realised, but in order to conform to established traditions he took initiation from his elder brother Sanatkumar who was himself one of the mind-born sons of Brahma. Ribhu was renunciation personified, was unpretentious and free from all shortcomings and blemishes that tainted others in Brahma’s creation. His only attire was his own skin, and he lived in a thatched hut.

It is believed that his first disciple was sage Nidagh who was the son of the great sage Pulastya. It so happened that once Ribhu, during his wanderings, came to the hermitage of Nidagh and saw that he was studying and chanting the hymns of the Vedas. Ribhu felt very pitiful for him and advised him that if one did not know or understand the essence of what the Vedas preach, if he did not come to know the Absolute and the Truth and become self-realised, then all this study is an exercise in futility. Thereafter Nidagh accepted his discipleship and learnt from sage Ribhu the intricacies of the esoteric knowledge of the Atma and Brahm.

Under the instructions of his Guru Ribhu, Nidagh accepted the life of a householder, married and established his hermitage on the banks of river Devika. After a long time, Ribhu remembered his disciple and wished to see him, and thus came to his hermitage. Nidagh could not recognize him, though he welcomed the guest with the greatest of respect and fed him. After meals, Nidagh asked Ribhu whether he was satisfied with the meal, who he was, where did he come from, and where he was going.

Then Ribhu preached him—‘Oh son! I am not the body or the Pran (life forces living inside the body) that gets fed or feels quenched of hunger or thirst. The ‘self’ or

the Atma is as eternal, infinite, all-pervading and omnipresent as the sky, so there is no question of it coming from anywhere and going anywhere. All these mundane aspects of creation—to be satisfied or not, to come and go—are related to the ever-changing ‘untruth’, so do not repost any trust and faith on such things that are transient, unsteady and fickle. Don’t be wasting your precious life and time in delusions, hallucinating and swinging between this and that. Instead, become uniform and steady on the Truth which is itself uniform, steady, unchallengeable, unequivocal and irrefutable. Concentrate upon your Atma, the pure ‘conscious self’.

Nidagh recognized his Guru, was overwhelmed with gratitude, and fell down on his august feet in surrender. This same idea was elucidated by sage Durvasa to the Gopis (milkmaids who accompanied Lord Krishna in his childhood days at Vrindavan) that forms the text of the Gopal Uttar Tapini Upnaishad of the Atharva Veda tradition.

After another long spell of time, the Guru once again decided to visit his disciple. When Ribhu reached the hermitage he found there was a great procession passing on the road and Nidagh was waiting patiently to let the procession pass so that he can cross the road. On enquiry he told Ribhu—who he could not recognize again—that the king of Virpur was passing through. Ribhu wished to rekindle the fire of enlightenment in his disciple, so he asked Nidagh—‘Say, who is that king in this melee?’ Ribhu replied that he was sitting on the biggest elephant. Ribhu asked him to point out some characteristic feature so that he can distinguish between the king and the elephant from a distance. At this seemingly stupid and impertinent question, Nidagh pushed Ribhu down and mounted on his back, saying—‘Now, I am the king and you are that elephant’. The wise teacher was unperturbed, and asked to point out the difference between them—i.e. how has he (Nidagh) become a king, and how come the man he is riding upon has become an elephant. Shocked beyond belief, Nidagh suddenly realised that the man was no one else but his revered Guru Ribhu. He fell at the enlightened teacher’s feet and asked for forgiveness. Ever so merciful and kind as Ribhu was, he not only pardoned his disciple but preached him the fact that the external body is not the true identity of the creature, and that to recognize someone based on this physical gross feature is the most ignorant and stupid thing to do, something not expected from a so-called learned man of the Vedas. So, finally Nidagh realised the futility of studying the Vedas without understanding the principle enshrined in their tenets. Thereafter, Nidagh finally found his spiritual liberation and deliverance, and though he lived in this world like another man, but henceforth he lived as a ‘Jivan Mukta’—i.e. a person who is freed from the fetters of the world and the body inspite of living in this gross material world and having a physical body that is equally gross. Such a self-realised man is totally detached and unconcerned about both of them—i.e. the body as well as the world. When the proper time comes, such persons find ‘Videha Mukti’—i.e. they shed their mortal body even without being aware of it being shed, and merge their ‘self’ with the supreme Self, the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, never to take birth again. This is because at the instant enlightenment dawns upon them, they stop being associated with any of the deeds done by the body, and remain absolutely neutral. Therefore no consequences of deeds done and actions taken by them by their physical gross body accumulate as far as their true self is concerned, and they do not have to take a re-birth to go through the process of either enjoying or suffering from these consequences.

Coming back to the story of Ribhu, when this news reached Sanatkumar, the Guru of Ribhu, he was extremely pleased and impressed, and to commemorate this occasion and to immortalize this unique virtue of forgiveness, he added the first letter ‘Ksha’ (pronounced as a combined utterance of the letter ‘Ka’ and ‘Cha’) of the word ‘Kshamaa’, meaning ‘forgiveness’ in the Sanskrit language, to Ribhu’s name. Thus, henceforth Ribhu came to be known as ‘Ribhuksha’ (Ribhu + Ksha). Since Ribhuksha was ever in a blissful mood, the word of bliss and ecstasy, viz. ‘Anand’ was appended to his name, and it finally became ‘Ribhukshaanand’ (Ribhu + Ksha + Anand).

The great metaphysical preaching of sage Ribhu for the benefit of Nidagh also appear in Tejobindu Upanishad, Cantos 5-6 as well as in Varaaha Upanishad, Cantos 4-5 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, and in Maho-panishad, Canto 5 of the Sam Veda tradition.]

2. Sage Nidagh most respectfully asked sage Ribhu questions pertaining to 'Atma-Tattva', i.e. regarding the fundamental truth and essence, the 'Tattva', about the esoteric and enigmatic entity known as the 'Atma', the consciousness that is the pure 'self' of the living being¹.

Thus, Nidagh asked sage Ribhu, 'Oh Lord! Please enlighten me about the knowledge of the 'Atma-tattva', and preach me about it in detail. By worshipping whom did you acquire this knowledge of Brahm? [That is, how did you become self-realised and Brahm-realised? It ought to be noted here that there is no difference between the knowledge of the Atma and that of Brahm because both the divine entities are 'consciousness' personified, the former at the microcosmic level and the latter at the macrocosmic level of creation.] (2).

[Note—¹The word 'Atma' means 'soul'. This word 'soul' itself implies the essence and fundamental basis of anything. It refers to the 'actual and absolute truth' that is hidden behind the external façade of falsehood, or even the 'apparent truth' that is only illusionary and misconceived. In the context of metaphysics, this 'truth' is the Atma, the soul of the creature, because sans this soul the creature has no meaning. There would be no life on this planet earth if there was no living soul here; dead bodies do not have any meaning and relevance in the context of life and creation. Hence, if there is any truth in 'life' it is the pure conscious entity known as the Atma, and not the gross body or the equally gross world which is pith-less and lifeless. Sage Ribhu was well-versed in this knowledge of the Atma as he was preached on it by none other but Brahma, the creator of the Vedas which are epitomes of pristine pure philosophy pertaining to the Absolute Truth of creation known as Brahm, and which in turn is pure Consciousness personified in the form of the Atma.]

3. Please be graceful enough to give this divine and eclectic knowledge to me, the grand knowledge that is at once spiritually liberating and enlightening, that is capable of providing emancipation, salvation and deliverance to the one who has acquired it, and which blesses the person who possesses it with an exalted stature, auspiciousness, majesty, glorious virtues and mystical powers.

[This knowledge is empowering and enabling for the creature as it not only entitles him for obtaining the exalted stature of one who is wise and enlightened but also provides him with the fruits of self-realisation that leads to his spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. It makes the creature acquainted with the ultimate and absolute Truth of creation, and this knowledge itself would make him stand out from the crowd, thereby bestowing unmatched honour and respect upon him.]

Sage Ribhu was overwhelmed and felt obliged to preach. He blessed Nidagh and said, 'Oh Nidagh, be blessed! Listen this eternal knowledge from me with due attention (3).

4-5. You would be liberated and delivered by having this knowledge (i.e. by understanding it and implementing it).

[Now, Goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity who is also known as Annapurna as she provides all the necessities of life, is being invoked in the following verses. Sage Ribhu had acquired the grand and eclectic spiritual knowledge

of the Atma by worshipping Goddess Annapurna, and so he prays to her first before proceeding ahead with his discourse for the benefit of sage Nidagh. This is also the reason why this Upanishad is named after this Goddess—it is to honour her and to emphasize the point that the knowledge contained in it was revealed by Goddess Annapurna as her blessing for sage Ribhu as made clear in verse nos. 8-12 of this Canto 1.]

She is the adornment of the Naad¹, the Bindu² and the Kalaa³. In other words, she is the center of authority and power that gives these entities their importance and value. These three entities acquire their importance because they personify or embody certain glorious virtues of Goddess Annapurna [4.]

She is an image of eternal blissfulness and cheerfulness.

She has no support, and neither needs any.

[In other words, she is self-sustaining and self-supporting. She does not need any other prop to help her be established and gain majesty, magnificence, power and authority. In fact, she gives support to the rest of the world. From the practical point of view this means that Goddess Laxmi provides the world with all the requisites necessary for a happy and prosperous life; she takes care for the world's need for material wealth and prosperity so that the creature is well fed, nourished and looked after. Hence, she is called 'Annapurna'—the one who replenishes food stock and other essential necessities of life.]

She has a pleasant and charming countenance, and equally pleasant and charming demeanours. She is famous with beautiful plaits or locks of hairs on her head. She looks exceptionally graceful, majestic and beautiful in this image.

She is known as 'Maha-Laxmi', the great Goddess of wealth, prosperity, well-being and all-round welfare.

[It ought to be noted here that Laxmi serves the creation by providing it with all its necessities of life, to make it comfortable and livable. But this applies to the material level of existence. The real and truthful welfare and well-being of the creature lies elsewhere—it lies in his spiritual well-being and welfare, it lies in his internal peace and tranquility, it lies in his ability to find true bliss and real happiness, in finding freedom from the miseries and torments associated with the gross body and remaining yoked to the continuous cycle of birth and death. Similarly, the real and truthful asset of the creature lies in the realisation of the Atma and the 'self' because this is a permanent and stable asset which is eternal and imperishable by its inherent nature, and therefore its accompanying bliss, ecstasy and contentedness is equally stable, eternal and imperishable as opposed to that obtained from the material things of the world as they are perishable, transient, ever-changing and illusionary like the world itself. Therefore, the same Goddess would provide the creature with worldly objects of his choice and majesty if he so wishes, and with spiritual majesty and glory if this is his wish. This is why the enlightened sage Ribhu worshipped Goddess Maha-Laxmi—he wished a special boon of spiritual wisdom and enlightenment as he understood the stupendous importance of this eclectic divine knowledge as he was the son of Brahma, the creator, and had the latter's genes running in him. Since Laxmi is the goddess in charge of the Lord's treasury, whether of material goods or of spiritual assets, it was appropriate for Ribhu to approach her because she had the 'key', she knew the right path and means to achieve what Ribhu wanted. Goddess Maha Laxmi could unlock the treasury of priceless wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment that Ribhu sought. Thus, we must see 'Laxmi' in this latter form in the context of this Upanishad.]

She enhances or stokes or ignites the internal passions and desires for more in the creature.

[Again, this stanza should be interpreted in the proper and correct context of what has been said in the preceding note. Goddess Laxmi stands for material wealth and prosperity, and their accompanying comforts, pleasures and joys as well as power, fame, pelf and authority. These things have no end, and the more a man has them the more he wants. It is rare and virtually impossible to be satisfied with them. This is what is implied here. The prefix ‘Maha’ meaning ‘great or grand’ serves to heighten the gravity of this situation—i.e. it indicates that the numerous passions, desires and yearnings that a man has for the world and its material sense objects are formidable forces to reckon with, and if one wishes spiritual enlightenment and has liberation and deliverance as the goal of his life then he would first have to conquer this fort.]

She is an image of kindness, graciousness, courteousness, politeness and sobriety.

[Although the Goddess presides over a formidable treasury of material wealth and prosperity, and similarly though she holds the key to spiritual wealth, knowledge and enlightenment, she is still not haughty, arrogant, wild, egoist and proud, but is the most benevolent and extremely gracious Goddess who looks after all the needs of this world, and therefore has countless creatures begging for her grace, kindness, benevolence, largesse and mercy. In spite of her powers, authority, majesty and grandeur, she is still humble, polite and graceful. She has no sense of ego and pride in her cosmic overriding powers, authority, majesty and grandeur.] [5.] (4-5).

[Note—¹⁻²Naad and Bindu—The word *Bindu* ordinarily refers to a ‘dot’ placed on the top of a Sanskrit alphabet to produce the nasal sound of a resonating ‘N’ or of ‘M’—as in *ring* or *rim*. It is equivalent to the reverberations of primordial sound created at the beginning of creation, and from which the rest of the subtle forms of sound were generated. It is called *Naad* in this context of creation. Therefore, the Naad is the cosmic sound of creation. It is represented by the dish-like sign placed below the dot on the top of a letter to represent the crucible of creation.

The Naad and Bindu are collectively called the ‘Chandra Bindu’. It is a sign resembling a concave crucible or shallow plate over which is placed a dot at its focal point. It is a ‘moon-like spot’ and hence called the ‘Chandra’ (moon) ‘Bindu’ (a dot). It is a nasal sound equivalent to the letter ‘N’ as in the words *can’t*, *mount*, *taint* or *taunt*. The Moon is regarded as the heavenly pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of life and the ambrosial fluid of eternity and bliss. The Bindu is a drop of this Amrit. Hence, in metaphysics the term Chandra Bindu is used to refer to the supreme transcendental Brahm and the spiritual state of realisation of pure conscious ‘self’ when the aspirant enjoys bliss and experiences a surge of ecstasy. This is a metaphoric way of saying that he tastes Amrit dripping from the Moon.

The concept of *Bindu* (a ‘dot’ or a ‘drop’) and *Naad* (the cosmic ‘sound’) have a close association with the concept of OM (the ethereal word representing the supreme transcendental Brahm) and its iconographic depiction as a symbol in the form of the sixth alphabet of the Sanskrit language, i.e. the long vowel sound ‘Ooo’ as in ‘boot or root’. Amongst the various Upanishads that describe this concept are Naad Bindu, Dhyana Bindu, Tejo Bindu and Yogshikha (Canto 3, verse nos. 2-11).

This monosyllabic word OM actually consists of three letters when analysed—viz. A, U and M. The letter ‘A’ stands for the origin of creation, the letter ‘U’ signifies the development and expansion of this creation, while the letter ‘M’ stands for conclusion. Other metaphysical connotations of these three letters have been elaborately described in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 74-79 and Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 3-10 of Sam Veda.

This OM is a representative of the supreme transcendental divine entity known as Brahm which predates this existence and lasts even after this world is concluded. In fact, this creation would fall back to merge into this Brahm and re-emerge from it at the time of a new beginning much like waves in an ocean rising and falling into the water again and again. This Brahm is in a neutral, a-dynamic and attribute-less state in the period before the process of creation began. Then when the time came for the creation to come forth, energy and necessary strength and relevant power were needed. This is called 'Shakti' aspect of Brahm which was inherent to Brahm but in a latent form. The 'point' whereby this Brahm revealed his Shakti is called a 'Bindu'. It is also like a 'drop' of the cosmic sperm emerging from the cosmic Purush, the invisible Father of creation, which contain all the necessary energy, strength, vigour and vitality needed to initiate the process of creation. Hence, Bindu is Brahm's 'Shakti' aspect; it represents the 'dynamic principle of Brahm'. In Tantra literature, Brahm is treated as Shiva, and his energy is called a Shakti represented by the Bindu. Since OM is a symbol for Brahm, this Shakti was put on top of this symbol in iconography to depict this fact in visual term.

Now came the revelation of this Shakti—and that was done in the form of Naad, the 'cosmic sound'. Since only the invisible ether was present in the beginning, this Shakti caused a ripple in it which spread in the form of waves. Waves have kinetic energy and this set in 'motion' the process of creation. Modern science has shown that the origin of this universe was in a Big Bang, and this means that there was a 'single point' where this 'explosive bang' occurred—a clear reference to the concept of a 'Bindu' (point) and its accompanying 'Naad' (sound). It was from this Bindu that the cosmic debris spread out by the force of this explosion to distant corners of the available space to act as nuclei for the umpteen numbers of planets and star systems that would eventually evolve to form the universe as we know of it today.

Since Bindu was the energy of Brahm that was not visible, it is therefore the un-manifest dynamic force of Brahm and very closely associated with the latter; it is a part of Brahm. The Naad is a revealed form of this Shakti as it is the cosmic sound which can be actually heard. Since Naad had its origin in Brahm and is a manifested form of the stupendous energy contained in an un-manifested form in the Bindu, it is constantly associated with them much like the electromagnetic waves (Naad) of a radio broadcasting station, the speaker (Brahm, the consciousness) who broadcasts the news and the transmitter tower (the Bindu) are inseparable from one another.

The concept of 'Bindu' and 'Naad' can be understood in another plane also. The cosmic process of creation needed the injection of a cosmic sperm to initiate the process of the creation of the cosmic embryo. This sperm would come from the cosmic Father, i.e. Brahm. Brahm in the context of metaphysical interpretation of creation would be the 'causal body of the cosmos' because it is the 'cause' of it all. The 'drop' of sperm ejaculated by this Father (Brahm) had the stupendous creative power and energy that provided the necessary spark. The word 'Naad', in addition to its conventional meaning of 'sound', also means a big open concave 'bowl or dish or crucible' for storing liquid, which in the context of creation meant the cosmic womb of Nature. So, when the cosmic Father (Brahm) dropped one 'drop' of his sperm (Bindu) into the crucible (Naad), the cosmic conception was affected and the process was initiated. From this conception there emerged the Hiranyagarbha, the yellow egg of the cosmos, which in terms of Vedanta would be the macrocosmic 'subtle body' of creation. When this cosmic egg matured, the macrocosmic gross body emerged in the form of the Viraat Purush.

The stupendous and astounding powers that Brahm inherently possesses are highlighted in the context of the most fascinating, majestic and magnificently wondrous world it has created using its own energy called Shakti. Had this creation not been in existence, the powers of Brahm would not have come to the fore. In other words, the active principle of Brahm is revealed in the form of the Shakti.

Since the Bindu is regarded as the Shakti principle of Brahm in Tantra literature because it is this principal point from where the primary form of active and dynamic Brahm started to reveal its self in the form of Naad, it is likened to the 'fire element'. The Naad itself is sound and the latter needs the medium of ether to travel as waves and spread in all the directions. Therefore, Naad is likened to the 'wind element'.

For the purpose of Yoga practice, the Bindu is depicted as the dot present on the top of the symbol of Naad, i.e. the sixth Sanskrit alphabet 'Ooo', symbolising the focal point in the cosmic bowl from where this sound is generated and where the mind is supposed to be focused during meditation so that Naad can be heard. The location of this Bindu in the body is the center of the two eyebrows where a practitioner of Yoga is supposed to focus his attention during meditation.

The Naad is the cosmic sound heard by an ascetic when he is in deep meditation mode. As any sound originates from a source and then radiates out in the form of waves much like ripples created on the surface of a calm lake when a stone is thrown in it, the Naad has its cosmic origin in the one-point source of sound energy called Bindu that has Brahm as its principal base.

From the perspective of the meaning of Naad as 'sound' we can have the following interpretation—all sounds have a 'point' of origin, the Bindu of origin. From this point source the sound waves spread out in waves in the ether present in space at the macro level of creation, and in the air in the immediate surrounding space at the micro level of creation. It can be compared to ripples arising on the surface of a calm lake when a stone is thrown on it. 'Energy' waves are created from the 'point' of impact and spread out in concentric layers just like the waves of sound travel in ether. This example would prove why and how the origin of Naad was envisioned in the Bindu (dot) by the ancient sage who had first visualized it.

The Bindu means a 'point source', and Naad refers to the 'un-manifest energy in the form of sound' that radiated out in the cosmic ether from this point source. Therefore, the Bindu would refer to the passive Brahm and the Naad would mean in this context the dynamic and active energy of this Brahm radiating out from this point source to all the directions of creation.

This Bindu or dot is the focal point from which the cosmic Naad or sound originated when the process of creation first started in what the modern science recognizes as the 'Big Bang'. This sound spread to all corners of the cosmos. The human skull is also slightly concave from the inner side, and the brain is located just below it. The implication is very obvious—this Bindu or 'dot' generated the cosmic Naad which is heard by the ascetic when he focuses his entire concentration in the head by diverting all his senses away from the external world and fixing their attention on one point in the head, called the Agya Chakra or still higher up in the Brahm Randhra Chakra.

It is just like fine tuning the antenna of the modern satellite discs used in television reception. The reverberation and vibrations caused by this cosmic Naad is very overwhelming for the ascetic and he literally drowns in its sound. The vibrations massage his nerves and relaxes them; he feels a sense of extreme ecstasy and bliss due to this, and that is comparable to the one obtained at the time of ejaculation of sperm during intercourse—hence the reference to the male phallus and the semen dripping from it. There is no vulgarity in this explanation. This citation is used to give a physical and verifiable idea of the extent of bliss and ecstasy obtained when the ascetic reaches the climax of Yoga so that he can hear the Naad.

This is also why this condition is compared to the 'cosmic union' of Shiva representing Brahm and his own energy personified as Shakti which produced this sound energy called Naad in the ethereal space of the cosmos. It was Brahm's ecstasy and bliss of self-realisation that produced a cosmic vibration which in turn set in motion the process of creation. According to Vedanta, Shiva is known as Brahm, while this Shakti is known as Maya. According to the Sankhya philosophy, this Shakti is called Prakriti in the context of Brahm who is called Purush here.

In Tantra worship, Bindu is regarded as Shakti, the dynamic aspect of Shiva, and the Peeth is the seat of this Shakti. There is another way at looking at these two words—Bindu represents the cosmic sperm which represents the dynamic energy, potentials and powers of Shiva, and the Peeth would then be the seat of this Shiva energy, i.e. the base of the Shakti.

Naad is a form of cosmic sound, and this sound is a form of energy created by vibrations in ether. In other words, during the process of Yoga, when the vital winds, especially the Apaana wind is made to activate the Mooladhar Chakra by literally vibrating or shaking it into action, the latent energy trapped inside it is activated to produce the sound much like striking of the tuning fork produces sound in a school physics laboratory.

This is another interesting analogy. The seed is round and small—almost like a Bindu or dot—when compared to the huge tree that it would produce. The sprout is like a Lingam or phallus coming out of it. [Refer Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3.]

The Naad or cosmic sound that is physically heard during Yoga is a manifestation of the dynamic forces or Shakti of Brahm, the energy present in this Naad is that dynamic force or Shakti itself. Taking a parallel from the physical world, the Naad is like the eye of the body but the eye function only because it has the energy to do so and has been empowered by the faculty of sight to see. In other words, the ascetic sees this living world characterized by the presence of sound as a revelation of Brahm who is universally and uniformly present throughout it in an imperceptible and subtle form. The fact that ‘sound characterizes this world as living as opposite to being dead’ is proved by the fact that there is utter silence in a morgue or grave yard whereas there is hustle and bustle of life in a busy city. For all practical purposes of Yoga as described in the Yogshiksha Upanishad, this Naad and its subtle energy called Pashyanti is located in the Mooladhar Chakra. [Refer Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 3, verse nos. 2-3.]

The Param Hans Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its paragraph no. 6 describes that the Bindu represents the fifth Matra or aspect of Brahm having a total of sixteen Matras. The ‘Bindu’ is equivalent to the ‘Swapna-Vishwa’ form of Brahm that exists in the first of the four subtle or secondary states in which the consciousness exists during its ‘Swapna’ or dreaming state of existence in this world.

The same Param Hans Upanishad goes on to say in the same paragraph no. 6 that the Naad represents the sixth Matra or aspect of Brahm having a total of sixteen Matras. The ‘Naad’ is equivalent to the ‘Swapna-Taijas’ form of Brahm that exists in the second of the four subtle states in which the consciousness exists during its ‘Swapna’ or dreaming state of existence in this world.

The concept of *Naad and Bindu* has been explained at length in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 105, 167, 178; Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 3, verse nos. 2-3, 11; Canto 4, verse no. 47; Canto 5, verse no. 28; and Canto 6, verse nos. 48-49, 71-73.

The *relationship between Naad and Bindu* has been elucidated in great detail in Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 3, verse nos. 3, 11, and Canto 4, verse no. 47.

The *relationship between the Bindu, Naad and the Mana* has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 178, Canto 6, verse nos. 71-73.

Naad Shakti or the majestic, dynamic and profound mystical and spiritual energy, powers and potentials of Naad have been expounded in *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 105, 178, Canto 6, verse nos. 21, 48, 72.

The *Bindu Shakti* or the majestic mystical energy and spiritual potentials of the point-source from where the cosmic Naad is envisioned to have had its origin has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse nos. 49, 71, 73.

³The word *Kalaa* has a wide application and briefly it refers to a particular aspect or position or condition or situation of any entity. It is indicative of this entity's deeds which has led it into the present position or situation. It also refers to the special qualities, attributes, virtues, strengths, powers and potentials possessed by it. Other connotations include—(a) shape, form, contours of a thing; (b) special qualities, art, craft, skills, expertise, attributes etc. that one possesses; the shades or aspects of one's overall personality; (c) a division, portion, fraction, phase or degree; (d) brilliance, magnificence and grandeur; (e) maverick and supernatural powers possessed by an entity.

The 16 *Kalaas* or *aspects* or *facets* of creation have been expressly listed in the Prashna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4. These sixteen *Kalaas* are also called the *sixteen Aakarshini Shaktis* of creation that makes the possessor of these virtues much sought after in society. The word 'Aakarshini' means one that attracts others, and the word 'Shakti' of course means power. These 16 *Kalaas* are the following—(i) Pran (life; life consciousness; the very essence of creation; the vibrations of life manifested in the form of the vital winds; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life), (ii) Shraddha (the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect, devotion), (iii) Akash (the all-pervading, all-encompassing sky or space element), (iv) Vayu (wind, air element), (v) Tej (energy, splendour, radiance, glory, might, majesty and fire element), (vi) Apaha (अपः—water element which is the all-important ingredient for life), (vii) 'Prithivi' (earth element which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation), (viii) Indriya (the organs of the body, both the organs of perception as well as of action), (ix) Mana (the mind and heart complex and their stupendous potentials), (x) Anna (food, the element without which life is simply not imaginable because it provides it with the basic nourishment and energy), (xi) Virya (semen, sperms, standing for courage, valour, potency, vitality and prowess), (xii) Tapa (austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance as well as carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self; the sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause) (xiii) Mantra (the key or formula to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advise; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), (xiv) Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), (xv) Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and (xvi) Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature; the good name, fame, reputation, honour and glory that a creature has in this world).

There are said to be sixteen *Tattvas* or essential units or elements in creation. They are the following—the five organs of perception (ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin) + the five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital) + the five Prans (the five subtle forms of the vital winds present inside the body—such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyana and Udana) + one Mana (mind) = 16.

The fact that there are sixteen *Tattvas* is mentioned in Tripadvibhuta Mahanarayana Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15.

These sixteen elements or units created by the Supreme Being are the sixteen *Kalaas* or *aspects* or *fractions* of creation. In other words, this visible creation is made up of these sixteen units in different ratios just like a colourful picture in mosaic is prepared by an expert artisan from bits and pieces of glass or stone which are

independent units in their own right but when incorporated in the mosaic that forms the colourful picture they become an inseparable and an integral part of the latter. Even if one piece is removed, the picture is disturbed.

In simple terms it means that a person's total composite personality, his characteristic attributes and individuality, his vitality and stamina, his prowess, powers and strength, his drive and vigour et al can be divided into sixteen parts.

The Kalisantarana Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 2 says that these sixteen Kalaas are like sheaths or veils covering the Atma or 'self' of the man, and he can realise this glorious divinity residing in his bosom only when these Kalaas which are like impediments or hurdles in self and Brahm realisation are removed. When this Upanishad describes them as 'hurdles or impediments' in realising the glory of the 'self' it implies that although all these sixteen qualities are related to achieving glory and majesty in the world, they have nothing to do with 'self-realisation' and 'Brahm-realisation' which is possible only by abandoning everything related to this world as well as the body both in its gross part and its subtle part.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 2 says that the divine entity that exhibits sixteen divine attributes lives in the body itself.

The 15 Kalaas—The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, section 2, verse no. 7 mentions of the fifteen Kalaas of a wise man merging into one main Kalaa, but it has not mentioned which these fifteen Kalaas are. However, the Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 4 has cited sixteen units of creation that have emerged from Brahm. If the primary Pran or life consciousness that was formed in the very beginning of creation is removed from the list, we come to the remaining fifteen units which are like Kalaa as they represent the fifteen aspects of creation. Hence, these fifteen Kalaas would be the following—Shraddha (the virtues of devotion, faith and belief), Akash (the sky or space element), Vayu (the wind or air element), Jyoti (the light and radiance personified in the form of the fire element), Aapha (the water element), Prithivi (the earth element), Indris (the different sense organs of the body), Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart), and Anna (the food that would sustain the other elements of creation which had combined to give shape to the creature).

From the Anna were created the following other units or elements of creation—the Virya (the sperm which is the carrier of life and the metaphor for valour, strength, stamina, vitality, vigour, energy, potentials etc., Tapa (austerity, penance and sufferance for some noble and auspicious cause), Mantras (the different mystical formulas consisting of letters or words or phrases which encapsulated various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilize the latent cosmic energy, strength and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large), Karma (the ability to do deeds and take action; the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks), Loka (the various worlds, such as the mortal world where the creature lived on the earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead creatures would live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the Supreme Being lives; the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness), and Naam (the name assigned to each independent creature).

The 8 Kalaas of the Gods—The eight Kalaas of the Gods and their incarnations or manifestations—Since there are said to be a total of sixteen Kalaas and the ordinary man can possess the maximum of these five Kalaas with those who are especially gifted having an additional three as narrated above (bringing the total Kalaas possessed by human beings to $5 + 3 = 8$), the remaining eight ($16 - 8$) belong to the Gods or their incarnations or manifestations. These are the following—(i) Prabhuvi—this is that magical and divine power possessed by the entity that enables it to make possible things that are impossible. For example we have the manifestation

of Lord Narsingh (half man and half lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu from a stone pillar to protect his devotee Prahalad from being killed by his own demon father). (ii) Kunthini—this enables the entity to neutralise the any of the effects of the five elements of creation, including their bad effects. For example we have Lord Shiva who drunk the horrible poison called Halalal that emerged as a result of the churning of the ocean without letting that corroding and very potent poison from harming him. (iii) Vikaasani Kalaa—the ability to develop, grow, expand or increase to any size, in any form and in any way one wishes. For example we have Lord Vamaan, the dwarf mendicant, who had measured the entire world in his three steps. (iv) Maryadini—this is the character, attribute or quality which forces the God-head to observe and exhibit exemplary virtues of righteousness, probity and propriety inspite of his ability of doing anything it wants. It virtually ties him down or restricts him to following a strict and exemplary code of conduct that he successfully implements; these codes are difficult even for the Gods to implement. For example we have Lord Ram who led an exemplary life of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity and propriety as well as observe all the character traits and attributes that are so common with all the human beings inspite of the fact that he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the almighty, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and all-incorporating Viraat Purush who is a manifestation of the Supreme Being. (v) Sanghlaadini Kalaa—this enables the God-head to supersede or overrule the laws of Nature and perform miracles that even defy its laws. For example, Lord Krishna had created flowers and fruits even without season. (vi) Ahalaadini Kalaa—this enables one to physically remain away but spiritually be constantly near one's object of devotion or contemplation and serve him or her. This is the way Radha was able to enchant Lord Krishna inspite of not remaining with him at all times. (vii) Paripurna—this word itself implies something that is wholesome and complete in all respects. It can therefore exhibit all the sixteen qualities or Kalaas in one go, or is the entity that embodies all these qualities in its self. Amongst the incarnations of Lord Vishnu, Ram and Krishna are said to be Paripurna. The supreme Brahm is 'Paripurna' because nothing is missing from him; it is wholesome and complete. And finally, (viii) Swarupaa-wasthiti—this means the ability to withdraw or collect all the Kalaas exhibited by an entity and revert to its original and primary form when it is so wished by it. For example, at the end of the Dwapar Yuga, Lord Krishna had withdrawn all his Kalaas into himself before bringing to close his sojourn on this earth.

The 16 Kalaas of the Moon—This refers to each of the sixteenth part of the moon's diameter/disc, or one of the various phases of the moon. The moon waxes and wanes in a fourteen day phase—each day it is different from the other. Thus we have fourteen Kalaas of the moon. Added to this is the full moon and the dark moon—i.e. two more Kalaas. Therefore the total Kalaas of the moon are $14 + 2 = 16$. These fourteen Kalaas have the following names—Amrita, Maanadaa, Pushaa, Tushti, Pushti, Rati, Dhriti, Shashini, Chandrika, Kanti, Jyotsnaa, Sri, Pritirangaa, Purnaa and Swarajaa.

The 12 Kalaas of the Sun—This refers to each of the twelfth part in which the sun's diameter/disc has been divided. They are called 'Dwaadash Aditya', meaning the twelve forms in which the Sun God is known. They are the following—Tapini, Taapini, Dhumraa, Jwaalini, Ruchi, Shushumna, Bhogadaa, Vishwaa, Bodhini, Dhaarini and Kshamaa.

Other forms of Kalaas—Other connotations of the word are the following:-- (i) the division of time equivalent to about eight seconds; (ii) one degree out of the three hundred and sixty degrees. So when this term 'Kalaa' is applied to that supreme Truth, also known as the supreme Brahm which is complete and wholesome, it implies that what is being referred to is but only one or more fraction of the whole, and therefore this one or more fraction cannot be a complete definition of the whole. At the best, it can give a rough idea of the principal, but not the exact idea of what constitute *Brahm*. This Brahm is an entity so wholesome and grand, so majestic, so

magnificent, so stupendous and astounding that it transcends the definitions or parameters set by this particular word. That Truth or Brahm is beyond their reach and dimension; these various connotations of the word cannot either be applied to that Truth or Brahm nor can they define it in its entirety in any way.

The *64 Kalaas of Brahm*—It is said that the complete Brahm has sixty four Kalaas. If these are divided into four quarters or quadrants or aspects or symbolic legs of Brahm, three-fourths is in the realm of the unknown (heaven) and only one-fourth is in the form of the visible creation (world). Therefore, if Brahm is a complete cycle of sixty four Kalaas, then the known physical world has $64/4 = 16$ Kalaas. It is a quadrant of Brahm. (Rig Veda, 10/90/4).

It is said that Brahm has four 'Paads' or legs which symbolise the four corners of creation. That is, Brahm surrounds this entire creation from all sides. Out of these four legs, the visible world represents one. The rest of the creation stands for the remaining three legs. According to another theory, Brahm is said to have sixty four Kalaas or aspects or levels. Out of these, the known world is represents Brahm's sixteen Kalaas, i.e. this world is only one fourth aspect of the entire Brahm—a fact metaphorically depicted by saying that Brahm can measure this world in one step. The rest is the invisible macrocosmic aspect of Brahm which is beyond imagination and comprehension. This is obvious because if one fourth is so difficult to understand, one can easily understand the astounding nature and stupendity of the remaining three fourths.

The *Kalaa in the context of OM*—In the geometrical symbol of Brahm which is pronounced as 'OM', these three Naad, Bindu and Kalaa appear as a crescent moon or a shallow bowl with a dot at the center placed on the top of the symbol for OM. This Naad is like a big trough and represents the cosmic bowl or crucible in which the primary cosmic gel was placed to initiate the process of creation. The Bindu appears to indicate the pin-point source of heat, radiation or any other activating source placed just above this crucible to inject sufficient energy in to the primary fluid and activate it. It acts like a source of energy directed at the crucible (Naad) set off the chain reaction that would ultimately culminate in the creation. The Kalaa which refers to the various phases of the moon would indicate the different stages through which the entire process passed from the initial stages of creation to its complete closure. But even as the parents of a child do not undergo any apparent change while the embryo develops in the mother's womb, the Supreme Being remained the same all the while the creation developed and unfolded in the cosmic womb represented by Mother Nature. Another example to explain is the moon's disc which appears to change every single day but all know that it remains the same, and the apparent change in its shape is only due to the angle with which its lighted or dark surface is viewed from the earth.

The Dhyani Bindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 13 proclaims that OM has eight Kalaas or facets or parts. They are the letters A, U, M, Naad, Bindu, Kalaa, Kalaa-teet and Param.

In brief, the idea is that Goddess Laxmi or Annapurna possesses all the majestic and magnificent glories and virtues listed above or implied in what has been said.

Kalaa in the context of the Jiva or the living being—The Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 33, 37-40 describe the concept of 'Kalaa' vis-à-vis the living creature. It says that the 'consciousness' that is present in the gross body of the creature called the Jiva-atma should be regarded as the one that has different Kalaas, i.e. as the one which shows various attributes and characteristic qualities and features typical or specific to that body. On the other hand, the same 'consciousness' when it is freed from the limitations and tainting effects of the gross body becomes free from these limiting factors and thus becomes one without any Kalaas, i.e. it has no attributes or special characteristic features that are specific to it, that can limit its virtues and qualities to a particular set of attributes and

characteristics. Therefore the Jiva-Atma or the living being has numerous characteristics, while the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, has no such limitations.]

6. 'Oh Goddess Annapurna! Fulfill my wishes. Give me food (i.e. nourish me and protect my life). Swaha.' With the utterance of the word Swaha, the worshipper should offer oblations to the divine Goddess after having said the Mantra (hymn) in her honour. [The Mantra is given in the following verses. The word 'Swaha' is uttered at the end of the Mantra to mark its end when offerings are made to the deity worshipped.] (6).

7. The Goddess resides in this Mantra as its Atma or essence symbolized by each of its twenty-seven letters.

[The Mantra of the Goddess consists of twenty-seven letters, and each of these letters has equal importance and significance. Even if one letter is removed the Mantra would collapse. That is why all these Mantras collectively and individually are likened to the Atma or soul of the Mantra because any living being cannot survive without the presence of the Atma in his body.]

She is served and honoured by her female attendants called 'Yoginis' (female ascetics) (7).

8. 'Aim Hrim/Hrin(g) Saum Srim/Srin(g) Klim/Klin(g) OM Namō Bhagavatya-annapurne Mamaabhilashitam Annam Dehi Swaha'—this is the Mantra having twenty-seven letters with which the Goddess Annapurna is worshipped. [The brief meaning of this Mantra is—'OM Salutations to Goddess Annapurna who is honoured by the Beej Mantras 'Aim' standing for Vaak Shakti or the power of speech, 'Hrim/Hrin(g)' standing for Maya Shakti or the power to create delusions, 'Saum' standing for politeness and suave demeanours, 'Srim/Srin(g)' standing for Goddess Laxmi or the power of wealth and prosperity, and 'Klim/Klin(g)' standing for Kaam Shakti or the power of desires that drives all actions and deeds. I reverentially bow before you. Be kind to fulfill my wishes and provide me with sufficient food and nourishment. I am offering this oblation to you by saying Swaha.']

I (Ribhu) had received this Mantra from my father (Brahma the creator). I follow this instruction and worship the Goddess. I worship her with this Mantra daily with devotion, and I have been doing it for a long time. I also ensure to diligently observe all the sanctioned rules of conduct for an auspicious and righteous way of life while doing so (8).

9. When I had been worshipping Goddess Annapurna over a long period of time, she was pleased with me and finally appeared before me in her most charming and magnificent form. She had large eyes, was smiling pleasantly, and her face was like a lotus flower (9).

10. When I saw the Goddess I stood up and then paid my respects to her by prostrating before her. After that I stood before her with the palms of my folded hands touching each other as a mark of submission and respect.

The Goddess asked me for a boon, saying, 'Oh son! You are blessed. Ask for any boon (or reward or gift) that you wish to have, without hesitation and delay.' (10).

11. In this way the Goddess with large eyes asked me to request her for a boon to be granted.

Oh exalted sage (Nidagh)! I then asked ‘Oh Goddess Parvati! Let the knowledge of Atma-Tattva sprout (and take firm root) in my mind.’

[‘Parvati’ is the divine consort of Lord Shiva and is considered as the Mother Goddess from whom all other Goddesses manifested. ‘Atma-Tattva’ is the essential knowledge of the Atma, the essence of creation and the true self of the creature. Hence, Ribhu basically requested the Goddess to provide him with enlightenment and self-realisation. This would lead to Brahm-realisation and his ultimate Mukti or liberation and deliverance. It is to be carefully observed here that the enlightened sage has addressed the Goddess as ‘Parvati’ instead of as Annapurna. It is to show that he knows that there is no difference between these two forms of the cosmic Shakti, which is the dynamic power, the cosmic energy and the supreme authority of Brahm revealed in different forms and known by different names, as well as the fact that he is well acquainted with the philosophy of Advaitya which stresses that there is no duality in creation because the ‘Truth’ will always remain the same no matter in which form it exists.

Further, sage Ribhu was an ascetic of the highest order. For ascetics, the chief deity is Lord Shiva, and the latter’s divine consort is Goddess Parvati. Hence, it was to give due respect to Goddess Parvati that Ribhu addressed Goddess Annapurna with this name. He also wished to give the message that whenever he worships Goddess Annapurna he is actually worshipping Goddess ‘Parvati’ because he knows that there is no difference between them.] (11).

12. When I had made this request, the divine Goddess graciously granted it to me, saying ‘So be it’. Then she vanished from sight.

Immediately I became enlightened and saw the mysteries of the world unravel before me (i.e. I got a divine sight which enabled me to literally look behind the curtain and see the esoteric secrets and truth of existence that lay behind it). I could see the various aspects of the world without any effort (i.e. I could easily distinguish the truth from the falsehood; I could easily distinguish the subtle and the sublime from the gross and mortal because I had acquired the eye of wisdom and enlightenment which gave me deep penetrating powers of insight and discrimination) (12).

13. Now, I shall narrate the five types of ‘Bhrams’—literally meaning delusions, illusions, deceptions and misconceptions that exist in this world, especially those related to the metaphysical field and spiritualism. These Bhrams create a lot of confusion and doubts caused by ignorance of the actual truth, which lead to perplexities and vexations.

The first Bhram is that the Jiva (the living being) and Ishwar (the Supreme Being) are two different and separate entities (13).

14. The second Bhram is that the Atma, the pure consciousness and the ‘self’ of the creature, regards its self as the doer of deeds (‘Karta’).

The third Bhram is that the Jiva has three divisions of the body and all belong to it. [The three divisions of the body are the gross body consisting of the external sense organs, the subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect, and the causal body harbouring the ‘cause’ of existence as well as the other two aspects of the body in the form of the consciousness known as the Atma that lives in it.] (14).

15. The fourth Bhram is to believe that the entity which is responsible for the creation of this corrupt and fault-ridden world is itself tainted and has various faults inherent in

the world. [This is based on the assumption that since it is said that the world is an exact image of this supreme entity, so if the image in the form of this material world is tainted then the principal of which it is an image must also be tainted.]

And the fifth and final Bhram is to believe that the 'cause' of this world (i.e. the entity that has brought about the world's existence) is different and separate from the 'result' or 'effect' of its endeavours which manifested in the form of this world.

When these five Bhrams are done away with, it is only then that true wisdom and enlightenment begin to shine in the inner-self of the creature. [These Bhrams act like dark veils that surround the sub-conscious and the inner-self of the creature, making the mind and intellect so biased and pre-programmed that it is unable to analyse any given situation dispassionately and arrive at the 'truth'. Once the veil of ignorance and delusions are removed, wisdom and enlightenment shine through like the bright sunlight emerging from behind the dark clouds in the sky.] (15).

16. When one becomes wise, erudite and enlightened he is able to see the truth behind the phenomenon of image formation and understand that the image that is seen in the mirror or any other reflecting surface is a reflection of some principal entity, and therefore it is both identical to this principal entity as well as completely different, distinct and separate from it.

[Suppose we see the image of a tree in a mirror. The image is exactly like the actual tree, but while the tree has a physical and tangible existence, its image is not, as the latter is merely a reflection of the former and therefore non-existent in the real sense.]

Similarly, pure crystal appears to be red when it is in contact with something that is red coloured. But actually the crystal has no colour of its own but merely reflects the colour of its surroundings or the things with which it is associated.

The sky element is essentially one, uniform and indivisible whole by nature, but it is nevertheless classified into various categories for the purpose of understanding—such as we have 'Ghatakash' or the sky present inside the hollow of an empty mud-pot, or 'Mathakash' or the space within the walls of a monastery. So these names create an illusion that these skies are different from one another, but the fact is that they aren't.

[For instance, if the mud-pot is broken there remains no segregation between the space that was present inside its wall and the vast space present outside its wall. There is no need to mix them; there is no effort involved in their becoming one and the same. It is a natural and automatic process. Rather, the wall of the pot had artificially created a separation in the otherwise uniform sky. Similarly, the creature's pure conscious Atma residing in his gross body is the same as the cosmic Consciousness called Brahm that is all-pervading in this creation. The gross body of the creature is the one which separates this consciousness into two, and this creates an illusion that the creature's Atma and Brahm are two different and separate entities. When the gross body is shed it is obvious that they merge with one another without any effort, and without leaving behind any trace of separation just like the space inside the pot merges with the space outside in a seamless manner when the pot is broken.]

Just like one is misled to believe that a given length of harmless rope is a fearful snake when seen from a distance, and this misconception is removed when the rope is examined from close quarters, the misconceptions about the world (that it is true and real) too vanish when one examines it from close quarters and comes to

realise the truth about it (that it is illusionary, deluding, artificial, entrapping and misleading).

Likewise, the pure metal known as gold appears to be different from the ornaments made out of it in the first instance, but on close analysis and understanding this misconception is removed because the gold is inherent to all the golden ornaments, and the latter owe their very existence to the former. It is the gold that has been converted into the ornament, and when the latter is melted it would revert back to gold. Without 'gold' there cannot ever be the existence of an ornament called 'golden'.

[When this principle is applied to this world having myriads of colourful forms and exceptional varieties of characters and features, we deduce that all these are simply multifarious manifestations of one single principal entity known as Brahm, the cosmic super Consciousness. When this world would finally come to an end, it would revert back to its principal source of origin, and it is the formless and shapeless Brahm. Just like the element 'gold' has no specific primary shape or form of its own but assumes the shape of the ornament, Brahm itself is formless and featureless but assumes the form of this world. Just as it is impossible to catch hold of the single atom of the metal gold in its primary and basic form of an 'atom of gold', it is similarly impossible to grasp 'Brahm' or 'consciousness' in its primary and basic form. But once again, as the same gold in its physical and gross form can be easily grasped and moulded, the Brahm in its grosser form can be easily understood and seen. But this visible world is not the true identity of Brahm just like the external and visible form of the ornament is not the true identity of the atom of the metal known as 'gold'. Further, even as impurities are inherent in any ornament of gold and it would be foolhardy and stupid to accuse the pure atom of gold of having the same impurities as those possessed by the golden ornament, it is also most foolish and the height of ignorance to accuse Brahm of possessing the taints and faults that are inherent to this gross physical world. Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 17-18 which explicitly endorses this view.]

In this way when a man becomes wise, erudite and enlightened, or when these virtues arise in his inner-self and the mind gets illuminated, all Bhrams (delusions, misconceptions, falsehoods) about the world are dispelled.

So, it is from then (i.e. when I was blessed by the Goddess and became enlightened) that all my Bhrams have been removed and I have become Brahm-realised.

Oh Nidagh, follow my example and attain the eclectic knowledge that is true and spiritually elevating, that would remove all your confusions and consternations, and would illuminate your inner-self so that you become self-enlightened and Brahm-realised.' (16).

17. Sage Nidagh bowed before sage Ribhu and requested him, 'Please preach me Brahm-Vidya¹, i.e. enlighten me about the secrets of the enigmatic Brahm. Nothing is superior to this knowledge and better than it.' (17).

[Note—¹Brahm Vidya, or the knowledge of the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, and Atma Vidya, or the knowledge of the Atma which is the same 'consciousness' that resides in the body of the individual creature, are intricately and inseparably linked with each other so much so that acquisition of the knowledge of any one automatically means the acquisition of the knowledge of the other, the only difference between them being the plane of existence at which these two terms refer, for while the term 'Brahm' refers to the cosmic and all-encompassing macrocosmic level of creation, the term 'Atma' refers to the same

divine entity that pertains to an individual creature at the microcosmic level. But then since this individual creature is an image of the entire cosmos, it follows that knowing the Atma, the truthful 'self' of one's existence one is able to know the spiritual truths of the entire creation.

Brahm Vidya is essentially an exposition of the knowledge of the Atma Tattwa, and vice versa. This is the primary reason why sage Ribhu explains the Atma Vidya in the following verses of this Canto, and then goes on to elaborately explain how to realise this Atma and gain spiritual benefits from this knowledge when sage Nidagh has actually asked him about the 'Brahm Vidya' and nothing else.

The concept of Brahm Vidya has been the chief subject of discussion of a number of Upanishads, especially the following:--(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kaivalya Upanishad, Brahm Upanishad, Panch Brahm Upanishad, Akchyu Upanishad, Tejobindu Upanishad, Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1-5, and Brahm Vidya Upanishad. (b) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1-2; Shandilya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3; Atma Upanishad; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 4; Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 1. (c) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7-8; Keno-panishad; Avyakta Upanishad. (d) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad; Isha Vasya Upanishad, Adhyatma Upanishad. (e) Rig Veda's Mudgal Upanishad; Atma Prabodh Upanishad.]

18. Ribhu was pleased and began his discourse—"I am pleased with you and shall oblige you.

Oh Anagh (the sinless and pure-hearted sage Nidagh)! Become so wise, realised, erudite and enlightened that while externally you become a great doer of auspicious deeds and enjoy their grand rewards, internally you must remain totally detached from them, having nothing to do with either the deed or its result by renouncing all your involvements with the world, by becoming highly dispassionate and neutral.

[That is, on the one hand you should become so successful in your endeavours that you become highly respected in this world for your achievements, and therefore obtain all the glories, majesty, magnificence, honour and mystical powers that one can ever hope to acquire by being successful in life and doing auspicious deeds, you can even enjoy the rewards of your deeds and efforts, but do this only externally. Internally, you must not be affected by either the deed or its result by becoming highly dispassionate and by renouncing all your involvements with this world. You must be completely detached and disassociated from this world. Hence, while you might be enjoying this world and living a normal life like me, internally you must be submerged in meditation and contemplation, you must be constantly thinking of the Atma and Brahm, and nothing else.]

Research your true 'self', or research about the truth of your 'self'. [Find out who you truly are, and what your true identity is. Refer verse no. 40 in this context.] Having known it or becoming enlightened about it, you would become eternally happy and cheerful. [That is, if you sincerely wish to obtain real spiritual peace and happiness, distance yourself from this gross and deluding world that is full of miseries as well as is mortal and transient, and instead concentrate on your Atma which is your 'true self' as well as the pure consciousness.] (18).

19. Realise and become enlightened about the truth of the statement 'I am that Brahm who is eternally awakened and always shining, who is pure, untainted, immaculate and pristine, who is most ancient and primordial, and who is eternal and imperishable. There is nothing except this. [That is, there is no truth other than this.]'

With this eclectic thought and firm conviction, become faultless and free from having any kind of taints. This would pave the way for your emancipation and deliverance. This would give you eternal bliss, happiness, peace, tranquility, beatitude and felicity (19).

20. Whatever that is seen here has no reality in it; it has no substance, pith and truthful existence. Have firm faith and conviction in this view.

Just like the city of Gandharvas (who are semi-gods of lower category in the hierarchy of Gods, and engage in performing tricks) which has no real existence, and like the sight of water in the mirage seen on the sand in hot desert being simply an optical illusion, whatever is seen in this world is also illusionary and deceptive, and therefore has no real existence (20).

21. Whatever is seen to exist in this world appears to be there just because it is imagined to be there (by the imaginative powers of the mind); actually it isn't.

Oh sage! Have faith in the divine and eclectic entity that is beyond the six organs of the body, and gain knowledge of it. In other words, become enlightened about the Atma or pure consciousness that is your true self; become 'self-realised'.

[The six organs are (i) the mind, which is the subtle component of the body, and (ii) the five sense organs of perception of the gross body such as ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin = total 6. The entity being referred to here is the Atma or pure consciousness. Sage Ribhu exhorts Nidagh to become self-realised by experiencing the presence of the Atma in his inner-self. This Atma is different from either the gross body or the subtle body as mentioned here.] (21).

22. This entity (i.e. the pure conscious Atma that is implied in verse no. 21) is imperishable, eternal and infinite like the sky, it is in the form of the Atma or the soul (essence; fundamental basis) of all living beings, it is immutable, indivisible and one single whole, it has no 'holes' in it (i.e. it has no drawbacks, shortcomings, taints or faults), and it is self-sustaining as well as able to sustain everything else in this world much like the planet earth (which is self-sustaining and complete in its own right, which needs no external replenishments to refill its bowl which is being constantly exploited and drained of its reserves, and which harbours all forms of diverse life along with sustaining and nourishing them without ever complaining of the way it is being abused by all and sundry).

Be convinced and have the eclectic thought that 'I am this divine entity (Atma)' (22).

23. If the mind and the sub-conscious develop some sort of dejection or depression and the creature begins to think that he is not an exalted entity and suffers from wants, or he feels that he is not complete or fulfilled (i.e. when, under the influence of ignorance and delusions, the creature begins to feel that he is suffering from this or that problem, that he is not happy, that he would die, and so on and so forth)—in such a situation he must tell himself that it is wrong to think this way, and that he is absolutely normal and fine.

In other words, the mind and the sub-conscious must be trained to remain calm and steady, and not be moved by imaginary problems and things that have no existence. The creature (i.e. the Jiva, the living being) must learn to inculcate positive and constructive thinking and virtues, and discard negativity and destructiveness (23).

24. When the mind and the sub-conscious begin to think that the 'self' (of the individual creature) is not different from the supreme 'Self' known as the 'Param Tattwa' (literally the supreme essence; the absolute Truth; the supreme Atma or the all-pervading super Consciousness), it is then that all distinctions between the two planes of existences in which the same essential Truth (the Tattwa, the Atma, the pure consciousness) exists is removed. In other words, when the wise spiritual aspirant trains his mind to think that his 'true self' is the pure consciousness residing inside his bosom, that this body is merely a carrier of this consciousness, that consciousness is a universal and indivisible entity that cannot be mutated or fractioned, that the consciousness residing in his body is the same that prevails everywhere else and resides inside each and every living being in this creation—it is only then that he truly understands the meaning of the term non-duality or Advaitya, and consequentially is entitled to be truly called wise, enlightened and self-realised.

[We deduce from this observation that it is the 'Chitta', or the mind and its sub-conscious aspect which are responsible for either the creation of the notion of duality, or of non-duality. The difference between an ignorant and deluded man and a self-realised, wise and enlightened man is that while the mind of the former believes that the Jiva and the Ishwar are two separate entities, the mind of the latter is convinced that they are one, indistinguishable and inseparable. This delusion of there being 'duality' between the Jiva and the Ishwar is of course referred to as the 'first Bhram' as mentioned above in verse no. 13.] (24).

25. When one develops this eclectic and holistic vision of life and creation (or existence), he is able to access Mukti (liberation and deliverance) while he is alive and still has a gross body. That is, though he has a body, but for all practical purposes he is deemed to be liberated from its shackling affects; he is deemed to be free from the limitations imposed on him by the grossness of the body. Here the term 'he' would mean his 'truthful self, the Atma which is pure consciousness'.

[Such a wise man realises that his 'true self' is the pure conscious Atma that is a sublime and subtle entity which is quite different from the gross body, as the latter is merely a habitat of the former. This self-realised and enlightened man can be doing all the deeds required of him in this world, but still remain free from all bondages and encumbrances because he has developed the wisdom to understand that the deeds are being done by the body and not his 'true self' which is the Atma, the pure consciousness, and hence 'he' remains a mere spectator of what the physical gross body does. Besides this, he has also realised that the world is an imaginary thing of the mind, that it is entrapping and deluding by its inherent nature, and so anyone who is wise would have nothing to do with anything that is untrue, selfish, cunning, crap, demeaning, demoting, denigrating and entrapping for the soul.

Therefore he understands that it is well to avoid this trap. He has no expectations of any rewards or punishments from the deeds, he has no target or aim or objective for doing the deeds—for he simply does them because it is his duty and assigned to him by the Supreme Being who is the Lord of all creatures and the world in which they all live. With this eclectic and highly evolved spiritual way of thinking, he does not get involved in the deeds or in any of the demands for gratifications of the body and its sense organs. Thus no consequences accrue to him for doing deeds. For him, the body simply does not exist, and therefore the world also does not exist because the latter is directly related to the former.

This sublime thought process is a de-facto 'Mukti' for the aspirant as he has freed himself from the bondages of the body and the demands of its sense organs, as well as the world of sense objects and its attendant delusions and entangling web.]

This state of the mind and the sub-conscious is called 'Turiyateet Mukti' or the transcendental state of existence.

[This is because in the Turiyateet state of existence of the consciousness, which can be said to be the state of 'super-consciousness', the mind thinks of nothing; it is in a neutral state. In its wake, the 'self' too becomes neutral and established in the Turiyateet state because it was the mind that had been nagging the 'self' or the Atma of the creature with so many inputs and demands that the 'self' just could not find time to rest and find its peace. With the mind out of the scene, the 'self' or the Atma reverts to its primary state of existence which is inherently calm and neutral. The 'self' or the Atma therefore lives in the Turiyateet state when the mind enters this state of existence.] (25).

26. Oh Anagh (i.e. sage Nidagh who is the sinless and faultless)! Such a highly self-realised man is deemed to be in a perpetual state of Samadhi—i.e. in spite of his apparently going about his normal duties in this world expected of him, he still remains lost in his own thoughts internally, and therefore he is deemed to live in a perpetual state of trance called 'Samadhi'. [He is unconcerned with and unaware of anything around him, including even his body. His body does some or the other deed in a mechanical fashion, but his 'true self' is absolutely oblivious of what the body does or does not do. Therefore, because of this un-involvement and dispassionate attitude of the inner-self, the person in a state of Samadhi is not at all affected by any of the deeds or actions undertaken by the external gross body.]

Therefore, both types of aspirants, those who are in the Turiyateet state as well as those who are in the Samadhi state, are deemed to be Mukta; they have attained Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation). In fact, for all practical purposes, both these states are synonymous with each other as both are transcendental states of existence of consciousness which is untainted and unaffected by any of the taints or drawbacks or shortcomings or faults of this deluding material world.

This sort of Mukti is not limited to only those who have studied the scriptures or are well versed and learned in them, and likewise it is not beyond the reach of those who do not have this privilege. In fact, Mukti is available to anyone who has become truly enlightened, wise and self-realised. This is made possible by training the intellect and the mind to think in the terms of the philosophy espoused in this Upanishad.

[That is, anyone who is diligent, determined and sincere can access this Mukti by becoming self-realised and having firm faith in the essence of Advaitya Vedanta that speaks of the non-duality, immutability, universality and uniformity of the Truth known as Consciousness. He must be convinced that his 'true self' is the Atma which is eternal, subtle, sublime and pure consciousness, and not the body which is perishable, gross and inane.]

A person who lives in this state of mind and thoughts for a long time becomes absolutely neutral and dispassionate so much so that the ecstasy and bliss that he experiences in the higher states of spiritual realisation and enlightenment do not show in his demeanours and countenance. Externally it appears that he is in a stupor and indifferent to all emotions and feelings; but internally he is full of bliss and joys unlimited. He has reached the stage of higher consciousness when he appears neither

happy nor sorrowful; he is neither cheerful nor remorseful. [This is described as the Unmani and the Manonmani* states obtained in higher states of Yoga when the mind and its sub-conscious thoughts are neutralized—refer Shandilya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 7, verse no. 17 and verse no. 10 respectively. Refer also to Canto 3, verse no. 4 of our present Upanishad.] (26).

[Note—There are a number of Upanishads that describe how the Mana can be controlled. References: (i) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kathrudra Upanishad, verse nos. 39-40; Yogshika Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 62-65, 69-71. (iii) Atharva Veda's Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 7, verse no. 23-25.

The Paingalo-panishad, canto 4, verse no. 5 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition states that the immaculate Atma, when it erroneously associates itself with the body, i.e. the sense organs which constitute the body, and the mind, it begins to think that it is a doer of deeds and also has to suffer from their consequences. In order to free itself from this clutch of delusion, the Atma needs to exercise control over the mind and the sense organs of the body.

The mind and the sense organs of a man are inherently very restless. Their control is called 'Nigraha'. The word 'control' implies that both of them are reined in and prevented from recklessly following their usual sense objects of the material world, seeking comfort and pleasure from them. To do this we have to set a goal, and then focus them on these goals, for then, their energy and agility would be diverted towards that goal. For this purpose the goal would be spiritual and that would mean self knowledge and self realisation. Once this spiritual goal is set, the Ahankar or a false and inflated sense of self-esteem, pride and ego along with their attendant arrogance and haughtiness that are inherent in a man will take care of the rest—for now he would do his best not to fail in his endeavour which he has set for himself by himself. A focused mind and sense would help the man to control them, for now they would find no time and energy to go berserk and have to live up to their expectations.

Another method is to focus the mind on one thing at a time—and this time it is self knowledge. Once the mind is focused on this target, it would try to find out how to achieve it, and then actually implement that method.

These methods are positive and are more helpful as compared to methods used to suppress the mind and sense organs, because then they would feel like being trapped under duress and would try to break free at the first opportunity, creating greater distress to the seeker.

The mind is always restless and it keeps the body restless. This is proved when a tired man sleeps. At that time, his weary body lies like a dead log of wood, not wanting to stir at all, but the mind is so restless that the same man 'dreams' the wildest of dreams, imagining nightmarish things so profound that when he wakes up from a long sleep he is as tired as he was at the time of going to sleep, though his body had been taking complete rest all this while. So in effect, the restless mind had not allowed the man to take 'effective rest'. This is what is meant here when the verse says that the body gets peace when the man realises the true nature of his self, because then his mind ceases to be in a state of constant flux due to the man concentrating it even forcefully upon the Atma, whereby the mind has no time to think of any thing else that is nonsense. This results in a situation when the man is able to harness the energy of the mind and concentrate it upon what lies beyond the restless picture projected by the mind; he is able to channelise the mind's vital strength from the falsehoods to the truth-hood. This in its wake gives peace to the body because with the elimination of the constant nudging by the mind, the organs of the body get a chance to find rest and peace.

When the mind is restless, it directs the body's sense organs towards their respective objects of perception and action. The mind does not allow the body to take rest. For example, a waking man's eyes are constantly jumping from one sight to

another, his ears hear one sound after another, and even his skin starts to itch if he has no other thing to do! Let a man sit alone for any length of time and he would become fidgety and change his position frequently lest the parts become numb. It is here that meditation helps—it trains the body and the mind to remain steady and calm like obedient pupils under the tutelage of a strict teacher. With this outlook, the man is able to rein the mind as well as the body.

The mind decides how we perceive and experience the world—the same circumstance, the same input of stimuli might seem pleasant at one given time but most irritating at another because the mind perceives them differently. Therefore, by exercising control over the mind by diverting it to the inner-self, one is able to give peace to the body.

Again we must note that the mind and therefore the body exist because of the following *four things*—(a) ‘Guna’ or attributes or qualities that are inherent in the character of a man, (b) ‘Kriya’ or activity that are so characteristic of them both, (c) ‘Vishesha’ or the unique features that the mind and body possess, and (d) ‘Sambandh’ or the relationships that they establish with each other and the rest of the world. The physical body depends upon the mind as would be clear when we consider the fact that all the perceptions and the actions have their seat in the respective faculties of the mind (brain). For example, if the mind is somewhere else, then no matter we might be staring at an object for hours, but we would not register it in our memory, and we would not recognize it when shown again, though we had been staring it for so long. This applies to all other parts of the body. This relationship known as ‘Sambandh’ is elaborately described in Canto 2 of this Upanishad.

The creature has three types of bodies—viz. the gross body consisting of the sense organs, the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect complex, and the causal body which harbours the pure conscious Atma. When the first two are eliminated, or when the enlightened creature is able to divert his attention from the body making it non-relevant and non-existent thereby preventing even the mind from receiving any new inputs from the gross world and becoming irrelevant and non-existent, naturally what is left is the third body. This causal body has the Atma surrounded in the bliss sheath; it was its interaction with the external world through the medium of the mind and the body that it got agitated. Again this was because the Atma was ignorant of its holy and sublime nature; it was surrounded by the veil of ‘Avidya’. When this veil of ignorance is removed from the Atma by acquisition of truthful knowledge and self-realisation based on contemplation and meditation, either as advised by one’s wise and realised teacher or by the deep studying of the scriptures, the pure and original shine and glittering illumination of the Atma comes to the fore. This leads to the realisation of its blissful nature, because when all agitations are removed, the seeker finds perpetual peace and tranquility.

The mind is the cause of all bondages for the creature. Bondage is when the mind longs for something, grieves about something, rejects something and accepts another, is please about something or displeased about another.

‘It is good to tame the mind which is difficult to tame, and is naturally inclined to be flirty and flighty, rushing wherever it wishes. A tamed mind brings happiness.’ [Dhammapada, 37.]

*The *Unmani* state is a higher and exalted state of existence of the consciousness when it rises above the mundane and the gross, and lives in a sublime state. The word itself has two connotations—one is to rise and lift up, and other is to become indifferent to things that are gross and unattractive. The ascetic who practices the form of Yoga outlined in this Upanishad is able to ‘lift’ his ‘self’ from the gross level of existence, ‘rise up’ and reach an exalted state of existence when he is able to ‘see’ the sublime Tattwa, or experience the presence in his own inner self the eclectic entity that is the essence of existence and which in common parlance of Vedanta and metaphysics is known as the ‘conscious self’ or the pure conscious Atma. This Atma is the essence or the Tattwa that is self-illuminated and that is witnessed in the higher

stages of Yoga as described in this verse. It is the realisation of this Atma that is the aim of all spiritual pursuits, and it is this realisation of the Atma that is the cosmic Truth known as Brahm which gives the feeling of unmatched exhilaration and ecstasy to the ascetic. That is why he is stunned and his eyebrows are raised in a crooked stance. He had never ever experienced this scintillating source of light earlier in his life, and when he actually 'sees' it, he is taken by surprise and utterly stunned and dazzled by its mere presence. The word also means total renunciation.

The *Manomani* state is very similarly to the Unmani state. The word 'Manomani' has 'Mana' as its first part, and the word 'Mana' means the thinking mind and the emotional heart. Hence, the Manomani state is that in which the mind loses its restlessness and is put under control just like one is able to control the vital winds during the process of Pranayam done in Yoga (meditation).

This state has been described in the Shandilya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 7, verse no. 10.]

27. By diligently practicing control of the mind for a long time by doing various Aasans (sitting postures) and other meditative techniques of Yoga (such as Pranayam or breath control, Bandhas or closing all exposure of the mind to the turmoil of the external world, etc.), one is able to become aware of the 'truth' of the presence of the pure consciousness inside one's own self as well as is able to get rid of the various Bhrams (delusions, misconceptions, deceptions, illusions etc. and their causes as described in verse nos. 13-16 above) that are associated with this life.

In other words, one is able to ascertain the 'truth' and do away with the falsehood. In fact, when the sun of 'truth' dawns on one's mental horizon, its brilliant light automatically dispels the darkness of falsehood. He is then able to attain the auspicious state of Mukti as well as of Turiya and Samadhi (as narrated in the foregoing verses) (27).

[Note—The concept of *Mukti* has been elaborately described in this Upanishad in Cantos 3-6.]

28. A person whose mind is convinced that the Atma or pure consciousness is free from being tainted or affected by any of the qualities characteristic of this world is the one who has truthfully understood what the Atma is, and is therefore truly 'self-realised'. Such a wise man is internally calmed, serene and peaceful, as well as in a state of bliss and contentedness.

When this state is achieved, it is called the state of Samadhi (28).

29. A person who can remain calm and steady by controlling his Vasanas¹ (i.e. the inherent passions, yearnings, desires and wishes that are so characteristic of all living beings; worldly attachments and attractions; desires for gratifications) is the one who can keep his mind and heart steady and focused on his spiritual goal. Such a man is said to be steady and unwavering in his spiritual pursuit.

When an aspirant reaches this exalted state of existence when he is not disturbed by the constant interference of the various Vasanas, he can experience the bliss and peace that are only available when this state is reached. He is deemed to be in the state of Samadhi or a trance-like state marked with indifference to the gross existence consisting of the material world and the gross body, a state of complete peace and tranquility that bestows rest and bliss to the aspirant. Since true peace and bliss is available only when one gets rid of the Vasanas and obtains the state of Samadhi, it also called the 'Kaivalya state of existence'² (because the word 'Kaivalya' literally means 'one of its only kind'; unique, unparallel and matchless).

[This is very obvious—when a man is being subjected to constant nagging demands of the sense organs of the body as well as the heart and the mind, he can never ever hope to find peace. He would be constantly striving to fulfill their never-ending demands, requests, hopes and expectations. It is only when he shuns them or shuts off the door to them that he can ‘sleep or rest in peace’. This phrase ‘sleep and rest in peace’ is a metaphor for his state of Turiya and Samadhi because he is unaware of anything pertaining to the external physical world made aware of by the medium of the sense organs of the gross body, as well as the subtle world of the sub-conscious mind that exists in his dreams. When this overwhelming calmness prevails, when there is nothing to disturb the Atma, the latter finds true rest and peace. Since true rest and peace and their accompanying sense of bliss and happiness is available only when this eclectic state is reached, it is defined as the ‘Kaivalya’ state—or the state that is unique and unmatched. This existential state bestows him with extreme bliss and peace; he feels full of beatitude and felicity; he is steady, unruffled and unmoving; he is unaffected by anything in this world; he is totally indifferent and neutral to everything, being merely a witness to all. He exists in his truthful state of enlightened ‘self’, and it is tantamount to his being in the Turiya or Samadhi state of enlightened existence.] (29).

[Note—¹The concept of *Vasanas*— *Vasanas/Vasnas* are the numerous attractions, desires, yearnings, infatuations and other natural inclinations of the creature that tie him to this world. *Vasanas* arise because a man thinks that one thing is better than the other and that he must get hold of the better choice. The *Vasanas* are deep-rooted impressions that define the texture of a man’s mind and intellect. On the other hand, intentions are conscious thoughts that determine his actions. *Vasanas* are innate inclinations and tendencies which form the propelling force behind a man’s desires, thoughts and actions.

Classification of *Vasanas*:--There are many ways to classify the *Vasanas*. Let us examine them one by one as follows.

(i) The *Vasanas* are of three types—viz. Lok *Vasana*, Deha *Vasana*, and Shastra *Vasana*—refer Atharva Veda’s *Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad*, paragraph no. 2. Now let us examine them in detail.

(a) *Lok Vasana*—this is the desire and greed for wealth, fame, sense objects of the material world, territorial gains, authority and powers, majesty, pomp and pelf etc. The *Vasanas* relating to the world are the various attractions and allurements that his apparently enchanting and captivating world presents to a person. It also refers to the various and endless responsibilities and obligations, real and imaginary, that a person has, or imagines he has towards this world.

Sometimes the Lok *Vasanas* overlaps the Deha *Vasana* as often they are interconnected. For example, one’s ‘*Vasanas*’ pertaining to one’s son, property, material wealth and other assets which a person has acquired by the efforts made by his body and which help him to get established in this world and enjoy enhanced comforts and pleasures as well as respect and honour that such acquisitions entitle him to in this physical world also come under this category of *Vasanas*. All such relationships that exist in this world, such as his relatives, his contacts, his friends, his peers and compatriots, along with his obligations, his contracts and his responsibilities related to them are called Lok *Vasanas*. It would also include all things done by him in this world to appease those who are related to him with this body.

(b) *Shastra Vasana*—this is the desire and yearnings related to scriptures and ancient literature, such as a desire to become an expert in them and be recognised as such, the desire to study them more and more, acquiring scholarship and literal expertise in them with its accompanying fame, renown, glory, honour, respect and financial prosperity, become much sought after and acquire a wide follower-ship

based on these qualities and honours bestowed upon them by the world by the virtue of their unique abilities and expertise of the scriptures etc. But usually such knowledge is superficial, and the so-called expert of scriptures relies more on their letter rather than on their spirit, engrossing himself in endless discussions and debates leading to confusions and contradictions instead of solving them. The scriptures are vast and like a fathomless sea. Trying to realise the Supreme Truth by delving into the depths of the scriptures is like an attempt at extracting a single piece of pearl by churning the whole ocean. Though it is theoretically possible in thousand of years of continuous effort, but practically it is impossible and incredulous to even think of such a success; it is a too far-fetched notion. It is rare to find a truly wise and enlightened soul amongst worldly scholars and orators, for the latter's erudition is limited to gaining fame and name and nothing more.

(c) *Deha Vasana* –this is the insatiable desire and passion related to the gratification of the sense organs, such as becoming licentious, engrossing oneself in enjoyment of worldly sensual objects, and all other types of indulgences and gratifications. The 'Vasanas' pertaining to the body also relate to the attachments that one has with one's son, property and wealth which a person has acquired and enjoyed with his body, and the world around him—his relatives, his fame, his contacts, his friends, his obligation, contracts and responsibilities. It also means gratification of the sense organs of the body as well as to appease those who are related to him with this body so that they continue to serve and help him and give comfort and pleasure to his body.

Now, when we talk of the Atma as pure consciousness or an embodiment of light, the question arises 'how can we obtain the clearest perception of that reality?' The greatest exponent of Vedanta philosophy, sage Adi Sankaracharya prescribes the following four paths—(i) discrimination between the eternal and truthful, and the non-eternal and non-truthful, (ii) renunciation of desires for sensual gratification and enjoyment of pleasures from this materialistic world, (iii) development of six divine eclectic wealth—self control, surrender, faith, forbearance, peace/tranquility and poise of the mind, and (iv) sincere desire for liberation and deliverance, because it is only then that the creature will try to find ways to achieve it.

(ii) Another classification is based on the proportion of *bad* or *good* qualities inherent in and integral to the nature of a man. Therefore, there are broadly classified into Good Vasanas, and Bad Vasanas depending upon the proportion of good quality and the bad quality that is inherent in the man and forms his innate character. These qualities are called the Gunas, and they are three in number—viz. Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. Hence, we have *Satvic Vasana*, *Rajic Vasana* and *Tamsic Vasana*.

The *Satvic Vasanas* are those desires that are determined by the predominance of the best quality called Sata in a man. Such a man is inclined to do auspicious deeds and take noble actions. He is naturally inclined to and attracted towards those things in this world which help him to cultivate higher values in life, such as the desire of serving others selflessly, being compassionate, relinquishing one's right for the general welfare of others, spending time in finding ways to achieve knowledge of the 'self', study of the scriptures and generally spending life in noble thoughts and deeds, etc.

The *Rajic Vasana* is the middle path which creates desires for name, fame and power and their accompanying laurels and majesty. Such tendencies need commensurate actions so that they can be effectuated. Hence such a man would be engrossed in the world and its activities; he would serve others but would have a certain degree of self-interest in whatever he does; he would judge everything but with himself as the overriding factor. He would study the scriptures but not for his spiritual well being but to gain money and fame and a large follower-ship.

Finally, the lowest of them is the *Tamsic Vasana* which makes a man pervert, sinful, selfish, indulgent and indolent to the extreme. He would snatch other's right in

order to fulfill his own desires; he would study the scriptures only to find fault with them and ridicule them. He would not have any qualms in making others suffer by his actions and derive immense satisfaction and pleasure in it. He would have no scruples and a sense of probity and propriety in what he does in order to satisfy his desires, wants, yearnings, aspirations and expectations.

It ought to be noted that there are no water-tight compartments in these three types of Vasanas; they are diffused and more often than not difficult to differentiate one from the other. Their intensity may change with the change in the person's attitude and the level at which his thought processes as well as his mind and intellect operate as he develops wisdom and knowledge.

Vasanas arise due to one's desire to gratify the natural instincts of the sense organs. Such as for example, the eye has a natural urge to see beautiful objects. So if a man falls prey to this urge, his mind and intellect would come into play and the man would then try everything in his means and power to acquire that object which pleases the eye, thereby dragging other organs in this quagmire. Each organ would then make its own demand, and the demands never cease but go on multiplying in a compound manner. Actions prompted by the element of ego and egocentric desires such as the attitude of 'I, Me and Mine' leave in their wake a chain of desires and wants which keep us prodding, propelling and compelling to satisfy them, and the chain of Vasanas is set in motion.

So the easy way to stem the surge of Vasanas and finally obliterate them is to first analyse one's natural inclinations and tendencies, and then slowly divert them from lower level to a higher level by conscious effort and diligence. One of the methods to do this is to do deeds but without expecting any rewards from them—which is at the core of Karma Yoga. With this attitude, the accumulation of Vasanas is gradually exhausted. Another way is to acquire truthful knowledge by studying the scriptures directly or getting to know about their great tenets and teachings from others. This helps to remove 'Agyan' or ignorance of the reality and truth which is at the very root of the creation of Vasanas in the first place. If one becomes wise and gets acquainted with great metaphysical truths about the 'self' and the Atma along with the nature of existence and its essential form as well as the real goal of human life in spiritual terms, it would be natural and logical that he would be more inclined to overcome all sorts of Vasanas, including the Satvic ones. In fact, he would have no Vasanas at all.

Now let us examine these *three Gunas* in brief. (a) 'Sat Guna' is the 1st eclectic quality that refer to all the positive, noble, virtuous, auspicious and good qualities present in a creature, (b) 'Raj Guna' is the 2nd type of quality which pertains to worldly passions, desires and ambition etc., while (c) 'Tam Guna' is the 3rd type of quality which is regarded as the lowest and meanest of the three qualities leading to various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular nature of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body—e.g. two men—might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, behaviour, thinking, outlook, action and deeds, wisdom and way of living. This is what is meant when it said that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual, countable specific number that there are actually and physically 84 Lakh types of bodies of living beings; it only symbolically refers to the huge possibilities that are possible with these three 'Gunas' and their different combinations that can imaginably produce a myriad variety of creation that can be created with these three basic qualities and their various sub classes of qualities.

Satvic tendencies are the best tendencies amongst the three. They are positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc. Rajsic tendencies are the second best quality which produces worldly desires, passions,

selfishness, obsession, expansion etc. The Tamsic tendencies are the worst types leading to vices, perversion, delusions, deception, gloom, anger, ignorance et. al.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclinations of the creature. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajasic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvic' qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajasic' quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man.

The Vasanas have been described in detail in the *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 70, and Canto 4, verse nos. 16, 20, 23.

²*Kaivalya*— The word *Kaivalya* means the 'only one' or the non-dual state. It is the supreme stature of existence which is the one of its kind and the most exalted state of existence when nothing but the non-dual consciousness is discernible everywhere in the world by the enlightened creature. There is non-duality and uniformity everywhere. It is a state of existence which is similar to the state of Samadhi in which the man goes about his daily life doing his chores in a routine way without getting emotionally involved in them and even remaining totally oblivious of what he is doing. He remains totally submerged in his inner self and thoughts. He appears in a virtual trance-like state of existence usually observed in realised ascetics and great philosophers. People regard such men as absent minded, but they are so much absorbed in themselves that they are not concerned with what others think of them. For them, the external world ceases to exist though they physically live in it and interact with it.

This Kaivalya form of existence is tantamount to being liberated from the fetters that tie the creature to this body and the world because though he lives in the world he is totally indifferent to it; he is free from all worries, sufferings and sorrows as well as all forms of attachments, entanglements and involvements with the artificial and deluding world that are the usual features of an ordinary worldly man submerged in the world's entrapping charms. This state is comparable to the actual and physical liberation of the soul upon death when it is physically liberated from the bondages of the limitations imposed by the gross body; the only difference being that in the former case the man is alive and enjoys the privilege of having a body that allows the ethereal Atma to enjoy this physical world in a totally dispassionate and detached manner as if it is a neutral observer, while in the latter case he sheds the burden of the body altogether.

The Kaivalya state is considered superior because such a man lives a life of happiness and contentedness; he never suffers from any worldly miseries and worries; he treats the world around him as of no consequence, and remains indifferent to its deluding effects and their entanglements. On the other hand, the ordinary man might find emancipation upon death, but his life is a burden while he is still alive in it. Such a man has not truly understood the teachings of the scriptures; he has not understood the 'spirit' of spiritualism and metaphysics as enumerated by the Upanishads because their main aim is to give peace and tranquility to the tormented soul and help in its liberation from the deluding effects of the body and the world. This concept has been elaborately described in *Muktiko-panishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition.

The Kaivalya form of Mukti envisions the merger of the 'self' with the supreme 'Self' so that there is no chance of the 'self' or the pure conscious Atma to take birth again (refer *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse nos. 108-109 of Krishna Yajur Veda). For all practical purposes as far as the ascetic is concerned, this would be equivalent to merging his soul with Brahm because the supreme Brahm resides in his own 'self' as his Atma or consciousness as well as his Pran or spark of life. Besides this, the very fact that he has reached this state of Samadhi itself indicates that he has crossed the

earlier stages where any of the worldly corruptions can demote him and pull him away from his spiritually exalted stature. He would have realised that the body is not his 'true self' but it is the Atma, and that this Atma is the supreme transcendental Consciousness personified. How can anyone with such an enlightened view of the 'self' can ever be expected to be weighed on the same scale as his other brethren who treat their bodies as their 'self' and remain engrossed in this material world of sense objects. So, though he retains the body and appears to be of a lower category than the ascetic who has discarded his body to merge his 'self' with the supreme Brahm, basically there is no difference between the two. The former type of ascetic who retains the body is called 'Jivan Mukta', or the one who has obtained liberation and deliverance from the fetters of the world while still living in it because he has certain obligations to fulfill, and the latter is called 'Videha Mukta', or the one who has obtained the same liberation and deliverance by abandoning the body. The body in both the cases causes no hindrance for him, because even while he has retained the body as a Jivan Mukta if he prefers the option to do so, he already has acquired so much divine mystical and magical powers called the various Siddhis that he can perform super human and super natural deeds that anyone with a body cannot ever expect or hope to do. These have been enumerated in verse nos. 73-74, 87, 91, 94, 97 and 102 of the Yogtattva Upanishad.

But there is subtle catch here which must be closely observed. Verse nos. 21-22 and 76-79 of the Yogtattva Upanishad clearly state that the use of various Mantras and obtaining Siddhis are impediments in obtaining the true fruit of Yoga; those who wish to acquire them and remain satisfied with them are of a very low type of Yogi.

Further, verse nos. 14-18 of this Yogtattva Upanishad describe what constitutes 'true Gyan' or true knowledge and wisdom, and it is to obtain the only state of existence that can give eternity to the Atma, and it is called 'Kaivalya', and this is the merger of the self with the supreme Self. This is obtainable when the Atma discards the body and finds final liberation and deliverance, or ultimate emancipation and salvation. This is 'unconditional Mukti', while the one obtained while retaining the body would then naturally be a 'conditional Mukti' because while the body is still there, Mukti cannot be absolute; it is conditional and subject to certain parameters and conditions that naturally come when someone has an obligation to fulfill. The obligation in this case is towards the body because the Atma is obliged to remain inside it and it must pay its due respect and the dwelling 'rent' to it! Therefore, the Atma is under 'conditioned freedom' if the ascetic chooses to retain the body and remain inside it instead of discarding it and becoming 'absolutely free', in which case the Atma becomes 'unconditionally free'. The later state is called 'Kaivalya' Mukti. The body has to be discarded ultimately, sooner or later; the soul is therefore not 'absolutely' free if the ascetic retains the body as compared to the case where he decides to permanently abandon it once the window of golden opportunity arrives during Samadhi.

Therefore, the ascetic has two options open to him as already pointed out in verse nos. 105-107 of the Yogtattva Upanishad—i.e. either to obtain Kaivalya Mukti which is like the Videha Mukti, or to obtain Jivan Mukti. There is only a subtle hair-fine difference between the two.]

30. Therefore, I pray and hope that you are blessed with the state of the mind when it is free from any kind of Vasanas—either those that are related to the gross body (such as the desire for the gratification of its sense organs) or those that are related to the external world and its material sense objects (such as the desire to obtain them, hoard them, enjoy them and be attached to them). Let your mind become neutral and non-involved in any of the Vasanas and their attendant ills; let your mind think that it does not do anything, that it is a non-doer of deeds that are done in the wake of instigation made by the Vasanas (30).

31. The Vasanas inherent in the creature are like a dark cloud that envelops the Chitta (mind, the intellect, the sub-conscious) from all sides. They are the cause of all the problems and miseries of the creature; they give the creature all sorts of torments and troubles. Hence, a wise man should endeavour to decimate or at least weaken the Vasanas gradually with the final aim of eliminating them (31).

32. A wise man should intelligently and diligently abandon the notion of existence of anything worthwhile in this material mundane world from the radar of his mind and sub-conscious. He must train it to assume the virtues of the sky. Just like the sky has no boundaries and limitations, his mind too has no fetters or limitations. A person who remains engrossed in contemplating upon his inner-self lives like the sky. He too attains such glorious virtues as those possessed by the sky.

[All living beings have a natural tendency of seeking happiness and peace. Since he is immediately in contact with the world as soon as he is born, he has the world as his constant companion since birth, and finds solace and comfort in its company. This world is visible and tangible, and at least it fulfills his immediate needs for all material things that provide comfort, happiness and enjoyments. The creature is so overwhelmed with this pampering that he forgets about his long-term spiritual welfare just like a spoilt child goes after sweets unconcerned about what this indulgence would do to his long-term health. How would the child know that it is wrong to eat too many sweets, that they would damage his teeth, cause such chronic diseases as diabetes, and ruin his liver and other internal organs, if someone does not tell him?

The same thing applies to the creature. He has seen and experienced the charms of this world since his birth, and no one had told him that it is illusionary and transient, that it would trap him in its web like a spider catches an insect and then never lets it free till it has sucked the life out of its prey. The creature is not aware of the fact that pursuing this world would lead him to nowhere just like running behind the mirage would not lead to water in a hot desert. In this scenario, neither the creature nor his mind is at fault because no one had enlightened them about the reality. This responsibility falls upon the scriptures and the wise teacher (the Guru) who make the spiritual aspirant aware of the reality of the situation, and then it is the responsibility of the individual to make an intelligent and well thought out decision for his own sake. This is exactly what is meant by saying that the creature should train his mind. The mind is simply an instrument to carry out the instructions of the 'Master', who in this particular case is the Atma because it is the 'true self and identity' of the individual creature. Thus, when the wizened, self-realised and enlightened creature becomes aware of the falsehood of the world and its temporary nature, when he logically deduces that anything that is false and temporary cannot give happiness and peace that is of a permanent nature, he instructs the mind to turn away from the world and search for it elsewhere. It is then that the mind is said to be turned away from the various 'Vasanas' related to the body and the world. The mind is an intelligent entity; it is like the super-computer that works out an answer instantly once the instructions are fed into it. So the mind immediately changes track and concentrates upon the inner-self and begins to dwell in the 'subtle world of the consciousness'. It is here that it finds the source of eternity and peace, it is here that it finds true happiness and bliss which are unaffected by the turmoil of the external world which is transient and deluding. Once someone has tasted the real nectar he would obviously not want to have anything to do with fakes. Thus, once the aspirant

tastes the nectar of peace, happiness, bliss and contentedness that comes by overcoming the various Vasanas related to this world and the body, he would naturally shun them without any further prodding, counseling or cajoling.

A wise person must teach his mind not to register anything in this material world by intelligently convincing it of its futility and falsehood. When the mind is politely educated of the reality and truth, it would abandon the material world out of its own free will because it would not find any substance in it. The mind would realise that it would gain nothing by pursuing this world, and hence it is a waste of time and energy for it to do so. The mind is not a foolish entity, rather it is the only entity in the otherwise inane body that can think, research, analyse, discriminate, deduce and decide. So when it is intelligently convinced, it would see the 'truth' without much cajoling or use of coercion. Once the mind is convinced, the rest becomes easy because it is the mind that is the power-house and the driving force in the body that actually holds the strings of what a creature does and what he does not do.

When the mind becomes neutral, then it would be like the 'sky' because the sky harbours so many things that are lodged in its bowls—such as for instance the numerous pollutants, the dust particles, the gases, the uncountable heavenly bodies as stars, planets, comets, cosmic debris, asteroids, galaxies etc.—but it still remains unaffected and inherently untainted and clean. What is seen as the pollution of the sky is only of a physical dimension with a limited extent, for the element that is called the sky is very subtle, vast and all-pervading by nature so much so that the pollution that is seen in its very limited and miniscule area is not even like a small pebble or a minute speck on its vast and infinite shore. A neutral mind becomes as quiet and calm as the deep recesses of the sky. It accepts everything without getting attached to any of them, and the world keeps on rising and ebbing in its front but it remains indifferent to and undeterred by it. Nothing can affect the creature if the mind is under control. A freed mind has boundless potentials and powers; it can achieve stupendous results not otherwise possible for the creature. Since the mind is the driving force that governs all thoughts, behaviours, actions and deeds of all living beings, a person with a tamed and trained mind can achieve great mystical powers and tremendous spiritual achievements, and indeed become super-natural by rising above the mundane and acquiring grand virtues and eclectic qualities of an infinite dimension. His majesty and powers, his good name and fame spread far and wide; he acquires such spiritual powers and authority that he virtually becomes as vast and infinite as the sky. He develops a holistic view of this creation and the world around him; he no longer remains selfish but becomes one who has a broad and all-inclusive approach to this life. No amount of worldly temptations and coercion of the sense organs of the body would ever deflect him from his chosen path or disturb his poise and state of neutrality. No corruptions of the surrounding world would ever affect him and taint his inner self just like the lotus flower whose petals are never moistened by the dirty water of the pond in which it grows. Hence, a controlled and trained mind is compared to the vast, fathomless and incorruptible sky.

A person who has experienced the pure consciousness attains such glories, such magnificence, such majesty, such mystical powers, such incorruptibility, and such eclectic spiritual virtues that they are compared to the sky in their vastness, their depth, their insight, their reach and their all-inclusive nature as well as their incorruptibility and immaculacy.] (32).

33. Just like a shrewd trader having no special affinity or attraction or preference for any particular place or spot where he would like to stay as his primary focus is on his

business and its profits, and he would not think twice before abandoning the first place and moving to some other place should the latter give him better chances of doing enhanced business and earn more returns, a wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant also has no special preferences for either a forest or a village. For him, both are alike as long as they serve his purpose of achieving his spiritual goals. He has no preference or abhorrence for anything (because, for one, he has inculcated the noble virtues of having neutrality, indifference, equanimity and fortitude, and second, his chief aim is obtaining liberation and deliverance for his soul, and therefore any situation that helps him achieve it is dear to him, and any situation that does not is shunned by him).

[A businessman is focused on his business rather than on the comforts or pleasures that a particular place provides. He leaves the comfort of his home and the known environs of his town to which he is used to since birth to venture out into unknown countries and live in hostile circumstances if that helps him to make a profit. No matter how charming a place is, if it does not allow him easy business and profit opportunity, he would chuck it without the least regret or compunction, and instead opt for a place that is favourable and conducive for his business interests.

Similarly, if a wise man finds that the forest is too uncomfortable for him in doing meditation and contemplation, if he finds that he is unable to cope with the harsh conditions of the forest no matter how much they are extolled by the scriptures for their utility in one's spiritual life, the wise man would not hesitate to discard the idea of living in a forest. He can even live outside a village (or for that matter any inhabited area) in an abandoned or lonely place (such as a mountain or hill side, a cave, the banks of a river, a remote shrine outside a small hamlet, etc.) wherever he finds peace and an environment that is conducive to his spiritual pursuit.

This verse assumes tremendous practical importance. It shows that ancient sages and seers were not dogmatic, rigid, bigots or fanatical in their views. The stress is on internal peace and control of the mind in order to attain one's spiritual objectives; the thrust is on flexibility of approach, on self awakening and accessing the truth. What is the use of going to the forest if the body is so uncomfortable and restless that in spite of the best of efforts of the man his mind cannot find its much sought-after peace for which the man had gone to the forest in the first place, and how can an agitated, restless and distracted mind that remains in a state of flux can ever be conducive to one's obtaining his cherished goal in life? He would rather be better off in the vicinity of a village or even in his home if that gives him mental assurance of stability and peace. Refer verse no. 34 below which is very explicit in this view.

In practice, this is the reason why Sanyasis, or renunciate friars, monks and mendicants, are expected to beg for food on a daily basis from households for their sustenance. Obviously they would need to live near inhabited areas where they can go begging for food from households—no household is found in a forest! If finding food was the only criterion, they could ask some rich man such as a king to make all arrangements for them in the forest itself without the need for going to the 'household' for food. This stark truth stares in one's face if he is wise enough to read the scriptures with an open mind in order to understand their intentions and purpose rather than becoming too literal and bookish in his approach in studying them.] (33).

34. A self-realised man, being focused on his inner-self and lost in the thoughts of the pure conscious Atma, treats everything and all situations in life equally, with great equanimity, and without distinguishing between them.

He may be sleeping, awake, walking or reading, but he always remains focused on the Atma; he remains steady in contemplating and meditating upon the Atma irrespective of the physical plane in which his gross body lives.

Such an enlightened and spiritually attained man may live in a forest or a village or a big town—all are equal for him.

[This verse compliments the observations made in verse no. 33 above. The idea is that when the mind is focused on the inner-self and is turned away from the outer world—i.e. when the mind is controlled as envisaged in verse nos. 20-22 above—the aspirant is not at all influenced by his surroundings. This is because it is the mind that actually makes the Atma aware of the various conditions prevailing in the outer world, thereby being the cause of all restlessness that the Atma is subjected to. Once the mind and the sub-conscious are controlled and properly trained, the Atma—i.e. the ‘aspirant himself’ in the truthful sense—is rest assured of peace and tranquility, as well as their attendant bliss and happiness.] (34).

35. A person who is peaceful, tranquil, serene and calm in his inner-self would treat the outside world in a similar manner.

[This is like looking at the world through a glass window. The sights seen would assume the colour of the glass. If the glass is red tinted for instance, the world outside would also be red-hued. This fact has been beautifully brought out in Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 93/1-93/15, and in Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 3.

Now therefore, if the inner-self is pure and untainted, if it is calm and peaceful, the Atma—which incidentally is the ‘observer’ living inside the dwelling known as the body of the creature—would see or observe the outside world as being calm and peaceful. On the contrary, if the inner-self is restless and agitated, the outer world too appears to be restless and agitated in equal proportion for the creature. In other words, a man sees the world like he himself is. Hence the importance is on attaining inner peace and quietude instead of seeking it outside because the ‘outside’ is a world that is constantly on the boil and ever simmering like the surface of the hot sand in a desert when mirage makes its appearance.]

Similarly, a man whose inner-self is burning with ‘Trishna’ (greed, rapacity, yearnings and wants) would find the world too tormenting and agitating for his soul. He would find only miseries and sorrows in the world (because his greed and yearning never ends, the more he gets the more he wants, and like a man running behind the illusive water seen in a mirage in the hot desert such a man too does not find peace anywhere in the world, but is rather scorched by the various sorrows and miseries that accompany shortages, unfulfilled desires, lack of opportunities and so many other things or situations that lead to dismay and frustration that seem to engulf him from all sides, drowning him and suffocating him in their wake).

[An internally contented man would be happy with whatever he has in this world and would thank the Lord for it, and an internally unsatisfied man may become the Emperor of the whole earth but would still want more of it, and remain dissatisfied and greedy throughout his life. Internally he is being ‘burnt’ by numerous aspirations, yearnings, desires and wants, and externally this world ‘burns’ him in failed ambitions leading to a chain of frustrations, dismay, distrust, strife, jealousy, ill-will, enmity, animosity and their accompanying sorrows, miseries and pains.] (35).

36. For a self-realised and enlightened man, the subtle and sublime entity that lives in his inner-self is also the one that lives uniformly everywhere else in this creation. This eclectic entity is the 'Atma' or the pure consciousness.

[In other words, an enlightened man sees the Atma, the pure consciousness, as the only entity that matters in this creation; he sees this Atma not only as his own 'self' but also as the reality in the rest of the creation. When he sees other creatures, he sees not their gross bodies but the Atma in that form; hence he would treat all the creatures equally because the Atma is a uniform and universal entity, being the all-pervading consciousness. This observation is the essence of the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta.] (36).

37. A man who is wise, self-realised and enlightened, a man who has experienced the 'truth', i.e. who has understood that the body is not his 'true self' but it is merely the habitat of the Atma which is his 'true self', and that all the deeds are done by the external gross organs of the equally gross body and not by the Atma—well, such a man is full of equanimity and dispassion, he is not bothered about the deeds or their consequences.

Such a man uses all the organs of the body to do all the deeds required to be done by him in this world according to destiny or the will of the Lord, but still remains totally detached and disassociated from them. This is because he knows that 'he' (i.e. his true 'self' known as the Atma) is not doing something, but it is the body that is doing anything. He therefore neither feels happy or exhilarated at being successful in doing the deeds or being rewarded for them, nor does he feel dejected or depressed or sorrowful or dismayed at not being able to do them as expected or even failure to do them at all if the circumstances do not permit. [Since he is of the view that 'he' is not doing anything, it is natural that he is not entitled to the rewards or punishments for the deeds done.]

In this way he is able to access exemplary peace and stability of mind and sub-conscious. He is said to be a person having a 'Samaahit Chitta'—i.e. the mind, intellect and the sub-conscious that accepts all without any distinction. That is, he accepts sorrows and joys with equal pleasure; he treats successes and failures with equal detachment. Nothing ruffles him; nothing disturbs his tranquility and stability. He has thus attained an exemplarily equanimous state of being (37).

38. Such a wise and self-realised man who is enlightened about the Atma, the pure conscious 'self', treats or sees everything, everyone and every situation with exemplary equanimity and uniformity of mind. He sees no distinction between any two given entities, and sees them all in his own likeness.

[This is because he does not see the external features of the gross body, but rather sees the Atma residing inside it. This Atma is a universal entity and the all-pervading consciousness; the Atma is immutable, unchanging and indivisible. Hence, the Atma that resides in his own bosom as his soul or true self is the same as the one that resides in the creature standing in his front. Therefore, though for practical reasons and exigencies of this life he may be required to maintain decorum, observe social norms and conform to formal hierarchy of society, internally he would have the same love and respect for the other person as he would have for himself. This is the secret behind the second of the ten commandments of Jesus Christ—'Love thy neighbour as you would love yourself'—the Holy Bible, Gospel of St. Mark, 12/31.

As for treating all situations alike, it has already been said in verse no. 37 that a wise and enlightened man remains unattached to his deeds, and therefore unaffected

with their results, good or bad. This helps him in being steady and unmoved under all circumstances.

And as far as material things are concerned, he has already understood that whatever is seen in this world is transient and illusionary because the world in which they exist is itself transient and illusionary. It is because the world is a creation of the mind; it is like the dream seen when the man sleeps, the only difference being that while his gross organs are inactive in the dream they are active while he is awake. But in both the cases the world is the creation of the mind—albeit one world exists at the gross physical level that is visible, and the other exists at the subtle level that is not visible, but this does not alter the fact that it is a product of the creative ability of the imaginative mind. Anything that is ‘imagined’ can not be true, real, stable and sustainable.]

Hence, he sees wealth belonging to others as being useless clods of clay or pieces of useless earth. This view is natural to him; it is not due to some fear or compulsions.

[That is, when a wise and enlightened man says that wealth belonging to others are as worthless for him as a ball of clay, he is not saying it because he cannot get hold of this wealth as he is not powerful enough to snatch it from the other person if given a chance, but because he actually means it sincerely. Deceit and conceit are not the playground for the Atma.] (38).

39. For a wise, enlightened and self-realised man, it does not matter whether death comes now or after a long time. Such a man is never tainted or influenced by any of the faults and shortcomings pertaining to this world; he remains as pure, untainted and un-corrupted as a piece of pure gold that might have fallen in a patch of muck and slush on the earth, or may be smeared with slime.

[It is very important to understand this verse in the context of what has been said immediately before in the previous verses. The piece of gold is not at all affected by anything in which it falls or is covered with—for it can be easily cleaned by washing off the impurity with clean water and scrubbing. The slush or the slime can never ever affect the inherent internal purity of gold. Similarly, a man who is wise, self-realised and enlightened lives in the corrupt surroundings of this world, he even does deeds in this world, but internally he is pristine pure, holy, and unaffected by anything. He is like the piece of gold cited in this verse. The ‘gold’ is a metaphor used for a priceless entity with immaculate purity and tremendous intrinsic value that never fades or erodes.

Now, let us examine how this applies to the man who treats the wealth of others as mud. If a man knows for certain that he would die the next day, then it is natural that he develops total dispassion for anything of this world—he would not want wealth and pleasures; he would not like to do anything at all, what to say of his hoping for acquiring material wealth and expecting long-term financial rewards for all his efforts. But suppose a man is young and healthy, belongs to a rich family, has an excellent job, and is well educated—will he think in the same vein? The answer is ‘very rarely, if at all remotely yes’. The latter type of man never imagines even in his wild dreams that all his wealth would vanish the next day when he dies, or that this wealth would not help him conquer death.

So, the man who is being cited here in this verse is not the one who has developed total renunciation and dispassion out of certain existential compulsions, or due to circumstances forcing him to pretend as being dispassionate and detached in order to overcome his shame or frustration because success eludes him, or because he

has not been able to taste the fruit of his labour, and therefore he hides behind pretensions of being a wise man who does not want wealth as he had developed renunciation. Instead, the man who is being referred to here is one who develops this eclectic and spiritually liberating view sincerely and honestly after careful examination and analyses of all available data to arrive at the 'truth' of existence, the 'truth' of the world and his own 'self' which the Upanishad prefers to call the 'Tattwa'. And this 'Tattwa' is that the real thing that matters for the man is the pure consciousness called the Atma which is eternal and blissful, that this world is deluding, illusive, artificial and entrapping like the mirage seen in the desert, that it is transient and illusionary, that to pursue it is like following the setting sun in the western horizon in order to reach it before it sets because the more a man moves in that direction the more the horizon as well as the sun move away or recede from him, and that to be freed from this quagmire of fruitless running around in pursuit of some illusive objective one needs to free one's self from the entire spectrum of delusions pertaining to the world vis-à-vis his own 'self' in a comprehensive manner.] (39).

40. Contemplate and ponder deeply on the questions 'who am I', 'how or what is all this (that I see around me)', and 'how is birth and death caused'.

When you (i.e. Nidagh) begin to ask these questions, it is then that you would be inspired to search out and find the answer. Then you will be able to find the great spiritual fruit in the form of the universal Truth.

[That is, when you find the answer to these questions by searching for them yourself, you would be more convinced by what you discover as opposed to the truth being told to you by someone else. This is because in the latter case you may doubt its authenticity and may feel that it is being imposed upon you or advised to you by some vested interests. But when you search it out yourself you would be going through layers after layers of facts and half-truths, you would be able to see how things have come into being, and you will be having first-hand knowledge of so many other things on the way to the Truth. It would be an eye-opening journey of spiritual discovery for you, and the knowledge that you gather en-route to the ultimate Truth would be like an additional bonus for you, enlightening you about so many practical things that you may not know if you do not make the right effort of undertaking the research yourself. A hungry man who is hungrily searching for food relishes it more than a man who is served ready-made food on the dining table.

So do it yourself instead of being spoon-fed! A teacher can show you the correct path, he can teach you how to reach your destination, but the walking has to be done by you. Refer verse no. 18 in this context.] (40).

41. When the mind is trained to have this eclectic wisdom and enlightened thoughts (as narrated in the foregoing verses), it abandons its present habits and natural tendencies, and instead evolves into a higher state of existence which is naturally sublime and blissful, which would naturally help you to realise your true self and true spiritual potentials (41).

42. When you have sufficiently trained your mind, it would not get mired in any sort of worldly Vrittis (natural tendencies of the mind that impel it towards the material world of sense objects) and its attendant problems. Such a mind and sub-conscious are freed from being tormented by any kind of sorrows, miseries, pains and other problems related to this world.

Just like a man cannot be drowned in the water collected in the shallow depression made on the ground by the hoof of a cow, a wise and enlightened man whose mind is free from Vrittis would not at all be affected by the world and its natural miseries, sorrows and torments. He never gets excited or unnerved by his circumstances; he maintains his cool under all conditions; no adversity is strong enough to disturb his calmness of mind and demeanours (42).

43. Even a Brahmin (i.e. a wise and learned man) who is narrow-minded and short-sighted, who is miserly in his views and thoughts in relation to this world, can get trapped in it and tainted by its faults just like a short-sighted man putting his legs in the dirty water that has collected in the shallow depression made on the ground by the hoof of the cow and getting smeared by the slush in the process.

Just like a mosquito remains trapped and rolling in the filthy water collected in the hollow made on the ground by a cow's hoof, an ignorant man too remains trapped in the world with its miseries and sorrows.

[A Brahmin is usually regarded as a wise and learned person who has studied the scriptures and knows their meaning. But if unfortunately his knowledge is limited to the literal learning of the verses of the scriptures by heart as a means of livelihood without understanding the philosophy behind the teaching of the scriptures, without implementing them in his own life but teaching them to others just to get honour and wealth—then such a Brahmin would fall in the same trap in which an ignorant man falls. A Brahmin who, inspite of having had the privilege of studying the scriptures and being taught of the secrets by expert and experienced teachers, still remains engrossed in the world and attached to its material sense objects inspite of learning that they are inherently entangling and the cause of all miseries and sorrows for the creature, who prefers transient enjoyments and pleasures of the world by sacrificing his long-term spiritual welfare, who forgets that the cause of remaining trapped in the continuous cycle of birth and death is getting involved in this entrapping world, who is tempted by the charms of the world inspite of having the knowledge that this world is deluding and illusionary like the mirage seen in the desert, who does not understand the real meaning of the terms 'non-duality' and 'truth' vis-à-vis the Atma and creation as envisaged by the scriptures, and teaches or preaches others about Dharma and Mukti but never attempts to follow their principles himself—then indeed such a Brahmin would drown in the vast ocean-like world just like a short-sighted man is unable to see the dirty puddle in front of him while walking, and steps right into it, splashing filth all around and dirtying his clothes and body. Here, the term 'filth and dirt' are metaphors for the numerous spiritual faults and corruptions that impregnate the world and are part of it, and the 'dirty water collected in the shallow hollow made on the ground by the cow's hoof' refers to the world of material sense objects. The analogy with the hollow made by a cow's hoof is employed to stress the point that to overcome the world and its temptations is not at all an insurmountable task if only a man has determination and will to do so; there are easily crossable if one is just cautious enough to step aside or just step across it—i.e. cautious and wise enough to avoid it and shun it. This can be achieved by simply controlling the mind, the intellect and the sub-conscious.

Hence, a Brahmin or any other man is considered short-sighted and narrow-minded in the context of this verse if he allows himself to stoop low and his mind to remain hooked to even the most inconsequential of things in this world without bothering for the long-term negative effect it is going to have on his all-round spiritual good. Once he allows himself to be involved with anything related to the world, it is

impossible to remain clean just like it is impossible to remain clean if one steps in the puddle of dirty water.

Such a man would remain perpetually shackled to this world, birth after birth, with no liberation and deliverance in sight. He indeed is 'short-sighted'; he indeed is ill-witted; he indeed is an ignorant fool.] (43).

44. Oh exalted sage (Nidagh)! When one voluntarily, cheerfully and out of his own free will leaves a thing, he would not be attracted to it again or harbour any surreptitious desires for it. It is only then that he can think or look beyond his erstwhile possession.

In other words, when one voluntarily and happily leaves this world and snaps his association with it, then he would not be tempted by the world any longer.

[This is opposed to forcefully having to disown the world and its charms, for then the inner-self would be constantly longing for the world, the sub-conscious would be permanently hooked to the world, and instead of getting peace, the result would be constant mental agony and restlessness caused by endless desires and wishes, by endless passions and lust, by endless greeds and yearnings. It would kill the very purpose of leaving the world in the first place. In other words, renunciation, dispassion and detachment should be natural and borne out of knowledge of the 'truth' based on wisdom, erudition, analytical thinking accompanied by proper and judicious decision making-process. It should not be done just because the scriptures say so, or some teacher has said so—for then the aspirant is bound to fail in his attempts to find real peace and freedom from the worldly miseries and shackles. On the contrary, they would lead to stronger shackles and greater miseries because of suppressed desires and unfulfilled longings.

It is when the mind is fully educated about the given subject or the circumstance it has to deal with, when it is given freedom to think, research, analyse and deduce, and when it becomes dispassionate and non-involved in the result of the decision that it is about to make that it can think rationally and in an un-biased way. So, when the mind is told about the truth of this world and the causes of all the miseries that the creature faces, when it is properly educated and trained to make judicious decisions, when it remains detached from the world, when it recognizes its importance and responsibilities vis-à-vis the future of the creature—it is only then would a man sincerely and honestly renounce the world and free himself of all its associated problems.

When this comes to happen, when a man loses his short-sightedness and miserly views, when his mind stops being selfish in the sense that it stops gravitating towards the material pleasures and comforts of the world, which however are transient and impermanent, in order to satisfy its natural urges, tendencies and passions, and instead prefers to think of the long term welfare of the creature, it is only then that the creature can get rid of the material world that is deluding in the first place, it is only then that he can see the world that transcends this gross material world, and it is only then that he moves in a spiritually uplifting direction and finds the spiritual world where there is no misery and torment, where there is bliss and happiness of the eternal kind.

Therefore, it is only when one leaves the gross world that he can see the subtle and the sublime world that lies beyond it.] (44).

45. Until the time everything gross and inconsequential are not discarded, it is not possible to have the knowledge or acquaintance of the Atma, the pure sublime Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of existence.

When all things gross and inconsequential are eliminated, the only sublime and quintessential entity that is left behind is the Atma (because it is the only ubiquitous and quintessential 'truth' that remains after sieving of the falsehood).

[It is like the process of elimination to arrive at the truth. For instance, when one has to find the reality in a given situation, he would sieve through all available information and discard what is non-relevant and obviously not the reality. It is only then that he would finally be left with the information that actually relates to the reality and which is of any value for him. Similarly, when a wise man sieves through all available data collected by his sub-conscious mind and intelligently analyses them he would be able to discard the falsehood and pick up the truth. He discovers to his amazement that the gross world is not the 'truth' he is seeking, but it lies somewhere else. This is the subtle world of the consciousness, and it is called the Atma. It is the 'truth' that he was seeking. When all falsehoods are eliminated, what remains is obviously the 'truth'; when all grossness are removed, what remains is the subtlety that is devoid of all grossness.] (45).

46. In order to have a divine vision of the Atma (the pure consciousness and the true 'self') it is imperative that the aspirant abandons everything else.

[In other words, one has to be focused on his spiritual goal in life in order to actually attain it. If one wishes to realise the truth of the Atma, he has to discard all non-truths.]

Hence, leave everything from a distance (i.e. do not even think of things that would act as impediments in your spiritual pursuit) because then only the truth known as the Atma would be left.

[When a spiritual aspirant distances himself from everything gross and non-truth, the only thing that survives is the subtle truth, and it is the pure consciousness known as the Atma. Refer verse no. 44-45 above.] (46).

47. Whatever that is seen in this gross world is nothing but an imagination of the mind and its sub-conscious. In fact, there is no pith and substance in it, there is no truth in it. It is merely a vibration of the imaginative mind which oscillates between this and that.

[In other words, this world is just like the world of dreams which is a creation of the sub-conscious but has no real existence. The only difference between this visible world and the one that is seen in one's dreams is that while the former is perceived when the gross organs of perception in the body are activated by means of vibrations sent by the active mind, the latter is created when the role of the active mind is taken over by the sub-conscious when it generates vibrations to create an imaginary world of dreams. In the dreams, the sense organs of the gross body have no role to play. The dreams are basically the creations of the imaginative mind which has the stupendous and amazing ability to 'create' things that have no real existence, and this is why it is called the 'creative mind'. Should the mind decide to take rest, the 'creation' would automatically come to a naught.

The oscillation of the mind refers to the fact that while one world exists when the mind is active, the other world exists when the sub-conscious is active. While the former is called the world during the waking state of consciousness or the Jagrat world, the latter is called the world of dreams or the Swapna world. The creature

oscillates between these two worlds—it either remains awake or asleep. If he is awake, he would go to sleep after some time, and if he sleeps he would wake up again after some time. The living being spends his entire life swinging like a pendulum.

The Upanishad however exhorts him to move beyond and give rest to his mind so that he can see the world that is real and not an artificial creation of the mind, and this world is the world of the transcendental Consciousness, called the world of the truthful Atma. This world is not oscillating between any two states; it is stable and permanent, hence the ‘truth’, because ‘truth’ is always stable and permanent as opposed to falsehood that continues to change every other moment like the simmering mirage of the desert.] (47).

48. Oh Brahmin (i.e. the learned sage Nidagh)! Those who have a well-controlled and trained mind, those whose mind has stopped vacillating and remaining in a state of constant flux, those who have inculcated the noble virtues of equanimity and dispassion—such people are eternally contented and at peace with themselves. They are able to analyse things properly and make judicious decisions dispassionately because their mind is free from any kind of bias and prejudice.

This state of existence of the mind has been defined by wise men as ‘Samadhi’ that is also known as ‘Para Pragma’—the supreme and transcendental state of existence when the mind is not affected by anything of the world, when the aspirant remains completely unmoved by his surroundings, when he is absolutely lost in the subtle and sublime world of the Atma which is pure consciousness and the spiritual ‘truth’ of creation as opposed to the gross world of the sense organs or the one created by the mind, and when he has attained the supreme knowledge of the Atma that is not only ‘truthful’ but also beyond the grossness of the world created by the mind.

It is the state of ‘Samadhi’ or trance-like existence when the mind is completely obliterated and only consciousness exists in its pristine pure state; it is the supreme transcendental state of existence and awareness that is known as ‘Para Pragma’ (48).

49. In this state of ‘Samadhi’ that a seeker has reached on obtaining ‘Para Pragma’ (i.e. when one has become totally indifferent to the artificial world by becoming self-realised and experiencing the presence of the pure consciousness in his own inner-self), there is no trace of any kind of negativity—such as for instance, there are no wants, there are no confusions and doubts and their attendant perplexities and consternations, there is no trace of pride, ego and arrogance. [Rather, it is the state of utmost contentedness, fulfillment and ecstasy; it is a state of high degree of equanimity and broad vision.]

In fact, this type of Samadhi (i.e. the Samadhi marked by ‘Para Pragma’) is more stable than even the mountain known as Mt. Meru¹.

[In other words, the transcendental state of existence called Samadhi that is obtained after one has attained knowledge of the ‘truth’ of the Atma that comes with self-realisation, and which automatically excludes his involvement with the gross world, is a very stable state of existence so much so that no temptations of the world are strong enough to disturb this state and its attendant peace and tranquility, its accompanying bliss and ecstasy.] (49).

[Note—¹Mt. Meru—The Meru mountain is also called ‘Sumeru’—the ‘golden one’. The word ‘Meru’ literally means one that reflects light like a mirror or crystal. It is described in the Purans as the fabulous mythological mountain that forms the axis of the whole world. It is much like mount Olympus of Hindu mythology. All the planets

revolve around it. It is compared to the cup or the seed-vessel of the lotus, the leaves of which symbolize the different Dvipas or continents and islands. The holy river Ganges from the heaven on its summit, and from there it divides into four streams and flows down to the rest of the world. The four Lokpals or the custodians of the four directions of the celestial compass occupy the corresponding face of this mountain which is said to be made of gold and glittering gems.

Its height is said to be one lakh Yojans which is equivalent to roughly 8 lakh miles. [1 lakh = 1,00,000 units; 1 Yojan = approx. 8 miles.]

Out of this huge size, 16,000 Yojans (8 x 16,000 miles) is under the ground, and 84,000 Yojans (8 x 84,000 miles) above the ground. On its top there is a flat plateau of approx. 32,000 Yojans (8 x 32,000 miles). It is here that Brahma the creator and his mind-born sons such as Daksha and the Saptarishis live. [refer Mahabharat, Vanaparva, 162; Bhagvata, 5/16.]

It is situated in the mystical Jambudvipa (the huge island by the name of 'Jambu'), and Bharatvarsha (India) is said to be to its south. The abode of Lord Shiva known as Mt. Kailash, which is presently located in the northern reaches of the Himalayan mountain range, is said to be the same Mt. Meru.

The creator Brahma resides on its summit, and it is the meeting place of Gods, semi-Gods such as Gandharvas, and exalted sages and seers who have attained Brahm-hood.]

50. Oh Brahmin (i.e. Nidagh)! The state of the mind and the sub-conscious when they are fulfilled and contented in every respect is called 'Samadhi'. [Because in this exalted state, the man would want and seek nothing; he gets such tremendous amount of bliss and peacefulness that he would not bother to seek a lesser amount of these grand virtues by turning towards the world and its material sense objects seeking bliss and happiness.]

This unparallel Samadhi is devoid of all things that need to be discarded, or about which one may have to think twice as to their utility, need and importance as far as the long term spiritual welfare of the aspirant is concerned. It is a stable state of the mind and sub-conscious when all his desires to obtain this and that have been overcome and eliminated for good (50).

51. This highest form of Samadhi is said to have its only origin in the enlightenment and true wisdom that the Chitta (the sub-conscious mind) has obtained. In other words, the true form of Samadhi is obtained when the mind is illuminated (taught; made aware of; wizened) about the 'truth', and thereby becomes highly enlightened.

Those who are well-versed in the eclectic philosophy of the Vedas regard this as the Turiya state of existence (which is the transcendental state). [Hence, Samadhi and Turiya are equivalent to each other.] (51).

52. The Sushupta state (or the 'deep sleep state) of consciousness is on the threshold of the Turiya state; it precedes the Turiya state and is very close to it.

When the Mana (mind) and Ahankar (ego, pride) dissolve (i.e. when both the mind that harbours ego, and the ego that influences the working of the mind, are made ineffective, are neutralized) it is then that the aspirant is said to have reached the Sushupta state.

[The Sushupta state of existence is the deep sleep state that comes after the Swapna or the dreaming state of consciousness. It is the third state of existence of consciousness. In this state the mind and the sub-conscious are both defunct. The difference between the Sushupta and Turiya states is that the creature reverts to the Swapna state from the Sushupta state, but when he reaches the Turiya state this

reversal does not happen. That is why the Turiya state is likened to Samadhi while the Sushupta state isn't.] (52).

53. In the higher states of realisation when the mind is able to control its self voluntarily (i.e. when all its Vasanas and Vrittis are done away with automatically and without the least effort), it is then that the divine and sublime form of the supreme Consciousness, called the 'Parmatma' or 'Parmaeshwar', makes itself evident to the spiritual aspirant. This vision bestows supreme bliss and beatitude upon him. [That is, the aspirant becomes Brahm-realised when he reaches the higher echelons of self-realisation.]

It is only when the Mana (mind) is fully controlled and diverted towards realizing one's goals in life (which in the present case is his quest for the spiritual 'Truth' and attainment of 'Mukti' or liberation and deliverance for his soul) that one can hope to achieve success in reaching it.

[In other words, since the mind is the only tool available to a man to achieve success in any of his endeavours, so when the mind is under his control and when it sees the futility of pursuing this world would it voluntarily help the man to obtain success in his spiritual pursuits and realise the truth of the Atma, the pure consciousness. A distracted mind would only create obstacles instead of helping the aspirant in any way.] (53).

54. When the mind is controlled and the aspirant has tasted the divine nectar of supreme bliss obtained upon his having the vision of the 'Parameshwar' (i.e. upon obtaining Brahm-realisation), all his Vasanas related to the world and its material sense objects (i.e. all sorts of worldly passions, lust and yearnings for seeking bliss and happiness in the gross material things of the world) are naturally and automatically done away with.

When this happens, the sub-conscious becomes absolutely clean like pure crystal.

[Whatever sensory perceptions the mind receives from the external world are stored in the sub-conscious which acts as a storage and retrieval system for the mind and the intellect. When the mind and the intellect have to make some analysis and arrive at a decision, they draw upon the information stored in the sub-conscious part of the mind which therefore directly affects the conclusion and the decision taken by the creature. Hence, when the mind loses interest in the material world or is turned away from it, the 'Chitta' (sub-conscious and memory) of the creature would be like a clean slate.]

It is in this eclectic state of existence that the 'self', i.e. the pure consciousness that is self-illuminated, begins to reflect in the Chitta. In other words, the mind and the sub-conscious begin to experience the presence of the pure consciousness inside the inner-self of the aspirant once all interference from the Vasanas originating in the outside world are removed. The mind and the sub-conscious begin to shine with the light emanating from the Consciousness that is beyond description. [As long as the mind and its various components are turned towards the world, being driven by the creature's natural Vasanas and Vrittis, all the taints and negativities so characteristic of this material world are reflected in the mind just like a mirror that reflects the object towards which it is turned. Now, if the same mirror is turned towards a lighted candle or a torch it obviously would reflect their light. Similarly, when the mind is turned away from the darkness of the deluding world and turned towards the light emanating from the pure consciousness residing inside the inner self of the spiritual

aspirant in the form of his 'Atma', it is obvious that the mind would reflect the Atma's divinity, its glory and its eclectic qualities.] (54).

55. Everything of any true spiritual worth in this creation is nothing but the Atma, the pure cosmic Consciousness. The latter is endless and eternal; it is steady, immutable, and constant; it has no taints or faults whatsoever. This Atma resides in the inner-self of the aspirant as his 'true self', and externally it is in the all-pervading form that is universal and uniform in this creation.

[The Atma is a sublime and subtle entity that has no grossness and physical form. Hence, it is not visible just like the atom of any given element is not physically visible. But the fact is that the element, such as for instance gold or iron, exist in their physical gross form that is both visible and can also be touched and felt only because of the atom—because it is the atom that has made the physical existence of the element, which in the present example are gold and iron, possible. The atom is the basis of existence of these elements; it is the 'atom' which gives these two elements their unique characteristics and place in the Periodic Table. Both gold and iron are visible, though their atoms themselves are not visible. Likewise, though the Atma is not visible in physical terms like the atom, the existence of the visible world and the life present in it is an ample and incontrovertible proof of the existence of the Atma just like the presence of gold and iron are proofs for the existence of their respective atoms. All things made of gold or iron would have the corresponding atoms pervading throughout the physical structure of all such things. Similarly, all living beings and the existence itself are uniformly pervaded by the Atma; the Atma permeates throughout them.]

The Atma is such a universal entity that besides being the 'self' of the individual creatures it is also the 'self' and the true identity of the Gods. Since it is the almighty entity that rules all living creatures as well as the exalted Gods, it is Brahm, the Supreme Being, himself. It is the 'God of all Gods'!

[The same consciousness is present in the inner-self of any given living being as well as in the form of any given God. Hence it follows that when the aspirant is able to realise that his 'true self' is the Atma and not the gross body, there would be no difference between him and any God. This is the fundamental reason why 'self-realised' ascetics are called 'Brahm-realised', are worshipped, adored and honoured just like one does for Gods, and are given the same honour and respect that one gives to the almighty God, the Supreme Being. The Atma is Consciousness, and Consciousness is known as Brahm. Hence, there is no difference between the Atma and Brahm.] (55).

56. The Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) that is not attached to anything or that does not long for anything is said to be pure, unbiased, detached and dispassionate. Hence, a Jiva (living being, a creature) who has developed such an eclectic state of his Chitta is said to be free from all the fetters that shackle others to this world inspite of his living in the same world in an ordinary way. [Refer Canto 2, verse no. 12.]

[This is obviously called 'Jivan Mukti'—literally meaning to be free from all bondages pertaining to this world while one is still alive and living a normal life in this world. Such a man does all things required of him, but never gets emotionally and mentally attached to either the deeds or their results. No temptations of the world are strong enough to break his resolve and to affect his dispassionate state of mind.]

On the other hand, if a man is internally hooked to the world and its material sense objects, if his Chitta is not free from its Vasanas and Vrittis (natural attractions

for the world and its charms, comforts and pleasures) then no matter how much effort he spends in doing Tapa (austerity and penance) for a long period of time to seek Mukti (liberation and deliverance), he would never find it; Mukti would always elude him (56).

57. A Jiva (a living being) whose inner-self is free from all attachments or entanglements with anything in this world, or who has no relations with anyone whosoever, is deemed to be a Jiva freed from all fetters and encumbrances. Such a Jiva has a cheerful disposition and pleasant manners.

[This is because he treats everyone and everything alike without having any bias for and against any of them; he does not favour anything or anyone, nor is he prejudiced against them. The result is that he has no enemy or friend, he has no fear from any quarters, and he treats every circumstance with stoic equality, remaining unruffled and poised under all situations. With exemplary calmness and poise comes an equally high measure of internal peace and tranquility that shows in his thoughts, behaviour and temperament. He would treat everyone with equal compassion and kindness, thereby endearing all around him. He would readily share his possession with others and would even give others something they need without having a second thought, thereby contributing to a positive and friendly environment of brotherhood and love around him where gracefulness, compassion, caring and sharing are the dominant norms. Obviously there would be no jealousy and ill-will that are generated when one is narrow-minded, selfish and greedy.]

He might be doing deeds as demanded by his destiny or circumstances, but internally he is so detached from them and their results that he does not think himself to be either the doer of deeds or the one who would be entitled to the fruits of the deeds done.

[Basically this means that he has realised that his ‘true self’ known as the Atma is not the one that is doing anything at all, rather it is the gross body which is merely a habitat of the Atma and not the person’s truthful identity. Since all the deeds are done by the body which is not the ‘self’, the question of the ‘self’ as being either the doer of deeds or the enjoyer or sufferer from the result of the deeds done does not arise. Since he has become dispassionate and detached from the ‘inside’, i.e. his inner-self and the sub-conscious mind is not involved in anything, it does not matter whether or not he does any deed ‘externally’ with his gross body. This is true Mukti—because if the inner-self and the sub-conscious are attached to the world then even if a creature does not do anything he still is deemed to be bonded to this world.] (57).

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Canto 2

1. Nidagh said, ‘What is called ‘Sanga’ (company; relationship; attachment; bond), and what is its form? What is described as bondage for those who have a gross body? What is said about their freedom and deliverance from this bondage? By what means those creatures who have a gross body can find liberation and deliverance from their bondages? What is the remedy for the various miseries and the countless torments which a Jiva, the living being, suffers from? Please explain these to me.’ (1).

2. The ‘Jiva¹’, the living entity that bears the gross body and lives in it, is distinct from the gross body in which it lives. But unfortunately a creature, the living

being, might, under the influence of delusions and ignorance, think them to be one and the same—i.e. he might erroneously believe that the gross body and the living entity that resides in it are the same.

This situation when the creature believes that the gross body is his ‘self’ is called ‘Sanga’—because the creature (the *Jiva*; the living being) has attached himself to the body, making it his identity and an inseparable part, because with this identification they are deemed to be one, and because the result is that the creature loses his independence in the form of the pure conscious Atma that is separate and distinct from the gross body. Instead, he allows himself to be an inseparable and integral part of the gross body. In short, the creature keeps constant company (‘Sanga’) of the gross body.

Since all relations and contacts with this world are limited to the gross physical body and are created by the body, since it is the body that lives in the world and keeps constant contact with it, such a creature (who thinks that his body is his ‘self’) is said to be in the company of the gross world; he is said to have a ‘Sanga’ (company; association) with the world² (2).

[Note—¹Here, the term ‘living entity’, or the *Jiva*, refers to the pure consciousness known as the Atma that lives inside the gross body of the creature. This Atma is the true ‘self’ of the concerned creature. The creature, on the other hand, is a composite of the Atma and the gross body in which this Atma lives. The term ‘Jiva’ literally means ‘a living being, an entity that has life’. The gross body, if taken independently, does not have any independent life of its own but it depends upon the conscious soul living inside it to give it its life. Similarly, the Atma needs a gross body to live in this gross world because for the simple reason that it (the Atma) is an ethereal entity that would not be able to live and do anything in this world on its own accord without the help and the medium of the body.

Hence, it is obvious that the term ‘Jiva’ actually refers to the pure consciousness that lives in the gross body of the creature. But in practice in this physical world we use the term ‘Jiva’ to mean a living body—i.e. we recognize as Jiva as an entity that has a body that is alive and active. But to make this gross body alive and active there is the absolute necessity for the presence of the sublime and subtle entity known as the Atma, the soul, the pure consciousness.

Therefore, the ‘Jiva’ has two connotations—(i) the ordinary Jiva is he who lives in the gross world and is an entity that is a composite or the sum total of both the gross and inane body as well as the pure consciousness known as the Atma. Each unit or component of this Jiva is as important as the other—the Atma would need a dwelling to live in this world, to acquire its own identity and make efforts to fulfill its desires, and the body would need some entity, some powerful driving force, to make it alive and do what it wants to do. Such a Jiva is said to be one who keeps a ‘Sanga’ or the one who has company of the body, or the one whose ‘true self’ known as the Atma keeps company or association with the body and the world. (ii) The other Jiva is the one who is highly enlightened and self-realised. He understands that his ‘self’ is distinct from the body, and that even if the body is discarded his Atma would continue to live in an ethereal form which, however, is the Atma true and natural form. Therefore, this Jiva is said to be without any company—i.e. he is ‘A-Sanga’, one who has no company or association.

²This is the sign that the Atma is bound to the body and the world—it is the Atma that is not free. In other words, if any entity keeps company with another entity, no matter how exalted or divine the first entity might be, it is bound to be affected by its company. To illustrate this phenomenon we can take the instance of the moon and the earth. The moon exerts its magnetic and gravitational pull on the earth though the earth is so much larger and full of vibrant life as compared to the barren moon. This influence of the moon results in high tides in the ocean, and, according to astrology,

even on the fate of the human being. If such lifeless bodies as the moon which is so far from the surface of the earth is said to have its influence on the man's behaviour and even on the water of the ocean, one can easily imagine the influence that the immediate world would have on the Atma—and that means the living being himself—because both are very close to each other and have a direct interaction.]

3. [Now, in this verse the Atma that is free is being discussed.]

A Jiva (the creature; the living being) who has developed the holistic view that whatever exists is nothing but the Atma in that form (i.e. the same pure consciousness is revealed in so many forms) would see no difference between what to accept and what to discard. Such a Jiva is indeed 'A-Sakta' or without company, without attachments, without bondages, without shackles and fetters, without any passions and yearnings, and without any dependence on anything. An exalted Jiva who has developed this eclectic state of mind which helps him to separate his 'self' from everything else related to the body is said to be 'A-Sakta'.

[That is, a sense of complete equanimity, evenness and neutrality dominates the thought process of a realised and wise man. Such a realised man would be dispassionate towards and unattached to anything in this world, for he would be treating everything in the same manner. For him a hut is as good as a mansion, dry bread would be as tasty as buttered one. He would not depend on any given set of circumstances to find peace and happiness; rather he would be eternally contented in whatever he gets or whatever situation he finds himself in. All this happens because it is the body that comes in direct contact with the world and its material sense objects that are the subject matter of corresponding sense organs of the body. For instance, sights of the world are the subject matter for the eye, and the latter derives pleasure at seeing pleasant sights and abhors unpleasant sights. The tongue likes delicious things to taste and shies away from bitter things. A man who thinks that his body is his 'self' would follow the directions where sense organs take him—for instance he would have an innate desire to taste delicious food, see beautiful sights, touch sensual things, hear pleasant sound, smell sweet aroma, etc. This means that such a man would be dependent upon the likes and dislikes of the body, linked to the world through this body and its attractions and aversions, and subsequently hooked to the world at the whims of the body.

On the other hand, a man who has distanced himself from the body would be independent of all its temptations, its prodding, its constant nagging and its provocations. He would be freed from or disinterested in whatever the body does or is inclined to do. He would not be linked to this world through the body, and hence would be independent from any dependence upon both of them—i.e. he would not depend upon either the body or the world for his quest for peace and bliss, happiness and joys, comfort and pleasure, fulfillment and contentedness. [That is, he would not think that being able to gratify the urges of the body, or providing comfort to the gross organs of the body, or acquisition of material objects of choice in the world and acquiring majesty and grandeur are marks of success or fulfillment in life. Instead, he would seek fulfillment and happiness elsewhere in his own 'self' by meditating and contemplating upon the Atma which is the 'truth' and the 'reality' of creation, as this Atma is the pure consciousness that is the only spiritual truth of life.]

Since he sees uniformity in this creation, since he does not see the external form of the body but the subtle Atma that resides inside it as the truthful identity not only of his own self but of all other living beings in this creation, he would cease to

see distinctions between this and that. That is, the notion of duality vanishes from his mental radar.

Thus, his mind would become steady and rested as all its restlessness would be done away with. This type of man is called 'Jivan Mukta'—one who is spiritually free in spite of having a gross body, and living with it in this mundane, mortal and gross world. A truly 'A-Sakta' man is therefore he who has developed exemplary and stellar levels of renunciation, equanimity, non-involvement, dispassion and detachment from both the body as well as the world. He is concerned about the Atma and nothing else. He lives a life like a lotus flower whose petal remains clean and un-moistened in spite of it living in a dirty pond and is always surrounded by water.] (3).

4. A person is called 'A-Sanga' or 'A-Sansakta' (i.e. one who has no attachments with anything or anyone, and one who keeps no company) when he has no sense of duality and distinction between himself and the other person (i.e. any living being), when he does not have the notion of 'this thing' and 'that thing'.

[This exemplary level of uniformity and universality of view when he sees no difference between any two entities in creation is possible only when he sees the same Atma or pure consciousness everywhere, and realises that what actually matters is not the gross things but this subtle and sublime Atma.]

Only such a person who has this uniformity of views and a steady mind is rightly called 'Brahm-realised', and only he is eligible to declare 'I am Brahm'. Such a person is indeed 'A-Sansakta'—one who is not attached to any particular entity.

[Brahm here refers to the pure consciousness that resides in the inner-self as the Atma of the individual, as well as the Atma of all living beings in this creation. Not only limited to the living being, this term 'Brahm' also implies the dynamic forces and energy of creation that subtly live inside the atom of all elements, and thereby of all things that exist in this creation because the atom is the basic unit of creation and all elements are basically made of atoms. In the field of metaphysics, the basic elements are earth, water, fire, air and sky, and the dynamic force that are inherent in all of them which enables them to harbour and sustain life is known as the 'Brahm' factor—for otherwise they would have not been able to harbour and sustain 'life'.

Therefore we see that whereas the term Brahm refers to the 'consciousness' that is present in all 'living beings' such as plants and animals, it also applies to the apparently 'non living' aspect of creation because all things that exist are made of the basic elements, and all elements have 'atom' as their basic unit. The atom has dynamism and stupendous cosmic energy trapped in its core—as is evident in modern times when we are all well acquainted with the phenomenon of 'atomic energy'.

In this context it must be noted that an atom is externally neutral, but harbours dynamic energy inside. Outwardly it shows no signs of movement but internally it constitutes of electrons that continuously revolve around the nucleus. So, there is internal 'movement, life, dynamism and activity'. It is this 'electron' that provides the otherwise neutral atom its magnificent powers known as the 'atomic power'. This analogy of the atom would clearly help one to understand the concept of Brahm and its dynamism in the form of Shakti. Like the atom, Brahm is externally neutral and invisible. The Shakti of Brahm is like the dynamism of the atom personified in the electrons which are an integral part of the atom but need to be activated to be of any use. Just like each and every element of this world is made of atom which is universally present everywhere, Brahm too makes up this world as its integral and inseparable part.

Just like nothing can exist without the atom though the atom is not visible, nothing can exist sans Brahm though the latter is not visible. Since all the elements also have a physical form that are visible, each form having its own characteristic features and qualities which are unique to it and different from its immediate neighbour, all physical forms that the same Atma takes would also have their uniqueness and individuality as well as their independent existence which is distinct from the other.

Therefore, the term 'Brahm' is a broad one, incorporating all that exists in this creation—whether it is considered at the micro level of creation, or at the macro level of creation. Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 17-18 which is very explicit in this endorsement.]

Thus, a wise man who has developed this holistic view of Brahm realises that his 'true self' is the Atma (the 'atom' in the above illustration) which is Brahm or consciousness personified (in a microcosmic level of existence), and that this same Brahm is the one who lives in each unit (atom) of creation (at the macrocosmic level of existence).

Such a man is called 'A-Sakta' because he is self-reliant and does not depend upon anything or anybody in this world for his existence or sustenance just like the case of the atom which is self-sustaining and an independent unit in its own right.] (4).

[Note—In the instance of the atom of any given element being independent and self-sustaining in its own right it ought to be noted that when the same atom gets associated with other atoms, molecules are formed. These result in the formation of the structure of the element in its physical form. Sometimes it also happens that a complete new thing is formed by such association or unions—for example we have water. Water consists of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen, both of which are elementary elements and gases, but water is not gas. This instance would show that after some point, worldly contact and interaction has such a profound effect on the Atma that it loses its original truthful nature and virtuous form, and instead undergoes such a transformation that the new form of the Atma makes it appear to be a part of the world characterized by countless faults, taints and shortcomings. This new identity of the Atma is its deluded form, and not its truthful form. Therefore, when the Atma is attached with the grossness of the body as well as the world, it is bound to become gross to a greater or lesser degree.]

5. 'A-Sansakta' person is one who does deeds selflessly without any kind of emotional and mental involvement in either doing them or in their results. He does not feel glad that he has done some noble work selflessly; he does not develop any sense of pride in such deeds. He also does not feel obliged to do anything, and neither feels grateful or satisfied at having done it. Such a person is said to be a true renunciate and truly dispassionate towards deeds (5).

6. A person becomes aware of all deeds and their fruits or results only through the medium of the mind and the intellect. Hence, a man who can disassociate his mind from involvement with deeds is said to be 'A-Sansakta'—one who is not involved in doing deeds and not attached to or affected by its results.

[It is the mind that tells a man that he is doing certain thing, and it is the intellect that helps him to predict its results. For instance, when a man picks up something not belonging to him, it is his mind that tells him that the deed that he is doing is tantamount to stealing, and it is a sinful act. But suppose the mind is programmed to think that all things belong to the society as a whole and a man has the

right to pick up what is needed by him then the same deed of picking up the thing needed would cease to be a sinful act. In another instance, suppose the mind is engaged in some thoughts and the man picks up something, we say that he has done so 'absent-mindedly', or without the involvement of the mind. In this case, the element of the deed being sinful or not does not arise because the man is just not aware of the significance of what he is doing. He is doing it mechanically as if by habit.] (6).

7. A person who does deeds without being overly worried about their results is said to be unattached to the deeds. Such a person can do the deed well (because he would be able to concentrate his efforts on the task at hand rather than getting nervous and restless about the unseen future) (7).

8. Such a person (i.e. a person who is described as being 'A-Sakta', i.e. one who is unattached) is not infatuated with anything, has no worry of any kind (does not think about anything, hence remains free from all sorts of worries), has no special desire or worries about doing or not doing anything (and does deeds as and when they present themselves to him for being done), and is not bothered or worried about either the need for going anywhere or the consequences of not going. Such a man is exemplarily neutral and indifferent to all circumstances and situations that prevail around him; none of them ever ruffle him and disturb his mind (8).

9. Such a person (i.e. a person who is described as being 'A-Sakta', i.e. one who is unattached) turns inwards (as opposed to being extrovert) and remains submerged in the thoughts of his inner-self. He remains lost in contemplation; he remains totally indifferent and neutral in all places and under all circumstances. That is, he does not allow himself to be involved in anything anywhere.

Such a man remains engrossed in enjoying the nectar of the Atma—i.e. he is submerged and engrossed in enjoying the bliss and happiness that comes with experiencing the presence of pure consciousness that comes with perpetual contemplation and meditation when the man has lost awareness of all things that are extraneous to the Atma (9).

10. Such a Jiva (i.e. a living being who is described as being 'A-Sakta', i.e. one who is unattached) is unconcerned with meeting obligations or conforming to conventions and traditions that govern a creature's relationship with others as well as with the world in which he lives.

Even when he is meeting obligations or conforming to traditions and living up to his expectations in this world (such as by doing various things, fulfilling his obligations, or by behaving in the way expected of him) he still remains non-committal and neutral internally. He remains focused on his Atma which is his 'true self' and 'pure consciousness'. [Such a person is said to be firmly established in the Atma; he is devoted and faithful to the Atma. Just like a loyal and faithful wife interacts with so many men during the course of her working life in the office or the market place, but has nothing to do with them at the personal and emotional level because the only 'man' in her life is her husband, a self-realised, wise and enlightened man remains focused on the Atma in spite of having to live a normal life in this world and interacting with it like other men who may not be as spiritually enlightened and exalted as him.] (10).

11. Or it can be said that such a person who abandons all involvement in all deeds and actions related to the body and the world finds true peace and tranquility; he becomes calm and poised. This eclectic virtue is his asset; it characterizes him.

Such a realised person remains established in the Atma which is like a glittering gem, and he shines in its illumination; he exults in its divine charms and virtues.

[That is, a self-realised man who has experienced the glory of the pure consciousness residing in his inner-self develops a natural glow of divinity around him like the halo seen around the lighted flame of a lamp. This flame would give the best light if it is not disturbed by breeze, even the gentlest of waft of air. Similarly, a man who is not disturbed in any way whatsoever would be able to remain fully concentrated on the Atma and draw on its nectar of bliss and ecstasy like the bee drinking nectar from the flower of its choice remaining oblivious of its surroundings. This would show in his cheerful countenance and the glowing halo of spirituality, holiness and divinity that effuses from his enlightened inner-self and surrounds him from all sides.] (11).

12. The state of the Chitta (sub-conscious mind; the ability of the mind to pay attention and remember events) when it is neutral, non-active or dormant so much so that it does not register any of the constant inputs received by the mind from the external world through the medium of the sense organs of perception of the body, is said to be equivalent to being in the deep sleep state of existence, called the Sushupta state, inspite of the creature remaining awake and active in this world, the state known as Jagrat state.

In other words, when the mind and the sub-conscious become un-interested in being involved with the body and the world at large, the creature finds the same peace and rest that he would find when he is sleeping peacefully without a worry in the world. [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 56.]

[The deep sleep state is when the mind is defunct and it ceases to function. The waking state is when the mind is fully active and the creature is actively involved in the world. So, in the situation when the mind fails to register what is happening around it, when it becomes uninterested in what the body does, it would be equivalent to the mind being in a virtual deep sleep state. It is said that the creature finds true rest and peace in the deep sleep state or the Sushupta state because both the physical body as well as the mind are resting. In the present context, the creature finds rest because the mind has stopped nagging him, and he can peacefully enjoy the nectar of bliss that drips from the realisation of the consciousness residing in his inner-self, in his bosom.] (12).

13. Oh Nidagh! The subtle Sushupta state of the mind and sub-conscious (when they are inactive and defunct for all practical purposes even though the creature might be physically awake as described in verse no. 12 above) is achieved and made steady by constant practice.

When the Sushupta state is ripe and perpetual, it is known as the 'Turiya' state. This is what those who are experts in the essence of metaphysics assert (13).

14. All the worldly problems of the spiritual aspirant are eliminated in the Turiya state, and he obtains a perpetual state of extreme Anand (blissfulness, happiness, beatitude and felicity marked by ecstasy, fulfillment and contentedness) in this state (14).

15. This extreme sense of Anand that is experienced in the Turiya state is also called 'A-Anand'—the state of existence when the feeling of Anand is so permanent, all-pervading and overwhelming that the spiritual aspirant is not even aware of its presence; he is so habituated to it that he does not find anything special about it. Hence, he becomes neutral to the enjoyment of Anand as well.

[It is like the case of a man who is habituated to the worldly comforts of a wealthy life. A man who is poor would greedily yearn for such a life, and if he is fortunate enough to access it he would wallow in it for some time till he becomes bored with it. The rich man is habituated with a pampered life of material comfort so much so that he pays no attention to it for it is taken for granted by him. Similarly, a spiritual aspirant who has reached the Turiya state of existence becomes so steady in it that the fact that he is in blissful and contented state has no special significance for him; it is a routine thing henceforth for him.]

This sort of extreme Anand, i.e. the so-called 'A-Anand', is eternal and immense in its stretch and dimension. It is also called 'Maha-Anand' or 'the great bliss, the great happiness, the great joy, the great beatitude and the great felicity' that is reached when one reaches the higher states of realisation of the super Consciousness. It is equivalent to the transcendental state that crosses what is the routine and the humdrum state of existence of the Atma in this world.

The state of 'Maha-Anand' is so steady, so robust, so permanent and so perpetual that not even 'Kaal' (all dimensions of time and circumstance) can disturb it; it is beyond the reach and purview of Kaal.

[That is, not even the greatest of adversities can disturb the level of bliss, happiness and contentedness that a man who has reached the higher level of Turiya state enjoys. No temptations of the world are strong enough or charming enough to allure him away from the state of blissfulness and contentedness in which he lives during the Turiya state of consciousness.]

Such an ascetic or Yogi who has obtained the Turiya state of consciousness is deemed to have attained Mukti (i.e. he has attained liberation and deliverance) (15).

16. All the fetters and bondages that are an integral part of the creature's life in this world, and which have shackled him to the world not only in this present life but even had done so in his past lives, are broken and done away with when he has reached the Turiya state.

All his negative traits such as having 'Abhimaan' (i.e. having a sense of ego and false pride with their accompanying arrogance and haughtiness) are dispelled.

[A man feels proud on having successfully done anything only when he thinks that he is the one who has done something, when he feels that he had skillfully handled the situation leading to achievement of success. But when he has developed the eclectic view of not getting involved in the deeds done by the body, when he maintains stoic neutrality and detachment towards the deeds, then he cannot claim any honours for success. Hence, there would be no reason for his developing any sort of 'Abhimaan' in whatever success that has been achieved by his body in this life. He would be doing deeds but remain totally immune to any sense of pride and ego related to them. This is exactly what is expected of an enlightened man who has reached the Turiya state of existence.]

Just like a piece of salt put in water dissolves in it without leaving a trace, becoming one with the water itself, a spiritual aspirant who has obtained the highest state of realisation and enlightenment dissolves his 'self' and merges it with the

supreme 'Self' to become one with it and indistinguishable from it. Such an aspirant is honoured as being a 'Mahatma'—a great Atma, a great soul (16).

17. Whatever is visible in this world consisting of two facets—one that is animate and the other that is inanimate. Taken in its entirety, the world must have something at its core without which it would just not exist.

The transcendental vision which enables a man to see this hidden entity without which nothing would exist, the entity that is not visible and apparent in its external form but nevertheless constitutes the very core and the very basis of creation, helps him to realise the universal presence of the invisible Brahm that forms the core, known as the 'Atma' or the 'soul' or the essence, of the entire creation.

This eclectic vision of creation enables the wise and enlightened aspirant to see Brahm everywhere in creation, to realise that Brahm is the essence of existence, and that it is the truth that is universal, uniform, all-inclusive and all-pervading (17).

18. A person who has any kind of attraction for or attachment with any of the things that are visible in this world is said to be the one who is bonded to this world, who is fettered and bound in shackles. [This is because all things that are visible in this mortal world are gross in nature, are perishable and transient by nature. This man is the one who maintains a 'Sanga' as outlined in Canto 2, verse nos. 1-11.]

To be freed from such attractions or attachments is deemed to be Mukti or freedom.

It is impossible to describe one's feelings in tangible and comprehensive form about what one has 'seen' behind the external façade of the visible world.

[The reference here is to the quintessential 'Truth' recognized as 'Brahm' that forms the subtle and hidden core of creation, and not to the physical gross aspects of the world. In other words, the 'Brahm' that the wise, enlightened and Brahm-realised man 'sees', or of whom he has a divine vision, or whom he perceives as the basis and fundamental essence of creation, cannot be described in words. This is because words have their own limitations, and Brahm is such a divine, esoteric, enigmatic and mysterious entity that it can only be experienced and never defined in words. Brahm is not something gross that can be 'seen' with the gross organ of sight (eye) and therefore it cannot be described, because a man can only correctly describe things that he has 'actually seen with his eyes'. The Brahm that he 'sees' is seen with the divine 'eyes of self-realisation, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment'; this Brahm exists in the subtle plane of existence and not in the physical plane like other sense objects. Just like the physical eyes cannot see the 'air' or the 'atom' to be able to define or describe them, it is also not able to do so with Brahm.

Even in the physical world when one sees any object, he would not be able to completely describe it in its entirety because of the fact that words have their limited use, but supposing he is able to narrate any thing seen in physical form completely, the narration might not hold good or be a truthful depiction of that thing after some time, because the thing would have undergone a change, howsoever miniscule, by the time this narration is actually done.]

In fact, this sight or vision (of Brahm) can only be witnessed and experienced and endorsed personally, but can never defined or described in words or gestures or images or metaphors of any kind by anyone (18).

19. Treating what has been taught to you (Nidagh) as being the irrefutable truth and the actual reality, become stable and steady (in your mind). This would help you to attain the state of Sushupta (as described in the foregoing verses).

This would help you to easily attain transcendental state of Turiya (as described in verse nos. 14-15 above). Obviously, it would give you immense peace and bliss. Hence, focus your mind and vision on attaining this target.

[That is, sage Nidagh is exhorted by his enlightened teacher Ribhu to cast aside any doubts and confusions that he might be having about Brahm and the Atma in view of what has been narrated in this Upanishad, and become stable in his spiritual pursuit. He must conquer his mind and make it stable so that it is not allowed to be tossed and turned and therefore remain in a perpetual state of agitation and confusion caused by the innumerable deluding inputs from the gross world as well as by the equally confusing doctrines espoused by various schools of thoughts and philosophies, but rather become steady and rested. The benefit of the calmed-down mind that has been fully trained to remain stable and be wise enough to analyse things and develop a deep insight to see the 'hidden' truth by being able to peep behind the external layers of apparent truths that are not the actual thing have been outlined earlier in Canto 1 of this Upanishad in detail.

Being thus enlightened about Brahm and his Atma, Nidagh would ultimately find eternal peace, happiness, rest, bliss, beatitude and felicity which are the focus of all spiritual aspirants who are wise and erudite.] (19).

20. The Atma (pure consciousness) is such an esoteric, enigmatic and mysterious divine entity that is neither gross nor subtle, that is neither visible and apparent nor invisible and implied, that is neither animate nor inanimate, and is neither false nor true!

[That is, the Atma cannot be fixed by any criterions; it cannot be butted and bounded by some parameters that would define it. It presents a paradox of sorts where both the extremes of any given set of circumstances would equally apply to it.]

For instance, the Atma, though being invisible itself, is the basis of this world which is visible, and therefore the Atma is the invisible aspect of the visible world. At the same time, it is the Atma that has assumed all the forms that the world takes, and sans the Atma there is no truth in it. Therefore, the physical world is a visible manifestation of the Atma, thereby indirectly proving that the Atma is visible.

Since the gross world has any existence because of the Atma and is a manifestation of the Atma, we deduce that the Atma exists in a gross form of this world. But primarily the Atma is a subtle entity (and not anything that is gross in the least), and it pervades throughout this world like the atom pervades in any given element. Neither the atom nor the Atma are visible to a causal observer, but their existence just cannot be denied if one is wise enough to understand the fact that any given element has the atom as its basis as much as the world which has the Atma as its basis. Hence, the Atma is subtle, atomic and invisible in its basic form besides being all-encompassing, all-pervading, all-permeating and omnipresent in this creation. Nothing exists sans the Atma.

Since the Atma forms the basis of 'everything' in this world, both in its animate as well as in its inanimate forms, it follows that the Atma has two aspects as well—one that is animate and the other that is inanimate.

If one were to judge the Atma in physical terms it would appear to be 'false' because it cannot be proved by laboratory experiments as required by modern science to establish the truthful existence of any given entity, but it would be foolish

to ignore its existence because things that are subtle and sublime are beyond the scope of laboratory equipments. The existence and presence of the Atma has been unequivocally endorsed by realised and enlightened persons who have experienced and witnessed it while meditating and contemplating—something that goes far ahead and beyond the physical proving in a science laboratory.

In other words, the Atma is such an enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious entity that it is not at all possible to define it or describe it or fix its characteristics and attributes. For instance, no one can define with certainty the taste of such an ordinary thing as ‘plain drinking water’. Each man would describe it differently; each man would see different virtues of water. This plain water can dissolve a large number of things as it is the universal solvent, and also can assume a large number of forms such as vapour, ice, rain, mist etc. But does this mean that the basic nature of the atoms of Hydrogen and Oxygen that combine together to form the element known as ‘water’ would change? Does it also mean that since one is not able to see these atoms of Hydrogen and Oxygen one were to assume that water has some other basic structure or an independent ‘atom of water’ like the primary elements such as Hydrogen, Oxygen, Iron, Aluminum, Gold, Silver etc.?

A similar idea that the basic nature of the water would always remain the same irrespective of its external appearances is endorsed in verse no. 44 below in this Canto no. 2.

Likewise, even though the Atma is very subtle and hidden in this creation, it is nevertheless its only and ultimate ‘truth’. The Atma is the ‘soul’ of creation; it is the ‘essence’ of creation just like the atom is the fundamental basis for the existence of all elements in creation.] (20).

21. A self-realised man (i.e. one who has understood the real meaning and import of the word ‘Atma’, and has personally experienced the presence of the pure consciousness in his inner-self) develops a holistic, all-inclusive and non-dual approach to life and the world around him. He thinks and firmly believes as follows—

‘Neither do I have an existence that is separate from the Atma (pure consciousness), nor does anyone else in this existence.

Neither am I lonely, nor in numerous forms. My essential form (as the pure consciousness) is non-dual and imperishable. [This is because the Atma or pure consciousness is a universal entity that is uniformly present in all the creatures in this world—so I am not alone. Further, since the Atma is one and non-dual, it exists in one basic form inspite of having uncountable number of external forms.]

I (as the pure consciousness known as the Atma) am not that which is visible in this creation or that is perceived by the sense organs of perception. [This is because the sense organs are gross in nature, being part of the gross body. Anything gross cannot perceive an entity that is the most subtle and sublime. What these sense organs perceive is the gross physical aspect of the world, but they do not have the ability or the caliber to perceive anything that is as subtle and sublime as the pure consciousness.]’ (21).

22. A person gets immense pleasure when coordination is established between the object to be seen or perceived and the organ responsible for seeing or perceiving it.

[If a man learns that a particular thing is very beautiful to look at and he is able to see it to his eye’s content, he feels extremely happy and contented. On the other hand, if he is not able to see it because his eyesight is bad, or because his eyes cannot see it for some reason or the other, he feels dismayed, distraught and

discontented, and therefore agitated. This would apply to all the other organs of perception such as the ears which hear, tongue which tastes, skin which feels, and nose which smells. Hence, when a proper coordination is established between things to be perceived and the relevant organs of perception, a man gets immense satisfaction and pleasure.]

The degree of contentedness, pleasure, bliss and happiness that is got when one is able to see or perceive something that is far more enduring than the physical perceptions of the world, something which is so sublime that it is beyond the reach of the ordinary gross organs of perception, or something that has an eternal and infinite value, is of a greater dimension and intensity than what one gets by perceiving things that are easily seen or perceived in this world by the organs of perception of the body, things that have a lower value, things that are mortal and finite like the world to which they relate, and therefore spiritually inconsequential.

[The higher level of contentedness, pleasure, bliss and happiness refers to the state of self-realisation when the aspirant is able to have a sublime experience of the pure consciousness that is an extremely exhilarating experience as compared to the pleasure and happiness that is got by perceiving and enjoying things of the gross world. This is because the experience of the eternal consciousness leads to perpetual contentedness, bliss and happiness, while that which is obtained by the perception of the objects of the material world has a limited span of life. This is because the world itself is transient, finite and perishable, while the pure consciousness is eternal, infinite and imperishable.]

Hence, the bliss and happiness that is got in the transcendental state of existence is much superior to and far more eclectic and divine than what one gets during one's perception of the gross world and its equally gross material sense objects (22).

23. Moksha (spiritual emancipation and salvation) is not present or available in the sky above, or anywhere behind it or underneath it in the nether world, or even on the earth.

True Moksha is available when all hopes and expectations, all desires and yearnings are eliminated; it is available when one does not remain aware of his surrounding world (of material sense objects along with their accompanying temptations). [In other words, Moksha entails breaking free from the shackles of the world; it involves freedom from all attachments, attractions, allurements and temptations of the world. Not to be tempted by the world ensures that the man is free and not under any sort of obligations to obey it dictates in order to meet the demands of his mind and sense organs seeking gratification, pleasure and comfort from this world of material objects and magnificent charms (23).

24. 'Let me have Moksha'—even this thought is a sort of desire, and when it arises in the inner-self of the creature it has a shackling effect for the latter. It acts as a hurdle in the creature's true Moksha. This is because whenever any kind of desire and expectation sprout in the mind and heart of the creature, they act as fetters that prevent his spiritual freedom and deliverance (24).

25. When one has developed the eclectic and holistic view about the Atma (pure consciousness) as being a universal and all-pervading divine entity that is so unique that inspite of the fact that it is uniformly present everywhere in this creation it still remains free and separate from what is seen in this world—it is only then that the

creature is said to have obtained the level of erudition and wisdom that enlightens him on what Moksha truly is.

[The Atma is an ethereal entity that cannot be limited to any given frame defined by the world of visible objects. Since everything in this creation is a manifestation of the Atma it means that all visible as well as invisible entities are one or the other form of the Atma. On the other hand, Atma is a sublime and subtle entity which is not gross like the things of the physical world, hence it is separate from what the world is usually understood to mean. A wise and self-realised man understands that his 'true identity' is not the gross body but his pure conscious Atma. Hence, inspite of his physical presence in the world and bearing a gross body with which he interacts with the world, the body which gives him his individuality in this world and by which the world recognizes him as an individual man, he knows that it is not the truth. Since it is the physical gross body that can be tied and not the ethereal entity known as the Atma, this wise, enlightened and self-realised man is deemed to be eternally and truthfully free and unbound. He is free from all fetters that shackle an unwise and un-realised man to this world as well as the body. In other words, the tentacles of delusions and ignorance do not clasp him in a vice-like grip the way other ordinary creatures are. This is 'Mukti'—freedom from being a serf to delusions and ignorance; freedom from being shackled to the gross body and the equally gross world.]

For such a wise, realised and enlightened man there is no such thing as being in some kind of bondage or shackle (known as 'Bandh'), and therefore there is no need for obtaining liberation and deliverance (known as 'Moksha') from it.

[This is because he has realised that the Atma, the pure consciousness, is his 'true self' and 'true identity'. This Atma is ethereal, subtle and sublime as compared to the gross world in which it lives. The gross body of the individual has so many limitations, but the Atma has no such fetters. With this realisation, the wise man understands that he is not tied down by any strings, and not bound to any thing in the real sense.

The reason for his seeking 'Moksha', or freedom from shackles, arises because he had erroneously thought that the gross body was his 'self', but when this false identification is removed and the truth prevails that the Atma is the 'self', the question of seeking Moksha does not arise at all, for the Atma is eternally free and has no bondages of any kind. It is like the air or the sky that is eternally free and without any limitations imposed on it. Even when the air or the sky seem to be enclosed by a wall (such as a pitcher or building), this limitation is artificial and man-made, for as soon as the wall is removed the air or the sky that is present inside the wall becomes one with the corresponding element outside.]

Therefore, you (Nidagh) must develop or cultivate this eclectic view about yourself and remove all doubts about what Moksha is. Get rid of the idea that there exists some kind of 'Bandh' (bondage, shackle or fetter) from which you need 'Moksha' (freedom and deliverance).

[In other words, you are eternally liberated, and the only reason why you think that you need Moksha is because you are ignorant and deluded about your 'true self'. Once you become enlightened that you are not the gross body, or that this world is merely a temporary habitat for you, and that your 'true self' is the pure consciousness that is eternally free and sublime, you would not need any separate Moksha for yourself. When you develop this eclectic view about yourself and understand what Moksha really is, you would have no 'Bandhs', or the need of getting 'Moksha' from them.] (25).

26. A man who seeks spiritualism, or one who wishes to realise the Atma (the pure consciousness), does not find peace or rest till his mind becomes fully purified and cleansed of all the taints (that are generally associated with those who seek the world and attempt to find peace in it).

[This is because the mind needs to be fine-tuned and controlled properly first before anything can be done by a man as the mind is the only instrument that can think, analyse, choose the correct option, and direct the man towards his chosen destination. In the field of spiritualism it is of utmost importance to control the mind by purifying it completely, because the path of the 'spirit' is holy and ethereal, and therefore it needs equally cleaned and sanctified instrument to reach the goal. The importance of cleaning the mind and taming the various Vasanas and Vrittis has been dealt with in substantial detail in Canto 1 and Canto 4 of this Upanishad.]

Such a man (who relentlessly pursues his spiritual path with a clean and controlled mind) is surely able to find peace and tranquility of the highest order, the kind of which is not available anywhere else in this world, when he ultimately realises the Atma or the pure consciousness. He does not want anything else in this world except this goal (of self-realisation and its attendant peace and bliss of the highest order) (26).

27. A wise and self-realised spiritual aspirant who remains established in the Atma which is pure consciousness, which is the basis of the entire living world, and which is one of its only kind, having no parallel—such a man is said to be 'Jivan Mukta'.

He has no affections, attachments or attractions for anything or anybody in this world; he is not infatuated with them nor does he yearn for them. He remains totally disinterested and neutral to the world and everything pertaining to it. Such a man is said to be 'Jivan Mukta'.

[The phrase 'Jivan Mukta' means one who is freed from all fetters or bonds in his life. When an aspirant realises that his true 'self' is the Atma and not the body, he becomes free from this first and foremost hurdle in his spiritual freedom. When this obstacle is removed, the shackles of the world are secondary and can be easily overcome. This is because the material world of sense objects is directly related to the body; it is the body that interacts with the world. When the enlightened man disassociates himself from the body, when he does not think that what his body does is being done by him, all his relations with the world are snapped instantly. The Atma is like a bird that is habituated to flying freely in the sky, but unfortunately it was trapped in the body and became dependent upon the world for its sustenance because it allowed itself to be tempted by its illusionary attractions and charms just like the unfortunate bird that gets caught in the bird catcher's net because of its greed for the grain or the worm that he puts as bait to attract the bird. Once this barrier of greed is done away with, the bird can remain flying in the sky without any fear of being caught. Even when it is caught, it should attempt to break free from the trap and use the first chance available to fly off into the sky which is its natural habitat. Similarly, once the wise man realises that the world and the body are different from the Atma, once he snaps all attachments with the world and its material sense objects, he becomes like the freed bird. He would live in this world, but at the mental plane he is unbound to it; he is unshackled; he is unfettered.] (27).

28. [Verse nos. 28-31 should be read together.]

A person who does not worry about the future or has any expectations from it, who does not remain concerned about the present and tackles things as and when they present themselves to him, who does not wish to have any knowledge of the past (because things gone by are history and they do not matter to him now or even in the future)—(28).

29. A person who has no affections for or attachments with anybody with whom he is associated in life, who treats all his friends with equal friendliness, and extends the same attitude to even those who are wicked, deceitful, dishonest and crafty, or are hostile to him—(29).

30. A person who behaves like a child among children, who acts like an old man when dealing with those who are aged, who shows patience, courage and fortitude with those who have these grand virtues, who becomes a youth when in the company of other youths, and becomes sorrowful and aggrieved when he sees others in this condition—(30).

31. A person whose mind and intellect are steady and calm, who is extremely cheerful and blissful, and whose thoughts are robust and firm—the fame of such a person (as outlined in verse nos. 28-31) spreads everywhere.

Such a wise man (who exhibits the above characteristics) always remains happy, is of a cheerful, pleasant and sweet disposition, and is free from the negative and depressing thoughts of being lowly and deprived of anything.

Indeed such a man is deemed to have achieved Mukti, or liberation and deliverance from all sorts of fetters and bondages.

[It would be evident while reading verse nos. 28-31 that the person to whom they refer is no ordinary man but someone who has inculcated the noble virtues of equanimity, empathy, sympathy, tolerance, endurance and humility, who treats every situation with stoic indifference and equality, who remains internally detached from all worldly relations and activities while doing deeds as required of him according to the demands of the circumstance, who maintains his equanimous state of mind during miseries as well as joys, and who maintains his calm and poise inspite of being surrounded by constant turmoil and transience that are hallmarks of the world around him. This is only possible for a man who has distanced his inner-self from being associated with the external gross world on the one hand, and sees uniformity in it on the other hand. The first thought is achieved because he knows that the world is simply a creation of the mind and hence illusory, that the true thing is the 'consciousness' that is not at all affected by the turmoil that characterizes the world, and that real peace is possible only when one maintains total neutrality amidst this upheaval. The second thought is possible when he sees the same 'consciousness' as a revelation of the supreme Brahman, the Supreme Being, in all aspects of creation, and therefore just marvels at the maverick play of the Supreme Being that unfolds before his eyes.

Being not grounded by any given situation, by not being bound to any set conditions, by remaining free from any obligations and expectations, and by maintaining his mental poise and equilibrium under all circumstances, a man is able to obtain freedom from all existential worries and mental disorders vis-à-vis this world in which he has to live. He maintains his quiet and serenity, his neutrality and detachment, under all circumstances—refer verse no. 28.

The fact that the man of whom we are talking about is wise and erudite is evident from the fact that he acts with utmost prudence and intelligence, being friendly with those who are friendly towards him, and skillfully witty with those who act smart with him (verse no. 29), who mixes well with his surroundings by becoming one with it (as narrated in verse no. 30), and who is never ruffled but maintains his mental stability and calmness (as outlined in verse no. 31).

Such a man is indeed eligible to attain fame and honour as a man who is internally free from all worldly shackles.] (31).

32. When one makes diligent effort and practices the above principles throughout his life, their implementation become natural to him, they become a part of habit and normal behaviour. His body naturally becomes responsive and adapted to his way of thinking.

[Since it is the gross body that comes in direct contact with the external world, developing relations with others, whether friendly or otherwise, and interacting with them, so when the mind develops steady neutrality by constant practice the body would too develop neutrality over time. As a result, a man would treat his friend and those who are opposed to him equally; he will treat those things that are charming and pleasant with the same indifference that he shows towards things that are otherwise. The sense organs of the gross body would not be any longer attracted by their respective sense objects in the world but maintains exemplary neutrality and calm—the eye would not be interested in looking at beautiful sights, the tongue would not hanker for tasty food, the ear would not like to hear only praises and pleasant things, the skin would no longer long for sensual touches, and the nose would no longer yearn for sweet scents. Similarly, the hands would no longer stretch out to grab things that are not worthy, the legs would no longer take the man to where self gratification is available, the mouth would not speak unnecessarily or eat just for pleasure, and genitals would not seek their own quota of pleasure. Such a regulated and reined-in body would be in consonant with the state of the spiritual aspirant's mind and subconscious. The state of equanimity and evenness acquires a wholesome nature; it encompasses every fraction of the spiritual aspirant's life and his dealings with the world.

Obviously, when the mind and the body work in tandem, the spiritual journey becomes easy and comfortable for the aspirant. He is easily able to obtain freedom from this world.]

Finally, when the time comes for the Pran (life-forces) to leave this body, it does so easily and without any regrets. The mind is fully calm and rested at that time. Nothing remains for it to achieve except Nirvana—or final liberation and deliverance, final emancipation and salvation.

[When the body and the mind are both tamed, the man has no desires or expectations left in this world. He has no unfulfilled wishes, or goals that remain elusive. He has no attachments with or affections for anything or anybody in this world. So when the time comes for his final departure from it, i.e. when he is about to die and leave the body and the world, he has no regrets or worry as to what would happen to his near and dear ones after him, or what would happen to the huge assets he had so laboriously created and assiduously collected around him, or what would be the fate of the world and the various relationships that he had so meticulously cultivated and nurtured in his life. He is so dispassionate and detached from this world as well as the body that he does not give a second glance to them at the time of his death.

His only thoughts are on his final liberation and deliverance. He rather feels glad that finally the chance has come for his salvation and emancipation. He is happy that finally the opportunity has arrived for his final liberation and deliverance from the fetters of the body and the entangling effects of the world when the barrier of the body is removed with its physical death. This frees the Atma from the compulsion of having to live in this world trapped inside a gross body and conform to so many traditions and conventions which act like so many burdens for it. Until the time of death, the Atma was forced to live in the body and interact with the world because it is impossible to live in the world and not interact with it. Of course, a wise and enlightened man remains aloof from the world and the body in spite of his living in this world and interacting with it, but this creates a lot of practical problems for him. But when death arrives, the necessity to have a body is removed, because the body collapses on its own, so there is not even the regret at having to discard the body which had given the Atma shelter for such a long time. Hence, a wise, self-realised and enlightened man does not treat 'death' with fear and disdain, but he welcomes it willingly and cheerfully. He regards the death of the physical body as a god-sent gift to get rid of the fetters that had been shackling his Atma, which incidentally is his 'true self', to the gross world full of miseries and pains. Say, who would like to live in bondages and behave like a serf or slave if he is given an opportunity to get his final freedom that is eternal?] (32).

33. Doubts and confusions (about what is the 'spiritual' truth and what is not, what is the truthful path and what is the misleading path) are the breeding grounds for mental and emotional restlessness, perplexities, bewilderments and consternations.

When one is wise, enlightened and realised, he is certain of the 'truth' as well as of the 'falsehood', and it is then that he finds peace and rest because he would no longer be deluded and subjected to confusions. So, when the mind itself goes out and searches for the truth and successfully finds it, it returns with a firm conviction about it. It is then that the mind becomes very steady and firm in its beliefs and convictions, and no amount of worldly corruptions and negativity would henceforth manage to delude the mind or sway it from its well-considered chosen path.

[The mind is an intelligent aid for the aspirant. He uses this instrument in anything that he does in this world. In fact, each single deed and action that any of the organs of the living organism does or undertakes is directly or indirectly controlled by the mind, the intellect and the sub-conscious. So, first the mind is in doubt whether the world is true or false. It is restless and agitated. It begins its research and finally realises that the world is its own imaginative creation, and that, in essence therefore, it is falsehood. The mind is aided in this search by the study of the scriptures as well as by a close examination of the world and an analysis of experience of others. When it finds that the 'truth' is somewhere else, and that this 'truth' is the pure consciousness hidden inside the bosom of the aspirant himself, it becomes focused on the truthful Atma, because the latter is the 'consciousness' that is the 'truth' of existence. And a focused mind is rested and calm; it can think coherently, cogently, properly and with due diligence.]

Hence, a Jiva (living being) who is free from doubts and confusions is indeed said to be Mukta—free and unshackled (because his mind would be easily able to separate the truth from the falsehood, thereby freeing him from the bondage of delusion and ignorance) (33).

34. The eclectic knowledge that a spiritual aspirant has about the enigmatic Atma, the pure consciousness, that it is a divine entity which has neither a beginning nor an end (i.e. is eternal, infinite and imperishable) is equivalent to having knowledge of the 'Parmatma'—the supreme transcendental Atma which is synonymous with the Supreme Being.

Those who are wise, erudite and well-versed in the knowledge of the Atma assert that a firm knowledge about it that does not waver and diminish under any circumstance is equivalent to having knowledge about the Parmatma or the Supreme Being. At the same time, those who have this knowledge are deemed to be highly knowledgeable, wise, erudite, enlightened and learned (34).

35. Such a person who has acquired the supreme form of spiritual knowledge (as described in verse no. 34) is able to see the essence and the truth of everything in the three worlds of this creation¹. He realises that whatever of any worth and essence that exists in this creation is nothing but the same divine Atma (the pure consciousness) in all the forms.

With this firm conviction, he attains fulfillment. [He has no more doubts as to what is the truth and what is false in this world. With the acquisition of this divine knowledge, he is deemed to have become enlightened as well as self and Brahm realised. And for such a person, nothing more remains to be attained, realised, achieved, accessed, known or gained. Hence, this grand, eclectic and most divine knowledge fills the spiritual aspirant with complete contentedness, beatitude and felicity.] (35).

[Note—¹The three worlds referred to here have the following connotations—(i) the past, the present and the future; (ii) the heaven, the earth and the nether world; (iii) the world represented by the word 'Bhu' meaning the terrestrial world where ordinary mortals live, the world represented by the word 'Bhuvaha' meaning the lower heaven or sky where spirits and semi-Gods live, and 'Swaha' or the upper heaven where the Gods themselves live. In short, all forms of life anywhere in existence have any meaning only as long as there is the Atma in them.]

36. The holistic view of the Atma envisages that one sees this quintessential, divine, sublime, immanent, omnipresent and all-pervading universal entity (i.e. the Atma) everywhere in creation, in a uniform and indivisible manner.

Such a wise and realised man wanders—'where is that place where there is no Atma, and where is it specially located to the exclusion of the other place?'

He also wanders—'what is Moksha (liberation and deliverance; salvation and emancipation) and what is bondage? Everything is indeed Brahm'.

[That is, a man is truly wise, self-realised and spiritually enlightened when he has developed the non-dual view of this creation which envisages the presence of one universal Atma as being the only 'truth and reality' in creation, and the rest of the world with all its variations and multiplicities as simply being a manifestation of this single entity known as the Atma. Since the Atma is synonymous with Brahm, the only difference being that while the term 'Atma' applies to the cosmic Consciousness when it is understood in the context of micro level of creation, and as 'Brahm' when it is understood in its cosmic context at the macro level, it obviously follows that a wise and realised man would see the universal presence of Brahm everywhere.

Further, such a wise man does not regard himself as being bonded to anything, does not regard himself as being tied by any kind of fetters, or shackled by anything. This is because he has realised that his 'true self' is not the gross body but the pure consciousness that is known as the Atma which is an eternally free ethereal spirit that

cannot be butted and bounded, that cannot be put in shackles, that cannot be limited by anything that is gross, such as the body and the world. Just like the sky or the air which are inherently free and unbound, the ethereal Spirit, or the Atma, is also inherently free and unbound.

Having gained this insight, he is not misled by the external façade of the gross world, but is able to peer deep inside and behind it to have a vision of the actual reality that forms its basis. He sees the subtle and sublime form of the ‘pure conscious self’ known as the Atma being reflected everywhere in creation. Therefore, whatever is seen in this world is actually a reflection of his Atma in that form. In other words, he sees all the living beings in this creation as his own image. This also means that he has risen above the narrow-minded approach that an ignorant man has of this creation, and he has developed a holistic view of this creation whereby he sees nothing but one universal, immanent and immutable Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the ultimate Truth, uniformly everywhere. Refer verse nos. 23-33 of this Canto 2 in this context.] (36).

37. The sky is inherently indivisible and immutable, remaining constant and complete in all dimensions of time. It cannot be shackled to anything or by anything, and therefore there is no question of it being freed or delivered from any fetters or bandages. The sky is so vast, fathomless and infinite that there are no dimensions that can be assigned to it. There is nothing that exists beyond the sky.

The cosmic Brahm possesses these unique virtues as those possessed by the sky. The sky is used as a metaphor to describe the divine and magnificent glories and divine attributes of Brahm. Hence, Brahm is similarly eternally free and without the need of getting any liberation and deliverance from any sort of bondage just like the sky. Brahm is the vast, all-incorporating and all-encompassing cosmic entity like the sky beyond which nothing exists. It is larger than the largest, and greater than the greatest. It is measureless and fathomless; its dimensions are better understood by the words ‘eternal, infinite, without boundary, without a beginning and an end’. These virtues establish the greatness and universality of Brahm.

[In other words, Brahm is compared to the sky element and said to possess the grand virtues so characteristic of the latter. Of all the things in creation, the sky has the uniqueness of being the most subtle, infinite, formless, eternally free, all-pervading and all-encompassing universal element that just cannot be captured and put in shackles. The sky is not something gross and material as a piece of iron or gold that can be held and cut into small pieces. Similarly, Brahm is a cosmic divine and sublime entity that also has these eclectic virtues as the sky element, and therefore Brahm simply cannot be compartmentalized and divided into units that are separate from one another. Brahm cannot be limited to a specific area of creation, but it encloses the entire creation from all sides just like the sky that covers everything from all sides.

Like the sky element, Brahm too cannot be said to have two existences or a beginning and an end. That is why Brahm is said to be non-dual, immutable, indivisible, eternal and infinite.

Brahm is a divine and sublime cosmic entity that cannot be regarded as being under any bondage or fetter, and therefore it is eternally and inherently free and without any shackles of any kind whatsoever.

Everything in existence is present in the vast and fathomless bowls of the sky, and there is nothing that lies beyond it. Similarly, the entire creation is lodged in Brahm; nothing exists that is outside of Brahm. Brahm, as well as its analogue the

sky, encloses the entire creation from the outside like a moat around a fort. It envelops the creation from all sides. Anything that encircles another thing from the outside cannot be surmounted by the one which it surrounds. In other words, nothing in this creation can supersede Brahm just like nothing can cross the limits and boundaries of the sky.] (37).

[Note—Refer also to Canto 1, verse no. 16; Canto 4, verse no. 24; Canto 5, verse no. 77.]

38. Hence, you (Nidagh) should discard this notion of duality vis-à-vis the Atma from a distance (i.e. never allow yourself to ever think in these terms; never get close to this idea because it would only create doubts and confusions in your mind and lead to consternations and perplexities), and instead be blessed with an eclectic wisdom that would enlighten you about the non-dual nature of the Atma.

Become wise and self-realised; be enlightened about your ‘self’ as well as about the true nature of the Atma. Don’t get confused and deluded about this at all.

[That is, become firm and established in the non-dual nature of the pure consciousness. Don’t allow yourself to be bogged by delusions and many versions that are proffered about the ‘self’ and the world around you in which this ‘self’ of yours lives. Understand that this ‘self’ of yours is the sublime and ethereal consciousness called the Atma which is a universal entity also known as Brahm, that it is separate from the gross aspect of creation such as the body and the world of material sense objects, and that it is eternally liberated and therefore need no special freedom. The very fact that you think you need some kind of Moksha, or liberation and deliverance from some fetter or bondage, is out of delusion and ignorance about yourself. The truth is you are eternally liberated and under no bondage.

Think in this positive term if you indeed wish to be freed from your bondage, which is however imaginary and due to your own folly and ignorance of the truth.]

Become so dispassionate about and uninterested in the external world that you would treat wood and stone alike. Do not be attracted towards any of them, nor repelled from them. For all practical purposes, be absolutely neutral towards them. This would exemplify your achievement of ‘non-dual’ approach to the world.

[This stanza can also mean—‘Be so neutral and detached from this gross world that you see no difference between a piece of wood and stone. Both are equally worthless for you, or equally valued for you. Your mind should neither treat any of the two as being of a greater or lesser value than the other.’ This is just an example of the highest level of equanimity and detachment that one develops towards this material world when one becomes highly spiritually wise, realised and enlightened.] (38).

39. When there is no sense or notion of existence of any kind of difference between any two given things or situations, there would be no need to have any volitions, desires and aspirations for anything.

[It is only when a man thinks that what he has is inferior to some other thing that he strives to obtain the latter. He makes a determined bid to acquire it; he has aspirations to be better off and be happier than what he is at present. But when he has developed the sense of non-duality, when he sees no difference between what he has at present and what he would get by making fresh wishes (and then making efforts to acquire the object of his desire), he would not feel the need of striving for any thing new. This would give him his peace of mind and sense of contentment and fulfillment. In the present context of obtaining Moksha as had been discussed in the

preceding verses, when the wise and self-realised aspirant understands that he is already liberated and unbound, there would obviously be no motivation for obtaining Moksha when he has already got it. Likewise, he would have no desire for obtaining peace and happiness from anything in this world when these virtues are an integral part of his Atma, his 'self'. He would make no vows, would have no aspirations and volitions as he would see no difference between what is available and what can be made available by making such vows, or having any aspirations and desires.]

An aspirant who has developed this eclectic thought (i.e. who has truly understood the import of the term 'non-duality', uniformity and universality) is bestowed with eternal peace and tranquility that is infinite, imperishable, and without a beginning or an end.

[That is, when a man understands that the Atma is a uniform entity that remains constant in all dimensions of time, and that Brahm is no where except in the form of his own Atma, he no longer yearns for Mukti, or liberation and deliverance from this world, and to go to some imaginary heaven to find peace. He finds peace here in this world itself while living in it. For such an enlightened man, there are no separate things as a heaven and a world. He sees the Supreme Being right in his front in the form of the manifested world as well as inside his inner-self in the form of the Atma which he has already realised, for had it not been so it would be impossible for him to follow what these verses of this Upanishad say.] (39).

40. Always think that there is no thing of any worth in this world which does not have the Atma representing the pure consciousness in it.

[In other words, the only entity that should have any value for you is 'consciousness'. If anything in this world does not have 'consciousness' inherent in it then you should have nothing to do with it.]

Do not be confused and get perplexed by the two doctrines of 'Advaitya' (non-duality) and 'Dvaitya' (duality). Treat them equally.

[As the terms suggest, the doctrine of Advaitya says that there is only one uniform entity known as Consciousness uniformly pervading in this creation, that there is no difference between the supreme Brahm and the Jiva (the living being), and that all things in this creation are nothing but multifarious manifestations of this single Consciousness revealed in the form of Brahm. On the other hand, the doctrine of 'Dvaitya' says that the Brahm and Jiva are two entities; that Consciousness is distinct from the world. In other words, sage Nidagh is exhorted by his teacher, the learned sage Ribhu, to see only one uniform Consciousness as being all-pervading in this creation.]¹

Similarly, do not be afraid of old age and death. Do not fall prey to delusions, confusions and bewilderments; do not be baffled by contradictory doctrines in this world but stick to your firm conviction about the Atma as being the non-dual, eternal, imperishable, uniform and universally conscious entity.

[This is because old age and death affect the gross body and not the Atma which is constant, steady, unchanging, imperishable, eternal and infinite. The Atma neither gets old nor dies. So, sage Nidagh is asked not to be worried of old age or death because 'he' would neither become old nor die. The term 'he' applies to the pure conscious Atma or soul of Nidagh and not to his external gross body.] (40).

[Note—¹(a) Advaita Vedanta is a system of thought based on the Upanishads, its chief exponent being Adi Shankaracharya. It expounds the unity of the individual's soul, his 'self' or the pure consciousness known as the Atma, with the supreme

transcendental Brahm which is the universal cosmic 'Self' or the cosmic Consciousness which is also regarded as the Absolute, the Truth and the Reality.

References—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 2-3, 29-31, 43; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 2 full. (ii) Atharva Veda's Tripadvibhuta Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph nos. 4, 6; Canto 2, paragraph nos. 1-8, 11; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 1-7. (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad.

(b) Advaita-Dvaita Vedanta—This is a system espoused by saint Madhavacharya. It expounds that there is a duality or distinction or separation between the 'self' of the individual creature, the world, and Brahm.

(c) Vishitha Advaita Vedanta—This school of thought is called 'qualified monoism, and it visualizes the 'self' and the world as the body of the supreme Self which is the indwelling Principle known as the Atma. Its chief proponent was Ramanujaacharya.]

41. The Atma, which is eternally neutral, stable, unchanging and steady, is constantly subject to nagging and prodding by the restive mind; the Atma is incessantly being buffeted and tossed about by the mind which is inherently restless and always changing like the waves on the surface of the ocean. In other words, left to its own accord the Atma would remain peaceful, rested and calm, but it is the vibrations generated by the sub-conscious that keeps it constantly agitated and subjected to incessant turmoil just like the ocean whose fathomless bowl containing a vast reservoir of water appears to be very calm, unmoving and stable in its great depths, but ironically the same ocean appears to be tossing about violently from the outside with huge heaving waves that rise up on its surface in a constant cycle, then move rapidly ahead for some time, only to disappear at a distance. Had it not been for the waves, the ocean would appear to be calm and smooth, but these waves render it fearsome and make it appear to be constantly agitated and on the move.

[The internal stability and calmness of the ocean is not apparent on the surface which is constantly on the boil, heaving and subsiding in an endless cycle. But this agitation is limited only to the surface layer of water of the ocean, for if one were to dive deep into its bowl one would observe complete stillness and silence just like one finds in the depth of a dense forest or high up in the earth's atmosphere. Even the roar of the ocean is limited to its surface because deep in its bowls no such sound is heard.]

In other words, it is the consciousness or the Atma itself which is the cause of its own restlessness and spiritual problems. Should the Atma decide that it wants peace and calmness and overcome its troubles, it can easily achieve them.

[The mind works only till there is 'life' or 'consciousness' inside the body; no dead body thinks though the gross organ of the brain is still present inside the skull. Hence, it is the 'consciousness' that keeps the mind and the sub-conscious active and motivated; it is the 'consciousness' that decides whether or not the mind should remain active or not. Should the 'consciousness' decide that the mind ought to remain inactive and become irrelevant, the mind cannot overrule its instructions by becoming active and pertinent on its own accord. Therefore, it is the consciousness itself that is the cause of its own problems. That is to say, it is the creature himself who is responsible for all the delusions created by an untamed and uneducated mind, along with all the attendant problems; it is the creature himself who has allowed the mind to be engrossed in the material world and its sense objects, and thereby remain miserable, unfulfilled, agitated and in a constant state of flux. If the creature wants, he can end all his spiritual problems by just reining in the mind and calming it down. In

fact, major portions of Canto 1 of this Upanishad are dedicated to this theme of controlling of the Mana (mind and sub-conscious)—refer 1/20-27, 1/33-48, 1/56-57.]

The best and the most exalted state of spiritual liberation and deliverance is attainable only when all the extrovert tendencies of the mind are chopped away (i.e. controlled and eliminated for good so much so that they can never re-generate and create fresh nuisance for the spiritual aspirant) like the uprooting and felling of a tree with an axe. This is true and supreme state of exalted existence for the creature.

[A tree that has been cut from the root would not be able to grow again. Likewise, when the mind is permanently cut-off from the world and its material sense objects, it stops being deluded by them, it stops being disturbed by the countless inputs and temptations of the world, and hence it finds permanent peace. Such a mind is able to focus on the inner-self and gives everlasting peace to the creature. The significance of this verse lies in the fact that it stresses that the controlling of the mind is of paramount importance for the spiritual aspirant. If he is able to control the mind, he can attain the highest spiritual stature one can ever hope to reach.] (41).

42. A wise and self-realised man is one who accepts and embraces the eternally immaculate pure conscious Atma, the soul, as the ‘spiritual truth’ by being firmly convinced of its truthfulness, and its divine presence in his own inner-self. He is steadfast in his beliefs about the Atma. This bestows mental, emotional and spiritual stability in him.

He is never confused or doubtful as to where the Atma is or about its truthfulness—because he has realised its presence in his own inner-self. Therefore, the skeptic thought ‘where is the Atma?’ does not bother him, and hence such delusions as are created by being unaware of the truth of the pure consciousness do not act as shackles that would tie him down in fetters of ignorance and its attendant spiritual turmoil and torments (42).

43. The mind is like the axle of a wheel, while the world and the various desires pertaining to it are like the wheel itself.

[In other words, the world and the desire to enjoy it, the inherent natural inclination of the creature’s sense organs to swerve and move towards their respective sense objects in the mundane material world, depend upon the mind just like the wheel depends upon the central axle to revolve and take the vehicle ahead. If the axle or axis is broken or jammed, the wheel would stop rotating, and therefore moving ahead. Similarly, if the mind is controlled, the world along with all its temptations is easily controlled.]

Besides this, the world is never able to actually disturb the mind if the latter is robust and strong enough just like the case of the wheel which is not able to harm the axle no matter how fast it revolves or on what ground it moves as long as the axle is strong and robust enough to withstand the rough and tumble associated with the movement of the wheel, and is sufficiently calibrated to carry the weight of the wheel and bear the burden of the vehicle.

[But should the mind become weak, unstable, ever-changing, vicissitudinous and indecisive, the world is certain to break its resolve like a weak central axle which would not be able to sustain the movement of the wheel for any length of time and would eventually break. The result of a weak mind would be as disastrous for the creature as a weak axle would be for the wheel and the vehicle that it carries.]

A firm mind that is clear in its concepts and which harbours no doubts about anything is never disturbed or influenced by any of the things or circumstances of the

world just like the strongest of winds cannot have any effect on the mountain which remains totally immune to the tempest and maintains its neutrality and stability.

[That is, a man who has inculcated firm wisdom, erudition and self-realisation is never influenced by any of the worldly delusions, and he is never in doubt about the Atma, the spiritual Truth and the all-pervading Consciousness. In spite of witnessing so much paradox, irony and dichotomies in this world, he remains firm in his conviction about the Atma and Brahm. He has no confusions and doubts in his mind, as his mind is fully enlightened about the 'truth' so much so that it does not need any more convincing and proving. The mind is so firm in its conviction and beliefs that it can no longer be deluded by the strongest of temptations and allurements arising from the fascinating world of astounding charms and magnificence.] (43).

44. A man sees so many variations of the same thing and then believes that the latter has as many forms which appear to considerably differ from one another. The fact is quite different. All these sights give different ideas for the same thing; they are deluding and misleading about the true nature and the essence of the thing under consideration just like the water present in different ponds appear different in spite of the fact that 'water' in its primary form is the same element wherever it is present. [To illustrate the point, let us take the example of the potter moulding so many things from the same ingredient, the earth. He makes toys, pots and pans of varying designs, forms, shapes and sizes. Each is known by a different name and is distinct from the other. For example, he makes a toy elephant, a doll, a piggy-bank, a pitcher, a water-pot, a clay cup and saucer etc. All have different forms, but a wise man would know that their essential ingredient is 'clay' and nothing else. So in spite of them being called by different names and exhibiting different colours, sizes and shapes, they are all 'clay' or 'earth' and nothing else. Another instance is of water—the same 'water element' is known by so many names, e.g. liquid water, ice, snow, vapour, steam, moisture, river, ocean, stream, oasis, well, pond, lake etc. Do these names mean that the essential element known as water whose chemical formula is H_2O also has so many forms? Of course not; the 'molecule of water' remains the same in whatever form it exists. It's the exterior form and structure that changes according to existential requirements, but the basic ingredient of a water molecule always remains the same. Similarly, everything in this creation, if it is to have any truth in it, is invariably 'Brahm' in that form. It is the same Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness performing myriad functions as required by the necessities of creation and exigencies of circumstances. It is indeed the same Brahm performing different duties and carrying out different roles in this world. Since the 'Atma' is the 'soul' of creation in the sense that without the Atma this creation would be hollow from the inside and without any meaning and truth, it follows that Brahm and Atma are synonymous with each other.

Again, since 'life' and 'consciousness' are the two sides of the same coin, and without consciousness there would be no life, it follows that 'consciousness' is the soul of creation. In other words, the Atma is 'consciousness' that is the 'soul' and essence of creation. Since Brahm is the basic truth of creation, and since the Atma is also the basic truth of creation, it follows that Brahm and Atma are the same thing because 'truth' can be only one, and not more than one. Therefore, the Atma, known as the consciousness, is the 'Tattwa', or the essence and fundamental basis, of creation as much as Brahm, the cosmic super Consciousness that is also the Tattwa of creation.]

Similarly, a wise, enlightened and self-realised person is one who knows that the Atma is one, immutable and non-dual, and all its variations are simply adaptations

of this Atma to suit a particular situation or environment in this creation. Hence, all the varied forms in which the same Atma exists are basically illusionary in nature; they would mislead a man if he is not wise enough to understand that the fundamental essence behind all external appearances is the Atma and nothing else. If anything does not have ‘consciousness’ in it then it simply does not exist for any given length of time without disintegrating on its own. [For instance, the gross body of any creature begins to decay and disintegrate rapidly after the death because the Atma or the consciousness has abandoned it. But as long as the same body harbours the Atma, it looks healthy and charming, without showing the least sign of decay and collapse.]

A wise and enlightened person has intelligently examined all the aspects of creation and has come to the conclusion that the fundamental ‘truth’ about all things that exist in this creation is one, and not two. He has developed the depth of wisdom and the insight to see the subtle Atma hidden as the ‘truth’ everywhere.

Such a person is certainly ‘Mukta’—i.e. he has obtained freedom from all delusions and ignorance; he has found liberation and deliverance for his ‘self’ from all the worldly fetters that shackle other ordinary and un-realised creatures to this gross world as well as their own equally gross body.

[The wise aspirant has realised that his ‘self’ is the Atma which is eternally free and the most sublime entity; it is distinct from the gross body which an ignorant creature regards erroneously as his ‘self’. The fallacious notions that the body is the ‘self’ and the gross world with its material sense objects is ‘true’ are the cause of all fetters that shackle a creature to them. Once wisdom and true knowledge dawns upon the mental horizon of the aspirant that both these notions are false, and that the truth is elsewhere, he is deemed to have broken the shackle. He realises that the ‘truth’ and his ‘self’ are both the same, and it is known as the pure consciousness or the Atma. The word ‘Atma’ itself means the essence—the ‘soul’—of anything or any given situation. Since the ‘consciousness’ is the essence of life, it is therefore the ‘Atma’ or the cosmic Soul of this creation at the macro level of existence. The same Atma is the true ‘self’ of an individual creature at the micro level of existence in this creation.

Such a man who is enlightened about this ‘truth’ is indeed freed from all fetters of delusions and ignorance. He is the enlightened one who knows about the Atma as well as Brahm.] (44).

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Canto 3

[This Canto is an extension of the previous Canto and primarily deals with the control of the mind—how to do it, and what its benefits are. In the course of this discussion, the higher states of existence of consciousness, such as the Sushupta and Turiya, are also described, along with how to overcome the various Vasanas or passions, and Maya or delusions.]

1. Sage Nidagh enquired from the exalted sage Ribhu, ‘Oh Lord! What is Videha Mukti? Please elaborate upon it for me. Who is that great sage who had attained this sort of Mukti, and which Yoga (meditation and contemplation) did he do in order to attain it?’ (1).

2. [Ribhu replied—] ‘There is a great sage by the name of Pandavya who lives in his hermitage situated on Mt. Sumeru that is located on earth¹. He has obtained the

knowledge of the Tattva (essence; the fundamental knowledge of the Truth) from his learned Guru (moral preceptor) whose name is sage Kaundalya. With this divine knowledge, Pandavya was able to become 'Jivan Mukta'—i.e. he became spiritually liberated and delivered from all bondages even while living possessing a gross body and living with it in this gross world.

[That is, when he accessed true knowledge and became self-realised and enlightened, he did not find it necessary to die and leave this body or the world in order to find freedom from them. He continued to live in this world and bear the body, but still enjoyed all the rewards that come to a man who is actually free from all bondages and fetters. In other words, it is not necessary to physically leave the body to become free from its bondage and break its shackles, which the term 'Videha Mukti' literally means. 'Videha' means one without a body, and 'Mukti' means freedom and deliverance. So, once a man is able to detach himself from the body by realizing the fact that his 'self' is the pure conscious Atma and not the body, he is able to snap all relationships with the body. This is tantamount to his being 'Videha Mukta' while he still lives in this world and has a physical body. Obviously, this state of exalted existence is also known as 'Jivan Mukta', literally meaning 'to be spiritually free even while having a physical gross body with which a person lives a life normally in this material gross world'.

Therefore we conclude that there is no factual difference between being 'Jivan Mukta' and 'Videha Mukta'. They are synonymous with each other for a truly self-realised and enlightened man who has known the 'Truth'.] (2).

[Note—¹Mt. Sumeru has two connotations—one is the celestial mountain located in the heaven where Gods such as Brahma the creator etc. live, and the other is located on earth in the north of the Himalayan range in what is known as the present day Mt. Kailash. This is said to be the abode of Lord Shiva, and nearby it is the legendary lake of fresh water called 'Man Sarovar'. This mountain is an important pilgrim site for Hindus.]

3. This sage (i.e. Pandavya) is regarded as the best amongst those exalted sages who were well-versed in the knowledge pertaining to Brahm. Once he had determined for himself that he would attain this exalted state of Jivan Mukti, he practiced to exercise full control over his mind and sense organs (3).

4. He adopted the path of Yoga in order to achieve this. He practiced 'Baddha-Padmasan'¹ (a special type of sitting posture adopted while doing meditation; the so-called 'closed lotus posture'), had maintained half-open eyes² (indicative of his state of mind that is lost in contemplation and deep thoughts; the state when the man is not sleeping, yet not awake in the conventional term because his mind is not focused on the external world but lost in its own inner thoughts), and had become neutral and immune to all perceptions related to the external world as well as the body³ (i.e. his mind was so transfixed in his spiritual pursuit that it did not register any of the inputs of perception gathered by the external sense organs of the body, such as the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue and the skin, as well as was unaware of the various needs of the body that are normally felt unconsciously by all living beings, such as the feeling of hunger and thirst) (4).

[Note—¹*Baddha Padmasan* is described in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 40, and in Yog Kundalini Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 5, 22-23.

The 'Baddha Padmasan' is the lotus posture in which the two legs are closed in from the knee joints so that the soles of the foot rest one on the top of the other in

front of the groins, and the open palms of the hands are placed on the soles in such a way that they rest upon each other and point upwards. Thus, the palms would be roughly placed just in front of the navel. The body is held ram-rod straight, with the buttocks, the spine, the neck and the head in one straight line.

²The state of the mind when the eyes are half-open or half-closed has been described in Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 7, verse no. 17.

³This state of the mind is called Unmani state as well as Manonmani state. Refer also to Canto 1, verse no. 26 of our present Upanishad.

These have been described in the same Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 17-18, and in verse no. 10 respectively. This Upanishad is Chapter 14 of this present volume of Upanishads belonging to the Atharva Veda.]

5. By diligently and persistently practicing these exercises of Yoga he was able to stabilize his mind. He was able to keep himself neutral and detached from the numerous thoughts that naturally arose in the mind as this is its normal characteristic habit and natural tendency.

[The mind cannot remain idle no matter how hard a man tries to keep it vacant of thoughts. The mind keeps on thinking one thing or the other. In the earlier stages of Yoga this normally happens, and the wise aspirant is advised to just let them come and go on their own much like the waves arising and subsiding on the surface of the ocean. The trick is not to pay attention to these thoughts. By and by they would calm down on their own when no one pays any attention to them. The intellect aspect of the mind has to be trained and fine-tuned to neglect these thoughts that arise in the sub-conscious. Gradually such neglect becomes a natural habit, and in due course of time the man is just not aware whether or not any thought exists at all.]

It is during such lonely states when one has withdrawn himself from the external world and has diverted his efforts to do meditation and contemplation that he becomes free from all external disturbances, and it is then that he realises how restless and fidgety the mind is.

[When a man is involved in the affairs of the world he is so busy with them that he has no time to see whether or not the mind is calm or restless as during active life the mind is never expected to be calm and rested. It is during periods of no external activity that one can judge the inherent and natural wont of the mind. It is then that he discovers that inspite of the absence of all external impulses and disturbances the mind is still as busy and restless as it was while being deeply involved in the activities of the world. This is because when the active mind rests, the sub-conscious takes over, and the result is equivalent to the mind remaining as active as before. When the gross organs of perceptions and actions were involved in the affairs of the world, the mind was engaged in receiving information from the outside world, analyzing them, and then instructing the body to act accordingly.

Since there are five organs of perception (ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin) and five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genital), the condition of the mind was like that of a charioteer trying to control a chariot with ten horses, each trying to pull the chariot the way it prefers. Obviously, to control the ten horses is a daunting task so much so that the charioteer has no time left to think of anything. But suppose he has trained his horses so well that once put on the road they keep on running steadily in a synchronized manner on the path ahead without breaking step, the life of the charioteer would be so much the easier and comfortable. The passenger too would have a pleasant ride. In this example, the charioteer is the mind while the chariot is the body, and the passenger is the Atma of the Jiva, the living being. This is

the situation during the movement of the chariot which can be compared to the Jagrat or the waking state of consciousness.

Now let us examine what happens during the Swapna or the dreaming state. During this state the body is inactive just like a standing chariot. But the charioteer would not find rest. He would go around the chariot and see if anything is wrong; he would pick up the dusting cloth and dust the chariot; he would pat his horses, rub his hands over their back, talk sweetly to them, and feed them. That is, he would do something or the other to keep himself busy for the time the chariot is standing, but he would not use this opportunity to rest. Similarly the mind does not rest when a man dreams; it is as active as it was when the man was fully awake in this world. The only difference these two situations is that while the mind was active at a gross level when the man was awake and interacted with the gross material world, it does so at the subtle level when the man dreams. This is because the world of dreams has its existence at the subtle level instead of at the gross level.]

Hence, no matter how hard a man tries to control the mind and prevent it from swerving towards the material sense objects of the world, the mind continues to defy him and constantly thinks of this world and its charms. This is the cause of the mind's restlessness, its volatility, its fickleness, its inconsistency, its vulnerability, and it being in a state of constant flux (5).

6. Now, examples are given to explain how the mind becomes fickle, freakish, restless and fidgety; how the mind is vulnerable to being influenced by the world and its material things.

At one instant the mind thinks of some cloth, then it jumps to another thing and begins to think of a pitcher, and in the third moment it would think of some cart or vehicle. In this unpredictable way the mind moves from one subject to another in a flickering moment.

Sometimes it begins to think of two things simultaneously. For instance, a monkey sitting on a tree thinks of jumping to another tree but remains undecided whether to continue sitting on the earlier tree or actually leaving it by jumping to another.

[This instance would show why the mind is restless. The monkey's indecision makes it fidgety and un-predictable. Likewise, the mind that is not decisive and steady is also restless and torn between various options. It begins to harbour a plethora of doubts that lead to bewilderments and confusions.] (6).

7. The body of the creature has five 'doors'. These five doors are actually the five sense organs of perception such as the eye etc. The mind ventures out into the world through these five doors. In other words, the mind perceives the external world through these five sense organs. You (Nidagh) must think in this term.

[Just like a man goes out of the house through the door to see the world outside, the mind wanders into the outside world and 'sees' it through the five organs of perception in the body. For instance, the mind 'sees' the sights of the world through the organ known as the eye, hears its noises and sounds through the organ known as the ear, smells its scents through the organ known as the nose, tastes through the organ known as the tongue, and feels the world through the organ known as the skin. These organs of perception of the body employ the medium of the mind to make the Atma aware of the existence of the majestic world with its numerous charms and fascinating forms.

It follows that if one closes these so-called doors, the mind would not be able to perceive anything of the external world because it would not be able to venture out into it. The world would cease to exist for the mind. Hence, if one is able to exercise control over the sense organs of perception of the body, one would easily prevent the mind from wandering out into the material world, getting enthused by its fascinating temptations, and then falling prey to its magnificent charms, however illusionary they are. Once trapped in the maze of delusions and falsehoods, the creature finds it exceedingly difficult to get out. The result of exercising control over the sense organs of the body is a restrained mind, a calmed and rested mind that would not be overwhelmed by the stupendously magnificent scene that unfolds before it as soon as it steps out into this colourful and flamboyant world which is like a stage-managed scene created by a magician. Such a mind would not be the cause of any restlessness and agitation for the aspirant.

Earlier in verse no. 6 the instance of the monkey is cited to explain how the mind and its sub-conscious remain unsatisfied and inconsistent. This would be clear now in the context of the working of the sense organs of perception. Suppose a man attends a party where sumptuous food is being served along with enchantingly melodious music, or some famous movie on show, or where some eminent personality is attending. His mind would be hyper-active and his sense organs would be extremely volatile and impatient—he would fill his plate with one food, but while he is not yet finished relishing its taste his tongue would be longing for some other dish; his eyes would be roving wildly for some other attractive dish somewhere else on the table, and simultaneously looking everywhere through the corner to see what is happening and who is attending the party; his nose would be attracted by some other enticing aroma emanating from some other dish in front of another guest; and while one of his ears would be focused on the music of the orchestra the other would be more interested in listening to the wild gossip flying around him. The cumulative result is that instead of feeling relaxed and rejuvenated at the end of the party, the man feels exhausted, tired and worn-out.] (7).

8. Therefore, you (Nidagh) must learn to exercise exemplary control and self-restraint over the natural tendency of your sense organs of perception to be restless, fidgety, volatile and unsteady; prevent them from being extrovert and hyper-active. Stop paying attention to the constant nagging by these sense organs; neglect them; ignore them.

Instead of this condition of being on the edge, think yourself as the pure conscious Atma that has none of these negative characteristics. Be convinced and firm in your conviction that your true 'self' is not the gross body, with its restless and fidgety sense organs as well as the mind, but the Atma which is pure consciousness and a sublime entity. This Atma is a manifestation of the supreme Lord known as 'Bhagwan'¹.

The Atma is merely a witness of all that is happening around it, and it is not an active participant in any of the events or is at all affected and tainted by them (8).

[Note—¹The Atma is called the *Bhagwan* because it is the ruling Authority in the body whom the sense organs serve. The Atma is the only 'living entity' in the body as it is pure consciousness, while the rest of the body, including the sense organs as well as the mind, is lifeless and inane. While the Atma is immortal, sublime and subtle, the body is mortal, worldly and gross. Just like all the organs of the state machinery serve the sovereign, the Atma is being served by all the sense organs as well as the mind of the body.

The term Bhagwan refers to someone who possesses eclectic qualities and divine virtues that others do not have. That is why Bhagwan is described as the 'Lord' of the world. In the present context, the Atma is 'Bhagwan' as it is the supreme Authority that resides in the body of the creature, and all the organs of the body along with the mind-intellect serve this Atma. Should the Atma leave the body, the latter would be of no worth, and would be dead. This is why the organs and the brain of a dead body do not function because their 'Lord', the Atma, has abandoned it.

The word Bhagwan refers to an enlightened being who possesses certain divine qualities not possessed by ordinary entities, virtues which are even difficult for the Gods to have. The word has two parts—'Bhag' and 'Wan'. The 2nd part 'wan' means 'one who possesses', while the 1st part 'Bhag' means 'one who is like the receptacle or womb' that harbours the following six qualities or virtues—(1) to have 'Aishwarya', which means to possess all the virtues that come under the category of having majesty, powers, wealth, fortune, opulence, flourish, supremacy, sway, dominance, glory, grandeur, omnipotence and other divine faculties in existence; (2) to have all Dharma, which means to possess all virtues that come under the ambit of righteousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, and nobility of thought and conduct; (3) to possess all the glories and majesties that come under the definition of the word Yash, i.e. to have great fame, glory, majesty and renown; (4) to have Sree, i.e. to possess all wealth, prosperity, pomp and circumstance, to have prestige, dignity, respect, honour, splendour and glory, as well as all other factors associated with those qualities mentioned in serial no. 1-3 above; (5) to have complete and comprehensive Gyan, i.e. to have true, deep, incisive, complete and all-incorporating knowledge, erudition, wisdom, skills, expertise and enlightenment; and (6) at the same time to have immaculate and the highest degree of Vairagya, i.e. to have complete renunciation, detachment, indifference and dispassion towards everything in this world. Hence, any entity that is endowed with the above six divine, eclectic and exemplary qualities is called a Bhagwan.

Conventionally, the word is used as a synonym for the words 'Lord, God, Supreme Being', and is used for someone who is glorious, divine, holy, majestic, honoured and revered.]

9. The Atma (pure consciousness) is all-knowing and omniscient. Whatever is known about the world, e.g. whatever the eyes see in this world, is due to the Atma. In other words, without the Atma the creature would not know anything of the world because the organs of perception as well the mind and intellect would not be able to function, and also because the world itself would be devoid of all forms of life.

[It is because the Atma is the 'soul', the quintessential factor of life known as 'consciousness', and as such it forms the very basis of existence and life in this creation. If there is no Atma there would be a complete void, and nothing remains to be known from a void. Nothing exists in a void that is blank and sans any substance and meaning.]

So be happy and feel privileged that you have been enlightened about the Atma, that you have been acquainted with the Atma. With this knowledge, nothing more is left to be known. Be convinced that you have attained final spiritual liberation and deliverance when you have acquired the knowledge of the Atma. Be peaceful and rested. Be free from all worldly torments and sorrows because you are free from the fetters of the world (9).

10. By becoming self-realised you (Nidagh) would be firmly convinced about the truth of your Atma, the pure consciousness that forms your 'true self'. This perpetual state of enlightenment and transcendence is called Turiya, and you would find yourself living in this state day and night. [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 25 also.]

Endeavour to exercise control over your inner-self, and gradually you would be able to control all your Prans, the vital winds that are responsible for all the subtle as well as the gross activities of the body and its various organs¹. [Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 42, 85-87 also in this context.] (10).

[Note—¹Dictionary defines *Pran* as breath, inhaled and exhaled wind, the breath of life, life itself, one of the five chief vital winds or airs that sustain life, strength, valour, courage, energy, vitality, vigour. It is also synonymous with the fire element as well as with the supreme soul or Atma. It is the 'fire element' because both the fire as well as the Pran inject and infuse life into the otherwise lifeless and inane gross body of a creature, enabling it to get up and perform its functions and carry on with its activities. A dead body from which 'life' has exited becomes cold and lifeless, thereby indicating that the fire element that is inherently present in it has been extinguished—we then declare that the man is dead.

The various Prans and how they regulate the functioning of the various parts of the body, which is tantamount to making life flow inside the body through its network of Naadis which would be like the web of wires in an electronic apparatus through which electric impulses flow in order to keep the apparatus alive and activated, have been enumerated in a number of Upanishads—viz. the *Subalo-panishad*, Canto 9, verse no. 1-14 of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which says that there are fourteen vital winds called Prans present in the body. It lists their functions as follows—(1) Pran—this controls eyes and the faculty of sight (verse 1); (2) Apaana—this controls ears and the faculty of hearing (verse 2); (3) Vyan—this controls nose and the faculty of smell (verse 3); (4) Udaan—this controls the tongue and the faculty of taste (verse 4); (5) Samaana—this controls the skin and the faculty of touch (verse 5); (6) Vairambh—this controls speech (verse 6); (7) Mukhya—this controls the hands (verse 7); (8) Antarayam—this controls the legs (verse 8); (9) Prabhanjan—this controls the anus (verse 9); (10) Kurma—this controls the genitals (verse 10); (11) Shyen—this controls the Mana or the thoughts and emotions (verse 11); (12) Krishna—this controls the discrimination, intellect and wisdom (verse 12); (13) Shwet—this controls Ahankar or the notion of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity etc. (verse 13); (14) Naag—this controls the 'Chitta' or the faculty of concentration, memory, sub-conscious, reasoning (verse 14).

The *Shandilya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, section 4, verse nos. 12-13 describes the *fourteen winds*, their *locations* and *functions*. This is Chapter no. 14 of this volume.

The word *Pran* literally means the life of all living beings, so called because the Pran injects life and consciousness in the otherwise lifeless body of the organism. It is represented by the vital winds and life impulses present in the body which keep the body alive, and distinguishes a living body from a dead one. The word 'Pran' is usually associated with the vital winds of the body as it is these winds that keep the body active and alive. The Pran is sometimes used synonymously with the Atma or soul of the creature because both are equally important for a creature's existence. Whereas Pran is a synonym of life and vitality, Atma stands for the consciousness present in the body. Hence both are like the two sides of the same coin called the living being.

Though technically Atma or soul is pure consciousness while Pran is a vital wind or air element, practically they are synonymous with each other. An illustration will clear this point. Suppose a man has lost senses in his limbs—they have been paralysed, or he is lying unconscious due to some serious disease. We regard such a man as alive and not as dead as long as he continues to breathe, and as long as he breathes, or as long as he is technically 'alive' his Atma is deemed to be inside his body, because the true identity or the true self of a man is not his physical body but his Atma. Therefore we do not regard the 'unconscious' body as dead. But when he actually dies, that is, when he stops to breathe, we say that 'his Pran' has left the

body, and that 'he' has died. Now, who has died? It is the person whose Pran has left the body; and the person is the 'self' or the Atma which has left the body when the Pran made its exit from it at the time of death. This is because Pran and Atma depend on each other so much so that as soon as the Pran leaves the body, the Atma also leaves the body and we say that the person is no more. Why do we say that the 'person is no more' when the body is actually lying in front of us? It is because the 'person' is the Atma and not the body, and this Atma has left the body with the Pran at the time of death. When the proper time comes, the Atma leaves the body astride the Pran, riding piggy back on it.

The five main vital winds are Pran, Apaana, Vyan, Udaan and Samaana. Amongst them, the Pran refers to the breath which injects the vital spark of life in a body to keep it alive and active, thereby providing it with the necessary impetus, the energy, vitality and strength to perform its designated functions and duties as a living entity. All the other vital winds are of any relevance and significance only as long as there is Pran in the body for the simple reason that if the body stops breathing it would die, and the dead body has neither the need for the other winds nor are they competent enough to keep it alive relying on their own strength. At the same time, all these vital winds are collectively called Pran because they work in tandem with each other to enable the main Pran, the breath, to actually carry out its function. These vital winds do not exist in separate so-called water tight compartments, as this is an incredulous proposition because air is an element that cannot be compartmentalized into separate entities having distinct existences, but they are named as separate winds just for the academic purpose of studying the way the vital wind or air functions differently in the body to enable it to carry on with its functions. So these other 'Prans' or vital winds besides the breath, both inhaled and exhaled, are the following—Apaana, Vyan, Udaan and Samaana.

So we see that the term 'Pran' is usually applied to breath because it is the vital wind force that injects and sustains life and vitality in a creature. It is synonymous with life, Atma and soul of a living creature. The presence of Pran determines whether a creature is dead or alive; it is a distinguishing factor between the animate and inanimate world. Pran is the essential vibrations of life; it is the rhythm of life; it is the essential characteristic that defines life.

The inherent tendency of the Pran, which is the vital wind residing in the upper part of the body between the heart-lungs and the nose, is to lift the creature to a higher state of noble, righteous, virtuous, auspicious and spiritual existence, to become wise and enlightened. On the contrary, the Apaana winds live in the intestine and pass down through the anus. It symbolizes the downward drag on the creature's spiritual upliftment, pulling it down towards the grosser aspects of creation and the materialistic world which is not only gross but also filthy and worthless like the excretory matters present in the intestine. It also symbolises passions, evils, vices, perversion and attachments to the worldly things at large, and their accompanying perplexities, bewilderments and hassles leading to restlessness and moral turpitude and degradation. This oscillation between the spiritual upliftment and moving upwards towards goodness, and spiritual degradation, moving downwards towards the gross world of sensual pleasures, leads a creature to a continuous cycle of birth and death—this oscillation is like the bouncing of a ball upwards and downwards from the surface of the earth. One must remember that a lot of symbolism, metaphors and allegories have been used in the Upanishad texts to explain things. One should be wise not to lose the spirit while getting bogged down by the literal meaning of the words; one should not lose the wood while searching for the tree. The 'Pran' wind here symbolizes the upward drift which the pure consciousness is inherently inclined to, while the 'Apaana' winds pull it down towards the attractions of the world. The creature remains trapped between the two forces.

This 'vital wind' called Pran is one of the five elements of creation, called the Panch Bhuts, the others being earth, water, fire and sky.

The Upanishads describing the various connotations and aspects of the Pran or the vital winds are, inter alia, the following:—

(i) Sam Veda—*Chandogya Upanishad* in its Canto 3, sections 13; Canto 5, section 1, verse nos. 1-15; Canto 5, sections 19-23 (describes how the five winds are satisfied; it also enumerates the Mantras pertaining to the five Prans); and Canto 7, section 15, verse no. 1; *Jabal Darshan panishad*, Canto 4, verse no.23-24; *Maitrayanu Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse no. 6-7 (which describes the functions of these winds).

(ii) Shukla Yajur Veda—*Subalo Upanishad*, Canto 9, verse no.1-14; *Paingalo-panishad*, canto 2, verse no.3; *Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 5, 8-9; Canto 2, verse nos. 54, 77-87; *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*, Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse no. 26; Canto 4, Brahman 2, verse no. 4; Canto 4, Brahman 1, verse no. 3; Canto 5, Brahman 13; Canto 6, Brahman 1.

(iii) Krishna Yajur Veda—*Dhyandindu Upanishad*, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-60, 95-100; *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 28; *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 166; *Amritnado-panishad*, verse no. 33-38; *Brahm Vidya Upanishad*, verse no. 17-19; *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 165 and Canto 5, verse no. 2; *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Valli 3, Anuvak 3, 7; *Katho-panishad*, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 10; *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 2 (especially describes the three methods to control the Prans); *Pran Agnihotra Upanishad*, verse nos. 11-12, 14-18 (which describe the fingers that are directly related to the five principal winds and the Mantras of these winds).

(iv) Atharva Veda—*Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 10 (that says that Pran controls all the activities of the body); Canto 4, verse nos. 42 (that says that the Chitta Vrittis inspire the Prans to become active), 85-89 (that say that control of Pran is equivalent to control of Vasanas, and briefly outline the methods by which Pran can be controlled); Canto 5, verse nos. 25-32, 50-53 (its verse nos. 52-53 aver that for a self-realised ascetic, the terms Pran and consciousness are the same); *Prashna Upanishad*, Canto 2-3; *Mundak Upanishad*, Canto 3, section 1, verse no. 4; *Shandilya Upanishad*, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 12-13; *Annapurna Upanishad*,

(v) These vital winds have also been elucidated upon in sage Veda Vyas' *Adhyatma Ramayan*, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39.]

11. When the fuel is exhausted, the fire would be automatically doused. There is a close link between the fire and the fuel.

[The fire depends upon the fuel to make its appearance and to remain lighted. But it burns the fuel and finally dies down. The fuel on the other hand burns itself out when put in the fire. In other words, ultimately neither the fire nor the fuel survives.

This analogy is used to explain how the activities of the body and the Pran are inter-related and inter-dependent. The body is the fire, and the Pran is the fuel. The Pran keeps the body active but in the process it gets worn out, exhausted and depleted in strength due to age and so many other factors associated with life, and the toll it takes on the body. Finally, both the body and the Pran would wither away and die; both become weak and exhausted, and a time comes that both stop their movement and activities. It is said that then the creature has died. But this statement does not depict the correct picture—because, for one, the creature's true identity is his Atma, the pure consciousness, and not the physical gross body that has died, and second, the body has become unconscious or lifeless because the Pran or the vital winds have become weak and unable to support the body. The 'Jiva' or the creature has not died because his Atma is an immortal and imperishable entity that is distinct and separate from the gross body that has been made weak by the weakness of the Pran. The Atma does not become weak even if the Pran becomes weak.]

Anything that has risen would set, and anything that has set would rise. This cycle would continue till the final rest and ultimate dissolution of creation.

[The sun is the best example of this doctrine. In the present context it refers to the fact that when the body dies, the Atma is for once liberated from its bondage, but soon it lands itself in another body to take a new birth. Since the Atma is the true identity of the aspirant, it is tantamount to the aspirant dying and taking birth again and again in a never-ending cycle.

In this scenario, the only way of ending this circle and breaking free from its shackle is to permanently de-link the Atma from the body and the world. This can happen only when the aspirant realises that except for the Atma the rest of the world, including the body, are non-truths and hollow. There is no use in longing for them or remaining involved in them. To achieve this end, he has to control his mind and the various Prans. When they are fully controlled and trained, the Atma would easily break free from the fetters that tie it to the body and the world. The mind would stop being enticed by the false charms of the material world, and it would in its turn direct the body to keep a safe distance from the world. The Prans need to be controlled because they are the instruments that directly play a role in the activities of the body. If the body is to be controlled, then both the mind as well as the Pran needs to be controlled.

Further, as long as the body is kept active by the Prans, the creature would never find rest as he would continue to interact with the external world and receive numerous inputs from it that would constantly keep the mind on its toes. This is because the sense organs of perception would be kept activated when the body is kept activated by the Prans. To break this circuit it is necessary to rein in the Prans. When the Prans subside, the world would also subside. Both would 'set' once and for all, thereby giving the spiritual aspirant his much sought-after Mukti—i.e. his liberation and deliverance from all fetters. Otherwise, the cycle of rising and setting would continue unabated.] (11).

12. A person who has cultivated exemplary degree of equanimity and neutrality, who has become highly dispassionate and detached from everything, accepts all perceptions with equal detachment and non-involvement. He treats the favourable as well as the unfavourable, the pleasant as well as the unpleasant, the good as well as the bad with equally stoic attitude and indifference. Therefore, he remains untainted and unaffected by any of the things or tidings of the world. None of them is able to influence him and disturb his spiritual calmness and poise.

In fact, even when he seems to be physically awake he is actually sleeping internally, because like a sleeping man he registers nothing about the events in the physical gross world around him.

Similarly, even when he appears to be physically sleeping he is actually wide awake as he is internally mediating and contemplating.

For a truly wise, enlightened and self-realised man both the situations are alike—whether or not he is awake, whether or not he is asleep, he maintains his mental equilibrium and calmness. He remains in a steady state of meditation and contemplation whether he is awake or asleep.

[Or in other words, unlike ordinary creatures whose mind-intellect is completely absorbed in the world during their waking state of consciousness, a wise, enlightened and self-realised man remains lost in his deep thoughts of the Atma, and is meditating and contemplating internally even though he is doing all his deeds in a normal way in this world externally. But inspite of his physical body doing any deed,

his mind-intellect apparatus is not involved in the deeds done by the body. The ignorant world and cynics would say that he is 'absent-minded' or suffering from some mental disease, but the fact is quite the contrary. This man is wise and enlightened; he is enjoying the bliss that comes with total detachment and non-involvement with the world, and the peace that this gives to the soul, the pure conscious 'self'. What is the use of pretending to be happy by enjoying the transient pleasures of the world when the long-term effect is misery and pain? What is the use of keeping a false or artificial smile on the lip to please the world when the heart is full of sorrows? Is it not wiser to be called dull-witted and stupid by the ignorant ones but reap the rich harvest of ever-lasting peace, tranquility and bliss that comes with total detachment and non-involvement?] (12).

13. Such a man remains neutral and detached towards all the objects of the senses, whether they pertain to the gross external world or the subtle internal world.

[The 'gross external world' is the world during the waking state of consciousness, called the Jagrat state. The 'subtle internal world' is the world of his dreams, called the Swapna state. In both the cases the sense organs have a natural tendency to run towards their respective objects in the corresponding world. When the man is awake, the physical body and its sense organs are active and they are directed by the mind, while in the dreaming state the same thing happens but at a subtle level when the sub-conscious takes over the role of the extrovert mind. During the waking state the physical body is active and the Prans help in its various efforts, while in the dreaming or sleeping state the Prans are active, but now at a subtle level by flowing through the various Naadis (nerves and veins) in the body and keeping the subtle world alive for the sub-conscious. For all practical purposes, the Atma does not find any kind of peace as long as it allows its self to remain involved in the world—whether that involvement is at a gross level as during the waking state of existence, or at the subtle level as during the dreaming state of existence.

In other words, a truly self-realised and enlightened man would have so trained his mind and sub-conscious that whether he is awake or sleeping, they remain neutral towards and detached from the world of the corresponding state. The effect is that the man is never disturbed, he is always peaceful and blissful, he can effectively practice meditation and contemplation in both the states. Extended further, it would mean that his Prans have been controlled both in the waking state as well as in the sleeping state.]

Such a man is said to have attained the state of Turiya, or transcendental state of existence of consciousness. He remains as unmoved and stoic as the pillar of a building. He bears the body till the time comes to abandon it just like a pillar that supports a building till the time comes for its demolition (13).

14. All the three worlds (the mortal world, the world of the spirits, and the heavens; the past, the present and the future) exist simply because the creature determines that they exist. Hence, it is very easy to discard them (by simply determining internally that the world does not exist).

[The entire world is a creation of the mind of the creature that is determined to create it with its stupendous and most excellent creative powers. It first imagines something and then believes that it is a fact. Hence, should a man determine that the world does not exist for him the latter would instantly become non-existent at the subtle level of the sub-conscious mind inspite of the world's gross physical presence.]

Such a man establishes a link between his individual 'self' and 'Pranav', the supreme Brahman or the cosmic 'Self', with the aid of the divine word 'OM' (by mentally repeating it constantly). This OM acts like a long and sturdy thread that links the individual 'self' with the cosmic 'Self'¹ (14).

[Note—¹In Yoga Upanishads it has been described how the ascetic does meditation by using OM as a Mantra for various Yogic exercises. This Mantra is used to focus the attention of the mind on the supreme transcendental Consciousness. The Mantra OM is repeated constantly, consistently and persistently. It is believed that the Pran of the individual creature leaves the body and attains oneness with the cosmic Pran by riding on this OM Mantra just like someone ascending to the top floor of a high-rise building with the aid of an elevator. Refer *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11-2, and Canto 5, verse nos. 34, 69-72; *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse nos. 9-17; *Amrit Naad Upanishad*, verse no. 24, 31-32; *Kshuriko-panishad*, verse nos. 2-5; *Yog Tattva Upanishad*, verse no. 19, 21-22, 63, 136-139; *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 14; *Yogchudamani Upanishad*, verse nos. 71, 86, 101-104.

The movement of the Pran and the energy generated by such movement produces a resonance inside the body which translates into sound just like blowing air into the conch shell or a flute produces a loud sound. In the cosmic ether, sound is produced when waves generated in the ether collide with each other or rub against each other. The sound effect is enhanced manifold when these waves overlap each other because then the energy of the individual waves are augmented. The cause of this event happening in the cosmic ether is the 'cosmic consciousness'.

The humming of the Mantra OM produces a sound that replicates this cosmic sound inside the body of the man. The skull of a creature is like an inverted parabolic dome of the creation, and it is here that this sound is heard and produces a reverberation. The movement of the Pran adds energy to these sound waves. The result is an enhanced hearing of the cosmic sound. The waves of this sound produce an experience of extreme thrill because they massage the nerves of the brain. Since the Pran moves inside the various Naadis of the body, the energy thus generated is carried to all parts of the body through these Naadis which act like the electric wires in a house that carry electricity to all the points in the building.

The individual creature's body is a microcosm of the entire creation. When we chant OM, the vibrations created by it help to keep the Prans revitalized and energized by producing waves of sound that inspire movement in the vital winds present inside the body. In other words, OM helps to charge the dynamo of life by way of keeping the Prans energized—the energy that is produced by the reverberation of the sound of OM helps to prevent the Prans from getting weak and feeble. It is like keeping the fan turned on when one sleeps; the fan would keep the room airy and help in the circulation of air inside the otherwise closed confines of a room.

The vibrations generated by the sound of OM create waves in the vital winds present inside the body of the creature. Movement of these waves would produce energy that would keep the body not only active and alive but rejuvenated and energized too. Thus the cumulative affects of the chanting of the Mantra OM are manifold—but in the context of Pran it is to keep them active, moving and energized, and preventing them from becoming feeble and unable to support the body and its activities. Since the Atma has adopted this body as its habitat, OM also helps to give comfort to the Atma, which means to the individual Jiva because the Atma is his true 'self'.]

15. Even as a bird finds its liberation by willingly leaving the cage and flying into the sky with the help of the wind, the Atma too finds its liberation by voluntarily leaving the gross body and flying to its freedom with the aid of the Prans or the vital winds.

Since this sort of Mukti (liberation and deliverance) envisages abandoning the gross body with all its sense organs, compositely called the 'Deha', it is known as 'Videha Mukti'—i.e. the freedom that is obtained by leaving the gross body for good.

When this happens, the 'self' becomes absolutely pure and sublime because it is even physically free from being forced to have some kind of contact with the gross body, however superficial and perfunctory it may be, as was the case when the creature was alive and his 'self' (i.e. his Pran or vital life-forces) had to live inside the precincts of the gross body. No faults and negativity that are inherent to the body would any longer be relevant for the creature who has attained Videha Mukti (15).

[Note—With Videha Mukti as described here in this verse, the individual creature is able to actually leave the body and fully break his links with it. It is different with Jivan Mukti in the present context because in the latter case the Pran, or the vital life-forces and consciousness of the creature, still lives inside the gross body. So no matter how detached or disassociated the creature might train himself to be from the body, but by the virtue of the fact that he has to live inside it he is subject to constant harassment and nagging by the body and its sense organs. Even if he maintains complete neutrality it would still cost him great effort and constant vigilance to maintain his neutrality. And this would drain his energy and would interfere with his peace and restfulness.

On the other hand, when he leaves the body, the detachment and disassociation is complete and final. No taints and grossness of the body would have any kind of effect on the creature any longer. He would not be at the mercy of the body and the mind for maintaining his peace and bliss. The link would be so severely severed that no vestiges of earlier life are left behind. Even if the creature did harbour some remnants of negative traits so characteristic of the gross body and the world in which the creature lives, none would survive once the body is discarded.

The creature who has attained Videha Mukti attains the supreme stature of becoming one with the all-pervading, universal and cosmic Divinity known as Pranav or Brahm, the supreme transcendental 'Self' or the cosmic Consciousness. In other words, the individual 'self' merges with its primary source, the cosmic 'Self'.

In Upanishads dealing with Yoga, this process of the Pran actually leaving the body by means of various techniques of meditation have been described in considerable detail. Basically it entails first controlling the various Prans inside the body by practicing Pranayam and other Yoga exercises, and then diverting it up through the Kundalini, the coiled energy centre of the body at the lower end of the spine, so as to reach the forehead. Here the ascetic experiences extreme sense of bliss and ecstasy. The Pran rises further ahead and reaches the top of the head from where it escapes into the outer sky through the Brahm-Randhra, the hair-like slit present in the skull, to become one with and inseparable from the air element that is universally present everywhere in the vast bowls of the sky. Incidentally, the Pran and the air element are synonymous entities. While the 'air' left to its own accord is neutral and apparently without any evident signs of 'life', the subtle dynamism it contains is revealed in the form of 'Pran' that infuses 'life' in the otherwise lifeless and gross world.

This is a one-way escape of the Pran from the confines of the gross body into the air outside is tantamount to the creature's final liberation and deliverance.

In this context, the term 'Pran' and 'life' as well as 'consciousness' are taken to mean the same thing; they all refer to the actual 'conscious self', the 'living being' who finds his emancipation and salvation by this method of Yoga.]

16. Oh the excellent sage (Nidagh)! The state of the mind and the sub-conscious of a man who has attained self-realisation and has reached the transcendental state of consciousness known as Turiya is as innocent, pure and uncorrupt as that of a new-

born child. At the same time it is as calm and motionless (i.e. steady and poised; free from all agitations, restlessness, bewilderments, confusions, perplexities and doubts) as the wind which has no vibrations or movement in it, which is absolutely calm and static (16).

[Note—We can understand it with a simple example. The leaves of a banyan tree shake with the slightest hint of breeze, but when there is no movement in the leaves we conclude that there is surely no breeze. Similarly, when the mind is quietened the Pran is deemed to be quiet, and when the Pran is quietened the mind is also deemed to be quiet. In practical terms it means that when the creature has been successful in controlling the natural tendency of the mind to think of worldly things and harbouring desires for anything in this world, he is able to control the activities of his body because he would not allow any of the gross organs of perception and action in the body to have anything to do with the sense objects of the gross world. A regulated body is equivalent to regulated Prans because all the activities of the body are under the control and supervision of the various vital winds present inside it as outlined in note of verse no. 10 of this Canto.

The reverse is also true. If the body is not involved in enjoying the world and getting involved in its affairs, if the gross sense objects of the material world fail to tempt the body, it is natural that the mind would be in peace and at rest. It becomes restless because it is constantly being bombarded by countless inputs of the sensory perceptions originating in the external world.]

17. A self-realised and enlightened man lives with a calm, peaceful and steady mind and sub-conscious that is the natural state of consciousness during the Sushupta state. In this state, the only entity that exists is the consciousness with its grand sublime virtues and eclectic divine qualities, while the world, both the gross and the subtle, are made redundant. Thus, the man can live peacefully and blissfully, without any kind of restlessness and agitations, or any kind of bewilderments, confusions or doubts when he has reached the Sushupta state of existence.

[The Sushupta state is the third state of existence of consciousness when the mind as well as the sub-conscious has been rendered inactive, or they have shut down. This is a higher state of sleep and it comes beyond the second state of Swapna or dreams when the sub-conscious mind is active even though the active aspect of the mind is shut down. Since the mind is the only instrument that acts as a link between the pure consciousness and the external world, whether at the gross level or at the subtle level, so when the mind is kept aside, the consciousness is left alone, and it is then that the latter's natural and inborn characteristics and virtues come to the fore. The glories of the Atma make their presence felt during the Sushupta state of existence of consciousness because now there is no interference of any kind, either from the external world or from the internal world of the sub-conscious mind.]

This Sushupta state is the preparatory state for the higher state of Turiya. In other words, what is experienced during the Sushupta state is made permanent and robust in the Turiya state (refer verse no. 18 below). The Turiya state is compared to a large mountain which is absolutely unmoving and unchanging over time no matter what happens in the world around it.

[No seasons affect it; rain, sunshine and tempest are equal for it. It may be covered by snow and barren cliffs, or it might harbour a vibrant wildlife and a dense verdant forest, but none of them ever bothers the mountain. Similarly, nothing of the world ever affects the inner-self of a spiritually enlightened aspirant who has attained the Turiya state of existence. This state is marked by absolute calmness of

demeanours; it is an eclectic state of blissfulness and peace of a high order. This is the state of spiritual blessedness.] (17).

18. By first attaining the Sushupta state he progresses and graduates to the higher state of Turiya. Such an attained soul achieves an eclectic state of existence where everything is alike for it, where it does not distinguish between a situation that gives happiness and bliss, and another that does not. For an enlightened man, there is no such thing as something being 'true' and the other being 'un-true', for he has developed complete neutrality towards everything else except the Consciousness that he knows is an irrefutable and unequivocal Truth of existence. Once the 'Absolute Truth' is known, other 'non-absolute truths' do not bother him at all.

[In other words, he lives in that higher state of consciousness where mundane matters do not cast their dark shadow of unhappiness and misery. He is so high up in the hierarchy of existence that lowly things do not matter for him or bother him much like the sun that is unbothered by small patches of the earth that are covered by clouds or some deep cave where no sunshine ever reaches. The earth rotates on its axis as it goes around the sun so that every other moment a new fraction of the earth's surface would face the sun, but the sun is unconcerned.] (18).

19. In the higher state of spiritual realisation, the enlightened man attains an eclectic form that is invisible, divine, sublime and most subtle.

[This is because now he is not to be recognized by his gross body or the state of the mind. His true identity in the higher echelons of realisation is the Atma, the pure consciousness that is an ethereal entity that is not physically visible as it has no grossness like the body. The Atma has no such thing as a separate mind that needs to be taught and tamed, a mind that has to learn something—this is because the Atma is eternally and inherently all-knowing and omniscient; it does not need to be taught and made any more wiser than what it already is.]

This subtle and invisible form cannot be described or narrated by speech; it is beyond the reach of words and the faculty of speech. [Why is it so? Now, this question is being answered—] It is because his form is transformed (from being something gross like the body) into something that is ethereal and sublime, a form which is described as 'Shunya' (or a void, a non-being, the complete absence of grossness and awareness of the material world, the highest degree of neutrality and subtlety like the zero gravity in outer space where there is no weight in even the heaviest of things) by those who are votaries of this philosophy, and as 'Brahm' (or the most sublime, all-pervading and omnipresent cosmic Consciousness) by those who espouse the philosophy of Brahm.

[The form that is being referred to in this verse is that of the pure conscious Atma or the soul or the true 'self' of the aspirant, or for that matter of any living being. This 'Atma' is looked at from different angles and assigned different names under various schools of philosophies. Some are mentioned in the present verse and others are outlined in the following verses.

The Atma is known as 'Shunya' because it is absolutely dispassionate, unattached and neutral like the center of a bar magnet. The word 'Shunya' also implies the void of the sky which harbours everything in existence but itself remains unattached to and unaffected by any of them—a virtue that the Atma too possesses. Like the numerical 'zero' (Shunya) that itself is neutral but gives other numerals their enhanced value in terms of tens of hundreds and thousands, the Atma itself remains neutral and inactive but it is the only entity that is the cause of this creation and makes

the world go around. It is the Atma that lends dynamism and life to this otherwise lifeless and inane world. What worth is a world that is dead, because if the Atma—the ‘consciousness’—leaves it the world would be dead in an instant.

The same Atma exists in two planes of existences—one is at the microcosmic level of the individual creature in which case it is simply called the Jiva-Atma, and at the cosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing level in which it is called the Parmatma, the supreme Atma or the Supreme Being. This Supreme Being is none else but Brahm, or the cosmic super Consciousness, that forms the basis and is the soul of the entire creation.] (19).

20. Again, a self-illuminated and enlightened Atma (i.e. the ‘self’ of the spiritually attained man) has the form that is immaculate and pristine pure, a form that is absolutely untainted and free from all worldly corruptions. This form of the Atma is the one that is lauded and honoured by those who are called ‘Gyanis’—the wise and enlightened men who have in-depth knowledge and a high level of sagacity and erudition.

Similarly, the same Atma is known as the ‘Purush’ (the primordial Being who is the cause of creation) by the followers of Sankhya Shastra (which is a school of philosophy propounded by an ancient sage named Kapil).

Those who follow the philosophy of Yoga (meditation) call this Atma as the ‘Ishwar’ (literally the ‘Lord’ of all that exists, the Supreme Being himself personified). [The followers of Yoga strive to find Mukti or Moksha, i.e. liberation and deliverance, salvation and emancipation, by experiencing this Atma as the pure consciousness in the higher stages of meditation and contemplation. When this is achieved, they experience bliss and ecstasy of the highest kind. They regard this achievement as the realisation of the Supreme Being. For the Yogis, realisation of the individual consciousness known as the ‘Atma’ and establishing its oneness with the cosmic Consciousness known as ‘Ishwar’ is tantamount to having attained Mukti and Moksha. Since the Atma resides nowhere else but in the inner-self itself, the Yogi endeavours to realise his ‘true self’ to attain Mukti and Moksha. For this, he takes the recourse of many methods of Yoga outlined in the Upanishads dealing with the latter.] (20).

21. For Shaivas (the followers of Lord Shiva), the Atma is Shiva.

[‘Shaivas’ are the followers of Lord Shiva who treat him as the Supreme Being. Lord Shiva is the third of the Trinity Gods, and is the concluder of creation. Since he is the Supreme Being, he is also known as ‘Mahadev’—the Great Lord. The word ‘Shiva’ itself refers to an entity that is pure, truthful, blissful, uncorrupt and most enlightened. Since the Atma is inherently endowed with these virtues, it is most apt to call it ‘Shiva’.]

For those who regard the ‘Kaal’ as the supreme force, the powerful influence and the superseding Authority in creation that controls everything in existence, the Atma is none else but Kaal personified.

[The word ‘Kaal’ applies to such concepts as time and period, circumstance, situation, occasion, age, era, fate and destiny, and even to death. The God of death and destiny is known as Yam. Nothing can overcome the force of Kaal; it is the factor that determines what would happen when. Those who regard the term ‘Supreme Being’ to mean a supreme entity that has overriding power and authority in creation, they treat ‘Kaal’ as the Supreme Authority. Since the Atma is the supreme entity in creation, since all life would be obliterated if there was no ‘consciousness’ in the

gross body and the equally gross world, since it is the presence of this consciousness that decides as to how long a given entity can live and when it would die (because 'death' means that instant when the consciousness has physically abandoned the gross body of a creature), since the word 'Atma' itself means the 'soul' that is the basis of anything in existence, it follows that the Atma is none but a personified form of Kaal as defined herein above.]

The Atma is such a flexible, adaptable, all-encompassing, all-inclusive and all-pervading cosmic entity that nothing in this creation is excluded from its purview or reach. It transforms its self in any way or any form whatsoever one wishes it to perceive it in.

[To illustrate this phenomenon one can take the example of water present in so many varieties and forms—such as ice, snow, vapour, cloud, steam, liquid water, river, lake and etc. They are all 'water' in their basic form. Another illustration would be 'gold' which can be moulded into a variety of shapes and sizes to make ornaments of gold which in their external form would have no resemblance to the primary metal, but are 'gold' nonetheless.]

The Atma also appears as the subtle aspect of the heart for those who believe in the existence of the body.

[The 'heart' is the only organ in the body without which life would be snuffed out in an instant. A man can survive without any of one or more of his sense organs of perception or action—such as a deaf man, a dumb man, a blind man, a man who can't smell due to some serious infection of the nasal passage as it happens during cold and catarrhs, a lame man, an impotent man, etc. Similarly, a man who has no intelligence worth the name or whose mind is not working at all—such as a mad man, a block-headed ill-witted stupid etc.—too can survive. Again, in cases of emergencies, people are known to survive when one of their internal organs or a part of them are removed—such as the cases when one kidney is damaged and is removed by doctors, or when a part of the lung is removed due to cancer or malignancy. But say, can anyone live even for a fleeting moment if the heart stops beating, or if a part of it has malfunctioned? Can anyone survive the collapse of the heart? It is the heart that pumps blood, the 'river of life', through the countless veins and arteries meandering through the length and breadth of the body.

The breath and other vital winds in the body, called the Prans, would not be able to keep the body of the man alive if the heart does not do its duty, if the heart stops functioning. Similarly, the brain, which harbours the man's mind-intellect apparatus, would not be able to keep the body alive should the heart decide to call it quits. Mere good appetite and excellent digestion would not do any good to the body if the heart does not allow the blood to take the nutrients to all the distant parts of the body of the creature. In brief, there is nothing in the gross body that can keep the man alive if the heart does not cooperate. In other words, the heart is the 'core' of life in the body of a living being. Since we recognize that the essence and core of life is known as the Atma, it follows that the physical heart is the centre or the seat of the Atma that is the supreme Authority in the creature's body. Left to its own accord, as everyone knows, the heart is merely a mass of flesh and blood, but it is the 'consciousness' that is quietly and imperceptibly present in it that powers the dynamo of life in the form of the subtle currents of electric that activates the physical aspect of the heart and keeps it working. Since this 'consciousness' is the 'core of the heart', or we can say it is the single most important entity that gives the physical organ known as the heart its importance for the life of a living being, it is most appropriate to call it the 'Atma' or the 'soul' of the heart. It is the basis of the heart's importance and

significance vis-à-vis the life in the body of the creature. And since the heart itself is the core and basis of life in the otherwise lifeless gross body, it is also apt to call the heart as being equivalent to the Atma of the creature, for no one can survive without the heart. Therefore, in a metaphoric way and in the context of metaphysical importance and relevance of the heart vis-à-vis the Jiva, the living being, the heart is like the Atma for the Jiva.] (21).

22. The Atma lives as the essence and the ultimate truth of anything in existence; it is the 'soul' of existence; it is the factor without which nothing would exist.

For those who treat the Atma (or pure consciousness) as being a self-illuminated source of divine 'light', it is like the un-flickering flame of a lamp that is not disturbed by breeze.

[The light emanating from such a lamp is steady and its flame is erect. The Atma of a wise and enlightened man too is constant, steady, upright and straight; there is no crookedness or deceit in it; it does not deflect from its chosen path if left untouched by worldly delusions. Just like the un-flickering and steady light of the lamp illuminates its surroundings uniformly, the Atma too illuminates the inner-being of the spiritual aspirant uniformly. In other words, when one realises the Atma it is said that he has become 'self-realised' because he has gained the knowledge of the divine entity that is at the core of creation, that is the ultimate Truth of creation, that is a fount of eternal knowledge that leads one to his spiritual liberation and deliverance, the knowledge that is at once the most enlightening and spiritually empowering, the knowledge which provides the creature his salvation and emancipation.] (22).

23. The Atma is to be experienced and witnessed first hand by the spiritual aspirant—i.e. it cannot be taught or bought by someone, given to or taken from someone, nor can it be brought from somewhere or taken somewhere else. It has to be realised by the aspirant himself, and that too within his own inner-self and no where outside. This is the philosophy of those who espouse the importance and import of the eclectic doctrine of 'self-realisation'.

For the adherents of the philosophy of 'Dwaitya' (i.e. those who believe that the same Atma exists at two planes—one as the visible world and the other as the transcendental world, both being real in the plane they exist), the Atma assumes the corresponding dual form. That is, they regard the same essence known as the Atma as having a dual form—viz. it is 'Vyakta' or manifested, as well as 'Avyakta' or unmanifested; it is varied, diverse and multifarious on the one hand, and one, unchanging, uniform and immutable on the other hand. They would treat the physical gross world as true because it is the Atma in that form, and simultaneously regard the transcendental state that is subtle and sublime also as true as the Atma exists in this form too.

The Atma is such an exceptionally fascinating, esoteric, enigmatic, mystical and mysterious sublime and divine entity that inspite of the various and numerous ways it is perceived and understood to exist, it is all of them simultaneously and none of them exclusively; all its forms are true and no one form can claim to represent it exclusively to the exclusion of any of the other forms. The Atma incorporates all the myriad definitions that are assigned to it for the purpose of understanding its profundity and it stands true to each of these criterions, but it cannot be limited to any one of them exclusively. In other words, the Atma is an incomprehensible and an indefinable entity in creation (23).

24. The Atma (the pure cosmic Consciousness) is a sublime and divine entity that is most unique by nature. The Atma is an entity that is without a birth as it is eternal, that never dies as it is imperishable, that has no beginning as it is both eternal and infinite, and that is the beginning of everything in the sense that the rest of the creation has its origin in it. The Atma is regarded as the immaculate and most exalted entity by reaching or realizing which a seeker is said to have attained the supreme stature. It is an all-inclusive element in creation with nothing out of its purview and reach. It is absolutely neutral, dispassionate and detached as well as universal and uniform by its inherent nature.

A self-realised, wise and enlightened spiritual seeker who has realised this eclectic and divine Atma in its truthful form is said to have become as immaculate, holy, divine and pure as the Atma itself.

[This is because this seeker would have realised that his ‘true self’ is the pure consciousness known as the Atma which possesses the grand virtues enumerated above.]

He vision and thoughts expand and he becomes all-inclusive like the vast sky. Such a man is deemed to be as free and unbound as the sky that cannot be shackled by or bonded to anything.

[In other words, just like the sky harbours innumerable objects in its vast bowls but remains basically uninterested in them or unbound to them, the wise and enlightened man accepts all doctrines and philosophies with stoic neutrality, and instead remains focused on the spiritual path he has chosen for himself. He lives in this world, sustains a body, interacts with others by the medium of a gross body in this physical world—but internally he is completely detached and separated from all of them. This is because he knows the eclectic spiritual truth that what is meant by the term ‘he’ is a divine and sublime entity known as the Atma which is pure consciousness, and not the physical gross body which lives and interacts in an equally gross world. He also knows that this Atma is not only immortal and eternal but infinitely powerful and sublime as opposed to the body which is mortal, with a limited power and reach.] (24).

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Canto 4

[This Canto is a further elaboration of the concepts of Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti that were initiated in Canto 3. During the ensuing discussion, the concept of Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) and Mana (mind and heart), and how to refine and control them are elaborately explained. Further incorporated in the discussion is the concept of Vasana and Vritti (the inherent passion, lust and desires that a creature has, as well his natural temperaments and inclinations respectively).

All these three components—viz. (i) Mukti, (ii) Chitta and Mana, and (iii) Vasana and Vritti—are intricately related to each other, and one must have a comprehensive understanding of them all if one wishes to obtain spiritual welfare.]

1. [Sage Nidagh asked the exalted sage Ribhu—] ‘Oh exalted sage! What are the signs of freedom that is known as Jivan Mukti (i.e. to be free from all spiritual bondages even when a man is alive in this world and lives a normal life), and how does it differ from the freedom that is obtained when flies off into the sky (i.e. the

Videha Mukti, the spiritual freedom found when one actually dies and leaves the physical body so that the spirit present inside it is freed from its fetters)?

If there is an actual state of existence when one can move freely in the sky without being subjected to any fetters (as is expected to happen going by the literal meaning of the term ‘Videha Mukta’), then why is that Jiva (the living being; the creature) not visible in the sky?’ (1).

2. [Sage Ribhu answered—] ‘As far as moving in the sky, or being able to fly freely and being physically visible is to be regarded as the criterion for a person who has attained Mukti, even those ignorant and lowly creatures who have no idea about the concept of the Atma, the pure consciousness (such as the bird), would serve the purpose.

[That is, if you regard being able to fly freely in the sky and the flier’s visibility as the only criterion for determining that liberated souls who have abandoned the gross body and have broken free from its shackles exist in the space of the sky then you can satisfy yourself by watching the bird or any other inane and gross thing that is visible in the sky, such as the kite or the cloud. But they are not the ones who fall under the criterion of liberated souls; they are not ‘Jivas’ or living beings even by any stretch of imagination. It would be most stupid and absolutely insane and incredulous to suggest it.]

An ignorant creature who is unaware of the ‘Atma’, the ethereal and pure consciousness, and who has not understood the real meaning of what constitutes ‘Mukti’ (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) and its intention, employs numerous means to attain the latter (Mukti)—such as for instance he attempts to gain Mukti by the use of material things (e.g. by giving wealth as donations, making charities of material wealth, doing sacrifices involving huge consumption of materials such as fuel, offerings etc.), or by employing various Mantras (spiritual formulas, and doing rituals with them, or doing Japa or repetition of these Mantras), or else by performing numerous deeds (such as doing auspicious deeds as going on pilgrimage, serving others, participating in religious activities etc.), or by waiting for the opportune moment to obtain Mukti (such as living in a holy site and waiting for natural death in the hope that Mukti would be found if one dies in such a place).

In other words, only those who are ignorant about the true nature of Mukti believe that it can be attained by making some physical effort and spending energy on its pursuance.

[The fact is that all these are erroneous ways of looking at the concept of Mukti. The Mukti that is envisaged by the Upanishad is different and not dependent upon any of the methods listed here. It is directly related to the knowledge of the truthful Atma, and identifying one’s self with the Atma and not the body in which the Atma lives. True Mukti is freedom from the stubborn shackle produced by ignorance and delusions.] (2).

3. This is not how the subject matter of Mukti¹ is treated by those who know the truth of the Atma (i.e. who are self-realised and know the truth of pure conscious soul). A person who is truly wise and enlightened is focused on the Atma only, and is not deviated by numerous ways the same truth is interpreted in this world by those who are deluded and ignorant.

He is contented with the knowledge that is known as ‘Vidya’, or the truthful knowledge of the Atma (i.e. the spiritual ‘truth’ that is related to the pure

consciousness), and does not run behind 'Avidya' or the false knowledge of things that are non-Atma (i.e. things that are non-truths) (3).

[Note—¹The term *Mukti* refers to a state of existence of the creature when he is free from all bondages and fetters. A person who has attained spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation is the one who has truly attained Mukti. Mere freedom from bodily bondages is not spiritual Mukti, and such freedom has only a limited meaning. A person may be an emperor or a king but he would not at all be regarded as being Mukta (free and liberated) if he is strongly shackled to this world of material objects, if he has not understood the true reason behind the cycle of birth and death as well as the fact why he has become a king while the other person is his subject or even his serf. Anyone who has not understood the true spiritual and metaphysical import of the meaning of the term 'Mukti' cannot be regarded as being free from bondages.

There are two terms usually used to mean freedom—one is 'Mukti' and the other is 'Moksha'. Overall they mean a person's spiritual freedom and deliverance, but while Mukti refers to liberation and deliverance, the term Moksha means final emancipation and salvation. Mukti and Moksha can be said to be the two sides of the same coin, and they are synonymous with each other.

The only path of Mukti is being enlightened about the Truth of Brahm. This is affirmed and espoused in *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 4, paragraph no. 4.]

4. [Now, what is 'Avidya' is being explained—] To think that this world consists of so many material things that have a real existence, to believe these material things and the world of sense objects to be true is known as 'Avidya'—lack of true knowledge and dominance of ignorance.

All the things of the world consisting of material sense objects are the subject matter of Avidya. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 19.]

[That is, when one is ignorant of the fact that the world is of a gross and artificial nature, and that it is entrapping as well as deluding for the Atma, he would pay attention to the material things of the mundane gross world; he would think of these things as having any kind of real value and importance which is worth paying attention to. It is 'Avidya' because such knowledge is not based on facts as the world and its material sense objects are un-truths; they are imaginary and deluding. They are like the mirage seen in a hot desert—appearing to be so alluring and real, but having no substance in it.]

Hence, a person who is known as 'Maha Yogi'—i.e. a great ascetic who is very wise and enlightened, who is well acquainted about the 'truth' of the Atma, abandons such fallacious and deluding notions (as outlined above) (4).

5. A person who is stupid and of low intellect would yearn for acquiring the various Siddhis (mystical powers that come by doing Yoga and other spiritual practices), and to obtain success in his endeavours he would adopt any method that he lays his hand on. All the numerous methods are like webs that would entangle him. He tries to obtain Siddhi by any method available, without paying attention to their effectiveness and worth (5).

[Note—The word *Siddhi* literally means to obtain success in one's endeavours, to be skilled in one's trade, to be an expert in any field. In the context of Yoga and spiritual practices, it refers to the achievement of certain mystical and super-natural powers. A man who is not wise thinks that by acquiring some or the other Siddhi he would be liberated and delivered from his worldly fetters. But he is deluded in this thinking. Instead of reaching his actual spiritual goal of finding 'true' Mukti—or 'real' freedom

from the bondage of the body and the world which comes with realizing the Truth known as the ‘self’ and the pure conscious Atma that is eternally free, he would be bogged down and trapped by following this or that method in his hurry to obtain some kind of Siddhi in the fallacious hope that these Siddhis would help him find Mukti. They do not; instead of liberating him they trap him further. When he attains Siddhis or when he acquires some sort of mystical and super-natural powers, he is usually filled with a sense of pride and achievement. There are good chances that he would boast of his prowess and powers, strutting around haughtily displaying them, and expecting honours and acclaim. Indeed, his wishes would be fulfilled because he would be crowded by favour seekers and those who need his intervention to solve their worldly problems, but in the bargain he loses his spiritual peace and attainments. Public advertisement of spiritual achievements would undermine his quest for spiritual upliftment and liberation; it would rob his soul of its yearning for peace, tranquility and serenity. Company of the world would distract him from his chosen path. Therefore, acquisition of various Siddhis by a man who is not sure of his goal in life would be similar to acquisition of material wealth by a greedy man who becomes so obsessed by it that he forgets everything else and his selfishness and greed increase exponentially instead of abetting in the least. He is also like a man who has acquired scriptural knowledge only with the intention of gaining worldly fame and as a means of livelihood, who wishes to milk this knowledge for pecuniary gains—for in the process his spirit is demeaned, denigrated and demoted.

Such persons can never hope to find spiritual welfare and upliftment. They can never hope to reach their final spiritual goal of finding Mukti. They are so foolish they have frittered away the golden chance of using Yoga as an instrument to achieve spiritual freedom and deliverance by bargaining its achievements such as acquisition of Siddhis to get worldly benefits. Refer verse no. 6 below.

The wise and enlightened ascetic is one who does not get deluded by the various Siddhis that naturally come to him as a reward of success in Yoga. This fact has been affirmed in the Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22, 62, 76-79, and the Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 62 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

The following Upanishads deal with the achievement of various Siddhis as a reward of doing Yoga—a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 151-155, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 23-24. (b) Atharva Veda—Sita Upanishad, verse no. 37 (which says that goddess Sita is like the Kamdhenu cow who grants the eight Siddhis); Annupurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 5-8 (which says that a wise aspirant should not be deluded by Siddhis); Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12 (which says that the eight Siddhis are enshrined in the first outer ring of the Sri Chakra used to worship Goddess Tripura).]

6. Material things of the world (such as wealth), Mantras (spiritual formulas used during various religious practices), various auspicious deeds and actions, as well as Kaal Shakti (the power of ‘death’ to provide a person freedom from the torments and numerous problems that he suffers from while he lived in the world and had a body, because with ‘death’ he leaves them behind) can be helpful in obtaining various worldly acclaim and super-natural powers known as ‘Siddhis’¹, but they can not provide the supreme Truth to the spiritual seeker. None of the Siddhis can ever provide the much sought-after ‘Param Pad’, literally meaning the supreme stature, or the state of being highly exalted and enlightened, to the spiritual aspirant.

[A man might do great sacrifices using immense wealth and huge amounts of material things as donations and charities in order to attain some special powers. He

might repeat some Mantras or undertake some mystical occult practices to acquire some mystical and super-natural powers. He might even spend his time and energy in doing auspicious deeds in the hope that some special mystical benefits would accrue to him, that he would acquire some sort of special powers and authority not available to others. He might even prefer to wait out his time to die so that he can find liberation and deliverance from his miseries. But all these would not give him access to the real and truthful form of Siddhi—i.e. he would not have achieved success in the real sense.

The reason is that all the so-called Siddhis bestow upon him some kind of super-natural powers that are enumerated below, and he would be swept off his feet by being able to perform miracles that other lesser mortals can't do. This would make him proud, arrogant and egoist; he would lose his footing or mooring or bearing when surrounded by acclaim and fame that come naturally to a person who has access to super-human powers. He would lose sight of the real goal of life to find final liberation and deliverance, to acquire knowledge of the essence known as the Truth. He would remain trapped in the cycle of birth and death; he would remain attached to the world and the body because of the simple fact that the mystical and super-natural powers acquired by him can be used only as long as there is a body.

This is because the Siddhis are dependent upon the body—they need the efforts of the body in their acquisition, and they can be employed only as long as the man is alive, for once he dies they become irrelevant. A dead man does not display any mystical powers. So obviously, the bondage of the body is still there; the dependence on the body is not done away with, and therefore no true freedom is obtained.

As for obtaining freedom after physical death of the body, this is also not possible because the creature would take another birth in order to fulfill his unrequited desires and to suffer the consequences of the deeds done in the previous life.

Hence, neither the obtaining of various Siddhis in the physical world that might give super-natural powers to the person would raise him to an exalted stature that would make him the supreme authority in this creation, nor can this stature be obtained upon death. This is because the 'supreme stature' that is referred to here is the stature beyond which nothing is to be attained or reached. In this context, the various Siddhis are just milestones marking the various stages of his spiritual progress, but they are not the final goal, they aren't his spiritual destination. Similarly, a creature would be re-born after death if he has not found 'true' form of liberation and deliverance or 'Mukti'.

Therefore, neither attaining super-natural powers known as Siddhis, nor the death of the physical body are any indications of one's attainment of the supreme state of exalted spiritual existence. That is, one cannot be called freed from the grossness of the existential world and the body if he acquires some sort of magical powers that can enable him to do super-natural things and perform miracles that other ordinary creatures cannot do—such as being able to lift himself against the forces of gravity, or being able to control his breath for prolonged periods of time, or being able to make himself small or large in size than what he actually is, or being able to leave the gross body for a limited time and travel in space like the wind. All these things can be done easily by acquiring the various Siddhis that come naturally as a reward of Yoga.

Similarly, one cannot be called freed from the fetters of the body as well as the world simply because he has died and left the gross body. If the mind and the heart had been hooked to this world and unwilling to leave the body at the time of death, though of course it had to do so because the body had withered away by the natural

process of aging, the creature is bound to take another birth so as to fulfill its desires and hopes of continuing to enjoy the world and the body.

Then, what is it? The answer lies in the realisation of the fact that the ‘true self’ is the Atma, that this Atma is the pure consciousness that is the universal ubiquitous Truth, that this Atma is synonymous with the supreme Brahm who is the only almighty Authority in creation, and that the Atma is endowed naturally with all the powers and authority that one seeks to get by obtaining the various Siddhis. This Atma is the eternally and perpetually free entity that is not under any kind of bondage or fetter, and therefore one need not die in order to attain freedom. Therefore it follows that when one has realised or attained the Atma, when one has become self-realised and has accessed the fount of pure consciousness residing in his own inner-self as his Atma—then he need not strive to obtain any other separate Siddhi or any other separate Mukti as they are attained immediately and simultaneously when one becomes self-realised and attains the knowledge of the Atma. In other words, realisation of the Atma is tantamount to attaining all the Siddhis and all forms of Muktis together.

Such divine and holistic views of the ‘self’ makes the aspirant convinced that he has attained the state of supremacy in this creation; this helps him to avoid pursuing various Siddhis in order to establish his powers and authority in this world. It also eliminates the need to die in order to obtain some exalted abode in the heaven, because for an enlightened man who has become self-realised there is no separate heaven somewhere in the sky but it is located in his inner-self where the Atma resides.

If obtaining Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, is his ultimate goal for which he does so many things, such as practicing Yoga by which he is gifted with many Siddhis that come naturally as a bonus by doing Yoga etc., then he would be well advised that ‘true and meaningful Mukti’ comes only when the spiritual aspirant or seeker realises his ‘true self’ as the Atma, the pure consciousness. This realisation gives him true Mukti because of the simple fact that the Atma is an ethereal and sublime entity that is never bound, that is eternally free, and that does not need some Siddhi to prove its super-natural powers and authority. The Atma is eternally all-knowing and omniscient; it is eternally powerful and almighty; it is eternally all-pervading and omnipresent; it is eternally truthful and one of its own kind. It has no dual existence, and therefore there is no need to seek a special form that is better and more powerful or more enlightened or more pure than what is it at present. The Atma does not need any special Mukti as such.] (6).

[Note—¹The word *Siddhi* refers to various mystical and occult powers that a spiritual aspirant acquires as a result of certain ritualistic practices.

There are eight Siddhis which are divine mystical powers which enables the person to accomplishment astounding feats. They are the following— (i) ‘Anima’ ‘अणिमा’ means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) ‘Mahima’ is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one’s achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; (iii) ‘Garima’ is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) ‘Laghima’ is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) ‘Praapti’ is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) ‘Praakramya’ is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) ‘Ishwatwa’ is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; and (viii) ‘Vashitwa’ is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient.

References—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 151-155, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 23-24.

The wise and enlightened ascetic is one who *does not get deluded by the various Siddhis* that naturally come to him as a reward of success in Yoga. This fact has been affirmed in Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22, 62, 76-79; and Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 62.

The two Siddhis—The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 151-155 classifies all Siddhis into two categories—Kalpit and A-Kalpit. The Kalpit Siddhis are the ones which are created with efforts made for them using various means and methods. They have a limited scope, are perishable, and have imaginable powers and potentials that can be predicted. On the other hand, the A-Kalpit Siddhis are those which are self-generated or uncreated by any artificial means, are natural and with unimaginable mystical potentials and powers that cannot be predicted.]

7. If a person has some kind of desire or hope, he would make relevant efforts and follow corresponding path that would help him fulfill the desire or obtain his goal that he hopes to reach.

On the other hand, if he has no desire or harbours no hope there would be no need to make any effort or follow any path. Such a man is perpetually contented and peaceful. He does not want anything; he does not hanker after some thing or the other (7).

8. Oh sage (Nidagh)! When one is fully enlightened about the reality of all material things in this world, it is only then that he can see the truth of the Atma. In other words, first he thinks that the world and its material sense objects are true, but with experience and close examination he finds this is not the case. Then he compares this knowledge of the world with that of the Atma which he has realised by meditation and contemplation. It is then that he discovers the difference, and comes face to face with the 'truth' of the Atma vis-à-vis the world and its material things.

[When a wise man analyses the world and its material things, he discovers that they are all illusionary and deluding by nature, and act as traps for the creature's soul. The world and its things are all gross, perishable and transient; they cannot provide sustainable peace and happiness. The semblance of comfort and pleasure that they do provide is temporary and more entangling than liberating. On the other hand, he finds that the Atma is an eternal and imperishable entity that is sublime and subtle, and the bliss and happiness that comes with its realisation, or experienced when the Atma is realised, is of an eternal and divine nature. While the world is imaginary, the Atma which is pure consciousness is true.]

With this realisation he finds that the world and the various Siddhis (achievements, successes, powers and acclaim) associated with it are futile to pursue, and are best discarded. Only those who are ignorant of the fact yearn for various Siddhis; it is only such people whose mind and sub-conscious have desires for obtaining Siddhis (8).

9. In order to attain the various Siddhis a person makes many difficult efforts—such as for example he does various severe penances by standing in cold water or subjecting himself to extreme heat by spreading fire and surrounding himself with it (or standing in hot sunshine), sometimes he worships the moon and at other times he stands upon the head or attempts to invert his body and reverse its functions (which is

a reference to the various difficult Mudras, Aasans, Bandhas and Pranayam practiced in Yoga).

But those who have attained 'Jivan Mukti'—i.e. those are truly liberated and free from ignorance and delusions, those who have attained spiritual enlightenment, do not act such foolishly. They do not allow themselves to be in doubt, and bogged down with confusion and perplexity.

[A Jivan Mukta person is one who has realised that there is no better achievement in life than success in realizing the Truth, and the latter is the realisation of the Atma which is pure consciousness. He also is aware of the fact that this Atma is his 'true self', and is the most powerful and dynamic force in creation.

Therefore, once he has become self-realised and accessed the infinite source of cosmic power that is inherently present in the Atma, there is no need for him to undertake so many difficult practices in order to access mystical power and authority.

He also realises that undertaking such difficult practices in order to find liberation and deliverance from the effects of his sins or evil deeds for which he is subjecting himself to such physical hardship which borders on self-inflicted torture is a futile exercise and most ridiculous. It is a total waste of time and energy and effort. This is simply because his 'self' known as the Atma is eternally pure and untainted, it has never done any deed and was never attached to any deed, and therefore the question of it being tainted with sins or the consequences of evil deeds for the riddance of which such severe penances and austerity are needed to be done does not arise at all.

Hence, he is never in doubt about his eternally liberated state, and therefore is never deluded to undertake such severe measures to find liberation.] (9).

10. Those who are ignorant and deluded imagine that the 'Param Tattva'¹ (the supreme essence or Truth of existence; the pure consciousness) can be accessed by attaining the various Siddhis (mystical powers) just like an ignorant man imagines that there is a snake in a length of lifeless rope. This leads them to get entangled in the web created by the numerous doctrines and philosophies as well as uncountable paths and their tempting rewards.

[In other words, if a man thinks that he would attain the highest state of spiritual enlightenment that would make him privy to the truth of the pure consciousness and thereby attain liberation and deliverance, or enjoy exemplary blissfulness and beatitude that accompanies such enlightenment by obtaining Siddhis or by following the various paths and numerous doctrines, then such a man is virtually seeking water in a mirage seen in the hot desert. In the example cited in this verse, he thinks that the lifeless length of rope is a snake and thereby gets terrified at its sight, raises a hue and cry, and ultimately proves himself to be a laughing stock, and gets humiliated at his stupidity.]

Therefore, a wise and erudite man is one who does not allow himself to be entangled in any kind of fallacious thinking that act like a web that would trap him instead of bestowing liberation and deliverance to him (10).

[Note—¹The concept of *Param Tattva* has been explained in note of verse no. 11 below.]

11. Those who are wise and erudite enough to concentrate their attention and efforts upon their main aim in life—which is to attain the 'Param Tattva' or the 'Param Pad'¹, the supreme stature of spiritual liberation when one becomes self-realised and gets acquainted with the pure Consciousness and the absolute Truth of creation as

well as of their own 'self'—remain focused on it, and they do not allow themselves to be deflected from this path, to be distracted in any manner, and get sucked in the vortex of confusions and never-ending bewilderments. They become indifferent to everything else; they renounce everything else; they pay no attention to anything else; they have nothing to do with anything other than the realisation of the Param Tattva as well as the Param Pad.

Such attained and self-realised aspirants are able to break free from the knots ('Granthis') symbolizing numerous delusions and confusions (about what is the truth and what is not) that has tied them down. Being thus freed, they live a life like a man who has been freed from all bondages.

[Here, 'breaking free from bondages' refers to the situations when one has overcome all traces of ignorance and delusions about the 'spiritual truth of existence' or the 'Tattva'. A man who is under the influences of delusions and ignorance tries to search this 'truth' everywhere else except the place where it should actually be searched. In other words, he tries to find the pure consciousness and its glories by following numerous tenets and philosophies, or by undertaking various difficult practices cited in verse no. 9 above. He also believes that by obtaining different Siddhis he would be able to access the consciousness and attain the supreme state of existence. Such a man is no better than a slave because he spends his entire life bonded to delusions and ignorance, and is deemed to be tied in 'Granthis' or knots. He is like a bullock that is yoked to a bullock-cart without ever finding rest and freedom to roam about at will.

The 'knot' of delusions and ignorance is broken only when true wisdom, erudition and enlightenment dawns upon the mental horizon of the aspirant. It is in their light that he sees the 'truth' and overcomes the darkness of ignorance that creates so many delusions. When he is acquainted with the Tattva or the principal truth about this creation, about his own self, about the rest of the world, it is then that he is deemed to have broken free from the shackles of ignorance and its attending delusions.] (11).

[Note—¹The terms *Param Tattva* and *Param Pad* are inter-related and almost synonymous with each other. It is like the case when a man can be called a 'medical doctor' only if he knows the 'science of medicine'. In other words, when a wise and enlightened man is aware of the Param Tattva he is deemed to have reached the Param Pad.

The word 'Param' means supreme and transcendental; that beyond which nothing exists. The word 'Tattva' or 'Tattwa' means the essence, the soul, the real meaning of something, the fundamental basis of anything, the hidden truth and reality about any given entity, the secret of anything.

The word 'Pad' means a state of existence, a stature, an honour and title, a pedestal upon which any given entity stands and which gives it its value, importance and significance, a designation, a step, a mark, a post or sign, a rank, a category, an occupation.

Now therefore, the 'Param Tattwa' is the supreme essence or the Absolute Truth of existence which is pure Consciousness. There is nothing beyond it to be known or accessed or realised. The 'Param Pad' is the supreme honour bestowed upon someone who has known the Param Tattva; it is the exalted and supreme stature that he acquires when he has accessed or known the Param Tattva; it is the ultimate citadel of spiritual endeavours and last destination of spiritual seekers.

In other words, when one has attained the supreme state of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation, when he has experienced the presence of the consciousness, when he has realised the falsehood of the external world and its equally false material objects and their charms, when he has realised that his 'self' is the pure conscious Atma or soul and not the body, when he has developed the eclectic view of Advaitya

or non-duality by seeing and experiencing the same Atma or consciousness everywhere in this creation and not only exclusively in some specified entity, when he has realised that true liberation and deliverance entails freedom from ignorance and delusions, and it does not mean to simply leave the body or forcibly tear one's self physically away from the world while mentally attached to it, and when he has developed so many other such sublime thoughts that naturally and automatically sprout in the bosom of a wise and enlightened man—i.e. when he has known the 'Tattva' that is 'Param', it is only then such a man is entitled to attain the 'Pad' that is 'Param'.

The *Param Pad* is the Absolute state of being, the Absolute state of existence. It is the supreme state of existence of consciousness which is regarded as being synonymous with the ultimate state in which anything can ever hope to exist, the state of perfection, truth and absoluteness. This Utopian state is the stature occupied by the only non-dual Truth in existence which the Upanishad prefer to call 'Brahm Pad', the stature of the truthful transcendental Supreme Being known as Brahm, the cosmic Truth and Consciousness.

It is a stature in which a creature reaches the supreme Lord and merges his own individual Atma with the Atma of the Supreme Being. The word 'Param' means the most exalted, supreme, greatest and the ultimate, while 'Pad' means feet, state, stature, honour, title etc. That is, the creature is honoured with the highest title obtainable in this creation in the form of salvation and emancipation of his soul. It also refers to achieving the goal of being near to his Lord. Param Pad is equivalent to spiritual utopia.

This destination is the supreme state which a spiritual aspirant aspires to achieve. It is not any physical place known as 'heaven' as such, but it is a symbolic destination whereby the soul of the individual creature reaches the citadel of spiritualism where the soul becomes one with its primary source, the supreme cosmic Soul, by merging with it. This is its final destination, and is called emancipation and salvation. The devotee reaches the destination which he aspires for. For example, devotees of Vishnu find an abode where that Lord resides, and that abode is called Vaikunth. Those who worship Viraat Purush reach Brahma Loka. Those who worship Brahm also reach Brahma Loka, but this abode is a symbolic heaven, for the worshippers of Brahm, there is no return to this mundane world as they would have merged their souls with the cosmic Soul known as Brahm.

In the realm of Upanishadic philosophy, this *Param Pad* refers to the ultimate citadel of spiritual achievement that any aspirant strives for. This is the culmination of his spiritual quest and the end of his spiritual journey. Briefly, when he has reached this state of existence, he is deemed to have removed and eliminated all distinctions and artificial demarcations that are supposed to exist for an ordinary creature between the 'self' and the supreme Brahm. He has merged his Atma, which is his pure and truthful 'self', with the cosmic Truth known as Brahm. He has realised that 'consciousness and truth' are always and indisputably 'one' and non-dual, and therefore there cannot be any distinction between himself and Brahm. Since the entire existence has its origin in this Brahm, and since his own 'self' is Brahm personified, it follows that there is no distinction between his own self and the rest of the creatures in this creation. This mystical, eclectic and divine realisation of the ultimate paramount spiritual truth of existence removes all causes of consternations, perplexities and vexations in him that confound all the creatures in this world. Such an enlightened and truly realised person becomes calm, quiet, peaceful, tranquil and serene, for he has found the elixir of eternal beatitude and felicity which leaves nothing more to be sought. That is, he has reached the citadel of spiritual realisation which makes him liberated and delivered from the fetters of ignorance-based delusions that shackle all his other brethren to this world of artificiality and perpetual restlessness. All creatures strive to reach some 'Pad' or acquire some good designation, honour, fame and name for themselves, and this 'Param Pad' is the

highest of any designations and honours that is attainable by a creature because it provides him with eternal happiness and peace.

A truly wise person is one who is not swept off his feet by external appearances but understands the reality behind each instance coming his way and then determines how to deal with it. In the realm of spiritualism and metaphysics, a wise and enlightenment man would be he who understands the truth that whatever is seen or unseen are all revelation of one supreme source of existence known as Brahm. This Brahm is the origin of all that exists so much so that each unit of this creation, from the minutest to the most colossal, is a manifestation of this single entity. For instance, gold can be moulded into innumerable variety of ornaments, but a truly wise man would see the universal presence of gold in all of them and determine their value on the fact of how much gold each unit contains rather than its outer look. The external look and design of a golden ornament can be very misleading; it can be changed and the ornament given a completely new look if it is melted down and re-moulded. What does not change in it is of course the 'gold' content. Moreover, suppose the same design and shape is moulded from some other metal such as iron or copper or even brass having almost the same external glaze and shine as gold, would the buyer pay the same price for them? Definitely not, simply because there is no 'gold' in it.

Likewise, a wise and enlightened man realises that everything he sees in this world is essentially one Brahm revealed in all these forms—and nothing else. The world has any value only because there is conscious life in it, and this life is intelligent life. So, when a wise man sees and interacts with the world, he is actually seeing and interacting with the supreme Lord of creation who is sought to be worshipped by fools and ignorant people alike by doing elaborate religious rituals, fire sacrifices, repeating of endless Mantras, going on pilgrimages, doing so many exclusive auspicious deeds such as making charity, giving alms and donations, visiting shrines and serving holy men etc. when they forget in the whole exercise that they need not indulge in separate enterprises to please and worship the Lord when the latter can be very easily and conveniently served in the routine course of daily life by merely fine-tuning one's view of the world and the self—which is to see the Lord in every single unit of creation as well as inside his own self as the pure conscious Atma. With this world-view, each single deed and action would be an offering as well as service to the all-knowing, omniscient, omnipresent and all-pervading Lord, and no special efforts are needed to be made separately to please and worship him. This is the holistic view of Brahm and his worship. This highly evolved state of the mind and intellect is called reaching the 'Param Pad'. This exalted stature is not somewhere in the sky or in a castle somewhere, but is here and now in our midst. What are needed are the vision and the sight to see this Param Pad, the exalted and divine abode where the supreme transcendental Lord dwells. Going by the timeless adage that one can reach one's target only when he sets his sight on it, a man who sets his sight on this Param Pad is the one who would ultimately reach it.

The view that this world is separate from the Supreme Being known as Brahm, that the other living being is distinct from my own 'true self', and that Brahm is to be worshipped as a holy and divine Being detached from this existence and 'me' is out of ignorance and delusions created by misconceptions about the 'truth'. Once one overcomes this ignorance, all delusions vanish, and the light of Truth and Reality shines through.

Other references = Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 14; Canto 5, verse no. 76; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 43; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 5, section 1, verse no. 7-8; Paingal Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 27; Tripadivibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph nos. 3-4; Canto 2, paragraph no. 11; Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; Canto 6, paragraph no. 8, 11.

In the present Annapurna Upanishad, the Param Pad and the Param Tattwa have been further expounded upon in Canto 4, verse no. 8-84, and Canto 5, verse no. 43.]

12. Those who are truly wise, erudite, realised and enlightened maintain their cool in adversities as well as in favourable conditions; they remain calm and unruffled whether there is sorrow or joy; they do not lose their poise, neutrality, fortitude and equanimity under any circumstance.

They do not bother themselves with unnecessarily worrying or thinking about anything (pertaining to this mundane life).

The stability of their 'Chitta' (the mind and sub-conscious) can be compared to a mountain, or to a person who has stopped breathing. Such a person has indeed controlled his Chitta; he has actually restrained it. It is a metaphoric way of saying that his mind and sub-conscious have become 'dead'—or non-functional. In other words, none of the inputs of the deluding world would ever evoke any response from such a mind just like a dead man's mind does not respond to any stimuli.

[A mountain is obviously a clear simile of something that does not move, that is steady and constant. The reference to someone who has stopped breathing however does not mean a man who is dead, but to him who practices Yoga and does Pranayam. During this process, the inhaled air is withheld inside the body for prolonged periods of time, a phase of Pranayam that is called 'Kumbhak'. During Kumbhak the body is said to be in a hibernating state, with no activity, and the mind with all its components is fully restraint and free from its inherent natural restlessness.] (12).

13. The Mana (mind with its intellect and sub-conscious; the emotional aspect of the heart) that has been completely controlled and restrained or fully trained would not be ruffled even when confronted by something unexpected or sudden. Such a mind would neither feel depressed nor exhilarated; it would neither feel low nor reach some emotional high under varying situations. It treats tragedy and festivity equally. In fact, it would maintain its stoic demeanours, equanimity, dispassion, neutrality, calm and poise under all situations (13).

14. There are two forms in which the Chitta (the mind and sub-conscious) is controlled or restrained or tamed—one is known as 'Sarup' and the other as 'Arup'.

[The literal meaning of the term 'Sarup' is to have a physical form and shape, something that has a definite contour and describable attributes, and 'Arup' is the opposite of Sarup.]

The state of existence known as 'Jivan Mukti' (i.e. to be spiritually free inspite of being alive and having a physical gross body) is an instance of the Chitta that is controlled or tamed but has a 'Sarup' form.

On the other hand, the state of existence known as 'Videha Mukti' (i.e. to be spiritually free from the bondage of the physical gross body) is an instance of the Chitta that is controlled or tamed but has a 'Arup' form.

[In the case of Jivan Mukti where the aspirant is enlightened about the reality of the body and the world as well as his true 'self', the mind and sub-conscious are deemed to be tamed and controlled when he does not get mentally involved in either the activities of the body or the charms of the material sense objects of the world. He lives a life that is outwardly normal, but internally he is completely detached from everything and every situation. His mind is active only to the extent that is needed for the man to do the work at hand, but that is all. The mind is so detached from the world itself that it does not remember what was done a moment ago. It is a 'Sarup' form of tamed Chitta because outwardly the man's deeds and actions do not show that his mind is not involved or interested in the things done by the body, which however is very much active and fully involved in all the deeds that the creature does in this

physical world. Such a man might even wash himself daily and take normal care of the body as required of him, but his interest ends there—he does not hanker for the body's desire for gratification or pampering. Therefore, the state of complete neutrality and absolute detachment of the mind does not reflect in his actions which are taken by the body. If one were to judge an enlightened and self-realised man by the physical behaviour of the gross body it would be like treating an actor who takes the role of king or a slave on stage in any theatrical performance as a real king or a real slave! Nothing would be more ridiculous and absurd. But it must be kept in mind that the body cannot act on its own without instructions from the brain (mind, intellect and sub-conscious combine), because even the basic things that a body does in this world are somehow controlled and empowered by the mind. The importance here is not allowing the mind to get involved in the affairs of the body and the surrounding world to such an extent that it gets attracted to them or repulsed by them, is disturbed by them and annoyed by them, and create some hurdle in the path of the Jiva, the living being, to reach his final destination of spiritual peace, beatitude and felicity as well as the attainment of Mukti or liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. As long as this goal is achieved, it really does not matter if the mind performs its duty to issue routine instruction to the body to routinely do the deeds in the world as required of it.

That is why this form of the Chitta is called a 'Sarup Chitta' because inspite of doing its normal duties in this world and helping the gross body to perform its own set of routine duties, it still does not allow itself to be influenced by or involved in any of the things that are done. In other words, this form of Sarup Chitta is a landmark of the creature's attaining 'Jivan Mukti'—it makes the living being free from all fetters and bondages inspite of living in this world and going about its daily routine affairs in a normal manner but with an exemplary level of neutrality, dispassion, non-involvement and detachment. Such a person is deemed to have renounced the world inspite of his enjoying it in the physical level.

Since the world recognizes the status of any thing by its physical appearances rather than its subtle form, such a Chitta is also known as Sarup because it is recognized by the way the body acts and behaves in this gross material world at the physical level. The ignorant world is not qualified enough to be able to see the 'real' state of the Chitta which is oblivious of anything. Hence, it is called the 'Sarup Chitta'.

Again, since the Chitta is rudimentarily and perfunctorily aware of the existence of the body and what it does for the simple reason that the former has to control the latter even in its routine affairs, this Chitta is known as the 'Sarup Chitta' because its existence is reflected in the deeds done and actions taken by the body which has a physical and visible form.

The second sort of tamed Chitta is 'Arup' that comes with 'Videha Mukti'. In the latter case, the aspirant is not even aware that the body exists—for instance he may not bathe for days but would be unaware of this fact; he would stand in hot sun but would not be conscious of heat. The word 'Videha' also means without a physical body, hence it refers to the state of transcendental existence when the spirit leaves the gross physical body. Obviously, the consciousness in this state is 'Arup' because it has no form. The Atma is an ethereal entity that has no specific form, shape, contours, colours, characters or other attributes. Since it is the mind and the sub-conscious that makes a man aware of the world around him, there is little difference between the term 'consciousness' as it is applied to the Atma or the true 'self' of the man, and when it is applied to the 'awareness of anything' that the mind and the sub-conscious

create for the man. Hence, when the awareness of the body is absent, the Chitta is said to exist in an Arup form.

How a 'Sarup Chitta' automatically transforms itself into an 'Arup Chitta' can be easily understood by a simple example. When we learn to drive a car in the beginning, all the attention of the body and mind are fixed on even the slightest movement of the machine. With practice however the body automatically controls the gear, the clutch, the brake, the steering wheel etc. The mind takes a back-seat and allows the body to function automatically. But does this mean that the body can drive the car if the mind does not want it to do so? Well, if this was the case then a sleeping man could have driven the car with the same ease and aplomb as a fully awake driver! So we deduce that the involvement of the mind is only rudimentary and routine. An expert driver's Chitta would be focused somewhere else; he might be thinking of so many things but driving, yet all the movements required of his body to drive the car are done expertly. Everything depends upon the expertise and practice the driver has in driving the car.

Similarly, the Sarup Chitta is the earlier and preliminary state of the mind and sub-conscious of a wise and enlightened man who is steadily moving ahead towards his higher and nobler spiritual goal, and the Arup Chitta is the later and more evolved state of the same mind and sub-conscious. The two terms 'Sarup' and 'Arup' are used only as indicators of the level of a person's spiritual evolvment and the degree of detachment, dispassion, non-involvement and neutrality from this body and the world that the Chitta has achieved. The Chitta that is assigned any of these two terms has already achieved these grand spiritual virtues, it is the depth and degree that differs.

The 'Arup Chitta' is a form of the mind that is higher in its spiritual achievement as compared to the 'Sarup Chitta'. The difference is just in the level of wisdom and enlightenment, and not that one is really different than the other. It is just like the case of the sun when viewed at different times during the day, and under different circumstances. The rising sun can be actually seen by the naked eye without getting blind, but the same sun would burn the retina of the eye if viewed during the day time. The rising sun is a large dish, but its size is diminished when it is right on the top of the head at noon. But does that mean that the sun's size or brilliance has changed in the least?

Similarly, the state of existence of the spiritual aspirant's Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) is known by these two terms only because the world sees it from two different planes, for otherwise both these two terms 'Sarup Chitta' and 'Arup Chitta' indicate that he has already attained an exalted spiritual state of truthful knowledge, enlightenment and wisdom.] (14).

15. The dominant role of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) in the life of a creature is the cause of all his worldly miseries and sorrows, while making the Chitta irrelevant or fully tamed and restrained in the way for attaining comfort, happiness and joy.

In other words, if one wishes to have freedom from miseries and sorrows he would have to overcome the influences of the Chitta, or make the latter redundant for all practical purposes. Therefore, true bliss, beatitude, felicity and peace come to a creature when he has effectively controlled and neutralized his Chitta, when he has trained it to remain uninterested in the world and the body so much so that inspite of performing the deeds as required of him by the virtue of his living in this world that depends upon actions and deeds for survival, the creature does them most dispassionately and does not allow any of the things of the world and the demands of

the body to ever influence his Chitta. For such a man, Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti are the same situation.

[When the mind is active a creature would have a natural tendency to be attracted by the numerous material charms of the sense objects of the world, because it is the mind that actually analyses the inputs of the various sense organs of perception of the body such as the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin to enlighten the creature about the existence of a fascinating world with its astounding array of fascinating charms and objects that give immense pleasures to the sense organs. The data collected and collated by the mind is stored in the sub-conscious which acts as a referral bank for the creature.

Since the mind is the only unit of the creature's body that can actually do the actual work of analyzing information, thinking and researching, and then deducing and making or taking final decisions, the individual creature is under its overall control much like an emperor who is not only guided by his advisors and ministers but is very much dependent upon them in practice, though the emperor is empowered theoretically to take his independent decisions on all matters. But even this independence of his is subject to the information provided to him by his ministers and advisors who have an overwhelming influence on the decision-making process of the sovereign.

Similarly, though the creature—here, incidentally, implying the 'Atma' or the pure conscious 'self' because this 'self' is the true identity of the concerned creature instead of his gross body—is theoretically empowered to make his own decisions, he is dependent upon the mind and its various components, such as the intellect, the sub-conscious, the memory bank and the conscience itself, that have an overbearing influence upon him. So, when the mind with all its limbs is active and uncontrolled, it is a constant nuisance for the creature; it never lets him rest in peace. Since the mind is part of the body complex, and not of the Atma, the mind is more inclined to please the body rather than the Atma. An illustration would explain the relationship more clearly. An emperor's advisors and ministers are part of the administrative structure of the empire, having their own priorities and vested interests, and are not part of the emperor's personal family who would be more personally concerned with his welfare. So, the actions, deeds and decisions of the advisors and ministers of the emperor would be different and would have different priorities as compared to those of his near family members.

This implies that a creature who thinks that the 'body is his self' would be more likely to be directly under the control of the mind as compared to the creature who maintains his distance from the body and knows that his 'self is the Atma which is different from the body'.

Hence, a mind that is controlled and put under direct control the 'self' is the cause of peace and happiness because then it would be a good companion and more interested in the welfare of the 'self' of the creature. A trained mind would be like a qualified advisor or minister who would independently sieve through all the rubbish and not allow the sovereign to be disturbed by the clutter of worldly inputs, it would not allow the Atma to be bothered by numerous options and false charms of the world, it would not advise the creature to go after the illusive happiness and joys of the world by pursuing its material sense objects. Thus the creature finds his peace and rest, his bliss and happiness.

On the other hand, an untamed mind would be like a selfish or incompetent minister or advisor who would be more concerned to make the emperor enjoy the pleasures of the world in expectation of some instant reward when the sovereign is

gratified. But this results in the long term ruin, decay and undoing of both the empire and the sovereign. So, an uncontrolled mind would allow the creature to run after the world and enjoy its temporary comforts and pleasures, but this would have a negative effect on the creature. The reason is that all the world and its charms are illusionary and transient by their basic nature, and once the creature becomes addicted to them it falls prey to an unending cycle of desires, aspirations, expectations and passions along with their attendant greed and longing for more that never ends. Since the world and its material comforts and pleasures are false and imaginary, no one can ever expect real and lasting peace and happiness from them. They are illusive, and the more the creature runs after them the more they recede from him. This fuels his dismay, restlessness, frustration and exasperation. This situation is obviously the opposite of the concept of peace, happiness and bliss that one expects to get by pursuing this world and remaining involved in it.

Therefore we conclude that a mind that is controlled is the cause of the creature's happiness and peace, while an uncontrolled and untamed mind is the cause of his sorrows and miseries. The former state of the mind gives him stability, while the latter state makes him erratic and unhappy.] (15).

16. Oh Anagh (sage Nidagh; the sinless one)! The rendering of the Mana (mind) as ineffective, to make it irrelevant and redundant, to rein it in and tame it is equivalent to making it annihilated. When this happens, the external behaviour of the creature is like one who is stupid and ignorant because he takes no interest or shows no initiative in anything. He does external deeds in a mechanical way, he remembers nothing of what has been done by him, he takes or accepts no rewards for the deeds done even if offered to him unasked, and in general he acts as if he is in a state of stupor, as if he is utterly dumb-witted and of a low-intellect. When this happens, he neither shows enthusiasm in doing a particular thing nor does he shy away from doing another thing. He neither enjoys any thing in this world nor shuns it. He neither laughs nor cries. He neither exults nor feels distraught and dismayed. He neither loves nor hates.

[Obviously since the mind is the workhorse of the body, when it ceases to function or refuses to react to the impulses of the world, the behaviour of the man would be like the one who is stupid and of a low mental development. But it is very misleading because internally the man is very alert and enlightened. The Mana has been made redundant out of his own free will, and not out of any compulsion or deformity of the brain or incompetence on its part. The man has voluntarily made the mind attain the state of sustained quietude in order to prevent it from constantly nagging him with this or that, and thereby constantly disturbing him. The result is that the man himself enjoys immense quietude and peace with a quiet and placid mind.]

This calm, serene, quiet and placid state of the mind would be its natural tendency and its natural habit once it is controlled and trained, and its fickleness, transience and restlessness overcome.

[Such a mind would be in a position to think and analyse rationally, logically and intelligently as compared to a restless and fidgety mind that is constantly on its edge. Since the mind is the most important tool in the hands of the creature in any of his endeavours, a cool and calm mind would be an efficient tool which would prove to be a boon for him instead of being his bane.] (16).

17. A man who has overcome even good Vasanas (natural passions and desires related to the world; attachments and attractions for the material things and sense objects of

the world) such as having the mental tendency to be friendly towards all is deemed to have become 'Jivan Mukta'.

[This means that to be actually free from this world and its entangling effects even while living in it—i.e. to obtain Jivan Mukti—one need to develop total neutrality, completed dispassion and absolute non-attachment. It is not merely sufficient to get rid of bad habits and thoughts, or avoiding unrighteous and inauspicious deeds and actions, and instead inculcating noble virtues such as being friendly, compassionate and graceful towards all others. One must avoid all involvement with the world at large in any manner whatsoever if one seeks to obtain true freedom from its entanglements.

This is very true. If being unfriendly would make a man face hostility from the world, being friendly would invite a large company, and in both the cases his calmness, serenity, peace and quietude would be compromised.]

A man is said to have attained Jivan Mukti when he does not have to take repeated births.

[In this context the advice of abandoning even the tendency of being friendly towards all assumes a different connotation. When one is friendly, he develops close relationship with the people around him. It creates a bond between him and them. The individual becomes concerned about the pains and sorrows of others, and though it is an excellent character trait on its own but it nevertheless creates a lot of mental dismay and misery for the person when he watches others in pain. Therefore his own peace of mind is disturbed, and a disturbed mind cannot allow him to live him in peace. He gets entangled indirectly in the chain of unintentional sorrows and pains.

Similarly, when he sees his friends happy he 'shares' their joy, he enjoys with them. This again creates involvement. Sharing someone's happiness and joys as well as sorrows and pains are good and noble character traits no doubt, but from the metaphysical point of view this is a sort of 'involvement' in the world as it is bound to affect the mind, and through it, the Atma. Any involvement with the world, whether good intentioned or of an evil design, is bound to rob the mind of its peace and stability as well as its desire to remain neutral and renounced.

Real freedom is achievable with any conditions attached. Being 'friendly' is one such condition. It creates its own shackling effect. Hence, a man who wishes to break free from the chain of birth and death must avoid even being friendly to anyone or towards anything in this world. He must treat all with equal detachment and neutrality. This would ensure that he is not bound to anything or anyone. A life that is lived with total and exemplary aloofness and detachment, with no involvement with the world whatsoever, is said to be Jivan Mukta.] (17).

18. Oh Nidagh! The apparent sign and the evident form that elimination of the Mana (mind) takes is called Jivan Mukti, while its subtle form or aspect and its sign is called Videha Mukti.

[As explained in verse nos. 16-17, when the mind becomes neutral and totally un-involved in the affairs of the world, the behaviour of the person would show his state of mind. This is the mind's 'visibly neutral form'. The detachment, dispassion and non-interest that a wise, erudite, enlightened and self-realised man displays are evident sign of his neutral and controlled state of mind.

On the other hand, the fact that inspite of living in this world and going about his life normally, doing his duties and living up to his obligations, answering questions and managing his affairs routinely, he still remains engrossed internally in perpetual meditation and contemplation at all times, externally appearing to be awake

but internally asleep or indifferent to the world, is indicative of his 'invisible and subtle state' of the mind. Such a man remains perpetually in a blissful and contented state inspite of all the turmoil that surrounds him outside.] (18).

19. Surely, the Atma that is independent of the body and with everything in which the body is involved is called 'Videha Mukta'.

[The word 'Videha' literally means one without a gross body, and 'Mukta' means to be free. Hence the phrase 'Videha Mukta' truly applies to a wise, enlightened and self-realised man who has realised that the Atma, the pure consciousness that is his 'true self', is independent of the body. The larger import of this understanding is that such a man need not physically shed his body by dying to actually free himself (i.e. his true 'self' which is his Atma, the pure conscious soul) from the body. He can do this even while alive—by breaking the link between the Atma and the body. A bonded man is one who erroneously thinks that his body is his 'self' and the Atma is just some part of the body that lives in the subtle heart, but a wise and enlightened man thinks that the 'self' is not the body but the pure consciousness known as the Atma that is independent of the body. For the man with the latter eclectic thoughts, the presence of the body is as external to his 'true self' as any third person.

Hence, true Videha Mukti does not necessarily mean leaving the body physically, but leaving it at the mental level and subtle level by completely disassociating one's self with it. When this grand state of existence is reached, no difference really exists between 'Jivan Mukti' and 'Videha Mukti'.]

As a result, all the different virtues and numerous characteristics that define this material world and the gross body become irrelevant, and only the 'truth' remains.

[That is why a realised and enlightened man stays quiet and poised inspite of being witness to such a colourful world and constant nagging by the body for self gratification. He also remains exemplarily quiet and equanimous inspite of being surrounded by the tumult of the world around him. This wise man has understood the false and entrapping nature of the world along with the fact that the body is the cause of all his entanglements with the world, and so it is best for him to neglect their joint provocations.] (19).

20. The Videha Mukta state of existence is most holy and auspicious in nature. When an aspirant reaches this exalted state of existence, all notions of existence of any thing gross in the world of material sense objects are eliminated.

[That is, once the enlightened state of being disassociated with the body is attained the spiritual aspirant loses all interests in this world because the existence of the world and its material sense objects are directly related with the body which actually perceives the world through its sense organs of perception and interacts with it with the help of the sense organs of action. Once the body is made redundant, the notion of non-existence of the world is a natural progression.] (20).

21. When the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) is completely annihilated (or made redundant and irrelevant; when the Chitta is fully tamed and put under leash), nothing exists or matters. Neither any of the Gunas (numerous qualities of the world) exist or matter, nor their absence is felt; neither do worldly majesty, magnificence, grandeur and glory matter to an enlightened and wise aspirant, nor do they have any existence as far as he is concerned (21).

22. A wise and enlightened man who has fully controlled the Chitta lives in a state of complete neutrality and equanimity. His mind is extremely stable and non-involved in any thing related to the world so much so that nothing rises or sets for him (i.e. nothing changes for him; the sunrise and sunset are equal to him; there is uniformity and universality in everything he views; there is nothing that is high and exalted nor lowly and sunken).

For him there is no happiness or joy, and there are no sorrows, miseries or anguish either; there is no notion of speed or slow motion; there is no difference between the evening, the day and the night—all have equal meaning for him; all are equally irrelevant to him; he is uniformly unconcerned with any of them.

For him, there are no separate states of existence that can be segregated into various categories, such as one being auspicious, holy, exalted and authoritative, the other being lowly, humble and downtrodden, and the third being somewhere in between.

[In other words, an enlightened and self-realised man treats everything around him equally and with exemplary equanimity of attitude and neutrality of mind.] (22).

23. This most exalted, divine and spiritually enlightened state of existence is available to those who have trained their mind and intellect to transcend the gross and limited view of the world and existence in it, and instead be able to rise above the mundane and see beyond the routine and the apparent. Their mind-intellect has developed the insight to surgically incise through layers of delusions and deceit that are so characteristic of this material world with precision, and thereby see what actually lies behind the veil.

They live a free life like the air or wind that is freely present in the length and the breadth of the vast sky. Such men are called 'Jivan Mukta'—or ones who have obtained liberation and deliverance from all bondages, such as the bondage of their gross body and the equally gross world, even while they have a gross body with which they live in and interact with the gross world.

[The air or wind has no fetters attached to it; it can go anywhere it likes; it spreads uniformly and unhindered through the length and breadth of the sky. Likewise, a man who has developed a holistic view of life and the world is not bound by any fetters at any level, be it mental, intellectual, emotional or sentimental. They live in the world but remain totally detached from and untainted by it just like the air or wind that are unaffected by anything that is present in the sky; no obstacle can ever exclude one area of the sky from the reach of the air or wind element for the latter can always go around the obstacle to reach its desired destination.] (23).

24. A wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant who has completely annihilated (i.e. overcome, controlled and trained) the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) becomes free from all sorts of mental disturbances and restlessness. He is at peace with himself, and has attained tranquility and serenity. All his agonies, sorrows and miseries are naturally overcome, or they cease to exist for all practical purposes.

[The reason being that it is the mind and its sub-conscious that create all the problems associated with perceptions. A situation may be the cause of annoyance for one person, while another may be enjoying it. For instance, loud rock music may cause a headache to one person, while another person would be rolling in merriment in it. Lack of worldly material things may be a reason for a man to fret and fume,

while for another it is so much the lesser burden on his head because he thinks that more things mean more botheration.]

Outwardly he may appear to be like a man who lacks interest in life, is stupid and mentally retarded, but inwardly he is calm and highly contented. He is like a man who is fast asleep in the Sushupta (deep sleep) state, for such a man is unbothered by what the world says and whatever is happening around him. Such a man would obviously be in a state of perpetual peace, tranquility and happiness.

He has risen to an exalted state of existence when he transcends the lower and the medium states of existences represented by the Tama and the Raja Gunas respectively. He has virtually abandoned them for good once he has experienced the quintessential sense of blessedness obtained by discarding the lower states of existence and establishing one's self in the highest state.

[In other words, he has raised himself to an exalted stature where all the qualities and virtues that are 'not the best' are abandoned. There are three Gunas—viz. Sata, Raja and Tama. The Sata is the best of the three, and regarded as the most auspicious and noble. It creates a desire in the creature to always look up and cultivate the best of qualities and virtues one can hope for. He endeavours to rise higher and higher in his spiritual life, and strives to reach the goal of emancipation and salvation. The Raja Guna is the second and medium quality which creates a desire for the world, not for reckless indulgence, self gratification and selfish motives but with a view to grow and develop along with the world at large. This may take a positive hue if the underlying pull of the Sata Guna is strong, and a negative hue if the Tama Guna has a greater pull. Finally, the Tama Guna is the least spiritually elevating, for it is very denigrating and demeaning for the soul. It is the grossest of the three Gunas and creates a natural tendency for vices and sins, making the creature very selfish and pervert.

In short, what this stanza implies is that a man who has controlled and properly trained his mind would pick and choose only the best virtues and qualities in life, those that would have a positive bearing on his life and general personality. He would always strive for the realisation of the ultimate state of blessedness marked by spiritual bliss and exemplary contentedness, he would always seek to find liberation and deliverance from this world, he would always attempt to find a way to break free from the endless cycle of birth and death along with the uncountable miseries and torments that are inherent in it and inseparable from it. For this, he would resolutely abandon the Raja and Tama Gunas, and instead focus on the Sata Guna.]

He would become one like the sky; he would assume an exalted stature that has the virtues of the sky inherent in it; he would live in this world like the sky lives in creation.

[In other words, he would attain a state of existence that has the unique characteristics of the sky, such as being uniform, immutable, steady, unmoved, untainted, calm, quiet and unfettered under all circumstances. When the Chitta is under control, the state of existence is compared to that of the sky.

The sky is the subtlest of the five elements of creation, the others being air/wind, fire/energy, water/liquid, and earth/solid. Like the sky, a man with a calmed mind and sub-conscious remains unruffled and unaffected by any of the numerous perceptions that the gross organs of the body constantly gather as impulses from the external world which is full of continuous turmoil, a world which is never at rest and never constant. All the noise, clamour and din of the hustle and bustle of life in the world are limited to the surface of the earth—a metaphor for grossness. As one rises higher and higher from the planes of the earth, say goes up a mountain, or rises up in

the sky in an air-balloon for instance, this noise diminishes exponentially with the increase of height and distance from the earth till a point is reached when it is not heard at all.

This means that the sky—which is inherently subtle and absolutely quiet as is evident when one reaches its higher levels far away from the earth—acquires the character of grossness so typical to earth when it is in close proximity with the latter. As we move away from the earth and reach the areas of the sky deep in its bowls, we experience absolute stillness and calmness.

In the context of the present verse it means that a person who has controlled his Chitta and has driven it away from any involvement with either the body or the earth would be able to bring the inherent shine out of a refined and tamed Chitta. A Chitta that is as far away as possible from the grossness of the world and the body, and as close as possible to the Atma which is pure consciousness is bound to replace its grossness of its earlier association with the body and the world with the subtleness and sublimity typical of the Atma.

Taken from another angle, this situation shows how and why the Chitta is able to give the Atma peace if it is far away from any involvement with the world and the body. As is well known, it is the Chitta consisting of the mind and sub-conscious that acts as a medium for the Atma to interact with the world through the medium of the sense organs of the body which the Chitta controls. So, if the Chitta is able to disconnect the link, the Atma would not be disturbed by anything of the world; the Atma would not even be aware of the very existence of the world in the first place. Hence, a controlled Chitta is a provider of peace, tranquility, bliss and happiness to the Atma of the creature. A controlled and trained Chitta acts like a shield that protects the sovereign from being unnecessarily perturbed by useless things in this life.

Therefore, a man with a tamed and trained mind can live peacefully and happily in this world amidst all the chaos and uproar that surround him without being bothered by any of them.]¹

When the Chitta is put under tight control, all vacillations cease; there is all-pervading calmness and quietude. This state resembles the state of the gross physical body that shows no movements and activities. In other words, it resembles the final conclusion of life—called the ‘Maha Anta’, the ‘great end’, the ‘final conclusion’. There is nothing left after the ‘final conclusion’.

[The phrase means an end to all the miseries and bewilderments that are a part of the normal life of a creature. When the Chitta is properly tamed and trained, the creature is able to obtain stability and focus in his life. He is able to save his vital energy and time from being frittered away in numerous perplexities and confusions associated with this mundane world of material sense objects, and instead concentrate on the Truth and Reality of existence on the one hand, and move steadily in the direction of attaining Mukti, or emancipation and salvation, on the other hand.] (24).

[Note—¹Sky or Akash—The sky or space is the subtlest of the five elements—viz. earth, water, fire, wind/air, space/sky. It pervades everywhere but is uncorrupt, unpolluted and faultless in all respects. The blemishes, faults, vices, evils, sins, corruptions, misdemeanors and all sorts of digressions and contaminations present in the world are like suspended dust particles, smoke, moisture, clouds, the numerous other things such as the various birds and the celestial bodies high up in the sky which create an illusion of a sky that is spotted or dotted or polluted or coloured or overcast with these uncountable objects that are extraneous to the sky, that are not integral to it but nevertheless appear to be a part of the sky. The sky has nothing to do with them; it remains absolutely unconcerned with and untainted by them, for once

they are removed from the scene the sky is uniform and spotless from one end of the horizon to the other. This example is very practical and can be observed by anyone. That is why 'sky' is used as a metaphor to describe anything that remains free from the influences of those things that appear to be an integral part of it but are in actual fact not related with it by even any remote chance.

The sky has the opposite types of characteristics present in it. For example, the space of the vast cosmos has no form but the space inside a bottle or a pot takes the shape of the bottle or the pot respectively. Similarly, the vast sky in its basic and truthful form is spotless and without any colours, but it appears to be spotted with so many stars and specs of clouds and smoke of different colours as well as with birds of different forms, colours and shapes flying here and there. The colour of the sky during the evening or morning hours present a canvas of so many colours which appear to be real, but they are obviously a reflection of the colours of the light of the sun as reflected from the various impurities present in the otherwise spotless sky.

This is what is meant here—though the Atma or Brahm are inherently and basically pristine pure and clean, but when they come in contact with this world, the different flaws and faults of the latter cast their shadow and make them appear to have some or the other kind of spots in them.

The sky has such grand and majestic attributes as being vast, measureless, uniform, immutable, spotless, clean, colourless, calm, all-pervading, all-encompassing etc. The sky is the measurement of Brahm in the sense that if it was ever possible to measure the length, breadth and depth of the sky, it would then have been possible to measure Brahm. But that is not at all the case. The calmness of the higher reaches of the sky is experienced by Para gliders and can even be witnessed on top of mountains which are high above the ground and located somewhere in the space around the earth, symbolised by the sky, where there is an eerie silence. The sky has no colours of its own; whatever colours that we see are actually the scattered sunlight.

Everything that exists does so in any one of these spaces. Every nook and corner where there is no solid or liquid is filled with space or 'Akash', which is a synonym of sky. It is omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing. That is, these three forms of the skies, viz. the outer, the inner and that which is present inside the heart, are all the same; there is no distinction or demarcation or boundary or fundamental difference between any two skies. The apparent boundary or limitation imposed on the sky by the physical body or the membrane of the heart is only deceptive in nature. Once a person dies, for example, his body perishes, and the space present inside the heart merges indistinguishably with the space present inside the body when the body is cremated or decays when buried, and they together merge with the vast space present outside the body.

The 'sky', which was originally conceived as something that was 'void' or 'nothing', gets filled with 'air', simply because void can't exist, and the creation which came into being in this void needed some base for its origin and coming into being. The molecules or atoms of air are in a state of continuous agitation and flux; they collide with each other, they form a chain of molecules which give rise to different layers or strata of air which extend from the surface of this earth to the stratosphere. This continuous turmoil produces 'sound'. Various physical and chemical processes come into play, producing gases of varying density and characteristic features. Air has particles of dust and different gases, which produce the perception of touch. Friction of the various molecules present in the air produces static electricity which is observed as a scintillating display of atmospheric discharge of electrically charged particles in the sky often observed at the poles. This sparkle of static electric discharge is synonymous with 'fire'. Perhaps the Upanishadic sage got this brilliant idea when he observed a meteor shower during the night. The two elementary gases hydrogen and oxygen combine to form the molecule H_2O commonly known as 'water'. With all these essential ingredients in place, the

solidifying and cooling down process of nature starts its effect and produces soil and rocks which are symbolised by the 'earth' element. Then gravity and magnetic forces come into play, giving density, gravity and grossness, indicative of the grossness or heaviness of not only the earth but also of the air around it. Previously, before gravity and other forces of nature came into play, this air was subtle and very light; it spread universally and uniformly to all the corners of the cosmos. But with the gradual formation of different celestial bodies from the primordial cosmic gases, each having its own gravity and other natural physical and chemical forces, the air was pulled or sucked in, leaving the rest of the space beyond the reach of these celestial bodies into a big void.

The sky is pregnant with a wide variety of impurities. It is full of celestial bodies besides cosmic debris. It has the burning furnace of the sun as well as the cool pitcher of nectar symbolised by the moon. The black clouds of a storm with its stabs of ferocious lightening coexist with white fluffy clouds floating lazily across the calm sky. There are birds of prey and there are harmless kites flying in it. There is the polluted haze of the city as is the pristine clear atmosphere of a village and the mountain. There is the brightness of the day and the foreboding darkness of the night. But the wonder is that none of these really affect the sky at all—it remains clear and untainted in its basic nature and form. All these things cited here are extraneous to the fundamental nature and characteristic of the sky. The sky treats all of them with the same magnanimity and kindness. Similarly, a wise man treats all the creatures with whom he has to interact in this world with the same equanimity and fortitude as the sky.

The sky has a unique quality—it harbours the entire creation in its bosom as nothing that exist lies outside the outer periphery of the sky, but still it remains completely detached from each and every thing present inside it. The sky remains unaffected, uninfluenced, unattached with and untainted by anything that it harbours or shelters. Whatever visual attributes that one sees in the sky, such as its blue or azure haze, the changing colours at different times of the day, are only optical illusions created by various factors of Nature. Even the clouds or the sun in the day time and the stars and the moon in the night do not effect the neutral nature of the sky because while the sun is there the sky appears to be bright and sunny, and when the moon rises the same sky assumes the colour of the moonlight with no indication that it was so bright earlier. The overcast sky with dark clouds becomes crystal clear when the clouds go away, and the darkness of the night sky dotted with umpteen numbers of stars can give no indication that it would be brightly lit during the day with no trace of any single star. The plumes of pungent smoke being belched into the sky by factories and fires do not effect the bland and neutral form of the sky, for the sky absorbs them all with great equanimity and fortitude without being affected by them at all.

Everything in existence needs the sky to develop and grow. The fire needs space representing the sky to burn, the air needs it to flow, the earth needs it to remain in its place and move around the sun which in turn regulates the seasons and other environmental factors, the plants need it for their growth and development as is proved by the fact that they become stunted and die in the want of space to grow and spread their branches, the creature needs it to breathe, stand and grow, and so on and so forth. The air can be sucked out from an enclosed space to create a vacuum, but the 'sky' would still be there. The world would die and go into oblivion along with all its components, including the other four elements (earth, fire, water and air) at the time of conclusion of creation, but the sky would still be there; in fact it is in the vast bottomless pit of the sky that the creation would vanish then. And when the time comes for the emergence of the new creation, it would do so in the bowl of the sky. Nothing exists beyond the sky.

The incorruptible and untainted nature of the sky has been explicitly endorsed in Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 24 by Lord Varaaha, the Boar incarnation of Lord Vishnu, himself.]

25. Oh the most wise Nidagh! Become free from all Vasanas (worldly passions, yearnings, desires, lust and wants; worldly attachments and attractions) of the mind. Strive to control the mind and its sub-conscious (as this effort would help you to overcome the Vasanas) (25).

[Note—Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 29-32, 54, and Canto 4, verse nos. 46-48.

Canto 5, verse no. 40 explains the importance of controlling the Vasanas, the Chitta as well as the Prans for an overall spiritual well-being of an aspirant.]

26. The Atma (the pure consciousness) is the only entity that makes this world alive, and enables the creature to see, experience and witness the world. This Atma is therefore self-illuminated (much like the sun which is also self-illuminated and illuminates the world around it so that the creature can see it).

[This is because it is the consciousness that is present inside the gross body of the creature that infuses or injects ‘life’ into it. Without this ‘consciousness’, the body would be dead, and a dead body would not see, experience and witness the world at all. It is the Atma present inside the body that makes it ‘aware’ of anything at all in the first place. Besides this, the world is of any worth because there is ‘life’ in it. Since ‘life’ is synonymous with ‘consciousness’, it follows that both the perceiver and the perceived, i.e. the creature who sees the world and the world that is seen, are manifestations of the Atma.]

It is the esoteric and mysterious entity that is at once the ‘seer’ as well as the ‘seen’. In other words, as the pure consciousness residing in the gross body of the creature, it is actually the Atma that perceives, experiences and witnesses the external world, and as the ‘living’ world present around the creature it is the same Atma that is perceived, experienced and witnessed by him.

[The body is merely an instrument by which the ‘living entity’ known as the Jiva perceives the world around it. This ‘living entity’ is actually the pure conscious Atma that lives inside the gross body of the creature, and a body that has no Atma in it is a dead body which perceives nothing. The ‘consciousness’ is the only divine and eclectic entity in creation that injects life in this world; without the ‘consciousness’ the world would be a dead thing. Therefore, when the creature sees anything in this ‘living world’ it is actually seeing the ‘consciousness’ in that particular form. Even as the same Atma assumes as many countless forms as there are species and numbers of creatures, the same Atma assumes the countless forms that this creation has taken externally in its visible diversities. Since Atma is a synonym for life, since change and movement are signs of life, since every change is a sort of movement from the previous situation, and therefore since everything in creation changes and moves, no matter how imperceptible that change and movement might be, it follows that whatever that exists in this ‘living world’ is a manifestation of the Atma. The world is undeniably changing and moving. Every moment from its inception up to its final conclusion, the world is subjected to change and movement; it can’t remain static and fixed.]

The Atma is the only witness to the world and whatever is there. This Atma is a universal entity that is present in the entire creation, because it is characterized by the grand and unique quality of being all-pervading and omnipresent. That is why it is called ‘Sarwa-Atma’—i.e. the Atma of all; the universal and ubiquitous Atma that uniformly pervades throughout this creation.

The Atma is most immaculate, uncorrupt, untainted and pristine pure (26).

27. It is the virtue of high level of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment that helps a creature to get established in this world and acquire fame and good name. Since it is the pure consciousness known as the Atma (soul; spirit) that is the 'true self' and identity of all living beings, it follows that all these virtues pertain to or are ascribed to the Atma.

The supreme transcendental Brahm, which is the cosmic super Consciousness, is untainted by the demeaning and denigrating qualities known as 'Agyan' or ignorance, which in effect means all the negative qualities that are the opposite of what have been enumerated above. Indeed, Brahm is truthful and Truth personified; it is an embodiment of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment); it is a personification of the undiluted 'Sukha', or bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity of the highest kind (27).

28. When a wise man realises that this Brahm is 'he' (i.e. when he becomes 'self-realised' to understand that his 'self' is none else but the transcendental Brahm, the supreme cosmic Consciousness that resides in the gross body), it is then that he feels extremely grateful, fulfilled and contented (28).

29. The supreme transcendental Brahm is the only established truthful and eternal entity in creation that is non-dual, and about which there is no dichotomy, doubt and confusion. Brahm is the one who has established this creation, and is the foundation upon which the latter rests.

Brahm is an image of 'Sat-Chit-Anand'¹—i.e. it is 'truthfulness', 'consciousness' and 'bliss' personified. Brahm is beyond description and comprehension of the mind and intellect. It is not the object that can be viewed or perceived by any of the sense organs (29).

[Note—¹Sat-Chit-Anand = refer (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishad = Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 26-27; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 41; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 6, 23; Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 46. (ii) Atharva Veda's Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 68.]

30. That transcendental state of existence where the Supreme Being (Brahm) lives has no semblance to the world as it is known to the creature—e.g. there is no moon or sun shining there, no wind blows there, and neither are any gods or semi-gods there.

A wise creature who has become aware of this state of existence of Brahm (which means who has become aware of the real state of his own Atma), becomes absolutely neutral and unattached; he transcends all mundane levels of existence, and becomes enlightened (30).

31. All doubts and confusions in his heart about what the reality is, which are like knots that tie him down to this world, are removed, and the knots untied. All his doubts and confusions are dispelled for good. When a wise and enlightened creature attains the exalted stature of Brahm-realisation, all the negative effects of the deeds done by him are neutralized. [This is because he would not be involved in doing any of the deeds, fully realizing that it is the gross body that is actually doing the deed, and not the Atma.] (31).

32. On this body-like tree live two birds with beautiful wings. One represents the Jiva (the creature; the living being), and the other represents Maheswar (the realised One; the reference here is to Lord Shiva who is regarded as the most enlightened and self-realised amongst the Gods)¹.

Out of the two, the bird which represents the Jiva (the creature; the living being who is indulgent in the world and its material objects) spends its time and energy in enjoying the fruits of the tree.

[That is, the creature enjoys all the pleasures and comforts that are got by the gross body from the world and its material sense objects. The creature also picks and chooses what he wants and what he wishes to avoid. Similarly, the creature has to suffer from all the bad effects of his bad, unrighteous and improper deeds even as he enjoys the good effects of those deeds that are good, holy and auspicious.]

The other bird which represents the Maheshwar (i.e. the one which is self-realised, wise, enlightened and sagacious like Lord Shiva) would not indulge in such enjoyments, and neither would it be affected by the restlessness and miseries that make their appearance when the fruits are not available. This second bird that represents the Maheswar remains calm and shows no such inclination to hop from fruit to fruit because it represents the enlightened soul that remains ever-contented with whatever it has, and has overcome the temptations and urges of the sense organs, such as the organ of taste in this case, to seek self-gratification.

[This is because this bird represents a creature who has become aware of the truth of his 'self' as being the Atma which needs nothing, and which is self-contented. This wise bird realises that the enjoyments of relishing a sweet fruit is limited to the taste buds that are part of the gross body, and this taste is transient and temporary. To be drawn by the urge to taste fruits similar to the one already nibbled at would be an endless enterprise, and it would be tantamount to be trapped in the web of greed and temptation. If filling the stomach and satisfying hunger was the intention and aim, then only one fruit would serve the purpose for the bird. It is its greed for more fruit and sweeter ones than the first that motivates it to leap from branch to branch and from tree to tree, spoiling all the fruits in the process, littering the place and feeling unsatisfied and tired at the end of the day.

Like a wise and enlightened creature, this bird would remain calm and unruffled under all circumstances; it would not be interested in enjoyment of the sensual pleasures of the sense organs, nor would it be subservient to them like its companion that is fickle-minded and indulgent in the enjoyment of the sense organs and the gross world with its sense objects.

The metaphor of the two birds is used in this verse to describe the difference between the thought process and mental condition of two persons—one who is 'realised and wise', and the other 'who is not'. While the former is fickle, indulgent, restless and eternally unhappy, the other is calm, steady, rested and eternally peaceful. The bird representing the ordinary creature keeps hopping from branch to branch; it is never satisfied, biting one fruit with its beak and leaving it to jump to another in the hope that it is better, more succulent and sweeter even while the first fruit is left to rot. This bird can never satisfy its hunger, and remains ever fickle and fidgety like the ordinary creature who keeps on jumping from subject to subject, from deed to deed, from thing to thing, from birth to birth, without ever finding truthful satisfaction, rest and happiness.

The other bird is Maheshwar in the sense that it like a creature who has become 'self-realised'. This creature has become aware of the reality of the Atma, the eternally contented and peaceful pure consciousness that is the resident deity in the

body, and therefore remains aloof from the intransigent traps laid by the world and its temptations. Such a creature finds true satisfaction, peace and happiness. Lord Maheswar or Shiva is always in a state of meditation and deeply contemplative. He remains in a perpetual state of Samadhi which is the blissful state of transcendental existence. He is oblivious of the material world and has exemplary renunciation in him. The second bird personifies these virtues.

Consequently, at the end of the day the first bird representing the ignorant creature would be tired and worn out by its constant hopping around, the tree also suffers due its presence because it destroys all the fruits and litters the ground below, and environment would be disturbed by the incessant nuisance created by the bird's constant chirping, pricking and hopping around. On the other hand, the tree as well as the environment welcomes the second bird because not only the fruits are spared from being ruined but the ground is also kept clean and there is quietude and peace all around the immediate surrounding of the tree. The bird itself is rested and peaceful at the end of the day, and since it has eaten its fill from one succulent fruit which it selected carefully, it too remains contented like a wise creature who has diligently searched out the 'truth' about the Atma and enjoys its accompanying bliss peacefully, instead of remaining involved in the ever-changing world which is tantamount to pursuing water in a desert mirage to quench his spiritual thirst for peace, happiness and bliss. Refer verse no. 41 of this Canto 4 also in this context.]² (32).

[Note—¹Refer also to—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 41; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 6-7. (b) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1, verse no. 1-2. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 13.

The metaphor of two birds sitting upon the same tree has been used to describe the relationship between the individual creature called the Jiva and the supreme Lord called Ishwar in a number of Upanishads. The tree is the body, while the two birds are the Jivatma and the Parmatma. This is done in the Krishna Yajur Veda's two Upanishads, viz. Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 41, and Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 6-7 which use the metaphor of two birds to describe the relationship between the individual creature called the Jiva and the supreme Lord called Ishwar.

On the other hand, the Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 1-2 use this metaphor to describe two types of creatures—one who remains engrossed in the world and the other who is totally dispassionate and watches it with total disinterest.

The Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 13 uses the metaphor of the bird finding rest in its nest to describe the Sushupta state of existence as follows—"The state of existence when the intellect is stable and uniform (i.e. when there is no distraction and agitation of any form) is like the 'deep sleep state' of existence when the man does not even dream and has no restlessness even in his dreams! [When he wakes up from this sleep, he is completely rested and refreshed.] Even as a bird that is tired of flying around heads towards its nest to take rest, and having reached there it folds up its wings to retire, the creature too, when it is tired and weary of the restlessness caused during its waking and dreaming states of existence, seeks rest, it retires to the state where there is no restlessness because there is no awareness or knowledge of the existence of the external world, nor the reception of any kind of stimuli that would disturb the peace of the mind and intellect and provoke it. This state is equivalent to being ignorant of any kind of happening that can disturb peace and equilibrium of the man, when he is blissfully at peace with himself. Thus, in this state the creature finds perpetual bliss which is devoid of any interfering annoyance created by the various stimuli either from the physical world of the waking state, or the imaginary world of the dreaming state.

But it must be noted that this state is marked by ‘ignorance’ of the reality, ‘unawareness’ of the truth.”

²Refer also to verse no. 41 in this context.]

33. The Lord of creation known as Maheshwar, i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm, is merely a neutral witness to everything without getting involved in any of the things and deeds in this world, without either enjoying anything or suffering from anything.

This Maheshwar is self-illuminated. Any sense of duality or difference or dichotomy that exists between this Lord and the Jiva (the creature) is imaginary, and only out of the interfering Maya (delusions about the reality and truth).

When the Maya corrupts the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious), the creature begins to think that such difference does exist, while when this Chitta is freed from the corrupting influences of Maya, these imaginary views vanish (33).

34. When it is established by logic, proof, study, analysis and elimination process that there is actually no difference between the two types of ‘consciousness’—one at the macrocosmic level that is known as Brahm which is all-pervading and omnipresent, and the other at the microcosmic individual level of the creature that is known as the Atma—the creature has no more consternation, he does not worry and procrastinate, he is not torn between what is real and truthful and what is not, and consequentially he becomes wise and realised, he finds lasting rest, stability, peace and bliss (34).

35. It (Brahm) is the universal foundation and the basis of the entire world (creation). It is truthfulness and consciousness personified.

Oh sage! Be convinced of the fact that your ‘self’ (the Atma) is this same ‘consciousness’ (that is known as Brahm, the Lord of creation known as Maheshwar), think that ‘I am that (Brahm; consciousness)’, and therefore be reassured and freed from all spiritual ‘Shokas’ (restlessness, worries about your destiny and chances of salvation and emancipation, about how to get liberation and deliverance, etc.). Be calmed down with this eclectic thought that you are indeed Brahm personified (35).

36. It (Brahm; consciousness) lives as a self-illuminated entity inside the body (of the creature as the latter’s Atma), and is a witness to everything.

This eclectic and divine entity is witnessed and experienced by a Jiva (living being; a creature) who has become thoroughly clean and uncorrupt, and all the faults and shortcomings of whom have been completely eliminated.

On the contrary, when the Jiva is surrounded or covered by a veil of Maya¹ (delusions and its accompanying ignorance) he is not able to have any knowledge or awareness of this self-illuminated consciousness (representing Brahm) that is present in his inner-self. [This is like the case of a lamp being covered by a dark sheath. The light from the lamp would not be able to light the surrounding area, and any person standing even very close to the lamp would be in the same pitch darkness as the one who is miles away from it. This covering of Maya so much deludes and corrupts the mind-intellect and the sub-conscious that one begins to hallucinate and is unable to ‘see’ the truth from behind the curtain of falsehoods and illusions.] (36).

[Note—¹Maya: Refer verse no. 33 above of this Canto 4, and verse no. 76 of Canto 5.]

37. The knowledge of this divine and eclectic entity known as the 'self', which is pure consciousness, enables the learned Brahmin become self-realised, wise and enlightened (about the 'truth'). It is not possible to have the knowledge of this 'self' by pursuing any specific field of study or by getting entangled in a web of words (in the form of debates, discussions, studying of voluminous scriptures without being able to understand their essence and teachings).

[In other words, it is not possible to know what the 'Atma' is, what the 'consciousness' is, by trying to find the answer in anything other than turning inwards in deep contemplation and meditation. One can learn of this eclectic entity only by the path of self-realisation, self-witnessing and self-experiencing. It cannot be taught and learnt by any external means. The scriptures and teachers can at the best guide the spiritual aspirant on the correct path, and remove his doubts and confusions, but the actual achievement of success depends upon one's own endeavours, own sincerity, and on actually walking the path. Mere knowledge of the destination or availability of a means to go there would not make one reach his targeted place if one does not go there himself; any destination can be reached only by walking the path and not by being a scholar in the knowledge of the path or the destination.] (37).

38. Be steady and calmed-down by obtaining the knowledge of Brahm by becoming like a child (who is innocent, untainted, unprejudiced and uncorrupt)¹.

The knowledge of Brahm makes a man Brahm-realised, and this eclectic mental state is equivalent to that of a child as it is not only innocent, untainted, unprejudiced, uncorrupt and contented, but is also cheerful, happy, blissful and free from any worldly worries (38).

[Note—¹Refer the Holy Bible, *Gospel of St. Matthew*, 18/1-6—1: At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2: And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3: And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5: And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6: But whose shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Gospel of St. Mark, 9/36-37—36: And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, 37: Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.]

39. The divine entity that is hidden inside the inner-self of the creature (i.e. the pure conscious Atma) produces two types of sprouts (awareness; desires or wishes)—one that is auspicious, and the other that is inauspicious. The 'inauspicious' sprout is represented by or is a metaphor for being aware of the gross body and the gross world, and the accompanying desire to derive pleasures and comforts of the sense organs of the gross body from the relevant sense objects of this imaginary world. These 'inauspicious' sprouts are responsible for not only the creation of the gross body and the gross world but also help to enhance them, keep them active and relevant, fostering a close tie between this illusion and the creature himself, thereby decimating any vestiges of chance that he has for his peace and redemption. It is 'inauspicious' because it traps the creature in its web-like tentacles which create innumerable and intransigent problems for him.

[On the other hand, 'auspicious' sprout would be that which creates in the creature awareness of the 'truth' which is another way of saying that a creature is inspired to be aware of the 'truthful self', or has the desire to break free from the grossness associated with the body and the world, and instead seek higher and subtler state of existence when one becomes aware of the pure and blissful 'consciousness' that resides in one's own inner-self. Hence, while the 'inauspicious' sprouts create a tree that provides fruits that lead to grossness and worldly entanglements, miseries, restlessness and anguish, the 'auspicious' ones lead to a subtle existence of a high plane which leads to one's spiritual awakening, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

In this verse, the term 'sprout' refers to the various Vasanas and Vrittis that a creature has. They are a creature's inherent and natural passions, yearnings, longings, aspirations, desires and wishes as well as his habits, inclinations and temperaments vis-à-vis the body and the world. Auspicious and noble Vasanas and their relevant Vrittis help a creature to attain higher goals in life and achieve an exalted state of existence, while evil Vasanas and their attendant negative Vrittis pull him down and lead to his downfall and denigration.] (39).

40. The notion that there is some shortage, there is some sort of want or unfulfilled desire that needs to be fulfilled or addressed is like some cursed family heirloom that is the cause of all sorrows, miseries and torments that afflict the possessor of such cursed heirloom. It snatches all his peace and happiness; it robs him of whatever bliss and tranquility that he might still possess. It affects the working of the creature's mind-intellect so much that he is not able to think coherently and cogently as his sub-conscious too has become foggy by being prejudiced and tainted.

The mind-intellect and the sub-conscious are subjected to the numerous desires and wants that a creature harbours in his inner-self, and the former cannot remain immune from the influences of the latter. [Hence, when the desires, wants, aspirations, ambitions and volitions become either non-existent or 'auspicious' as described in verse no. 39, it is only then that the creature can hope to find true rest, peace and bliss.] (40).

41. If the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) is compared to a tree, then it is said that it has two kinds of seeds. These are 'Vritti' (natural desires, temperaments, tendencies and nature of a creature) and 'Vrat' (exemplary self-control, the various regulations and disciplines followed by the creature voluntarily for his self-improvement and enhancement; the various vows and self-regulatory principles that one rigidly follows in his life to make oneself disciplined and orderly).

The various 'Vrittis' that a creature has keeps the Pran (vital winds; the life-forces inside the body) active and inspires the creature to do so many things with his gross body in order to meet the demands of these Vrittis. On the other hand, the 'Vrats' inculcate in him the virtues of self-discipline and self-restraint.

While the Vrittis make the creature restless, fidgety and agitated (like a balloon filled with air that moves at the slightest movement in air, or a tall slender tree that sways when struck by a strong wind during storms), the Vrats on the other hand make him peaceful, serene and rested (like a balloon that is tied with a short string to a peg on the wall, or like a tall but sturdy tree which does not sway even in the strongest wind).

[The word 'Pran' in this verse refer to the life-forces in the creature's body. Since 'life' is a synonym for the pure conscious Atma, it follows that the Atma is subjected

to numerous problems due to the various Vrittis that are present in a living being. These Vrittis do not allow the Atma to rest in peace. They are like wild and untrained horses of a chariot; these horses would cause havoc for the charioteer and the passenger besides damaging the chariot itself.

On the other hand, the 'Vrats' are like the bridle and the whip used to tame and rein in the same wild horses.

In the example of the two types of trees cited here, while the tree representing the various 'Vrittis' of a creature makes life hell for him because of its constant swaying which makes the creature fearful of falling off its perch any moment, the one that is a metaphor for 'Vrats' provides calmness and peace to him.

In other word, the Jiva who allows the Chitta to harbour various Vrittis would be always restless and on the edge, while the Jiva who has learnt to practice various Vrats would be able to overcome the negative impact of the same Vrittis and maintain the peace, poise and calmness of his mind.] (41).

[Note—If we read this verse in conjunction with verse no. 32, its profundity with respect to its metaphysical import would be self-evident. We have two trees—viz. A and B. Tree 'A' sprouts from a seed that is known as 'Vrittis', meaning various worldly tendencies, inherent temperaments and natural habits that a creature inherits. Therefore this symbolic tree is said to be structurally weak and unsteady in as much as it sways easily under the slightest of breeze representing the numerous temptations of the world, some small and some big, as well as the natural tendencies of the sense organs of the body to seek self-gratification and swerve towards their respective objects in this material world. Obviously, a bird living on such a tree would be very uneasy, disturbed and restless. Even a bird symbolizing the Maheshwar (i.e. an enlightened, wise and self-realised creature) would be not spared from the buffeting effects of the Vrittis for the simple reason that as long as it lives on this tree it simply cannot avoid being influenced by its natural habitat or perch, so one can well imagine the disturbing condition of the other bird representing ordinary Jiva.

As compared to this is the tree called 'B' which sprouts from a seed known as 'Vrat'—meaning exemplary self discipline, self control and self restraint. The structural fiber of this tree can withstand even a storm, and thus stands steady and unmoving. The robust structure of this tree gives steadfast hold to the bird and it can rest peacefully in its nest or perch comfortably on its branch without getting agitated and restless, and without worrying for being felled. In this case, even the bird representing the ordinary Jiva would be comparatively comfortable and happy because its perch is steady and strong.

In essence this verse emphasizes the point that it is most important to control one's Vrittis and practice the virtues of Vrat if one wishes to obtain peace, tranquility, stability, happiness and bliss.]

42. When the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) makes the Pran Vayu (the vital winds) active, life and consciousness begin to flow in the various Naadis (nerves and veins) present in the body of the creature. As a natural corollary it can be said that the cause of the origin of this world and its objects is due to the Chitta having various Vrittis inciting the Pran to become involved in this creation consisting of the gross body as well as the gross world.

[That is, the inherent desires and aspirations of a man motivate him to do so many varying deeds, and since doing of deeds need the active participation of the gross body it is said here that the Naadis have been made active by Pran. The word 'Pran' not only means vital winds but is also a metaphor for life, activity and movement. Various Upanishads enumerate how the Pran keeps the body active and

regulate its functioning. In this context, refer Canto 3, verse no. 10 and its accompanying note.

The life-giving vital winds keep the body alive and active, and such a body is said to be 'conscious' of its surroundings as opposed to a body from which the vital winds called Pran have made their exit or in which they have become dormant. An active and living body is said to have consciousness or vital signs of life pulsating in it because of the vital winds flowing through its Naadis; it is this spark of life present in the nerves and veins that keeps the creature alive in this world. This is because the body is made active only when the nerves and veins keep it alive. Since a person who has no desires would not be inclined to do anything in order to fulfill his desires, and therefore his body would not need to remain active, it is said here that Vrittis present in the Chitta incite the Pran to become active, and in turn activate the gross body so that the creature can do what the Chitta wants him to do.] (42).

[Note—In the context of the importance of the control of Pran and Chitta, refer to Canto 3, verse no. 10; Canto 4, verse no. 85-89.]

43. The Pran (vital winds) is made active, or the vital winds present inside the body begin to vibrate so as to make the body of the creature active and perform various deeds, upon being inspired or incited to be so by the Chitta Vrittis inherent in the creature.

[The mind and the sub-conscious of the creature which makes him do this and that in this world, and his various Vrittis (or natural tendencies, habits, inclinations and temperaments) motivate him to do a particular thing in preference to another. It is the creature's inherent Vrittis that compel him to swerve towards the material world of sense objects, and thereafter remain hitched to them. Had it not been for these Vrittis of the Chitta, the creature would have been restful, peaceful and calm. The Vrittis keep on gnawing at him and prodding him ceaselessly to do something desired by them. When given a choice, the Vrittis would decide which of the various options the creature selects.

Since all the activities of the body are controlled by the vital winds, it is said that the Chitta Vrittis motivate the Pran to become active and agile. This is because all the desires of the creature as inspired by the Chitta Vrittis can be realised only through the medium of the gross body, and the latter is under the control of the Prans. So unless the Pran works according to the dictates of the Chitta Vrittis, the latter cannot hope to fulfill its desires.

The cumulative effect of all this is borne by the Atma which is the 'real and truthful self' of the creature. The restlessness of the Prans under the influence of the Vrittis is reflected in the restlessness of the gross body as well as the mind. Since the Atma is a resident of this gross body, and the mind is its assistant in its dealings with the body as well as the world, the Atma is bound to be disturbed when both its habitat, the body, and its assistant, the mind, are disturbed. When the Vrittis make the creature entangled in the affairs of this material world of sense objects, and in the bargain keeps him agitated and restless, it is said that the Chitta Vrittis have made the Atma not only agitated and but entangled in this world unnecessarily.]

Hence, it is best to control this situation (if one wishes to find peace and happiness) by controlling the unnecessary movement of the Pran (that makes the creature unnecessarily involved in the world and pay unwarranted attention to the nagging of the gross organs of the body). This can be made possible by practicing the tenets of 'Vrat', or self discipline, self control and self restraint (because then the tendency of the Chitta to be restless, unsatisfied, greedy and rapacious would

automatically be done away with, resulting in calming down of the Pran, and with it, of the body.] (43).

44. Yogis (ascetics) strive to control their 'Chitta Vrittis' by regulating their Pran and its flow, or movement, inside the body. The method of regulating the Pran are many, such as doing 'Pranayam' (breath control), Dhyan (concentration or focus of the mind; contemplation), and such other time-tested paths or instruments of Yoga (meditation) (44).

45. You must understand that peace of the Chitta and its stability is the eclectic reward or the fruitful result of doing Pranayam. Those who are wise, learned and erudite, those who have a deep knowledge of this subject, assert that Pranayam is a bestower of 'Sukha' (the feeling or notion of having happiness, joy, peace, comfort, pleasure and good fortunes) as well as 'Swastha' (good health). [In other words, by practicing Pranayam, a Jiva finds mental peace as well as a rejuvenated and a healthy body. His mind is freed from all unnecessary clutter and inauspicious thoughts, and his body is freed from unnecessary tensions and their negative effect on its metabolism. Obviously, with such a peaceful mind and a invigorated body, the life becomes a happy journey, rather than a cumbersome burden, for the creature.] (45).

46. Be firm in your convictions and beliefs, and abandon procrastination. Do not worry about the past as well as the future. [And therefore, live in the present. Of course, this is the best antidote to worries and fears.]

Vasanas have been defined as having a desire to accept or grasp material sense objects of this world; as having yearnings, lust, greed and passions for material things and sensual objects of the world; as having a desire for gratification of the sense organs of the body (46).

[Note—Refer also to Canto 1, verse nos. 29-32, 54; and Canto 4, verse no. 25.]

47. The Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) cannot find peace, stability and rest till the time one abandons all things worthy of abandoning. [That is, all things that are gross, material and created out of the imagination of the mind should be discarded as being inconsequential if one wants to achieve the peace of the mind as well as of the Atma. This is because as long as the mind remains agitated, the Atma cannot find rest; it would be constantly nagged and irritated by incessant pricking by the mind and sub-conscious.]

Hence, one should discard every sort of disturbing element (such as various Vrittis and Vasanas) from interfering in one's calm and peaceful existence (47).

[Note—Refer also to Canto 4, verse nos. 85-86.]

48. As long as the Mana (mind and the emotional or sentimental aspect of the heart) is not freed from the clutches or influences of the Vasanas (worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; worldly attachments and attractions), it can never find peace and happiness. [This is because the Vasanas would constantly keep nagging at the creature, and cause immense perplexity and agitation in him.]

So, when the aspirant is able to keep the Mana free from any sort of Vasanas, it is only then that he obtains the eclectic state of existence known as 'Amanask'¹—i.e. the state of the mind when it is absolutely neutral towards and uninvolved in the surrounding material objects of the gross perishable world, as well as is immune to the constant prodding of the gross body and its sense organs demanding gratification.

This state of being 'Amanask' is a provider of exemplary peace, calmness, bliss, beatitude and felicity (48).

[Note—¹The concept of *Amanask* have been described in other Upanishads as well, for instance Shukla Yajur Veda's Mandal Brahmin Upanishad Brahman 2, section 2, verse nos.1-5; and Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 7.

The word *Amanask* literally means without the influence or interference of the mind; being de-linked from the mind; annihilation of the mind; absence of the mind. This state leads to tranquility and peace for the creature and his soul. The Atma, which is truthful 'self' of the creature, generally interacts with the outside world through the mind-intellect complex. When the mind is snapped shut, the chain of receptions and responses of the Atma vis-à-vis the world also gets snapped. The Atma then remains cocooned in the sheath called the bliss sheath which surrounds it in the causal body. It is not impinged upon by the perplexing impetuses from the outside world because the circuit has been broken at the level of the mind. Hence, the Amanask state is when the Atma of the creature, i.e. the pure consciousness, becomes detached from and remains oblivious of the deluding external world along with its trademark problems, and consequential becomes rested, peaceful and tranquil. The Atma is uninvolved and aloof from all that the body might be doing in this world if the creature remains permanently in this Amanask state, because it is the mind and not the body that actually does the 'thinking, feeling, remembering, analyzing, deciding and responding' to the stimuli that the body receives from the external world on behalf of the creature. If the mind is stopped from functioning, then the body may be doing anything but the creature does not register that deed, and therefore the Atma is also not aware of what the body was doing and neither is it responsible for its consequences as it is not a participant in the entire process. That is why this state of Amanask is liberating for the creature's Atma. It also follows that the mind-intellect complex is the one that decides whether or not the creature gets involved in a deed.]

49. When one does not think about any given thing in this world, or when the mind is diverted elsewhere and one does not pay attention to it, then for all practical purposes that thing does not exist.

In a similar way, how can the Chitta (mind and the sub-conscious) have any existence when the heart is neutral and exists in a symbolic void like the one that is present in the sky? [A man is not interested in anything in this world when the heart is not interested in it or when it finds no attraction in it. In other words, a man is interested in anything in this world only as long as his heart likes it. A man feels emotionally attached to anything and feels happy to be associated with anything in this world only if his heart too plays ball with him. Should the heart decide to turn away from something or someone, no matter how important and significance that thing or person may be, the man is not interested in them any longer. A man finds anything worthwhile and worthy of paying attention only if the heart consents. It is only then that he is able to focus his mind on that particular thing at length, and his sub-conscious registers the presence of that thing along with its relevance and importance for the man. In order to keep the mind focused on any given thing it is of paramount importance that the heart should love it and long for it. Otherwise, the mind would move away from it and dwell on any other thing that sufficiently charms the heart. In other words, it is the heart that actually inspires the mind to focus on and register the presence of anything in this world. If the heart is disinterested, or when the heart exists in a virtual void, then the mind and the sub-conscious would not be bothered about that thing and would be inclined to move away from it.

The proof of the importance of the heart vis-à-vis the mind is when we say that we have learnt anything by heart. The process of learning is actually done by the

mind and not by the heart. But the implication is that when one was going through the process of learning, his heart was sincerely and diligently involved in the process; it had not created any hurdle by diverting his attention to something else more pleasant, but had rather assisted the learner to focus his attention on the thing to be learnt. Had it not been so, the man would not have been able to focus his attention fully on the thing to be learnt because the heart would have pulled him in some other direction. He would not have been able to maintain the drive and stick to the task at hand if the heart did not cooperate with him. Hence, for all practical purposes, the heart decides whether or not the mind can focus itself on any given thing, and remain focused on it.

We can take another example to understand the importance of the heart. When a man loves something and longs for it ‘whole-heartedly’, his entire being—including his mind and sub-conscious—becomes obsessed by it and remain focused on it. The mind would always think of it, and nothing else but that particular thing. The mind would constantly devise all imaginable ways to get the thing longed for by the heart, or be at least near to it, even when such obsessions are, more often than not, detrimental for the long term good of the man. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the scenario when the heart detests or loathes something—in this latter case, the same man would begin to despise the very thing which he would have died for had the heart longed to have it, even if the mind tells him that the particular thing is of great value and the heart is wrong on this count. The man might heed the advise of the mind and think of the thing under consideration for some time, but sooner or later he would lose interest in it because his heart would pull him away by telling him that there is another thing more pleasant and worthy of being paid attention to than the one which the mind had preferred.

So we conclude that that the heart and its emotional as well as sentimental powers are more powerful instruments as compared to the mind and its logical or reasoning powers when it comes to determining the natural inclinations, temperaments, tendencies and leanings of a man. The heart has a greater say to determine a man’s desires, yearnings, wants, longings, aspirations, volitions, hopes and expectations as compared to the mind.

A typical example of the sway of the heart is when a man falls in love—he overrides all advice given by the mind and becomes ‘blind in love’. This is because his thinking and analyzing mind, which actually enables a man to ‘see’ the reality and be practical in life, has been paralyzed, or made to sleep or become numb, under the relentless onslaught of the emotional and sentimental demands of the heart.] (49).

50. When one thinks that he does not have a certain thing in this world (but others have it), it is only then that he feels the dearth of it, it is only then that he begins to want it and get mentally hooked to it. But when a thing has no existence at all, then there is no question of feeling the lack of it, and therefore there is no question of desiring it or getting hooked to it.

This is the active state of the Chitta—because it is the Chitta that determines whether or not a particular thing is needed, its importance, relevance and worth, and the very fact that it exists at all in this world. Once this happens, the same Chitta conjures up a desire for that thing in the creature, and the creature begins to feel the need of that thing.

Then there is the case when one accepts a thing as it is or as it appears to him, without bothering too much about it or getting unduly involved in it. This case is called ‘A-Chitta’ state—i.e. a state of indifference, dispassion and neutrality of the mind and sub-conscious (50).

51. A wise, erudite and enlightened man willingly and consciously leaves everything related to this world, and disassociates his inner-self from having any kind of mental and emotional involvement with them. Consequentially, he develops great calmness, tranquility, serenity, peace and stability of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious). His Vrittis (inherent tendencies and natural desires) are quietened (51).

52. Just like a new shoot does not emerge from a roasted seed, a person whose worldly desires and corrupt tendencies have been vanquished or crushed too does not take a birth again. In other words, he who has no Vasanas (worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; worldly attachments and attractions) is said to be the one who is 'Jivan Mukta'—i.e. he has obtained spiritual liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle an ordinary creature to this deluding and entrapping material world even though he is alive in it and has a gross body with which he does deeds ordained for him by destiny (52).

53. Those who are erudite, wise and realised understand the truth of everything, including this existence and their own self (as being 'consciousness personified'). They realise that the body is gross and not the real 'self', but the latter is the Atma that lives in this body, and this Atma is a divine, eternal, eclectic, subtle and sublime entity known as 'consciousness'. [That is, they do not see the exterior façade which is gross and deceptive, but are able to see the 'truth' which is pure consciousness that is hidden behind this exterior, the 'truth' that is the only absolute reality of existence. Therefore, they discard the falsehood and accept the truth.]

With this wisdom they develop a Chitta that is not involved in this world and the body in any manner whatsoever. Hence, when they leave the body and the world, they become as subtle and infinite as the sky; they lose all vestiges of grossness and become sublime and ethereal like the sky; they merge and become one with the sky. [The reason is that the Atma, being 'consciousness', is an ethereal and sublime entity that is often called the 'Spirit', and when the shell of the gross body is shed, it imperceptibly, automatically, and without the least of effort merges with its primary form that is as diffused, eternal, infinite and all-pervading as the sky element. That is, the individual Atma merges with the universal cosmic Consciousness that permeates everywhere in this creation.] (53).

54. When a creature becomes self-realised and truly enlightened about the Truth and Reality (as outlined in the foregoing verses), he abandons all his Vasanas and the tendency of the Pran to keep the body involved in this world. [When the creature has desires and passions, he would strive to fulfill them at any cost. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the Pran, or life-forces present inside the body, keep the latter involved in the world, as desires can be fulfilled by taking relevant actions or doing necessary deeds by the body.]

Hence, Gyan, or truthful knowledge, self-realisation, enlightenment and wisdom, helps one to abandon the Vasanas and the resultant agitation of the Pran. In other words, it is only then that he finds peace and rest. It is like the case of uprooting a tree from its roots, for then there are no chances of it producing new shoots and coming back to life once again. That is, if the Vasanas and Pran are controlled as a result of inculcating Gyan, or as a reward of acquisition of Gyan, then this control would be lasting and sustainable (54).

55. To have lingering attractions for things seen or imagined in some time in the past, to yearn for them, lust for them, be obsessed with their thoughts, and to be overcome by a staunch desire to have them and enjoy them, is called a 'reflected Vasana'. [It is 'reflected' because the thing or object of attraction or passion is not present currently, only its memory and thoughts remain in the mind and the sub-conscious. But this memory is so strong and unshakeable that it overwhelms the creature's being in the present moment; it literally 'possesses' him like an evil spirit. This longing for a particular thing or object is an 'echo' of the original Vasana that had submerged the creature earlier when the thing or the object had actually existed or imagined to be existing in the past.]

A creature is called intelligent, wise and erudite who makes diligent efforts to eliminate such imaginary and illusive thoughts from his sub-conscious, and clears his mind and intellect complex from being deluded by such hallucinating notions. [Otherwise, he would be foolish to allow himself to be unnecessarily agitated and flummoxed by imaginary things that have no existence, pith and matter.]

Therefore, a man must get rid of or overcome even the 'reflected Vasanas' (55).

56. Only if such Vasanas are not done away with that the creature is impelled or compelled to get entangled in this world. [It is because if he has lingering traces of Vasanas, he would strive to seek fulfillment of his hidden desires and satisfaction of his passions by getting involved in the material world and its mundane activities. And obviously this would tie the Atma to the gross body or compel it to surrender its inherent independence to the body, because without the body it is not possible to gratify or please the Vasanas.]

Therefore, to get proper and complete rid of the Vasanas is called 'Moksha'—or true liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of the creature's 'self' (56).

57. You (Nidagh) must attain an exalted and self-realised state of existence where nothing matters. It should be a state of total indifference, detachment and neutrality, of total dispassion towards anything or anyone in this transient, material and deluding world, so much so that you must not have the notion of having, or deriving, any kind happiness or joy from anything whatsoever in this world.

But this does not mean that you would not have happiness in this world. Quite the contrary; in fact you would be so much drenched in the sort of 'Anand' (bliss, joy, happiness, beatitude and felicity) that has a sublime and subtle dimension, instead of an Anand having gross value that is derived from the material sense objects of the world, that you would be completely submerged and dissolved in this aforesaid grand virtue of Anand. That is, your whole being would be indistinguishable from Anand; you would be virtually Anand personified (57).

58. A creature who has no interest in anything of this world, which is, however, only the subject matter of perception of the sense organs of the body is said to have truthfully overcome the Vasanas. Such an exalted state of existence is equivalent to being in a state of virtual stupor as far as this gross existence and the gross world is concerned. [This is because such a man would not be interested in the affairs of the world and does not get involved or indulgent in it; he prefers to remain aloof in a contemplative mood of meditation, and lost in the deep thoughts of his own pure 'consciousness' that resides in his bosom. Since the world prefers to deal with someone who shows interest in it, it is natural that the former would neglect the latter

just as the latter neglects the former. For all practical purposes, the self-realised man who is indifferent to this gross world, its sense objects and their charms, and instead prefers to remain contemplative and focused in his inner-self, is of no worth for the world. The world is selfish and anyone who does not meet its vested interests is of no value to the world in spite of his being a good person and highly realised, wise and enlightened.]

Such a wise, self-realised and enlightened man who is fully detached from and dispassionate towards the world and its affairs may be doing all the routine works expected of him in this mundane world or mundane existence, but he is totally un-involved (at the mental, intellectual and emotional level) in the deeds that his body routinely does. That is, his 'self' is literally not doing anything at all. He is unaware of the gross material things of the world, and their charms, pleasures and comforts, he is not even aware of the body's actions and deeds because his mind—which is the actual center where all sensory perceptions are received, accepted and then analyzed to be interpreted in the form of existence of the world with its material sense objects, or the doing of the deed by the body, or the various comforts and pleasures that are derived by involvement of the body in the material sense objects of the world—has been trained to neglect the world and the body, to remain neutral and detached, to practice non-involvement and dispassion, and to generally shield the Atma from being disturbed by the various gross inputs from the body as well as the world.

He is virtually like a man in stupor or coma. He might be doing so many things externally, but internally he is not deemed to be doing anything at all. He becomes an ideal of such glorious virtues as neutrality, dispassion, equanimity, detachment, non-involvement and renunciation (58).

59. Being enlightened and self-realised, he lives in a state of mental void. He is totally unaware of what is happening around him, or what is present in the world around him. His heart—which is the progenitor of such emotions or feelings as attraction, longing, desire, affection, infatuation etc., which in turn lead to emotional involvement with anything in this world and being sentimental about—too remains in a virtual state of void or non-involvement.

In other words, his heart as well as the mind remain non-involved in, non-committed to, non-indulgent with and non-attached to this world and its material sense objects along with their attendant charms and temptations.

Such a person is said to be 'Jivan Mukta'—or one who has obtained spiritual liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle an ordinary creature to this world even while he is alive and lives in this world with a gross body with which he does so many deeds in this life (59).

60. The Atma (the pure conscious 'self' of the creature) has not the slightest trace of any kind of inherent Vasanas (worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; worldly attachments and attractions) in it. [The Atma is absolutely pure and immaculate, and such tainting qualities are simply not its cup of tea. The Atma does not possess any trace or vestige of any kind of Vasana that can be called its integral part or its inherent character. Whatever Vasanas it has are its acquisition when it comes in contact with the material sense objects of the mundane world. These things are so fascinating, charming, attractive and alluring that they delude the Atma into falling for the honey-trap. It's like the case of the eternally free sky-bound bird that allows its self voluntarily to be trapped by the bait kept by the bird-catcher. Therefore, if the Atma manages to keep itself aloof from the temptations offered by the world and the

demand for gratification by the sense organs of the body, it is able to keep itself free from being tainted by the Vasanas, and even overcome any trace of Vasana which might have inadvertently clung to it. The Atma would be able to maintain its immaculacy and pristine purity. If there are no Vasanas, there would be no Vrittis, and vice versa. This is because if one has no passions and lust, he would have any desire for anything in this world, and therefore his mind would not be conditioned to develop certain habits and preferences, it would not be inclined to move towards something or away from another impulsively.]

A wise, enlightened and self-realised man who has understood this fact becomes quiet and steady just like an innocent child or a man who is dumb. [A child or a dumb man is not able to express his desires and passions. Just like them, a man who has realised that the Atma has no Vasanas in it too remains mute and un-expressive in the sense that he does not have the faintest idea of what is known as desire, passion, lust, longing, yearning etc. Since he is totally oblivious of what constitutes 'Vasana', he is unable to express his longing or attraction or desire for anything or anyone in this world. Therefore he becomes 'mute'. He is 'steady' because he no longer is torn between this and that charm, between the worthiness of this object and the futility of that, between one desire and the next.] (60).

61. This state of total neutrality and non-involvement with anything or anyone in this gross mundane world is deemed to be the state of 'Mukti' (or liberation and deliverance from all sorts of fetters that shackle an ordinary creature) by those who are well-versed and wise in this field of metaphysics.

A man who adopts this eclectic tenet in his life and relies upon it is established in knowledge and is deemed to be wise, enlightened and self-realised. He does not get entangled or involved in the least in anything that has the remotest of chances of igniting any kind of Vasana in him (61).

62. A wise, enlightened and self-realised man should discard all sorts of Vasanas, and instead be established in the unmoving and the perpetual state of 'Samadhi'—i.e. he should be perpetually calm and quiet like a man in the higher state of meditation when he has reached the transcendental state which is trance-like. Such a man, for instance, does all the deeds with his body, but internally he is absolutely serene and unruffled, being un-involved mentally, intellectually, emotionally and sentimentally in any of the deeds or actions of the body because he is in a state of deep contemplation upon his 'self', or his Atma, which is pure consciousness residing inside his inner-self. His focus on the 'self' precludes any chance of his mind being involved in the outside world, as the extreme sense of bliss and ecstasy that he enjoys while being focused on the Atma has no match in the temporary and artificial and transient happiness that one derives by being engrossed in the gross world through the equally gross body.]

He becomes so engrossed in Samadhi (deep meditation and contemplation) that he loses awareness of even his own existence as a creature with a gross body in a material world. And therefore, he is deemed to have attained the exalted state of ethereal existence which is eternal and infinite, a state which is without a beginning and an end. That is, his conscious 'self' dissolves in, or merges with, or becomes one with the eclectic entity known as the cosmic Consciousness. In other words, though he is not aware of the mundane and gross world, though he is unaware of the gross body, yet he is very much awake and aware, but this awareness and awake-ness now pertains to the higher plane of existence rather than the gross and lowly (62).

63. In this eclectic and exalted state of Samadhi (as described in verse no. 62), the consciousness (the Atma, the person's true 'self') may be involved in various activities of the world—for instance the creature may be walking, may be touching different things, may be smelling something—but internally his subtle mind-intellect is not aware of any of these things. That is, he does not perceive anything in this world; for him there is no activity and no existence of the world. Therefore, he does not get involved or engrossed in any of the deeds done in this world, or any of the numerous activities of the body. [This is because the creature becomes aware of anything in this world only when the mind is ready and willing to receive the impulses picked up by the sense organs of perception in the body when they come in contact with the world, and then interpret these signals so as to conclude that such and such thing is there. If the mind is not willing to do so, then nothing matters, nothing exists. The best way to witness this phenomenon in practical life is when the mind is deeply thinking about a certain thing. In this case, a person might be intently staring at something or even listening to people talking animatedly on a subject, but he would not be aware of either of them. A person sees, smells, hears, feels or tastes anything only when the mind accepts the relevant signal picked up by the concerned sense organs of perception in the body. If the mind is pre-occupied somewhere else then the man is not at all aware of the world where the sense organ of the body might be focused.]

It is actually the mind that does the function of perception on behalf of the Atma, with the body being merely an instrument to felicitate the mind in this function because the body bears the organs of perception through which the mind receives the impulses originating in the external world; the mind does not receive these impulses directly on its own. If the mind refuses to accept any of the inputs from the world though the sense organs have picked up the necessary signal, the Atma would not be aware of that particular perception. So, if the mind decides to shut itself off, the world would be shut off for the Atma. In other words, if the mind is fully detached from, and uninterested and un-involved in the affairs of the world which the body is involved in, the Atma too would be deemed to be detached, uninterested and un-involved for all practical purposes.]

A creature who has reached such an exalted and sublime state of existence when his mind does not register any impulses pertaining to this mundane existence as it is engrossed in contemplation, and when he thus stays in a perpetual state of Samadhi (which is a trance-like state of transcendental existence of consciousness that remains aloof from all grossness associated with the body as well as the world), the creature is deemed not to be involved in anything. Such an exalted creature lives in a virtual state of Amanask (refer verse no. 48) which is like a state of stupor since his mind has completely retracted itself from the outside world and its awareness, the mind has abandoned all its involvements in the gross world and its temptations, and instead has become meditative and contemplative. The mind is now engrossed in the thoughts of the 'self' rather than in the thoughts of the gross world and its sense objects as well as in the thoughts of the body and its demands for gratification. This is the ideal state of the mind of an enlightened and self-realised Jiva (creature; living being).

Such a creature becomes exemplarily neutral and indifferent to both the notions of sorrows as well as of joys. He does not feel dismayed or exhilarated at anything. In fact, his mind even fails to register the bliss of experiencing the pure consciousness that comes naturally during the process of meditation and contemplation, and which is enhanced and becomes overwhelming when the aspirant

reaches the higher state of existence known as Samadhi—because the intensity of bliss and ecstasy experienced during this stage becomes so overwhelming, so overpowering, so intense and perpetual, reaching such a high pitch and acquiring such depth and amplitude that he becomes literally numbed by it. His mind and sub-conscious become so drenched and suffused by this ecstatic feeling of bliss, felicity and beatitude that he fails to especially register these feelings in his mind.

[This can be illustrated with a simple example—when one eats only sweets, then after some time the taste buds fail to register the intensity of sweetness in a given dish because they are numbed by the overpowering sense of sweetness and become immune to its titillating and delicious effect. After some point, the eater would not even know that he is eating some delectable sweet dish. In fact, if one continues to eat only sweets without interspersing it with some other dish, a time would come when he would vomit, what to talk of relishing it.

On the other hand, if he combines it with some salty dish, then even the smallest morsel of the sweet would taste extremely sweet, delicious and immensely pleasing for the taste buds. So, when the mind is involved in the world, it gets a liberal dose of sorrow and joy. These are like the salty and sweet dishes cited above. In this situation, the smallest cause that can provide happiness and bliss to him is marked out, and the man can experience these senses. But in the case of Samadhi, there is only one, all-engulfing feeling of bliss, with nothing to disturb it, so the senses become numb to the feeling of bliss as now there is only bliss all around, with no trace of sorrows and pains.]

Therefore, in the absence of any disturbance of any kind, the state of Samadhi, the state of non-involvement of the mind and the sub-conscious, gives immense spiritual happiness, comfort and pleasure to the creature.

Such an exalted living being may appear to be stupid, ill-witted and dull externally, but he is immensely wise, enlightened and realised internally. He is perpetually happy and blissful not because he is a block-head or a mental patient whose mind is not working properly but because he has reached a higher level of consciousness that transcends the gross and the mundane.

[Ordinary people who are not sufficiently spiritually enlightened and empowered and wise are subjected to being buffeted by wave after wave of sorrows and happiness alternating with each other. They are tossed and turned like a plank of wood in a choppy ocean. But a wise, self-realised and enlightened man has attained the density and the gravity that comes with attainment of super conscious state of existence which can be compared to a huge ship that remains steady, stable and unaffected by even a fierce storm in the ocean. Therefore, when a man has acquired the gravity, depth and intensity of spiritual knowledge that comes with self-realisation, he would not at all be affected by any emotions or sentiments related to the body and the world.] (63).

64. With such eclectic and most enlightened views (as expressed in the aforesaid verses), a wise and self-realised Jiva (creature; living being) crosses this seemingly interminable world of miseries and sorrows, though it requires certain degree of diligence and effort on his part to achieve the exalted state of existence that would enable him to realise his spiritual objective (64).

65. He does not treat anything as being special, or having any special importance for him. That is, he treats everything with stoic equality and great equanimity. Therefore he need not be attracted to or be disturbed by any given thing or situation as compared

to the other. He is not attracted towards, attached to, infatuated with, or longs for one thing more in preference to the other. He gives no especial importance or preference to any thing, person or situation. [In other words, he would be equally happy in different situations and equally contented with two different things, though one might be of an excellent quality and the other most lowly.]

He has become wise enough to understand that the universal Truth (i.e. the spiritual 'truth' about his own 'self' as being pure consciousness, and that the rest, including his dear body and the enticing world of astounding fascination, are all false) is only one, and it is immutable. It is great, grand, magnificent and majestic. It is the highest stature of existence that any wise and erudite man would aspire to achieve (65).

66. You (Nidagh) must inculcate the grand and noble view that the notion of there being different times and circumstances (called 'Kaal'), different phases or aspects of a thing (called 'Kalaa'), and different things and objects (called 'Vastu') in existence in this world is erroneous and fallacious. This notion of duality is fallacious and imaginary, and only leads to delusions, confusions and hallucinations.

In fact, there is no duality in creation; everything is one single whole that is viewed from different angles and perspectives, giving it the appearance of diversity, its myriad forms and uncountable variations. This 'single entity' is known as the universal Truth—because 'truth' is always one, and never two or more. From the perspective of metaphysics and spiritualism, this ubiquitous and quintessential Truth is known as the 'Consciousness' that is sublime and pure.

Hence, you must discard the deluding idea of there being two aspects, facets or parts of this existence. And instead be established in the eclectic notion of non-duality (Advaitya)—i.e. the notion that there is only one common denominator, which is the Absolute Truth, in the entire creation (66).

67. There is only one universal, all-pervading, non-dual and supreme Authority (known as Brahm) in this existence. It should be thought of as being a 'Vibhu'—or the one who is almighty, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and eternal.

It is complete in all respects and wholesome. It is supremely blissful. It fills all the directions uniformly, being all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent (67).

68. Be enlightened about the irrefutable fact that this Authority that permeates everywhere in this existence, and which is the cause of all that exists as well as all that is done in this creation—occupies the highest stature in existence, and it has no beginning or an end; it has no cause for its own coming into being, and neither is there any seed from which it originates, though it is the cause of the rest of the creation and the cosmic seed from which the rest of everything else germinates or sprouts (created) (68).

69. When an enlightened and self-realised aspirant becomes aware of this exalted state of existence or attains knowledge of the divine Authority as described above, it is then that his consciousness finds peace, rest and stability. [This is because the 'Authority' referred to here is the cosmic supreme Consciousness that is the same as the consciousness that resides in the spiritual aspirant's own bosom as the Atma. Since there is no basic difference between the two, when the aspirant becomes 'self-realised' he is actually realizing this cosmic Consciousness. Obviously, the fractional consciousness known as his 'self' or his Atma would plunge to become one with and

indistinguishable from the larger parent body of the cosmic ‘Self’ when true realisation happens.]

A person who has reached this exalted stature would no longer befallen with grief and sorrows of any kind (69).

70. It is this Vibhu (see verse no. 67) that is the cause of all the ‘Bhuts’ (primary elements such as earth, water, fire, air and sky, as well as all the mortal living beings) coming into existence, but it is a magical feat that the same Vibhu has no cause of its own creation or existence—i.e. it is eternal and infinite, being un-born and imperishable.

It is the essence and fundamental basis of all the other elements, and there is nothing superior to it (70).

71. It is in a clean mirror that all the things of this creation are seen. It is similar to the case of the image of a tall tree being reflected in the calm waters of the large pond or a lake on whose banks the tree grows.

[In the present context this analogy implies that when the mind and sub-conscious are clear and untainted as well as calm and quiet, it is only then that the consciousness can be experienced and witnessed by the aspirant. A disquiet and disturbed mind would not be able to focus its attention on the self and the Atma. Similarly, if the mind is corrupted by various Vasanas and Vrittis (worldly passions and tendencies for indulgence) it would be deluded, and therefore unable to perceive an entity that is as subtle and sublime as the Atma. This is akin to the case when there are ripples on the surface of the pond or the lake, in which case the image of the tree would not be visible in spite of the fact that both the tree as well as the reflecting surface are there.

Another interpretation of this verse can be as follows—once an aspirant achieves the exalted stature when he has successfully cleansed his inner-self of all impurities that taint his ‘self’, the Atma, when his mind-intellect has been sufficiently sharpened and made alert to perceive the hidden truth in this creation and discard the falsehood, it is then that he is able to realise that whatever that is visible in this creation, whatever that he had been treating as the reality till now are but only a ‘reflection’ of the supreme Brahm, and not Brahm itself. In other words, these sights only prove the presence of the supreme Brahm without which the world would not have been there in the first place, and that it is not the real Brahm but an image of Brahm just like it would be utterly stupid to see an image of any object in a mirror and treat the image as the real thing.] (71).

72. When the creature experiences the presence of the taintless pure consciousness known as the Atma, it is then that his Chitta (mind, sub-conscious as well as the heart) finds true rest and peace.

Be enlightened about the fact that a creature who has accessed this ‘truth’ and experienced this ‘consciousness’ is the one who overcomes all fears and consternations in this world. [This is because then he would have realised that all fears arising from the presence of gross things in this world—such as the body, for instance, getting old and infirm, or for instance the other man being an enemy who can harm one’s interest or even kill him, etc.—have no bearing and basis. The Atma is eternal and universal, it never dies, is neither harmed nor does it harm anyone else, and it is all-complete and fulfilled so as not to desire anything or harbour any shortage. So there is no cause for fear of any sort from anything or anybody for a

wise, erudite, self-realised and enlightened person who knows the ‘truth’ of the Atma.] (72).

73. I have enumerated to you the spiritual remedies for all sorts of miseries and agonies that afflict an ordinary creature in this world, and all of these problems can be soon and easily overcome by employing the remedial measures outlined above (73).

74. One should make diligent efforts to overcome the various Vasanas (worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; worldly attachments and attractions) that are inherent to all the creatures in varying degrees, and thereby attain the exalted stature that is marked by universal stability, uniformity, poise, peace, bliss and happiness. [Obviously, when the creature has nothing to distract his mind, when he is satisfied and fulfilled, or when he has overcome the ‘Vasanas’, he would be rested and peaceful. It is like a case when a man who has had a sumptuous meal would lie down to rest peacefully, and no matter what delicious dishes are offered to him, he would refuse them with total disinterest and without regret. This can be compared to a man who is hungry and greedy; he can never sleep or rest in peace.] (74).

75. When a creature becomes self-realised, he is said to be wise and enlightened so much so that he gets acquainted or becomes aware of the ‘Tattwa’, literally the essence and the fundamental element, which in the present case is the awareness of the Truth in the form of the pure consciousness or the Atma or the ‘self’. This realisation is instantaneous and spontaneous. Though theoretically it is an ethereal experience that is like a flash, but once it is experienced it becomes lasting. In other words, if one has overcome one’s Vasanas and Vrittis, one can make this fleeting ethereal experience of the Tattwa a permanent one. It is like virtually being able to grasp it firmly and keep it within one’s reach (though it is so difficult to access and retain because it is like a flash of lightening) (75).

[Note—In the beginning, the experience of the Atma, the pure consciousness residing in one’s bosom, is for a fleeting moment like a streak of brilliant lightening in the sky that is here now and gone the next moment, or like a dazzling spark that erupts momentarily when two live electric wires touch each other. But just like the case of this spark of electric translating itself in a continuous flow of electric current when the two ends of the wire are properly and firmly joined together, the moment of spiritual ecstasy and bliss that is attained upon the first moment of realisation of the Atma would become permanent if one continues to diligently practice focusing his mind on the Atma. Of course, there are various means to do so, and Yoga (meditation and contemplation) is one of them. The permanent state of realisation is called the Turiya state of consciousness which in turn translates into the state of Samadhi. The earlier stage of temporary bliss and ecstasy is equivalent to the Sushupta state of consciousness because then the experience of bliss and ecstasy was transient and experienced only for a fleeting moment.]

76. The exalted stature of self-realisation when one experiences the presence of the supreme universal Authority known as the ‘consciousness’ in one’s own self is normally fleeting and transient, but it can nevertheless be made permanent and steady by constant practice, diligent effort, persistence and sincerity (76).

77. Oh Nidagh! If you concentrate your attention and focus your mind on this essence known as ‘pure consciousness’ (i.e. the ‘self’, the ‘truth’, the Atma), and persist in your endeavours, then surely, by and by, you would be able to attain this exalted state

of existence known as the 'Tat-Padam'—i.e. that exalted and supreme state of existence or stature which is marked by total enlightenment and its accompanying bliss. [In other words, if you keep your mind focused on the chief target of your spiritual pursuit inspite of living in this world and going about your duties in a routine manner, you would still be able to achieve the much acclaimed stature of being realised, enlightened, liberated and delivered. That is, you can achieve 'Jivan Mukti'.] (77).

78. If you wish to fully eliminate and overcome your Vasanas, then you must realise that unless the Mana (mind and heart) is not completely and fully submerged in the supreme essence—i.e. unless you are fully committed to self-realisation and experiencing the pure conscious Atma in your inner-self, a commitment that should involve both your mind as well as your heart, and unless your Mana has not enjoyed the taste of the nectar of bliss, beatitude and felicity that comes with realisation of this Atma, and consequentially has not become fully contented and fulfilled—it is not possible to do so.

That is, only when the mind is drenched in the bliss and is fully satisfied by the high degree of contentedness that comes with spiritual enlightenment and realisation of the supreme Consciousness that it would abandon any thoughts of the world and attempt to find happiness and bliss in its material enjoyments. Hence, the ability to keep the Mana focused on the 'self' and enabling it to suckle at the nectar-like bliss dripping from the experience of the pure consciousness is the only way to control the various Vasanas and divert the Mana away from the various temptations of the world and the desire to gratify one's natural instincts that pertain to the sense organs of the body (78).

79. Unless the Vasanas are decimated, one cannot expect that the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) will ever find rest and peace. Indeed, how can the Chitta find permanent rest, stability and peace if the creature does not find (access) the eternal source of rest, tranquility, stability, peace, happiness and bliss?

That is, how can the mind rest and allow the creature to rest till it finds what it wants—and it is the discovery of the pure consciousness, accompanied by its nectar-like bliss, happiness and contentedness, which would bestow the mind with the much wanted calmness, stability and peace that it so much yearns for, that it so much strives to attain, that it so much hopes it would access during this life (79).

80. Till the time the Chitta is calmed down and made focused, it is not possible to attain the Tattwa (essence; fundamental element; the Truth) which is the pure consciousness and the truth that is the essence of all spiritual happiness, peace, bliss, peace and tranquility. [In other words, if the mind and the sub-conscious are not rested and controlled, if they are agitated and in a state of constant flux, if they are not able to focus on the target, then obviously spiritual success would be illusive. Any enterprise needs a focused mind and an alert sub-conscious, and should they be distracted for whatsoever reason it is not possible to attain great success in one's efforts. An effort made with a distracted Chitta would be like doing something half-heartedly, and naturally anything done this way would not be the best thing done nor would its rewards or fruits be up to the mark.]

Similarly, unless the Vasanas are eliminated, is it possible to have knowledge of the Tattwa? Of course, the answer is 'not'.

In the same vein, unless the Tattwa is accessed, the Vasanas too can't be got rid of. [In this context, refer verse no. 78-79. In other words, the decimation of the various Vasanas, the control of the Mana and the Chitta, and the realisation of the Tattwa—all are inter-linked and intertwined. If one has to achieve success in any one of them, the others must be achieved simultaneously. That is, it is not feasible and plausible and practical to have the Vasanas eliminated but keep the Mana restless, and it is not possible to calm down the Mana while still harbouring various Vasanas in one's bosom.] (80).

81. Destruction or decimation of the various Vasanas and control of the Mana are said to be equivalent to having knowledge of the spiritual essence known as Tattwa-Gyan.

That is, the real fruit (benefit, reward) of wisdom and enlightenment is the destruction of one's passions and desires on the one hand, and control of the wayward tendencies and restlessness of the mind on the other hand. They—destruction/decimation of the Vasanas, and control of the Mana—complement and supplement each other; they are of equal importance to the creature if he wants to attain the exalted state of self-realisation and enlightenment, if he wishes to attain wisdom and access the supreme Truth called the Param Tattwa (81).

82-83. Those who are wise, enlightened and self-realised, those who have experienced the truth of the pure consciousness and the falsehood of the rest of the world, i.e. those who have the acquired 'Tattwa-Gyan'—they completely abandon all desires for gratification of their sense organs and enjoyment of the sense objects of this material world which is deluding and transient by nature. They discard such desires and longing from a great distance—i.e. they do not allow such thoughts to come near them, they keep a safe distance from all sorts of Vasanas.

They pay special attention to the triad (necessary for the exalted state of self-realisation and attainment of enlightenment) consisting of (i) elimination of Vasanas, (ii) acquisition of Vigyan (truthful, rational, empirical and systematic knowledge), and (iii) control or vanquishing of the Mana (the thinking mind and the emotional heart).

Oh wise one (Nidagh)! Success in these three spiritual necessities can be obtained by constant, consistent and persistent practice (82-83).

84. By properly and diligently practicing these three spiritual doctrines (elimination of the Vasanas, acquisition of correct Gyan, and control of the Mana) for a long time, the aspirant is able to crush even the stubborn attitudes and intransigent nature of the heart. He is literally able to break through the strong knots that tie down the heart. These knots—called the Hridaya Granthis—represent the stubborn and uncompromising attitude of the heart which likes to dwell on things which it deems to be pleasant and enchanting, and move away from those that it deems to be the opposite. That is, by diligent and steady practice, the aspirant is able to tame the tendency of the heart to seek pleasant and gratifying things of the senses and then get hooked to them, to long for them, to be infatuated with them, to develop affection for them, and to embrace them tightly.

[The heart is driven by emotions and sentiments rather than analytical reasoning and intelligent deductions from all available information to decide what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. This more often than not lands the creature in awkward situations. If the heart supersedes the advice of the mind, it would lead to the creature's ruin. This is because the heart is driven by emotions and sentiments,

while the mind is analytical and thoughtful in its approach to problems in this life. All the Vasanas and Vrittis have their epicenter in the heart. So it is very important to overcome the dictates of the heart if one is to move ahead fruitfully in one's endeavours, whether such endeavour is related to the affairs of the world or to spiritual affairs.

It is said that the Atma lives in the subtle space of the heart, known as the 'Hridaya Akash'. When the aspirant seeks to access this Atma ensconced in the heart, it is necessary for him to overcome the stubborn obstacles in the form of the various Vasanas and Vrittis that the heart possesses. For this, he needs a sharp Mana—because only an intelligent and conscientious mind that is determined, steadfast and steady in its pursuit would help him tide over all the problems created by the rigidity and stubbornness of the intransigent heart. Once this hurdle is overcome—which is like breaking through the strong knots of the heart, called the 'Granthis of the heart'—the Atma is easily accessible. Refer also to verse no. 11 of Canto 4.] (84).

85. The control of the Pran (vital winds) hold the same importance in acquisition of knowledge of the Tattwa (supreme essence or the Truth known as the consciousness or the Atma or the 'true self') as the elimination of the Vasanas. For this, a similar process and attitudes are required.

[Canto 5, verse no. 40 elucidates the direct relationship that exists between the control of the Pran, the Chitta and the Vasanas, along with the importance of such control for the overall spiritual welfare of the spiritual aspirant.]

Hence, those who are wise and learned endeavour to control the mind by controlling the various vital winds called the 'Prans'. [For this purpose, they follow the various procedures as prescribed in Yoga—such as Pranayam or breath control, Aasans or sitting postures, Bandhas or closures of all openings in the body, etc.] (85).

86. The Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) becomes quiet, tranquil and rested—i.e. it virtually becomes non-existent or dormant or non-interfering, or 'A-Chitta'—only when the Vasanas (worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; worldly attachments and attractions) are eliminated. [This is because as long as there are worldly desires, the mind cannot find rest; it would be constantly fidgety and in a state of flux, being buffeted and kept agitated by the pull and tug of the Vasanas. Refer also to verse nos. 47-48 of the present Canto 4, and verse no. 43 of Canto 5.]

Similarly, one can achieve great success in the spiritual field by reining in the vital winds and controlling their movement or vibrations. [It has been said earlier that the Prans control the functioning of the body and its various sense organs. When the Prans are controlled, the body would lose its tendency to be restless, and its sense organs would abandon their natural habit to move towards their respective sense objects in this world. The result would be that the creature would be left alone and at peace with himself. So we see that control of the Vasanas as well as the Pran play equally important role in giving peace and bliss to the spiritual aspirant. Refer also to Canto 3, verse no. 10, Canto 4, verse no. 42, and Canto 5, verse no. 5.] (86).

87. The movement of the Pran (vital winds) inside the body can be controlled or regulated by practicing Pranayam (breath control), doing various Aasans (sitting postures), and observing Ashan (fasting; moderation in eating), along with establishing a coordination between them as advised by a learned Guru (teacher).

[That is, in order to regulate the movement of Pran it is important to practice all the aforesaid three principles of Yoga simultaneously. They act like the three legs

of the tripod which support the aspirant's efforts to control the Pran and achieve success in his spiritual endeavours. Even if one leg is short or deformed, the tripod would be unsteady and face the risk of toppling over. Similarly, if one any of the three tenets are not properly followed, the aspirant cannot hope for reaching the desired goal of self-realisation. Refer also to Canto 5, verse no. 41 which also outlines how the Pran can be controlled.] (87).

88. Any endeavour that is done alone and without taking any sort of help is said to be 'A-Sanga'¹—literally 'one who has no company'. When anyone achieves success in any given enterprise relying upon his own efforts, he would not be under any obligation of anybody; he would be independent and free from the compulsion to please this or that. Therefore, when one becomes detached from the gross body he would be under no obligations to please the body and its sense organs, and fulfill their demands for gratification. And when extended further, it would also free him from the necessity of appeasing the world by offering the body in its service. Hence, all causes of fears and bondages are automatically done away with (88).

[Note—¹A-Sanga: Refer Canto 2, verse nos. 1-11 also.]

89. The movement or vibration or pulsation of the Pran (vital winds) inside the body is equivalent to the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) remaining alive, active and agile in the body. [This is obvious because only as long as the body is kept alive by the vital winds would the mind and sub-conscious have any relevance to the creature. A dead body will have the gross aspect of the mind known as the 'tissue of the brain' intact, but it would be a lifeless mass of dead tissue, and not a live and vibrant entity known as the 'brain' which does stupendous things even without physically appearing to do so or even moving a bit to prove that it is alive and active. A dead body's brain-tissue would just be like the rest of the body in which the vital winds have stopped moving.]

Hence, those who are immensely wise and erudite strive and focus their efforts to control their Pran and its movement (by following the instructions given in verse no. 87) in order to control their mind and sub-conscious. [In this context, refer also to Canto 5, verse no. 40.] (89).

90. The Mana (mind and heart complex) cannot be vanquished or controlled without making diligent and proper efforts which are noble, righteous, auspicious and sincere.

Therefore, you (Nidagh) should make all efforts to inculcate noble and auspicious virtues in your self, become truly wise and enlightened, acquire correct and proper knowledge, and consequentially be totally neutral towards, indifferent to, and detached from all that is false, erroneous, misleading and deluding in this world. Be calm and poised; be rested and peaceful; be serene and tranquil (90).

91. Oh great soul (Nidagh)! All forms of knowledge except that which pertains to the pure consciousness should be discarded as being unworthy and untruthful by a truly wise, erudite and enlightened spiritual aspirant. Remember, to be wise is to know about that which is true and real.

Keeping this advise in mind, be free from the numerous and myriad emotions as well as the worldly desires, longings, passions, affections and attachments of the heart. Instead of these grosser tendencies of the heart, concentrate your attention on the subtle and sublime consciousness that resides in the same heart, and be firmly established in it, be focused on it.

Even when you have to do so many deeds in this world (which you cannot avoid doing because of the circumstantial compulsion of life that if you have a gross body and have to live in this material world, your life revolves around the doing of deeds and not sitting idle), you can still be deemed not to be doing them if you do them without involvement at the level of the heart and the mind, if you inculcate the grand view 'I am not the doer'. [Here, the word 'I' stands for your true self, which is the Atma, the pure consciousness, and not the body. But to say it honestly, and sincerely believe in what you say, you must be highly enlightened and self-realised. Otherwise it would be a contrived and a deceitful statement smacking of lie, pretension and falsehood.]

If this fructifies, you will be steady and rested, calm and poised. There would be no agitation or restlessness in you. [In other words, you would have achieved 'Jivan Mukti'—i.e. liberation and deliverance even while being alive and possessing a gross body, as well as being active in this world and doing deeds.] (91).

92. The endless thoughts and inherent inclinations of the mind and the sub-conscious can be reined in and controlled by you with a little amount of wise thinking, sincere effort and constant practice. A person who has been successful in controlling the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) has indeed obtained the ripe fruits of being born as a human being. [That is, when the mind and the sub-conscious are controlled, the man can achieve astounding feats in this life itself. Usually it is said that if one is not able to complete his mission in life he takes another birth to complete the unfinished task, but for a man who has complete control over himself and his mind, nothing remains incomplete. From the metaphysical perspective it means that he would have realised that material gains and pursuance and enjoyment of sensual pleasures are not the aim of taking birth as a human being. Since birth as a human is the highest point in the evolutionary ladder, one must strive to make the best of it within the limited time-window that is available to him. If he fails to do so, it is obvious that he would fall down to the bottom of the pyramid and would then have to work his way up the ladder again, which would be a most horrifying prospect given the bitter experience he has had of his earlier lives. So a wise man would strive hard to find permanent liberation and deliverance of his soul in this life itself; he would make all-out efforts to remain free from any chance of having to assume a gross body once again, with all its accompanying pains, sorrows, miseries and torments. Hence, with this wisdom, he would focus the mind on those things that enable him to achieve this spiritual freedom, and for this to fructify it is important to make the mind fine-tuned and obedient. Because if the mind is left to its own natural tendencies and allowed to do what it wants, then all such efforts made by a man would be futile. Instead, the tug-and-pull caused by the countless Vasanas and Vrittis as well as the numerous temptations of the material world would drain the man of all the energy he has, leaving him bewildered, flummoxed and exhausted.] (92).

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Canto 5

[This Canto is a continuation of the preaching of Canto 4. The change in the numbering of the Canto is a sort of a small interlude to give rest to the disciple. It is like a break or a recess period in modern-day colleges before the lectures resume in the next session.]

1. He whose mind and sub-conscious are neutral towards and detached from every incoming impulse, when the mind harbours no thoughts whatsoever and the sub-conscious registers no information, whether the man walks or sits, whether he sleeps or remains awake—well, such a man is deemed to be like a man who is mentally dead. [In other words, such a man is no better than an unconscious man who has no active senses inspite of his being physically alive. An unconscious man's body lies like a dead body—his external gross organs show no signs of life and activity, and his mind-intellect is also unable to function. Such a man does not recollect any of the events that had occurred while he was unconscious. Therefore, if he has tamed his mind not to register any of the sensory perceptions of the world, then inspite of him living in the same world he is deemed to be like a man who is either unconscious or physically dead.] (1).

2. A man who has become extremely wise, self-realised and enlightened is able to 'see' the truth of his own 'self' in the 'light' of this wisdom and enlightenment. [Even as anything is visible only if there is light, the pure conscious Atma, which is the man's 'self', is only 'seen' (witnessed and experienced) in the 'light' of truthful knowledge. It follows that if there is no 'light of knowledge', this Atma cannot be seen. That is, if there is a thick blanket of darkness symbolizing spiritual ignorance and its accompanying delusions, the consciousness cannot be witnessed and experienced by anyone.]

Such a realised and enlightened man is afraid of none, and neither does he accept anything from anyone (as charity or donation). [He is afraid of none because he has no enemy as he treats everyone alike and like a close friend or brother. He sees the same Atma in all the living beings, and therefore treats everyone as his own image or sibling. He takes nothing from anyone because he has no desires of any kind; he is self-contented and fulfilled.]

He does not live a life of bondages, and neither does he feel humble and lowly. [He is without any bondage because his 'self' is not the gross body but the Atma which is eternally free and unshackled. He is not humble because this 'self' is the Atma which is an exalted, ethereal and divine entity that represents the supreme Brahm personified in its form. The Brahm is the supreme Authority of creation. How can an entity that is 'supreme' and 'the most exalted' Spirit be humble and lowly?] (2).

3. Even though a man may be wise, self-realised, highly erudite and enlightened, but if he eats, even inadvertently, anything that is polluted and unclean, a thing that is poisonous and toxic for the body, or a thing that has been obtained by unrighteous and unscrupulous means, the man is bound to be affected by it. It would ruin his body, would be injurious to his health, would make him diseased and weak, would corrupt his mind, and its cumulative effect would demean and denigrate his Atma.

[Therefore, merely being knowledgeable and wizened about the secrets of the Atma and being able to distinguish between the truth and the falsehood is not enough. One must be careful about what contacts or company one keeps. One must assiduously avoid any sort of contact with the 'falsehood' because the latter is bound to dilute and corrupt the immaculacy and pristine purity of the 'truth' if allowed to come too close to it and maintain its contact with it just like a wise man falling sick by eating infected and polluted food that is generally regarded as injurious to health. He may eat it unknowingly and even under force of circumstance, but his body would

react immediately nonetheless; the eater's ignorance of the type of food he eats is no excuse for the adverse chemical reaction that the food produces inside the body.

Hence, any contact with the artificial, deluding and entrapping gross world of material sense objects is bound to have a negative and degrading effect on even a most wise and highly self-realised man if he does not keep his guard.] (3).

[Note—The statement 'eating of poisonous food that would ruin the body' is an aphorism for accepting and indulging in the material things of the gross world. Since whatever one eats affects his body, so whatever contact one has with the world is bound to affect his inner-self. A man cannot remain immune to the negative and deluding influences of the world if he keeps company with it, if he is deeply engrossed in its affairs even at the level of the gross physical body in the hope that if he is able to control his mind he would manage to remain free from the corrupting affects of such contact. But it is almost impossible to do so, and by and by the world would cast its shadow on the mind. This is just like the case of a poisonous food harming the body irrespective of the fact that the food was eaten willingly or unwillingly. The world would invariably affect and taint the mind should the latter establish any contact with it which is more than what is absolutely necessary for survival. A man who remains indulgent in the world and seeks worldly honours and pecuniary benefits from his knowledge would fall from his exalted stature sooner than later. 'Mukti' and 'Moksh' (or spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) would elude him no matter how hard he tries.

But the practical problem arises that if a man has to live in this world, he has to perform some deeds that are absolutely necessary, and without which it is impossible to survive. Well, here lies the importance of the control of the mind and the heart, collectively called the Mana. The idea is (i) not to allow the mind to think of evil thoughts, not to allow the sub-conscious to accept and harbour such thoughts, and not to allow the intellect to be deluded by the influence of such corrupted thoughts, and (ii) not to allow the heart to be emotionally attached to anything related to such thoughts and the things of the material gross world. If a man is able to achieve this, then for all practical purposes he is deemed to be non-involved in the world. This is because the real acceptance of the world and the real indulgence in it is done by a man at the level of his subtle mind and heart, and not by the gross body which is simply an instrument for the mind and the heart to carry out their wishes. So, if the Mana and the Chitta (the mind, the heart and the sub-conscious collectively) are able to maintain their neutrality, the man is deemed to be neutral towards the world.]

4. Moksha (final liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation) is equivalent to abandoning all sorts of company. [That is, to remain free from any contacts and relationships is tantamount to being free and liberated as the concerned person has no obligations to fulfill and no bondages to break free from. Refer Canto 4, verse no. 88.]

When one abandons all company and relationships, he has no fear of having to take any birth again (because he will have no unrequited or unfulfilled desires and passions left).

Oh Anagh (one who is sinless and uncorrupt—an epithet used for Nidagh)! Therefore, you must discard the company you may still have in the form of various thoughts, emotions, views and notions. [In other words, you must renounce all things gross and material in this world; you must withdraw yourself from all things except the pure conscious Atma which is your true 'self' and the absolute Truth in creation.]

This will entitle you to obtain Jivan Mukti—i.e. you would become free from all spiritual bondages even while you are alive and have a gross body in this world (4).

5. The notion of feeling happy and exhilarated when one possesses something which one longs for, or the opposite feeling of sorrow and frustration at the lack of it or not possessing it is the cause of all mental and emotional disorders and their attendant defects in the creature. They do not allow him peace and composure; they keep him constantly oscillating between bouts of happiness and frustrations.

Hence, the Vasanas (worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; worldly attachments and attractions) that pertain to material things or objects of the senses are called 'tainted Vasanas' as they do not give happiness, peace, bliss and rest to the creature. On the contrary, they keep him tormented, agitated and restless. He is persistently and constantly buffeted by desires and passions for this and that, and he never feels contented and fulfilled; he never feels peaceful and calm.

[This is because in the one instant he feels that he is the most lucky man to have possessed something, then his mind registers something new which it feels is better and nicer than the first simply because of the factor of jealousy and greed, and their psychological implications for the mind and sub-conscious that the man just forgets about his privileges and good fortunes, and instead feels that he is unlucky that he has yet not got this better or newer thing. This is an endless cycle and a quagmire from which it is very difficult to extricate one's self unless one develops total disinterest in things that are material, gross and transient by nature, and therefore understands that the pleasure and comfort derived from such things are equally immaterial, gross and transient. Real happiness and peace is obtained instead when a wise man focuses his mind and the sub-conscious on subtler and more important things of life that are everlasting, and which give him true spiritual peace and happiness.]

Therefore, a Jiva (the living being; the creature) who has abandoned all Vasanas for all things material and gross, all things that are transient and perishable, all things that are not directly concerned with his spiritual welfare, is said to be without any company, or as being alone. He is deemed to be peaceful and untainted, he is not under any obligations, and he is said to be leading a secluded and a serene life. [In other words, it is not the mere physical presence of another creature or the physical possession of something that is called 'having a company'; even harbouring some thought of someone or something is deemed to be 'living in a company', or 'having a company'. Hence, it is of paramount importance to eliminate all thoughts of everything, whether real or imaginary, if one really wishes to have no company and thereby be freed from all entanglements that having a company or contact or relationship with something or someone brings in its wake. This is called the ideal state of 'A-Sanga' as described and intended in Canto 1, verse nos. 1-11, and Canto 4, verse nos. 86 and 88.] (5).

6. The state of existence when a creature is not swayed by happiness or sorrows, when he does not oscillate between joys and exhilaration on the one hand, and bouts of depression and frustration on the other hand, when he is emotionally steady and neutral, maintains his calm and poise, and treats everything equally and with exemplary equanimity—it is only then that he is said to have a cleansed Buddhi (intellect that is untainted by corrupt thoughts), and only such a creature is able to obtain Jivan Mukti (which is freedom from all worldly fetters even while he is alive and has a gross body with which he interacts with the world). [This is because in spite of being in close proximity with the gross world and its numerous charms related to the objects of the senses, he is not interested in them, he keeps aloof and maintains a safe distance from them. He lives like a lotus flower that grows in a pond—no filth of

the water ever sticks to this flower inspite of the latter being surrounded by the former. Or like the case of the sky which remains inherently untainted and clean inspite of the myriad varieties of pollutants being always present in it.]

A person who has achieved this exalted state of Jivan Mukti is freed from having to take a birth again. [A creature takes a birth because, inter alia, his mind is attached to something in this material world which he very much loves, and at the time of death his whole being is thinking of this object of his adoration. So when the creature dies, in that instant, his Atma leaves the current body and immediately transmigrates to another body with the intention of remaining close to the object of love and adoration. This is one of the several reasons for taking a new birth. Another reason is that while he was alive, he had strived to achieve successes of different kinds and obtain so many things which he could not accomplish in the limited time-span of one life. So his unrequited desires and unrealized wants would compel him to take another birth to complete the unfinished task. But it is not that easy as it seems. For, in the new birth he would be engaging himself in doing fresher deeds and gather another cache of desires related to the material objects and worldly pleasures and comforts. This in their own turn would create newer and more desires and greed. The result is that the creature is sucked in a whirlpool from which he finds it impossible to extricate himself, and this means that he is pushed further away from the spiritual goal of finding Mukti or Moksha—i.e. finding freedom from worldly attachments and entanglements, freedom from worldly passions and greed, freedom from all worries and consternations etc. And the cycle continues to rotate for ever.]

The only way obviously to break free is to stop having desires, get rid of attachments, not have affections for anything, and stop hankering after worldly possessions. Since life in the physical world revolves around doing deeds and taking actions, it becomes imperative for a wise and enlightened man to do them without any mental and emotional attachment to them or having any sort of desire for results. That is, to do everything totally dispassionately, with a sense of complete neutrality and exemplary renunciation. One must not harbour any desire for rewards from his actions or deeds. At the same time, he must not be passionate about anything whatsoever in this world.] (6).

7. Oh Nidagh! You must not have sorrow or feel saddened when you face adversities or failure in achieving your objectives, and neither should you feel happy or exhilarated when you have good fortunes or are successful in anything. That is, you must learn to practice the highest degree of detachment, non-involvement, dispassion and renunciation, leading to the grand virtues of having equanimity, resilience and fortitude.

You must not feel that you are unable to overcome such emotions and thoughts, that they are too strong for you to be subdued. [That is, you must be confident and absolutely certain that you can practice these grand virtues and maintain your equilibrium, and that you can definitely overcome all sorts of temptations and delusions that may pull you down from the high spiritual platform where you have been striving to establish yourself successfully.]

This will be equivalent to your being 'without any company'—because when you have inculcated neutrality of attitude, you would be equally at ease under both the circumstances, the one that is favourable, and the one that is unfavourable. A man is disturbed when he keeps company, because then he has to keep his mind busy in order to deal with such company. It is not necessary that the company is favourable, and so

he keeps oscillating between pleasure of keeping one company and the pains of another company.

Therefore, when you have learnt to maintain your calm and poise under all circumstances, you would be like a person who is all alone, and there is no thing or no one to disturb him. You would be left to yourself (7).

8. Do not be afraid of, bewildered by and amazed at so many changing things and circumstances that are seen in this world in different phases of life and time. They are misleading and deluding. In fact, there is no duality anywhere, for only one non-dual 'consciousness' prevails everywhere and under all phases and planes of time. This universal cosmic 'consciousness' is known as Brahm, and it is the same consciousness that is also your own truthful 'self'. Therefore it logically follows that 'you' are 'Brahm' personified. In other words, be calmed down and feel peaceful in the eclectic thought 'I am Brahm personified'¹ (8).

[Note—¹This observation is the climax of self-realisation, and it forms one of the many 'Maha Vakyas' or the great spiritual sayings of the scriptures. There are numerous Upanishads that describe these Maha Vakyas in detail—viz.

(i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad.

(ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi).

(iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-3, 8; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi).

(iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk Rahasayo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2.

(v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15; Canto 6, paragraph no. 22; Canto 8, paragraph no. 5; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2; Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 8; Canto 5, verse nos. 20-21, 57, 65, 74, 95; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-8, 11; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15; Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, paragraph no. 3; paragraph no. 4.

Now, let us see briefly what the different Upanishads of the Atharva Veda tradition say are the Maha-Vakyas:

(i) *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 7, verse no. 8—"Tattwamasi; Ayamaatma Brahm".

(ii) *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15—"So-a-Ham"; Canto 6, paragraph no. 22—"Twam Brahmasmi"; "Aham Brahmasmi"; "Twamewaaham"; "Ahamev Twam"; Canto 8, paragraph no. 5—"Brahmaasmi" or I am Brahm; "Ahamasmi" or Indeed it is I/me; "Brahmahamasmi" or I am indeed Brahm; "Yoahamasmi" or That is I/me; "Brahmaamashmi" or Brahm is I/me; "Ahamevaaham" or I am indeed I/me.);

(iii) *Ram Rahasya Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14—"Tat Twam Asi" or That Art Thou;

(iv) *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 2—"I am Lord Ram who is Brahm personified; there is no difference between me and Lord Ram";

(v) *Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 9—"So-a-Ham; Atma-Ram";

(vi) *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 8—"Brahmasmi—I am Brahm personified"; Canto 5, verse nos. 20—"Brahm is consciousness; Brahm is this entire

creation; Brahm is manifested as all the Bhuts (elements; mortal creatures) according to ancient tradition. I am Brahm. Everything is Brahm—therefore even the enemy is Brahm, the friend is Brahm, and this Brahm is also all other kith and kin, all compatriots and relations; Canto 5, verse no. 21—“Everything is Brahm and nothing else”; Canto 5, verse no. 57—“the ‘great and transcendental Authority known as the supreme Brahm is no one else but me (i.e. my ‘truthful self’ which is the pure consciousness called the Atma)’”; Canto 5, verse no. 65—“I am indeed Brahm personified”; Canto 5, verse no. 74—“I am Brahm; I am a personification of Brahm”; Canto 5, verse no. 95—“Brahm is none but me; I am no one else but Brahm”;

(vii) *Mahavakya Upanishad*, verse nos. 6-8—“Hans So-a-Ham” or the divine entity known as the Swan is none but me or my truthful form as the Atma; verse no. 11—“So-a-Hamarka” or that essence of creation known as the truth and the supreme consciousness is me;

(viii) *Hayagriva Upanishad*, verse no. 15—“Tattwamasi”—i.e. that supreme essence or truth is you; the second Maha Vakya is “Ayamatma”—i.e. that essence known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is my own Atma, my own ‘self’; the third Maha Vakya is “Brahm Aham”—i.e. Brahm is me; the fourth Maha Vakya is “Aham Brahmasmi”—i.e. I am Brahm);

(ix) *Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad*, paragraph no. 3—“Brahm Twam Yagyastwam” or ‘Brahm, you are personified in the form of the sacred fire of the sacrifice; paragraph no. 4—“Tattwamasi”—that essence is you.

According to *Paingalo-panishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 2 of the Shukla Yajur Veda, the great sayings of the Upanishads, called the Mahavakyas, are the following—(a) ‘Tattwamasi’—that essence or Tattva is you; (b) ‘Twam-Tadasi’—you are that; (c) ‘Twam-Brahmasi’—thou art Brahm; and (d) ‘Aham-Brahmasi’—I am Brahm.

The *Adhyatma Upanishad* of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 2, 10 describe the great saying ‘So-a-Ham’, i.e. ‘that essence is me’, and in verse nos. 30-31 describe the other great saying ‘Tattwamasi’, i.e. ‘that essence is you’.

According to *Mandal Brahmin Upanishad*, of the Shukla Yajur Veda, they are the following—(a) ‘That is me’, or ‘that is I’ is mentioned in Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; (b) ‘I am Tej or I am energy personified’, ‘I am Pragya or personified knowledge’, ‘I am one and immutable’, ‘I am pure and non-dual Brahm’—these are mentioned in Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; (c) ‘I am the eternal and immaculate Parmatma’, ‘I am that essence’, ‘you are me’, ‘I am you’ are mentioned in Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; (d) ‘I am Brahm’ appears in Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 1; and finally (e) ‘You are me’ appears in Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2.

According to *Shuk Rahasaya Upanishad*, verse no. 22 of Krishna Yajur Veda, they are the following—(1) ‘OM Pragyanam Brahm’. [OM salutations! The truthful and pristine pure knowledge which is all-inclusive, most sublime and eclectic in nature is Brahm personified.] (2) ‘OM Aham Brahmasmi’. [OM salutations! Indeed, I am Brahm.] (3) ‘OM Tattwamasi’. [OM salutations! That Brahm is you; that Principal Absolute and essence is you; it is you; or ‘that art thou’.] (4) ‘OM Ayamatma Brahm’. [OM salutations! This Atma, the pure conscious soul or ‘self’ of the creature, is Brahm.]

The *Chandogya Upanishad* of Sam Veda tradition describes the great saying ‘Tattwamasi’ in great detail in its Canto 6, sections 1-16 with numerous examples when Uddyalak, son of Aruni, taught this great axiomatic maxim of the Vedas to his son Shwetketu. It winds up the exposition with the final declaration of ‘Tattwamasi’, ‘that art thou’, in verse no. 3, section 16 of Canto 6.

According to *Avadhut Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 2, an Avadhut Sanaysi is a living embodiment of the great saying ‘Tattwamasi’.

According to *Kaivalya Upanishad*, verse no. 16 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, the Mahavakya is ‘That Brahm is you; you are it’. Verse no. 17-23 of this Upanishad also affirms that the truly realised person is one who sees ‘his own self in

every aspect of this creation' simply because the entire creation is nothing but a revelation of one single immutable and truthful entity known as Brahm.

The *Sarwasaaro-panishad*, verse no. 12-14 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition explains the terms 'Tat' and 'Twam'.

According to *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 32, the great Mahavakya which is exclaimed by the self-realised ascetic as soon as he discovers the truth about himself is 'I am Shiva'. The word 'Shiva' refers to the supreme transcendental and quintessential Brahm which is the cosmic Absolute, the universal Truth and the only Reality in creation. The word 'Shiva' itself means 'one who is pure, auspicious, truthful, holy, divine, beautiful, renunciate, most wise and enlightened'.

A simple parable would illustrate the essence of the Mahavakyas. Once a teacher asked his disciple—"Son, do you see anything?" The disciple answered—"Yes sir, I see". The teacher—"By what light do you see?" The disciple—"Sir, by the light of the sun in the sky during the day time, and by the light of the lamp during the night". The teacher—"By what light do you see these lights?" The disciple—"Sir, by the light present in my eyes". The teacher—"By what light is the eye enabled to see?" The disciple—"Sir, by the light provided by the mind". The teacher—"By what light do you know the mind, or what lights up your mind and enables it to see and interpret the sight?" The disciple—"Sir, by the light provided by my self, for no one else outside can empower my mind to think for me". The teacher—"Well, there you are. You are the light of lights". The enlightened disciple exulted—"Yes indeed sir, that is I; that indeed is me".

Who can preach the Mahavakyas—The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 7, verse no. 8 says that only certain types of Sanyasis are authorised to preach the Mahavakyas. To quote—"The three types of Sanyasis such as the Turiyatit, the Avadhut and the Param-hans are the only ones who have the authority to preach the great sayings or the Mahavakyas of the scriptures such as 'Tattwamasi' (that essence and principle is you), 'Ayamaatma Brahm' (my Atma is Brahm) etc.

The other three types of Sanyasis such as the Kutichak, the Bahudak, and the Hans are not authorized to preach the Mahavakyas (8)."]

9. When you understand what has been mentioned and intended in the aforesaid teachings, you would succeed in firmly establishing yourself in the exalted state when you always think that you are internally freed from all fetters that had been shackling you to anything whatsoever till now, and the only entity that still appears to bind you down is your gross body in which your true 'self', i.e. your Atma, lives.

A man who has this firm belief (that he is eternally free in his truthful form which is his pure conscious 'self' known as the Atma, but it is only the gross body that acts as the fetter that still binds him to the gross world and acts as a hindrance in his complete and unconditional freedom) becomes absolutely steady, calm and poised in his approach to life and its problems; he develops a uniform and universal view of this world and the life in it. For him, all are equal, and he never gets disturbed or agitated by different situations. This gives him exemplary and outstanding peace, bliss and happiness.

Hence, if you inculcate these noble views and eclectic thoughts you too would enjoy the highest degree of spiritual bliss, beatitude and felicity (9).

10. There is no separate existence of entities known as 'Chitta' (mind and sub-conscious), 'Vidya as well as A-Vidya' (knowledge or the lack of it respectively), 'Mana' (mind and heart complex), or a 'Jiva' (living being). All of them are but

different manifestations of the single cosmic entity which is the supreme Consciousness, and which is also known as the supreme transcendental Brahm. This Brahm is the one that has no end or beginning as it is eternal, infinite and imperishable; it is the one that pulsates in this entire creation like the pulsations of the waves in an ocean.

[The wave is but another form of the water that also forms the main body of the ocean. In effect, there is no real difference between the wave and the ocean. The ocean and its wave cannot at all be separated from one another, for we cannot have an 'ocean wave' without the presence of the ocean or the wave. It ought to be noted here that both the ocean and the wave are but two forms of the same entity known as 'water'. The wave represents that aspect of water that is charged with movement, dynamism and energy vis-à-vis the rest of the body of the ocean which is heavy and dense, unmoving and grave as ever. Whereas the wave has a point of origin on some limited area of the surface of the vast ocean, the ocean itself is a endless and measureless reservoir of water which has no beginning or end. Whereas a wave rises meters high in the air, the ocean never leaves the surface of the earth. Whereas the wave can cause horrific destruction if it unleashes its wrath, the ocean harbours a healthy marine life without harming it in the least. Whereas the wave has a beginning, a span of life, a distance that it travels, and finally the end when it collapses back into the ocean, the ocean is an endless reservoir of water that has no beginning or end, and it neither rises, nor travels anywhere or collapses anywhere into anything.

In other words, the entities mentioned in this verse, viz. Chitta, Vidya, Mana and Jiva, which are all components of this existent world, are like the countless waves that come, live their course, and finally end. On the other hand, the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm is like the ocean. It possesses all the characteristics of the ocean enumerated above. It is from this Brahm that the creation begins, derives its energy and dynamism, grows, expands, develops and spreads, and it is in this Brahm that it finally ends much like the waves that derive their energy from the ocean, spread over the surface of the ocean, and finally collapse into the same ocean to become indistinguishable from it.] (10).

11. Only as long as one is aware or conscious of the body and its importance does he have any sort of attraction for it and attachment with it. He then thinks, though erroneously, that the body is his own self, and that the body is his identity. Then he becomes possessive of the body; he is proud of it, proud of its abilities, strength and beauty.

As long as a person thinks that something or the other is 'mine' (in this case, the body, and in general all things of the material world), it is only till then that the mind is deluded, remains distracted, and diverted away from the reality. When the mind decides that it has nothing to do with either the gross body or the world with its myriad charms and uncountable material things or sense objects, it is then that it would become disinterested in either of them.

[In other words, all attachments and relationships are created only when a Jiva, the living being, thinks that a particular entity and he are related, and that he has something to gain by this link. This notion conditions all the reactions of the Jiva towards the body as well as the world—he would become possessive of things that serve his self-interest, and shun those that he thinks harm it. Gradually he gets hooked to things that he thinks are useful for him and gets emotionally attached to them. The result is that the mind becomes so much deluded that it is conditioned to believe that the thing belongs to the Jiva, and then it becomes possessive and jealous.

So, if a man becomes wise and erudite enough to understand that the world and the body are not only gross but perishable while the Atma is sublime, subtle and eternal, he would naturally opt for the latter instead of having to do anything with the former. Obviously, no man in his right senses would prefer to take something of lower value if he can get a thing of much higher value with the same effort. With this realisation, he would shun the body as well as the world, and remain focused on the thoughts of the pure conscious Atma.] (11).

12. Oh sage (Nidagh)! Those who treat the entire creation, literally the three worlds¹, as being inconsequential and of no importance as a blade of grass or a twig, and burns all of them (i.e. all the vestiges of desires for them) in the fire of enlightenment that burns constantly in his inner-self, it is then that all the delusions, erroneous thoughts, misleading perceptions and the vagrant nature of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) are eliminated.

[This is because the mind remains unsteady and on the boil only as long as it is tempted by the numerous temptations arising from the material world of sense objects and their charms. The mind wants this and that; it is torn between this option and the next; it accepts one thing and then finds the other thing is better and more useful, and so jumps and hops continuously from object to object, from subject to subject. Such a mind is never at rest. It is in a perpetual state of flux and bewilderment. On the other hand, a mind that has nothing to disturb it is able to remain focused on the single job at hand, and obviously it can fix all its intellectual abilities and analytical energy on this single subject. The result would be of top grade as compared to the result obtained when the mind is distracted and uneasy. Refer also to Canto 5, verse no. 33.] (12).

[Note—¹The three worlds are the terrestrial, the heavenly, and the nether world; the past, the present and the future; the good, the bad and the mediocre; the gross and visible, the subtle and invisible, and what lies in-between.]

13. Such a wise, enlightened and self-realised man thinks that there is no such concept as something being big and the other being small. [This is because he treats everything equally and with the highest degree of equanimity. For him, whatever that exists is nothing but the same Brahm or cosmic Consciousness in different forms, and therefore the fundamental essence of all are the same.]

He becomes aware of the eternal and irrefutable truth that his ‘true self’ is the eternal and imperishable Atma which is nothing but pure consciousness. He realises that this ‘self’ is one complete, immutable and uniform whole that has no fractions.

Hence, you should also develop this eclectic wisdom and feel yourself as being complete, whole and all-inclusive (13).

14. ‘Trishna’ (excessive worldly desires, rapacity, greed, yearning, lust, thirst for sensual objects and self-gratification) is like a spiritual poison which is as painful as the disease known as diarrhea. Trishna washes off or purges all spiritual inclinations, all good effects of learning the scriptures, and all the positive effects of the Mantras (spiritual formulas) employed by an aspirant to reach his goal in life.

The remedy of this spiritual ill which is known as ‘Trishna’ lies in holding fast to and relying upon the strength of the Spirit by focusing one’s attention on the thoughts of the Atma, in studying the scriptures and understanding their teachings and then implementing them in practice, and in employing the Mantras to help one focus the mind on one’s spiritual objectives by doing Japa (repetition) with these Mantras.

The various Trishnas freeze as a consequence—i.e. they become inactive and stop their constant pricking under these circumstances just like the water freezes in winter. [Even as liquid water flows freely while its frozen form is static, when the mind and the heart are able to overcome the various Trishnas, they can rest in peace without being bothered by them. If one takes the recourse of meditation and contemplation to remain focused on the Atma, if one takes the help of the scriptures to guide him as what to do and how to reach one's goal, and if one uses the Mantra as aids to focus his mind on the pure consciousness while meditating and contemplating—it is sure that all the uncountable desires and thirst for worldly objects would stop bothering him any longer. It is tantamount to them freezing and being rendered ineffective. The main focus here is on acquiring truthful knowledge along with reining-in of the mind and controlling its restlessness with the help of the Mantras. The Mantras also help to harness the cosmic energy, the divine powers and dynamism inherent in their letters which can be regarded as encrypted forms of cosmic sound containing its natural cosmic energy. All these steps collectively help the man to overcome the natural Trishnas that raise their hoods in his mind and heart. Refer Canto 1, verse no. 35 also.] (14).

15. Those who are wise and learned realise that it is best to first know what Vasanas (worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; worldly attachments and attractions) are, and then abandon them altogether.

They understand that the only Authority in creation which is universal and uniform is Consciousness, and that to attain it is the only way of obtaining the highest spiritual stature in existence (15).

16. The state of existence when all the Vasanas are eliminated is equivalent to the Sushupta state, or the deep sleep phase of one's consciousness. But this elimination of the Vasanas does not bestow any kind of 'Siddhis' (mystical powers) on the man.

[The deep sleep state is the third stage of existence of consciousness and the second step of the sleeping state. During this state, the mind and the sub-conscious go into inactivity, and the sleeping man finds complete rest. But ordinarily, this is only a transient phase as the man reverts back to the Swapna state or the dreaming stage when the sub-conscious and the subtle aspect of the mind are active. That is the reason why the man 'dreams' in the first place—because the sub-conscious is active and feeds upon its data-bank in a sort of playback of what it had experienced when the man was awake during the Jagrat state. Now, when all the Vasanas are eliminated, the mind and the sub-conscious would not be attracted by any of the material objects of the world or be nagged by the sense organs of the body for self gratification. Hence, the man would find complete peace of mind and have a calmed down sub-conscious which registers nothing which can even make a man dream of this or that attraction of the world.

It does not grant any Siddhis because it is a temporary, procedural and experimental phase in the spiritual life of a man. It is like the case when a student cannot be awarded a degree by the university by merely passing his sectional exams. The degree is awarded only when he completes his course—and in the present context, the completion comes when he reaches the next higher state of Turiya as described below.]

When this state of Sushupta or temporary annihilation of Vasanas becomes stabilized and perpetual, it is equivalent to the 'Turiya' state of consciousness. This is the higher form of existence that transcends the Sushupta state, and in this state the

man remains oblivious of the surrounding world even if he is awake. This eclectic and sublime state is obtained when all the Vasanas are completely exhausted and eliminated from the root, and not even a trace of them is left to produce a seed that can, by chance, create a new shoot of Vasana. The Vasanas are, therefore, naturally eliminated and exhausted, and this elimination is permanent. [Obviously, this state is reached by practicing the earlier state of temporary removal of Vasanas by conscious effort. As has been cited in verse no.14 above in relation to the Trishnas, it is a gradual affair that requires practice and effort. But once success is achieved, it becomes natural to the man and an integral part of his life, his thinking and his behaviour.] (16).

[Note—Canto 5, verse no. 46 describes the Turiya state of consciousness when the Chitta and the Vasanas are controlled.]

17. Even a remnant of Vasana that might be left unattended may be very dangerous and a spoil-sport for the spiritual aspirant just like the case when even the remnant of a doused fire can prove dangerous if it is not taken proper care of (because it can re-ignite by the least provocation and the slightest spark, and then burn the whole surroundings down), or like the case of a loan no matter how small it is (because it acts as a bondage that shackles the man to the vicious cycle of cumulative accrual of interest and his inability to repay the enhanced amount), or the case of a disease which can prove fatal if not eliminated completely (because it would gnaw at the body and nibble at its vitality and strength from the inside, leading to fall of health, vigour and general well being, as well as the chance of a sudden relapse that can be gravely threatening for one's life), or the case of those who are in the habit of keeping malice and jealousy (because they would be hated by one and all), or the case when one has the intemperate tendency to be easily infatuated with others or hate them at the slightest excuse (because this habit would land them in uncomfortable situations which could be easily avoided had they been more cautious and conscientious about their behaviour), or the case of one being too close to an animal that has horns (i.e. it is not a good idea to be unduly close to such an animal for it cannot be known when the animal gets annoyed or provoked and gore the man with its horns).

Likewise, even the slightest of Vasana is the cause of bondage for the creature. The Vasana undermines all his efforts, no matter how sincere these efforts are, to obtain Mukti (spiritual freedom) from this world (17).

18. Therefore, a man who has completely destroyed all the Vasanas and burnt down all the seeds (causes or reasons) that purport to be the progenitors or the creators of the Vasanas—verily, such a man is never subjected to any kind of torments and sorrows under any circumstances. He remains free from all miseries and grief whether he lives in this material world with a gross body, or has obtained freedom from them. [That is, notwithstanding his being involved in the routine affairs of the world or his renouncing them completely, he would nevertheless remain at peace under both the situations.] (18).

19. 'It is not Brahm (the supreme transcendental Consciousness and the Absolute Truth)'—to think of anything or anybody in this term is known as 'A-Vidya' or ignorance. [This is because everything in existence is one or the other form of the same Brahm. Brahm is a universal truthful entity that is all-pervading and constant in the entire creation.]

Hence, overcoming A-Vidya or ignorance is to be firmly convinced that all is Brahm personified, and there is nothing that is not Brahm (19).

[Note—Refer Canto 4, verse no. 4.]

20. Brahm is consciousness; Brahm is this entire creation; Brahm is manifested as all the Bhuts (elements; mortal creatures) according to ancient tradition.

I am Brahm. Everything is Brahm—therefore even the enemy is Brahm, the friend is Brahm, and this Brahm is also all other kith and kin, all compatriots and relations (20).

[Note—Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 8, 21, 56, 65, and 74.]

21. ‘Everything is Brahm and nothing else’—a person who develops this holistic and most eclectic view of this creation and the life in it, and is firmly convinced of it, indeed becomes a personification of Brahm himself. [The fragrance and radiance of his enlightenment and spiritual glory effuses from him much like the light emanating from the glow-worm or the sweet aroma of a flower. It comes automatically, and is a part of his overall personality and being.]

Such a man experiences Brahm everywhere, and his presence too is equivalent to the presence of Brahm there. He remains eternally established in the virtues of being calm, composed, steady, serene, peaceful and blissful; he becomes a personified form of the ‘consciousness’ known as Brahm. [He acquires all the grand and immaculate virtues associated with Brahm—he is enlightened, wise, immaculate, uncorrupt, perpetually calm and blissful, etc.] (21).

22. If the mind is focused somewhere else rather than on the path ahead, then a man would walk unsteadily, would totter and stumble frequently on the path even though there is adequate light, and the path too is even and straight. It is also akin to a man who lives a wayward, a reckless, a listless, an undisciplined, an unregulated, a pervert or an indulgent life that has no scruples or aim, a life that didn’t have the opportunity for moral and ethical education or guidance in its formative years.

Instead of this condition of the mind, if the latter is focused on the target, the person would be steady and calm.

Hence, a wise and enlightened man sees the Brahm who personifies pure consciousness everywhere, and this realisation or knowledge or awareness makes him unfaltering, unwavering, steady, calm, poised, serene and rested. He remains steady in his journey through life, and is never subjected to the buffeting effects of the tumultuous world around him and the myriad varieties of torments, miseries and grief that are inherently present in it (22).

23. Such a wise, self-realised and enlightened person would take the shelter of the pure conscious Atma (which is Brahm personified in his own bosom), and would have consequentially become absolutely calm, serene, tranquil and peaceful because he would have calmed down all his numerous ‘Sankalps’ (the various aspirations, vows, violations, promises and determinations vis-à-vis the material world and its sense objects). [This is because all desires related to the world deprive a man of his peace of mind, and as long as he thinks of anything that pertains to the material world, he can never hope to find lasting peace. So, when all Sankalps are decimated, the cause of a man’s uneasiness, frustration and dismay arising out of various volitions, desires, determinations, aspirations, hopes and expectations and his inability to fulfill or realise them are done away with. Refer also to Canto 5, verse nos. 47-48, 102-104.]

He becomes free from the entanglements and delusions created by deeds and actions in this material and gross world because he disengages himself from the deeds done or the actions taken by the gross body. [This happens as he realises that the body is not his 'true self', but the latter is his Atma, the pure consciousness, that merely lives in the gross body. So whatever the body does is independent of the Atma, and hence the latter is not responsible for anything done by the body.]

He completely discards or renounces whatever he might have done (or 'thinks' that he had done) in the past (out of the erroneous notion that 'he' is the 'doer' of deeds). His past is shed, and the present as well as the future are completely de-linked from it and its vestiges. [That is, even if he had thought in the past—by mistake or ignorance or under the influence of delusions—that 'he' has done certain thing, and therefore is entitled to its reward, or fears from the bad consequences of its negative results, as soon as true wisdom and enlightenment dawn upon his mental horizon he must realise that such thoughts are ill-conceived and erroneous. He is not the 'doer' of anything, as all the deeds are done by the body and not the Atma. And therefore there is no question of his either enjoying the rewards of such deeds or suffering from their bad results. Once this awareness arises vis-à-vis the past deeds or actions, it is a natural corollary that an enlightened man would no longer be involved in the deeds or actions of the body, and their accompanying results, in the present or in the future.] (23).

24. In this way, those who are of a stable and calm mind and sub-conscious, who are wise, self-realised and enlightened, and who are free from any sort of attachments, attractions or infatuations with anything or anyone in this world are the ones who neither criticize or speak ill of others on the one hand, nor do they praise or honour anyone.

[They would treat everyone equally because they would have developed the grand virtue of equanimity, dispassion and detachment of the highest order, and of seeing uniformity in this creation in its best form. They would see the same consciousness everywhere, in all persons in equal measure. So therefore they would be no basis for finding fault with one person and treating him as lowly as compared to the other. Since such notions of a person being good or bad is ordinarily judged depending upon what he does, how he acts, how he thinks, how he behaves or how he looks, for a truly wise and enlightened man this criterion does not hold water because he does not judge a man by his gross body but by his Atma. And this Atma is a universal and uniform entity that is immaculate and untainted. Then say, where is the question of one person being good or senior, and the other being bad or junior?]

For them, being alive or being dead are equal. [That is, they have risen high in the spiritual realm and have realised the fact that the concept of 'death' and 'life' is limited only to the gross body, and they do not apply to the Atma, because the latter is sublime, ethereal, eternal and imperishable, while the former is gross, moribund, mortal and perishable.] (24).

25. The Pran (life-factors in the creature's body; literally referring to the vital winds, especially the breath) is an entity that is constantly on the move. It remains perpetually pulsating or vibrating in the creature, and never ceases to move. Indeed, this Pran is dynamism of Brahm revealed in practical terms in the body of a living being; it represents the dynamic energy of Brahm in practice in this life.

This Pran moves in and out of the body, and has a natural tendency of rising high and up. [This observation specifically indicates that the term 'Pran' applies to the

‘breath’ because it is the breath that moves in and out of the body, and also has a natural tendency of ‘going up’ through the throat, as well as coming ‘in’ and moving ‘out’ through the nose.] (25).

26. Similarly, the Apaana Vayu is also a manifestation of the dynamism of Brahman. It too, like the Prana, is constantly on the move, moving in and out of the body. [The term ‘Apaana’ refers to the vital wind that moves down in the body—the wind that moves in the intestines and helps the food to be digested and expelled out of the body; it is mostly located in the lower part of the body below the throat.] (26).

[Note—When verse nos. 25 and 26 are read together in the context of what has been said earlier in verse nos. 19-21, and 24, the meaning assumes a different connotation. The Prana wind moves upward and is also located in the upper half of the body, e.g. in the lung and the throat. This is a metaphoric way of saying that there are certain people who are spiritually more elevated and enlightened, people in whom the mind-intellect apparatus is more developed and refined, and who are mentally inclined to look up and positively at this world and life. Such people would be like cream that floats on the surface of milk when it is churned. They are naturally inclined towards nobler and higher goals in life.

On the other hand, the Apaana wind has its dominant presence in the lower half of the body, such as the abdomen and the intestines. This obviously implies a lowly approach to life and its values. The Apaana wind is mainly concerned with digestion and elimination of waste from the body—indicative of the tendency of such people in whom the Apaana wind is more active as being literally indulgent in eating and drinking and making merry while they have the chance to do so! Such people have the habit of developing close relationship with the gross world and are inclined to gratify the demands of their sense organs.

The difference between the approach of the two types of people can be simply described as follows—while the man in whom the ‘Prana’ is more active would be inclined to spend his time and energy in studying the scriptures, seeking company of noble men, discussing spiritual and other eclectic topics, doing noble and righteous deeds, following auspicious path that would give peace to the mind, the heart and the soul, and generally spending their lives in pursuit of positive things, the man in whom the ‘Apaana’ wind is more active would do just the opposite. He would rather spend his time reading books that would have sensual value, do things that would gratify his natural urges and demands of the body, keep company with people who talk of worldly things and material pleasures, spend time in enjoyment of the comforts and pleasures of the world and the body, etc.

Therefore, ‘Prana wind’ would refer to those people who are good, wise, educated, of a high birth and occupy a high standing in society, and are spiritually enlightened, wise and realised, while the ‘Apaana wind’ would refer to those persons who are just the opposite.

The dissimilarity between the two situations is marked and obvious. The principle that both the Prana and Apaana are manifestations of the same Brahman’s dynamic powers on display would naturally also apply to the two types of people in the world. This is expected in the light of the fact that ‘everything and everyone is Brahman, and nothing but Brahman in this creation’ as affirmed in verse nos. 19-21. And that is why a wise disciple who has fully understood the teachings of the Upanishads treats all living beings alike—refer verse no. 24 above.]

27. This eclectic way of thinking is the best way of doing Pranayama constantly and consistently, even while one sleeps, from the metaphysical perspective.

Hence, those who know how Pranayama should be done in a holistic and comprehensive manner are duly rewarded by its auspicious and good effects.

[Pranayam is a form of Yoga exercise wherein the practitioner endeavours to control and harness the power of the breath and the other winds present inside the body for achieving his spiritual objectives. The import of this verse is tremendous—if one limits his Pranayam to mere physical exercises that can only be done for a limited time and that only when he is awake, then obviously their good effects would be also limited in scope. But if one develops the holistic and philosophically evolved form of doing Pranayam as described in verse nos. 25-26, then the same can have a profound effect on the spiritual aspirant's spiritual progress in life. If limited Pranayam can have great practical benefits in the form of good health and rejuvenated spirit, giving peace and bliss to the practitioner, then one can well imagine the heightened benefits if this Pranayam become perpetual and steady. The peace, bliss and tranquility that are derived by this perpetual and steady mode of Pranayam done with acquisition of truthful wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation from the metaphysical perspective would be truly liberating and delivering for the creature.

If physical Pranayam means controlling of the flow of vital winds in the body, then its metaphysical connotation would mean a comprehensive regulation of life in general by the creature. This is because the vital winds control all the functions of the body of the creature. It is also because while physical Pranayam benefits only the gross body which is however inherently perishable and therefore would die one or the other day, thereby limiting the benefits of Pranayam, if the same Pranayam is done in a holistic manner then the entire life of a man undergoes a change for the better, he is able to realise the true potential of his 'self' which is however an eternal and imperishable entity. Therefore, it is wiser on his part to spend his time and effort to realise a benefit of doing Pranayam that has an eternal value as compared to a benefit that has a limited life-span and perishable value.] (27).

28. The Pran extends up to a distance of twelve fingers width outside the body. When the creature's 'self' is able to grasp it and pull it in, then this process is called 'Purak'. [This refers to the inhalation of breath to fill the body with the air that is present outside it.] (28).

[Note—We see a halo depicted around the head of divine souls or spiritually elevated persons in their portraits. This halo or aura symbolizes the Pran that has been activated and energized in such people. As has been said in this verse, this energized Pran extends for some distance around their head just like we have an aura around the flame of a lighted candle or the halo around the disc of the sun in the sky. This halo consists of charged particles just like the manner of the charged Pran wind established around the head of spiritual persons.

We have even two forms of electricity—one that moves in the wire, the 'dynamic electric current', and the other that is known as 'static electricity' which consists of static charged particles in the air immediately around certain things which are dynamic. Likewise, we have two forms of Pran—one that moves in and out of the body, the 'dynamic Pran', and the other that is steady around the head of spiritually attained persons, and it is charged with energy that is subtle but visible in the form of the halo or the aura their heads.

In this context, it would be interesting to see what the characters of a spiritually enlightened and self-realised holy man, known as a saint or a Sadhu, are. A true Saint or pious man known as a Sadhu, according to *Adhyatma Ramayan* of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, canto 3, verse no. 37-39, has the following characteristics—

“Those persons who are even-minded and stable, have equanimity and forbearance, are serene, placid, unruffled, unwavering, calm and balanced under adversities as well as favourable circumstances, both during sorrows, sufferings and troubles as well as under happy and joyous situations in this world; those who are

without any desires and wants whatsoever; those who do not have any attachment to their worldly assets such as their wealth and sons, nor harbour any desires pertaining to them; those who have restrained, conquered and suppressed their sense organs and their wayward tendencies or the urge for their gratification; those who are of a serene, calm, peaceful and tranquil temperament and mind; those who are sincerely devoted and dedicated to you; those who are devoid of and free from all desires, greed, avarice, yearnings and ambitions of all kinds (37); those who are even-keeled, have equanimity, remain neutral, unaffected, indifferent and aloof even while going through the throes of destruction (unfavourable circumstances) or construction (favourable circumstances); those who are without encumbrances and attachments of any kind; those who abandon and forsake involvement in all types of worldly deeds and getting involved in various actions, i.e. do not regard himself as the 'doer' of any deed, nor expects any reward or punishment for it; those who are always the followers of Brahm (i.e. pursue the path of righteousness that leads to the supreme, eternal One) (38); those who are endowed with 'Yam' and other virtues (e.g. self-restraint of passions and doing penances and austerities); and those who are contented and satisfied with whatever comes their way—such persons who possess these virtues are truly 'Sadhus' (saintly, pious, holy, divine, pure in mind and heart). Whenever one is fortunate to get communion and a chance to interact with such saints, one develops endearment for and interest in your divine stories (i.e. in spiritualism) (39)".]

29. Oh Suvrata (i.e. one who has auspicious inclinations and keep auspicious vows; referring to sage Nidagh)! The Moon is represented by the Apaana Vayu, while the Sun is represented by the Prana Vayu. The Apaana wind is present throughout the body, and it virtually reflects the glory and energy of the Prana wind in the body.

[The Apaana wind does not routinely move out of the body like the regular flow of the Prana wind which is also known as the breath. Apaana wind is the general term for the wind that moves in the lower parts of the body, and its general location is in the alimentary canal. While the Prana wind moves out of the body through the nose, the Apaana wind moves out through the anus. It is activated and enabled to carry out its functions—such as digestion and elimination of waste from the body—only as long as there is 'life' inside the body, and 'Prana' is synonymous with 'life', for if the man stops breathing he would not survive.

This is metaphorically depicted by saying that the Apaana is the Moon while the Prana is the Sun—because the Moon is lighted in the light of the Sun; the Moon shines only because its dark disc is lighted by the sunlight; the Moon would not have shined if there was no Sun. The Moon has no light—or 'life'—of its own, and had there been no Sun the Moon would not have 'lived' as a shining celestial body.

It is the latent heat and dynamism present in the Prana wind that enables the Apaana wind to acquire sufficient heat and energy to keep the body warm, digest the food eaten, and then expel the toxic residue from the body. The inherent heat and warmth in the creature's body is lent by the Prana wind, but carried to the different parts of the body by the way of the nutrients that are extracted by the Apaana wind from the food eaten by the creature.

While the Prana wind makes its presence apparent when one can feel the flow of breath by holding one's hands near the nostrils, or when one speaks because it is the Prana wind that produces sound by rubbing against the vocal cords in the throat, or when breath condenses to form a mist in the front of the head during extreme cold conditions, showing that the creature is alive and has energy and stamina, the Apaana wind on the other hand is hidden inside the body and silently performs all the internal duties assigned to it that actually enables the creature to perform his external duties in

the world. The importance of the Apaana wind cannot be underestimated because if it fails to perform its duties properly, the creature would not be able to eat, digest and eliminate waste from the body, and obviously he would fall ill and unable to perform anything in this world. In practice we know how difficult even routine work becomes when one feels gas accumulating inside the abdomen, when one becomes bloated and uncomfortable.

Therefore we conclude that the Pran and the Apaana are but the two sides of the same coin representing the dynamism, the vitality and the life-infusing and life-sustaining virtues of Brahm—one wind is useless or ineffective without the other.] (29).

30. When the time comes for the Pran Vayu (breath) to subside or become extinct (i.e. when the time of death approaches; when the man's breathing become short, slow and shallow; when 'life' begins to ebb and life-factors become weak and fragile), it appears that numerous Apaana Vayus (the wind present in the abdominal region) have made their appearance. [This is due to the slowing down of the overall functioning of the body, resulting in the incarceration of vital winds due to reduced metabolism and the inability to properly digest the ingested food. This results in accumulation of gases inside the body which reveal themselves as bloating, rumbling, gurgling, croaking of wind etc. in the abdominal cavity. There is a constant heaviness in the lower abdomen and in the intestines, and a constant desire to pass flatus as well as to belch. Such a man would take medicines in order to suppress the restlessness of the Apaana wind, forgetting that this restlessness is an indication that the Atma wishes to leave the gross body which has become feeble and decrepit. He wishes to cling to this body for as long as he can.]

When the Pran and Apaana Vayus are united with each other, or when they mix and become one (as is done during Yoga), the man is able to experience the consciousness inside him. He realises that the moribund and perishable gross body must be forsaken, and it is better to shed it voluntarily and peacefully rather than cling to its grossness for much longer because it will cause agony, pain and misery for the soul.

[A careful reading of these two stanzas would clear the difference in their meaning. The first stanza refers to a man who does not practice Yoga—so when his old age approaches, he is tormented by weak wind. His breathing slows down, and there is accumulation of gases in the body which give him a lot of discomfort. He does not want to leave the body, and takes medicines to overcome 'gases', but does not recognize this symptom as the desire of the Atma to leave the cage of the gross body.

On the other hand, the second stanza refers to a man who practices Yoga or meditation regularly. He has accustomed his body to slow down the movement of the Pran wind by practicing Pranayama (a technique of Yoga by which breath is controlled), and has also sufficiently energized his Apaana wind that it can rise up and mix with the Pran wind to reach up in the region of the head, at which time the practitioner experiences the thrill of self-realisation, and when this exercise is extended further the practitioner is able to voluntarily make his Pran-Apaana winds to make their exit through from the body by sneaking out through the skull by the path of the Brahm-Randhra which is a hair-like slit in the cranium bone. This results in his Mukti—or liberation and deliverance from the shackles represented by the gross physical body. Once outside, the Pran merges with the cosmic air or wind element

present outside the body, and becomes one with it. In other words, the individual's Pran or vital life-sustaining winds have discarded their earlier limited realm and scope to become universal and all-pervading like the wind or the air that is present in the sky outside the gross body.

In this scenario, the first type of person has to suffer numerous types of discomfort of the body and is utterly uneasy because the same Pran-Apaan complex, which is the basis of life in his body, now begins to torment him no end, while the second person is at peace with himself as he has obtained full control over the same Pran-Apaan complex by establishing a harmony between them, and therefore leaves the body comfortably and voluntarily.

There is another angle from which one can interpret this verse. The Pran wind stands for the Sun which symbolizes the light of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and self-realisation that a creature has. The Apaan wind stands for the Moon which symbolizes the heart and its emotional and sentimental aspects in a creature. Now, if the Pran is the dominant wind, then the person would be naturally inclined to be spiritually elevated and attracted towards nobler and sublime values and things in life. He would be driven by the thoughtful, analytical, rational and discriminating mind and intellect apparatus, and hence his life and its decisions would be well-thought after and balanced. On the other hand, a man in whom the Apaan wind is playing the decisive role would be driven by the heart, and obviously would be more impulsive, emotional and sentimental in whatever he does, thinks etc.

Again, a person in whom the Pran is more active would spend his time and life in pursuit of noble goals in life, while he in whom the Apaan is more agile would be indulgent in the world and a serf of the body.

Evidently thus, a person who has not fully controlled these two winds would be like a leaf tossed around in a storm, while he who has overcome the natural inclinations of the winds would be settled and calmed. The former sort of person would be torn between numerous opposing demands, habits, inclinations and tendencies of the body, the mind and the heart. He would be tossed and kicked around like a balloon or a ball. The Pran wind would pull him upwards, and the Apaan wind would try to pull him down.

The only way out of this predicament and spiritual dilemma is to create a balance and establish a harmony between the opposite pulls of the two important winds inside the body. Success in it would bestow the reward of rest, peace, calmness and tranquility. This success is achieved by practicing Pranayam. It not only helps to create a balance between these two vital winds but also harnesses their combined energy for the long term physical as well as spiritual well-being of the practitioner. The vibrations of the two winds now coalesce with each other to produce enhanced energy and dynamism, instead of working against each other and clashing with one another to cause upheaval and unnecessary discomfort for the Jiva.

The effect is magical to say the least—because the vibrations that had previously caused havoc for the creature now aid in his all round welfare and well-being. Instead of causing so much agony and torments for him, the two winds now make his life easy and comfortable. Their combined energy is able to lift him from having to live a humdrum life of misery, pain, uneasiness and shortages to a healthy life of peace, bliss and contentedness. He is catapulted from a lowly life of grossness to an exalted life of sublimity and holiness.

Its like two powerful kings joining hands for the general welfare of their kingdoms and subjects—then instead of constant skirmishes and warfare leading to

ruin, havoc and enmity all around, there is now eternal peace, contentedness, development, growth, happiness and cheer everywhere.] (30).

31. In a gross body where the Apaana wind completely calms down or subsides and stops its natural activities, there is not the slightest chance of the Prana wind ever making its appearance again. [When the Apaana wind becomes extinct, all the organs stop functioning and the body is deprived of nutrients. Naturally, the body cannot survive in this condition. This is indicated metaphorically by saying that the Prana wind that symbolizes life cannot make its appearance if the Apaana wind dies.]

Therefore, you (Nidagha) should take the shelter of the pure consciousness known as the Atma which is eternally steady, independent, self-reliant, self-sustaining, unmoving and uniform unlike the two winds. One who is wise would always prefer to accept something having eternal value and sovereign rather than something that is changeable and dependent upon something else.

[The vital winds known as Prana and Apaana infuse and control life in the gross body of a living being like the consciousness known as the Atma. But there is a vital difference between them—whereas the two winds are dependent upon each other for their survival, the Atma is independent, self-sustaining and self-sufficient. The two winds cannot stand alone by themselves—the Prana wind infuses life in the body by way of breath, and only as long as the body lives is the Apaana wind able to carry out its functions of digestion, extraction and distribution of nutrients, and expulsion of waste from the body. Similarly, it is only as long as the Apaana wind functions properly that the body is kept healthy and survive, for otherwise the body would bloat, breathing would be difficult, the body would be poisoned by accumulation of toxic matter inside it, and the person would die. In other words, the mere presence of the Prana wind or the Apaana wind would not be able to help the body survive and enable the creature to live a comfortable and healthy life if both of them do not coordinate their activities or work against each other.

On the other hand, the Atma does not depend on any other entity for its survival. Even if the present body dies, the Atma continues to live, because it is an ethereal Spirit that was trapped inside the former body and when the body dies this Spirit is freed from its prison. If the Atma does not make a body alive by injecting consciousness in it, the vital winds would not be able to do so. If the Atma leaves the body, the vital winds would not be able to keep the body alive on their own.

Besides this, a time comes when the two winds begin to give trouble to the creature as is clear from verse nos. 25-31. A wise man would wonder why any entity that is supposed to provide 'life' would ever give him trouble, and why would an entity that is supposed to be infinite ever subside and become extinct? Therefore he concludes that to treat the vital winds as the source of eternal and imperishable 'life' is an erroneous, a fallacious, a misconceived and a misplaced proposition. He also concludes that therefore there must be something else that is really responsible for the factor of 'life' in this creation. So he begins his search for this source of life, and upon research and study of the Upanishads he discovers that this true quintessential entity that is synonymous with life is known as the pure conscious Atma.

In other words, he deduces that the truthful factor that infuses real 'life' into the gross body is not the 'Prana' or the 'Apaana' but the 'Consciousness' that is known as the Atma. This Atma is eternal, imperishable and infinite; it never undergoes change as it is steady and constant unlike the two winds known as Prana and Apaana. Hence, if he takes the shelter of this Atma, the pure consciousness, then surely he is bound to be free from the torments and fears presented by relying upon the vital

winds for his life-sustenance. If he relies on the Pran and the Apaana to attain an eternal life, he would be cheating himself because sooner or later these two winds would become feeble by age, they would lose their energy and vitality as the body ages and begins to decay, and they would finally betray him by subsiding and resulting in life being snuffed out of the body. On the contrary, if he relies upon the Atma as a source of life, then he succeeds in his quest for obtaining an eternal source of life because the Atma is eternal and imperishable.

Whereas the presence and life-giving dynamism of the Pran and the Apaana is proved only when one breathes through the Pran and when the body carries out its varied functions, digestion being one of them, through the Apaana, the presence and dynamism of the Atma is known even without any vivid signs or perceptible symptoms. That is, the presence of Pran is known when one breathes or speaks, and as soon as the man stops breathing or speaking it is deemed that the Pran has left the body. Similarly, the presence of Apaana is known when the food is digested, the waste eliminated, the body gets proper nourishment, and kept warm. But the presence of the consciousness does not require such signs. Acclaimed ascetics are known to hold the movement of their vital winds for prolonged periods of time by various meditative techniques, but that does not mean that they are 'dead'.

From the metaphysical perspective this verse means that a wise, enlightened and self-realised person must understand that the vital wind can, and eventually would, come to an end, but the 'consciousness' is an eternal entity. And therefore, it is wise for him to treat the consciousness as his 'life' rather than the vital winds.

Therefore, if a wise man is given a choice to choose a synonym for 'life' between the two options of 'Pran-Apaana complex' and 'consciousness known as the Atma', he would certainly choose the latter.] (31).

32. You must strive to experience the presence of pure consciousness which is done (during the process of Yoga) when the Apaana wind is active but the Pran wind has stopped its movement. At this point of time, the practitioner of Yoga focuses his attention at the tip of his nose in order to concentrate his mind upon the consciousness¹. [This refers to the process of Pranayama when the flow of Pran (breath) is controlled, but the Apaana wind continuous with its routine activity.] (32).

[Note—This process has been described in detail in Shandilya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, which is included as Chapter 14 of this volume, in its Canto 1, section 3, verse no. 5-6; section 5, verse no. 2; and section 7, verse no. 16.]

33. The entire creation consisting of the three Lokas (or aspects of creation, such as the terrestrial, the heavenly and the nether; the past, the present and the future) is neither true nor false. It only appears to be so; it only appears to be sometimes true and at other times false. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 12. The very fact that a doubt is created as to whether the world is true or false is itself a proof of the deluding nature of the creation. Anything that is 'true' and 'real' cannot be subjected to such doubts.]

Those who are truthfully wise and exceptionally erudite assert that real metaphysical wisdom and enlightenment is to discard such doubts and delusions along with their attendant confusions, perplexities and consternations. [This is because such persons see only Brahm, the sublime, universal, all-pervading and pure cosmic Consciousness, as the irrefutable and incontrovertible truth and reality in this creation, and do not bother to pay any attention to the gross aspects of creation. Therefore, they have no doubts. In this context, refer verse nos. 19-21 above.] (33).

34. It is not possible to experience and witness the presence of the supreme transcendental Brahm by a corrupted and unclean mind, intellect and heart just like it is not possible to have a clean and sharp image of something in a tarnished, unpolished and unclean mirror, or one that has an uneven surface.

Therefore, do not be misled by the tainted view or notion of Brahm that is presented by this deluding and unreal world of imagination. You must abandon this deformed, corrupted and tainted view of Brahm.

[It is said that the world is a manifestation of Brahm, that Brahm pervades in each pore of this creation, and that whatever is seen is nothing but Brahm. On the other hand it is also said that this world is false and imaginary as well as corrupt and deluding. This apparently opposite situation might create an obvious confusion in the mind of a spiritual aspirant or a student of metaphysics. Hence it is said here that a wise man must not treat the exterior view and gross aspect of the world as being a synonym of Brahm—because that would be misleading and completely wrong. Brahm is the subtle but undisputed ‘truth’ known as the ‘consciousness’ that is hidden behind the false exterior, and which pulsates throughout the length and breadth of creation, the only factor without which nothing would ever ‘live and become conscious’ of anything at all. This ‘consciousness’ cannot be physically seen or verified, but it is nevertheless the core of creation.

For instance, when one sees a garland of flowers or a prayer rosary made of independent beads strunged together, one sees is external feature only. One sees a string of flowers or beads and takes it for granted that they would always be like it. But suppose the garland or the rosary breaks and the flowers or the beads scatter about—then an ordinary man is utterly dismayed and thinks that he has lost the garland or the rosary forever. On the other hand, a wise man knows that the garland or the rosary can be made again by threading the independent pieces of flowers or the beads together once again. Once this is done, the garland or the rosary reappears. So, a garland or the rosary do not owe their existence to this independent units but the underlying string or the thread that keeps them together to give them the shape of a garland or the rosary. It is the string or the thread hidden behind the external façade of the garland or the rosary that is actually responsible for their existence, though of course the flowers and the beads do contribute their might to give the finished product its unique features, character, beauty and function.

Similarly, it is Brahm that holds the creation together and gives it its form, its importance and its recognition. If one were to remove Brahm from this creation, then the latter would cease to exist inspite of the presence of the rest of the elements as before.

That is, if one judges what Brahm is by looking at the external features of this creation then he would get a distorted picture of the reality. He would be seeing the outer façade of Brahm, the way the latter is reflected in the external features of this creation. But just like the case of an image in the mirror not being the original thing but merely a reflection of it, this external world is merely an image of Brahm and not Brahm.

On the other hand, if a wise man peeps deep inside and behind the curtain of falsehoods and delusions that mark this world, it is only then that he would see the ‘real and truthful’ Brahm. The view of Brahm as seen in the physical gross world is a corrupted or a distorted version of the real and truthful nature of Brahm, while the view of Brahm that is understood upon self-realisation and enlightenment presents a true and honest picture of Brahm.] (34).

35. Don't pay attention to the Mana (mind) which is like a fiend that instills fear, creates inauspiciousness, steals courage, fortitude, forbearance, steadfastness and strength, and is the one which robs everything that is of any worth from the creature (such as his mental and emotional stability, rational thoughts, peace, tranquility, joys, happiness and bliss etc.).

Become steady and calm by freeing yourself from the clutches of the Mana. Keep it aside and don't bother about it. Don't be a serf to your Mana; don't obey its dictates. Stop unnecessarily procrastinating and dithering, stop having doubts and fears, and stop getting confused and bewildered (35).

36. Be steady, constant, unmoving, eternal, imperishable and infinite like the sky element that would be there even after the end of creation—because 'you' (i.e. your true 'self') are the pure consciousness that has these grand and eclectic virtues.

[In other words, realise that your 'true self' is the pure and sublime consciousness that is an eternal and ethereal Spirit, and not the gross and perishable body. So even if the world ends, or in other words the body ends or dies, you would continue to live in your ethereal and sublime form as the eternal Spirit. So, where is the cause for fear from death, or the fear of losing anything upon the end of the world?] (36).

37. One wants something only till the instant he feels that he lacks it. If he never feels that he is devoid of something, that there is a dearth of something, that he lacks something, or that he is unfulfilled or un-contented in some way or the other—then he would never want anything whatsoever; he would have no desires of any kind.

Hence, be fulfilled and fully contented; never allow yourself to think that you are not complete. Abandon all desires, yearnings, needs, wishes, aspirations and ambitions. [You do not want anything—because the Atma, which is your truthful 'self', is a sublime and complete entity that is self-sufficient and self-contained, while all the desires and wants are limited to the body which is gross and full of shortcomings. Remember—this body of yours is not the real thing, it is not your 'real self', and it is extraneous to your Atma which is actually your 'true self'.] (37).

38. Don't be oscillating between hopes and despairs; don't be swaying between having any kind of feeling for anything or anyone, or suffering from the lack of it. Don't even have a desire to become neutral and dispassionate—let this come to you automatically on its own, and not by making efforts to acquire it, because any effort would bind you to the result, you would hope for a positive outcome of your efforts, which in its wake would be counter-productive as it would ruin your intention of getting free from all sorts of desires in a holistic manner.

Discard all your association with these vicissitudinous and uncertain thoughts and emotions that are deluding and entrapping by their inherent nature (38).

39. When one withdraws one's self from getting involved in anything in this material world of sense objects as well as all the desires for self-gratification of the organs of the body, i.e. when he is able to control and annihilate the Vasanas, he acquires the grand and eclectic virtues which are similar to the sky element.

The sky accepts everything, has countless entities embedded in it (such as for example the celestial bodies, pollutants, birds, clouds, gases, moisture, dust particles etc.), but it is basically unaffected by any of them. It maintains its neutrality and un-involvement with things lodged in it. It maintains its primary form as an entity that

harbours everything in creation in its vast and fathomless cosmic bowl without any sort of discrimination, while its self remaining detached from all of them. The sky is eternally pure and untainted, and maintains its inherent cleanliness and pristine glory inspite of these gross things being lodged in it. None of these things limit the sky's reach and create any hurdle in its expansive path. Nothing gross lodged in the sky would make the sky gross; none of the heavy or dense objects lodged in the bosom of the sky would ever affect the inherent subtle and sublime nature of the sky element in any manner whatsoever. The sky harbours the sun, the planets and the stars and the rest of the cosmic objects, but itself remains absolutely distinct and unaffected by them. The sun may affect the planets and the rest of the things around its environment called the solar system, but it does not alter the nature of the sky element.

Similarly, a wise man who has no Vasanas in him lives in this world surrounded by everything gross and material, but internally he remains pure, untainted, unconcerned, unruffled, un-influenced, uncorrupted and unaffected by them. He maintains the pristine purity of the Atma inspite of the unclean world in which he lives (39).

40. The world is created or brought to an end by the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) wanting it to be so. It is the rising and blooming of imaginations and desires in the Chitta that gives rise to the blossoming of a colourful and fascinating world of magnificent charm and myriad varieties. Similarly, when the Chitta decides to retract itself, when it wishes to conclude its own creation, the same world would collapse into non-existence. [In other words, the world exists because the Chitta is focused on imagining it, because the Chitta wants it to be so. On the contrary, should the Chitta decide that it has nothing to do with this imaginary thing, the latter would simply lose its relevance for the creature, and hence would be non-existent for all practical purposes. Therefore, it is the Chitta that decides whether or not the world exists as far as the creature is concerned. If the Chitta decides so, the world ceases to matter for the creature because his mind would not register the presence of the world at all, his organs of perception would not respond to any perceptions originating in the world, and his organs of action would consequentially not have to react and sub-sequentially interact with the world. On the other hand, if the Chitta so decides, the creature would not only perceive the world but also get involved in it and harbour its thoughts in his mind and sub-conscious.]

Awareness of the world sets off a chain reaction—the creature either is attracted to it or repulsed by it. Therefore the very basis of existence or non-existence of this world with its myriad charms and material sense objects directly depends upon the inclinations of the Chitta.]

You (Nidagh) should therefore control all your Vasanas (passions, yearnings and desires pertaining to the gross material world and its sense objects; worldly attractions and attachments) as well as the Pran (vital winds) in order to make your Chitta free from all desires and passions that arise in it for the enjoyment or acquisition of the countless things of the senses in the material world as well as the wish to gratify the sense organs of the body.

[If the inherent Vasanas that are hidden in the creature are removed, the Pran would automatically calm down. This is because when one desires or longs for certain thing in this world would he make diligent efforts to access that particular thing for which the mind and sub-conscious has inspired him. Since the body has to do deeds and take actions for acquiring the thing desired for by the mind, or because it is the sense organs of the body which would actually help the mind to access the thing

desired, it follows that only if the Pran, the vital wind which keeps the body active and perform its duties, is active would the mind be successful in fulfilling its much wanted desires.

On the hand, should the Pran be calmed down, the body too would calm down in equal measure, and remain inactive and neutral inspite of all the poking, pleading and prodding of the mind. Consequentially, the Vasanas would automatically be suppressed. Even if the mind wishes to do anything or acquire anything in this world it would fail to do so if the vital winds do not cooperate and keep the body active to enable to physically acquire the objects desired by the mind.

If the creature has no Vasanas in him he would be peaceful and rested. This is because his mind would no longer be forced to devise methods and search for means to fulfill the Vasanas on the one hand, and on the other hand be torn between failures and successes pertaining to the fulfillment of these Vasanas. The mind would no longer be distracted and bothered by the numerous desires, and the joys of getting them fulfilled or frustrations at failures.

So we conclude that it is imperative to control the Vasanas and the Pran in order to control the Chitta (mind and the sub-conscious), and thereby do away with the existence of a world with its numerous charms and temptations that is imagined by the Chitta which has Vasanas in it, or the Pran that keeps the body restless and agitated in its desire to reach for the objects that would appease the sense organs.

When the mind would have no desire for creating this world in which it hopes to find happiness and comfort, the sub-conscious would also not store any hidden desires for it—this is because the sub-conscious is merely a library, an information and data storage and retrieval system of the mind, assisting the latter much like a secretary who gives the boss relevant files and information when so desired by him. A vacant sub-conscious clears the clutter of inputs from the external world and does not keep on nagging at the mind from behind the curtain to act in a particular way.

In brief, the emphasis of this verse is to practice control of the three important factors that act as impediments in a person's all round spiritual welfare—viz. (i) control of the Chitta, (ii) control of the Pran, and (iii) control of the Vasanas.] (40).

[Note—Canto 4, verse nos. 41-92 elucidate elaborately on the importance of controlling the triad of Chitta, Pran and Vasanas for the spiritual welfare of an aspirant.]

41. The world consists of a cycle of creation or rising up or blooming, and the end or conclusion or collapsing and dying.

Similarly, the Pran (breath) also has a cycle—coming in (inhalation) and going out (exhalation).

Learn to control the flow or movement of the Pran (by doing Pranayam or breath control exercises as prescribed in Yoga), and this would also help you to control the cycle of creation and conclusion of the world. Practice it diligently. [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 87.]

[When the flow of Pran is stopped, it is called the 'Kumbhak' state. During this state, the wind is held or trapped inside the body immediately after the inhalation phase of Pranayam which is called the 'Purak' phase. If this is practiced for a sustained period of time, the practitioner is able to stop the metabolism of the body and prolong its life as long as he wants.

The analogy of the stoppage of the movement of the Pran is cited here vis-à-vis the creation of the world to emphasis the point that if it is possible to stop the flow of the wind which is inherently mobile and unstoppable, and that if it is possible that

the inherently unbound wind can be limited within the confines of the body if the creature does want it to be so, then it is not difficult to stop the mind from creating the world! In other words, nothing is impossible if there is a firm determination and a strong will in the spiritual aspirant.] (41).

42. Those who are foolish and unwise think that there is an 'Unmesh' (beginning, initiation, rising, blooming, brightening or opening) and a 'Nimesh' (the opposite of Unmesh; end, closure or conclusion) in this world. In other words, they think that there is a situation when a new life is born, and a time when it concludes. They believe that they are the doer of deeds which produce a corresponding result. They think that there is a conclusion or dooms-day for this world.

[The word 'Unmesh' refers to or implies the beginning of life, while the word 'Nimesh' refers to or implies the end or conclusion of life. These two metaphorically correspond to the inhalation and exhalation of breath respectively. Inhalation of wind symbolizes infusion of life in the body of the creature, and by extension it refers to the injection of life in the universe because the body of the individual is a microcosm of the cosmos. Similarly, exhalation of wind metaphorically stands for the ejection of life from the body, and by extension to the conclusion of creation.

This assumption that the creation has a 'life' that has some beginning and that ends at some point of time, a 'life' that comes in this world and goes out from it just like the vital winds coming in the body (inhalation) and goes out of it (exhalation), is a completely fallacious idea—simply because the truthful identity of the living being known as the Jiva is not the body but the pure conscious soul, the Atma, which is his 'true self' and which is an eternal and imperishable entity that is steady, constant, all-pervading, all-encompassing, immanent and omnipresent. Therefore the question of it (the Atma) coming in from somewhere and going out to somewhere else does not arise at all as much as the question of it taking a birth or dying.

The body has an Unmesh (birth) and a Nimesh (death), but the Atma is free from this limitation. The body wakes up (Unmesh) and goes to sleep (Nimesh), but the Atma remains steady, unchanging and constant.

In fact, the truthful entity that lends or injects 'life' to this creation is the cosmic supreme Consciousness which is steady, eternal and imperishable, and not the vital winds known as the Pran that change and show fluctuation. So there is no question of the Consciousness going anywhere or coming in from anywhere; it does not decay and become feeble, nor does it subside, die or conclude like the Pran. This universal Consciousness is known as the Atma, and this Atma is the true identity of the man. The Atma is not the doer of anything, but merely a neutral observer of the deeds done by the gross body in which it lives. The deeds are actually done by the gross body, and certainly not by the Atma. Hence, there is no locus standi in claiming that 'I am the doer of deeds', and therefore there is no claim on the results either.

If one does not have this wisdom then he is indeed a fool.]

Be wise to abandon this erroneous notion of you being the doer of deeds, and that there is an end for you (for your 'true self' is the Atma which does no deeds and which never dies). For this, you should take the advice, guidance and help of learned people who are well-versed in this field, as well as the help of scriptures which would lighten up the correct and truthful path for you. Don't fall prey to wrong ideas and erroneous notions which would be detrimental for your spiritual welfare, which would deceive you and lead you astray (42).

43. Those who are wise, realised and enlightened assert that when the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) becomes neutral and non-involved in anything, it is only then that it finds true rest, tranquility, peace and bliss. This translates into the creature too experiencing or accessing these eclectic virtues once he is able to calm down his fidgety, uncertain, wandering and restless Chitta. A Chitta which loses its wandering and restless nature is deemed to be calmed down and 'A-Chetan'—literally meaning a situation when one is not aware, or not 'conscious', of his surroundings, when one is not aware of what the body does. Therefore, such a Chitta that has reached the state of 'A-Chetan' practically exists in a plane of existence which is equivalent to the state of 'non-existence' in the physical gross world. Such an 'A-Chetan' Chitta transcends the limits of the gross body and the gross world along with their attendant delusions and entrapments. [Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 48, 86.]

Control of the Pran wind enables the creature to obtain the exalted stature of transcendental existence called the 'Param Pad'—literally, the supreme state of existence. This is because when the Pran is controlled along with making the Chitta defunct, the creature becomes peaceful and steady; he is able to concentrate his attention and energy on higher goals of life and pursue his spiritual aims. He is not disturbed by numerous temptations that arise out of the various Vasanas when the Chitta and Pran are active. [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 11.]

[The control of the Chitta and making it virtually non-existent, the expunging of the various Vasanas as well as practicing control of the Pran is described in detail in the forgoing verses of the present Canto no. 5, as well as in verse nos. 41-92 of Canto 4.] (43).

44. Go beyond the limited vision (notion, idea, conception, view) of what constitutes the 'truth and reality' by not limiting your judgement to merely relying upon the physical perception of sight to see (perceive) things that are gross and visible in this world in order to determine about their existence and truth. [That is, you must not decide that a particular thing has a real and truthful existence in this world just because you can physically see it. You would be deceived. For instance, don't you know that there is no water in the mirage seen on the hot sand of the desert during summer, or that the sun does not actually move from its position though it moves across the sky from east to the west, or there is no object actually present in the mirror when you see its reflection in it, or that the disc of the moon has not changed a bit though it appears to change every night as seen from earth, and so on and so forth? Therefore, merely judging the truthfulness or otherwise of any given entity by merely relying upon the perception of sight would be like willingly falling in a blind well. Such judgements of anything being true and real which are based on completely erroneous premises ought to be rejected outright; they cannot be trusted.]

Rise and go beyond the pleasure and comfort and joys and happiness that you derive from seeing physical things in this world that appear charming and appealing to the senses, and focus your mind instead on something that is far more sublime and eclectic than these gross aspects of creation. [Because once you experience the bliss and beatitude of this sublime entity that is perceived in the transcendental state of existence, an entity known as 'pure consciousness', all the rest would fade into oblivion, would lose their attraction, luster and glamour, and become irrelevant and inconsequential for you. Besides this, all the physical charms, comforts and pleasures of the world are transient, short-lived, perishable and deluding because the platform upon which they are based, i.e. the gross physical world, is equally transient, short-

lived, perishable and un-sustainable. How can anything that is gross and perishable itself give sublime comfort or pleasure that has an eternal dimension?]

Understand and realise that there are certain things which are so ethereal, sublime and subtle that they are beyond the reach of the gross organs of perception (such as the eye). Thus, when you rise above the mundane and the physical, and when you are able to experience the existence of the sublime and ethereal entity that transcends such limitations and barriers of the physical gross world, it is then that you would be able to experience the profound bliss, happiness, joys, felicity and beatitude that is obtained by realizing Brahm.

[Since you can't see Brahm and the Atma, or the 'pure consciousness' in physical terms as you see or perceive other gross things in this world, it does not mean that they are not there, and that they are not true. The gross organs and their objects have a limited scope, but the cosmic Truth and Absolute Reality known as Brahm and Atma, or the cosmic super Consciousness personified, is an entity that is extremely sublime, subtle, ethereal, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, immanent, immutable, constant, uniform and universal. You cannot deny it merely because you can't see it in physical terms.] (44).

45. The pleasure, bliss, joy and happiness in which the 'consciousness' is not involved are definitely not the real thing. They are imaginary, deluding, artificial, superficial and transient. On the other hand, pleasure and happiness etc. that is derived by involvement of the consciousness are true and real in essence; they are sustainable and sublime. [In other words, the pleasure that one gets from the material sense objects of the world is temporary and inconsequential, whereas the one that is got by realizing the pure consciousness is for real and truthful.]

When the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) is controlled, and its natural nature and tendency to be restless and wandering is overcome (by diligent practice, meditation and contemplation), it is then that the 'pure consciousness' is realised. [This is because only a stable mind is able to focus on a thing that requires deep and penetrating insight to be realised. All great discoveries and inventions are made by a calm and focused mind, not by a restless, agitated, fidgety and worried mind that is in a flux, is distracted and unable to focus. If this is the situation in the physical gross world that is within the reach of the senses, one can well imagine the gravity and importance of the need of a focused mind in the field of spiritualism and metaphysics that goes beyond the reach of the physical senses.] (45).

46. When the Chitta permanently loses its inherent and natural character of being restless, wandering and uncertain, of being desirous of so many things and never be satisfied or contented by anything—in other words, of being full of Vasanas (passions, desires, lust and longings for this world and its numerous material temptations; worldly attachments and attractions for material things of the sense organs), it is then that it is said to be stable and steady. Such a Chitta exists in a perpetual state of calmness when the creature witnesses the ecstatic feeling of spiritual bliss and happiness that comes with the experience of pure consciousness in the transcendental state of existence known as 'Turiya'.

[The 'Turiya' state is the fourth state of existence of consciousness that goes beyond the 'Sushupta' or the deep sleep state, and in this the creature experiences bliss and calmness that comes when the mind and sub-conscious are made irrelevant, when they stop bothering the creature by their constant nagging and prodding.] (46).

[Note—Refer also to Canto 1, verse no. 25; Canto 3, verse nos. 10, 13, 16, 18; Canto 5, verse no. 16.]

47. A wise man who keeps aside or gets rid of all sorts of ‘Sankalps’ (volition, ambition, determination, resolution etc. that pertain to the affairs of the world), who is free from their fetters and being enslaved by them, is said to be the one who has a calm, rested and peaceful mind. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 23.]

A high degree of renunciation, detachment, dispassion, non-involvement and contentedness in which all the Sankalps vis-à-vis the world are exhausted is known as ‘Sanyas’.

If you wish to have true Gyan (enlightenment, truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition and self-realisation) and allow the development of the eclectic virtues of the Atma so that it blossoms in its finest and most profound glory and magnificence, then it is imperative that you inculcate this grand virtue of Sanyas in your inner self and empower your Atma with this spiritual power. This achievement in turn would pave the way for your Moksha, or your spiritual liberation and deliverance from all the miseries and agonies that torment you in this world.

[In other words, if a spiritual aspirant wishes to obtain peace, happiness and bliss that comes with attainment of self-realisation and enlightenment, if he wishes to break free from the trap of temptations proffered by the gross world of material sense objects, if he wishes to free himself from all bondages that tie down his soul to the gross body as well as the equally gross world, if he wishes to rise above the mundane and the humdrum of life in this world, if he wishes to detach himself from the grossness and the crassness of this world and attain a spiritual stature which is exalted and sublime, then he is obliged to discard all worldly desires, yearnings, lust, greed, volitions and ambitions. Instead, he should develop a high level of renunciation and detachment for the world of sense objects and its material charms that are nevertheless deluding, artificial and transient. This obviously would result in calming down his frayed mind, and enable him to obtain a high degree of stability and tranquility.] (47).

48. Therefore, you must completely vanquish, decimate and ultimately eliminate all sorts of Sankalps and Vasanas that have covered your inner-self much like the shroud of dark clouds in the sky (that blocks the sun’s brilliant light). You must become completely neutral, harbouring no emotions and thoughts related to anything in this world.

This state of eclectic and sublime existence when one has no desires or ambitions for the world, no attachments and infatuations with the world, and no thoughts and emotions related to anything in this world is a state of existence that is regarded as a metaphor for Brahm-realisation. In other words, the Atma which lives in this state is a personification of the supreme transcendental Brahm; this Atma is a microcosmic form of the supreme cosmic Consciousness itself. This is because the Atma represents the ‘true self’ of the spiritual aspirant who has completely overcome his Sankalps and Vasanas (48).

49. An ascetic who regularly practices only one type of spiritual philosophy symbolized by practicing only one type of Samadhi, and is steady and diligent in it—only such a wise and enlightened ascetic is able to expunge all other philosophies from his mental horizon, only he can prevent his mind from being confused and confounded about what to do and what to avoid. He can focus his efforts and attention

on his chosen path more effectively, and walk this path more stridently and confidently, overcoming all hurdles that may occur.

[The term 'Samadhi' broadly means to remain focused on the pure consciousness and to live in a plane of existence that is known as transcendental. When in this state, the person is unaware of the world and the body, along with any of their activities. Here it implies that a man who does not waver or remain wobbly by being uncertain of the veracity, the truthfulness and the effectiveness of the philosophy he is practicing, who does not keep oscillating between this and that as he is unable to decide what to do and what not to, who is certain as to what is true and what is false, and what his goal in life is, and who is certain and convinced of himself and the philosophy he practices—it is only such a man who can ever expect to succeed in his endeavour in any field in this world, whether mundane, secular or spiritual.

In other words, a spiritual aspirant must be of a firm and stabilized mind in order to realise his spiritual goals. An undecided, fluctuating and vicissitudinous mind which is a victim of confusion and perplexities can never ever lead the aspirant steadily to his spiritual goal. And what is this goal? It is to realise the truth of the Atma, the truth that comes with self-realisation that requires a focused mind and great diligence, the truth that, in its finer and higher forms, is equivalent to Brahman-realisation, and which translates into his final spiritual Mukti or Moksha (i.e. his spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation). He obtains freedom from all fetters representing delusions and ignorance that tie his soul down and shackle it to this world and the body. A freed creature enjoys bliss, beatitude and felicity; he enjoys happiness, ecstasy and contentedness that come when one has finally reached his desired goal or destination which had eluded him for generations. This is the fruition of Samadhi. Refer Canto 4, verse nos. 62-63 also.]

Such a wise and enlightened man realises that the essence to which the Sankhya philosophy¹ of Hinduism refers to is only 'one' and 'non-dual', and not many and varied. [He realises that the spiritual Truth known as 'consciousness' is only one and not two or more though the Sankhya philosophy refers to Tattwas or essential elements as being twenty-five in number.]

An ascetic who has known this secret is indeed not an ordinary man, but a highly attained and enlightened soul. He is 'living being' who has understood the truth of 'life' in a truthful manner. [In other words, he is not to be identified with a gross body now, but with the 'living Atma' that resides inside this body. Realisation or awareness of this 'truth' of life is a true form of wisdom and enlightenment.] (49).

[Note—¹The *Sankhya philosophy*—References—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Varaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 55, and Canto 4, verse no. 35; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 5-6. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahmin 5, verse no. 14; Mantriko-panishad, verse no. 14. (iii) Atharva Veda—Sita Upanishad, verse no. 33.

This is one of the six great schools of Indian philosophy. It was first propounded by sage Kapil as 'Sankhya Sutras'. [Refer Bhagwata 3/25-33, and Canto 5-6 of Shwetashwatar Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

Sage Kapil was the celebrated sage who is regarded as the fifth incarnation of Lord Vishnu (Bhagavata, 1/3; 3/24). He is compared to Lord Krishna in Bhagavata (10/26). He was the brother-in-law of sage Vashistha, being the brother of his wife Arundhati, and the only son of sage Kardama and his wife Devahuti. He taught even his mother spiritual wisdom in Bhagavata, and hence this part of this scripture is called 'Kapil Gita' in which the sage has expounded upon the philosophies of

Sankhya Shastra, Ashtanga Yoga (the eight-fold path of Yoga) and Bhakti-yoga (the path of devotion for and submission to the Lord) (3/25-33).

Sage Kapil is however renowned for one of the six schools of Indian philosophies known as Sankhya Shastra.

The word *Shastra* means any body of knowledge which has been deeply researched and then systematically codified and made useful in a meaningful way.

The word *Sankhya*, according to some scholars, refers to the 'number' or 'numeral' that it refers to, because it says that there are twenty five elements or 'Tattwas' in creation. However, there are some others who assert that it refers to 'Gyan' or acquisition of truthful knowledge of the reality behind the façade of illusions. It stresses on Gyan or truthful knowledge as the only path leading to liberation and deliverance of the soul from this world, and its attaining final emancipation and salvation riding on the boat of knowledge.

Therefore, the combined word *Sankhya Shastra* refers to the philosophy that endeavours to unravel the great secrets of creation based on sound knowledge and rational logic. It has six chapters and contains five hundred twenty six Sutras or keys or codes that unlock the profound treasure of knowledge pertaining to who the creature actually is, how has he come to be what he is at present, and how he can be freed from this vicious cycle of birth and death. Only when one understands the beginning can he understand the end, because this so-called 'beginning' has its origin in the previous 'end'. That is, only after something ends and carries forward certain baggage with it does a new beginning can start. After all, this is based on the fundamental tenet of Nature that 'nothing can start from nothing; there must be something from which anything starts'. That is why we say that there cannot be smoke without a fire.

Now, if one goes back to the 'very beginning of creation' when there wasn't any prior life from which any new life could be born on the principles of 'deeds and their consequences', i.e. the theory that when a creature does any deed in this life then he would have to take a new birth to suffer the consequences of these deeds because they cannot be wished away, the question arises 'what started this creation then?' The Sankhya Shastra endeavours to answer precisely this question in a very logical and systematic manner.

This secret was revealed, according to the of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition's Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/2, to sage and seer Kapil who was the first person to whom the esoteric secrets of creation were unraveled by the Supreme Being (Brahm) himself. In fact, the whole of Cantos 5 and 6 of this Upanishad are dedicated to this philosophy of Sankhya Shastra.

It was propagated by Kapil's disciple Aasuri, and then by the latter's disciple Pankashika.

This philosophy accepts only three basic yardsticks or valid sources of knowledge—viz. 'Pratakshya' or direct perception or cognition of anything such as directly seeing a thing for one's self, 'Anumaan' or implied knowledge or deduction of anything entails inference of something based on some other first hand knowledge, and 'Shabda' or the word affirming this knowledge which is like a testimony of some witness or any dependable source.

So this philosophy adopts the approach of reaching the unknown from what is known. It has reduced all that can be experienced in this world to two fundamental units of creation—the Purush (the Supreme Being; Brahm; cosmic Self) and Prakriti (Nature; the invisible matrix of all forms of natures and temperaments that characterize this creation). The basic argument of this philosophy is that 'nothing can be produced from nothing'. In other words, if the creation has come into being, then there must be something that pre-dates this present creation. If this creation is the effect of some past deed, then obviously there must have some occasion when certain deed was done which resulted in the present. It states that 'Karya (the result) pre-existed (had a truthful existence) in the Kaaran (the cause of the result)'. Suppose we

have an earthen lamp. This lamp, made of clay or mud, was inherently present in the un-moulded lump of clay or mud before it was shaped. Had it not been so, the clay or mud could not have been moulded into the shape of the lamp.

When this argument is applied to the experience of the world, one observes that there are three basic qualities exhibited by all things—one that gives pleasure and happiness, the other which is just the opposite, and the third which does not effect us at all, i.e. we remain neutral to it. Sankhya philosophy states that there are three 'Gunas' or basic virtues and qualities in creation which determine these three responses as well as the characters of things which evince these responses. These three Gunas are Sata which produce positive responses of happiness and bliss, Raja which create negative response of pain and sufferings, and Tama which generates neither.

In more physical terms, Sata Guna means pure and holy, and it is conducive to knowledge marked by these characteristics. The Raja Guna produces desires and ambitions which create restlessness in their wake. Tama Guna is meanest of them all, for it creates a tendency for resistance and inactivity. A man having the Tama Guna in excess would not do anything himself and neither would he allow others to do their duties.

It should be noted here that there is a situation when all these three Gunas can theatrically exist in perfect balance—this situation is the ideal situation and is synonymous with Prakriti at the cosmic level. This Prakriti, therefore, becomes perfectly 'neutral' and self centered; it is the perfect example of grossness because it remains in a state of perpetual coma or paralysis because of this balance. It is when this perfect balance is disturbed that it starts stretching and yawning like a man waking up from a deep slumber.

An example would illustrate. An electrolyte works when there is a difference of potential between the two electrodes—i.e. the cathode and the anode. A neutral solution having the same electrodes dipped in it would not perform the function of electrolysis.

On the other hand, the Purush is the cosmic Consciousness or the Atma or cosmic Soul.

The *evolution of the creation* starts when a union is established between this Purush and Prakriti. There arises a question here. Purush is neutral and absolutely unattached to anything, while Prakriti is gross and lifeless. How is their cooperation possible? Well this is illustrated by the example of physically handicapped intelligent man who has lost the leg and cannot walk and a blind man who cannot see but can walk. The blind can carry the lame on his back, and under the latter's guidance, can reach the destination.

The process of evolution of creation from this primary Nature or Prakriti is as follows—As the result of the three Gunas mixing with themselves, the first offspring was 'Mahat' or Buddhi (the cosmic intellect).

From the Raja Guna part of this Buddhi emerged Ahankar (cosmic pride and vanity, ego and the notion of individualism and selfish arrogance).

From the Sata Guna part of this Buddhi emerged Mana (the cosmic mind), the five organs of perceptions (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin), the five organs of actions (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genital).

From the Tama Guna part of Buddhi emerged the five Tanmatras (the five perceptions of sight, hearing, smell, taste and feeling) and from these further developed the five Bhuts or elements (such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth).

Thus, there would be twenty three such elements + Prakriti + Purush = *twenty five components of creation* in all.

There is another way at looking at this philosophy. It describes the origin of the cosmos from Brahm who created the macrocosmic first Male called Purush and his female counterpart, the Prakriti (Mother Nature), who are the basic cause of this vast and myriad creation. The individual male and female human beings are the

microcosmic forms of that macrocosmic Purush and Prakriti. It is their union which resulted in this cosmos. Their offspring were—Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, mind), Ahankar (pride, ego), the mind-heart complex called the 'Mana', the five perceptions (of smell, hearing, touch, taste and sight) forming the subtle body of the creature, the five elements (space, wind, fire, water, earth), the ten sense organs (five organs of perception—ear, nose, tongue, eye and skin, and five organs of action—hand, leg, mouth, anus and genitals), which together formed the gross body of the creature, the invisible Atma (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (nature of the individual creature). These are the twenty five basic constituents of creation.

So, according to Sankhya Shastra, there are *twenty-five fundamental Elements or Tattwas* as follows—Purush (the primal cosmic Male; the Viraat Purush), Prakriti (primal Nature), Mahtattva (the powerful Buddhi or intellect), the Mana (mind), Ahankar (ego, pride), the five organs of perception (i.e. the eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin), the five organs of action (i.e. the hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genitals), the five perceptions (such as the spoken word or speech, sight, smell, touch and taste), the five Bhuts (i.e. the five primary elements—the earth, water, fire, air and space or sky) = 25.

It further postulates that Brahm created Nature (cosmos) because it allowed itself to be covered or mired by the three Gunas—'Sata' meaning righteousness and virtuousness which are the best and noblest of qualities, 'Raja' meaning worldly passions and desires which are the medium or mediocre qualities leading to worldly desires, and 'Tama' meaning evils, sins and other mean mentalities leading to perversions and vices. The Purush, though he remains aloof, still gets shackled or attached to Prakriti, the creation, because of these three Gunas which act as ropes or strings that tie him down. This fact has been very stated in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 5/10-12 and 6/10.

Breaking one's habits is tantamount to liberation and deliverance from this bondage, and it is called Mukti. The three Gunas are the causes of the myriad temperaments, natures, thought patterns and behaviours of all the creatures, because they have all these three qualities or virtues in them, though they vary in ratio or proportion. These three Gunas are also present in Mother Nature, giving rise to a populace which is so varied and diametrically opposite to each other, even virtually getting at each other's throat, because of the infinite possibilities created by their mixing in different proportions to mould the innate nature, inclinations and temperaments of a creature.

This school of philosophy says that there are five elementary 'Bhuts' in this creation—they are the earth, water, fire, wind and space which, in different permutations and combinations, form all the creatures who have a gross body. A creature, it says, has eleven organs— five organs of perception (ears, nose, eyes, tongue and skin), five organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, anus and genitals) and one organ called the Mana (mind and heart).

According to Mahopanishad, 1/4 – 69 of Sam Veda tradition, these twenty-five elements or Tattwas are the following—five organs of perception (ear, nose, tongue, eye, skin) + five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, genitals, excretory) + one Mana (mind) + one Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) + one Pran (the vital life-giving breath; the essential vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life) + one Atma (soul) + one Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, discrimination) + five Perceptions (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch) + five Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air, space) = twenty-five elements.

Another related philosophy is the *Sankhya Yoga*—This philosophy is a combination of Sankhya philosophy and Yoga philosophy. In Shwetashwatar Upanishad 6/13 it is stated that the Supreme Being can be known by the means of 'Sankhya Yoga', i.e. by an intelligent fusion of 'Sankhya' and 'Yoga'.

The second chapter of Bhagvata Gita is also called Sankhya Yoga. Now, let us analyse this word. It has two parts—viz. 'Sankhya' meaning learning and knowledge,

and 'Yoga' meaning a union, a conjunction, a fusion. Elsewhere, e.g. 5/5, this word has been used to signify 'Gyan' and 'Karma' or a conjunction of knowledge and the philosophy of doing deed. The 'Praanaagni-hotra Upanishad', 1, uses this word to mean 'intense thinking, deep contemplation or deep insight'. It is also, therefore, synonymous with 'Gyan Yoga' or the great concentration and diligent divergence of all energies of the creature to acquire truthful knowledge of the Truth and Reality behind what is apparent but not the whole truth, and what is not apparent at all.

These two paths are not separate, independent and distinct from one another. They are like the two legs by which one walks. The word Yoga also means to bring about a union between two entities, to create a synergy between the mundane and the spiritual. Here it refers to the union between the Atma and the Brahm, or the coordination of various elements of the creature's body so that congenial atmosphere conducive to spiritual upliftment and enlightenment is created for the realisation of the true nature of the 'self', which would mean realisation of the presence of Brahm inside the very own self of the seeker. To bring this about, deep concentration of mind is needed along with the focusing of all the energies of the body in one single pursuit; this is meditation and contemplation.

The word *Sankhya Yoga* therefore means a combination of both the eclectic values of Sankhya philosophy and that of Yoga. Hence, that which brings about a fusion or union between the known and the unknown, that which establishes a coordination between the creature's individual world and the cosmic world of the pure consciousness, that which brings the Atma, the pure 'self' of the creature close to the supreme 'Self' of the cosmos, that which links and ultimately brings about a merger of the single unit with its parent body, and that which helps in the creature's final liberation from the vicious cycle of birth and death, is called Sankhya Yoga.

Now the question arise how is this brought about? The answer is in the following the manifold path of Yoga besides acquisition of knowledge as expounded and espoused in the Upanishads. Yoga has basically two connotations—viz. (1) meditation and contemplation which aim in harnessing all the energy and potentials at the disposal of the creature and diverting them and concentrating them on one single goal chosen by the practitioner of Yoga; and (b) following other methods of achieving this aim as laid down in the scriptures dealing with Yoga.

There are *four paths of Yoga*--(i) Gyan Yoga, (ii) Bhakti Yoga, (iii) Karma Yoga and (iv) Raj Yoga.

(i) Gyan Yoga involves the intellect and mind to determine and delineate the true and the false; it helps to access and understand the reality and falsehood behind the manifested visible world which appears to be 'real' but is actually like a 'shadow of the truth'. This Gyan Yoga helps to establish the mind firmly into seeing unity in diversity. Those following Gyan Yoga are called 'seers' because they can 'see' beyond the visible, multifarious and bewildering variety of this false world. Gyan Yoga is in the realm of the intellect and discriminating mind of a creature.

(ii) Bhakti Yoga refers to having devotion for a chosen Godhead who is a person's ideal, on whom he showers all his adoration, and on whom he focuses his attention. He is emotionally and sentimentally involved with his deity. Hence, the heart is the realm of Bhakti Yoga; it helps to commune with the divine.

(iii) Karma Yoga expounds on the importance of doing deeds and taking actions, but with a different attitude. It stresses that we must not get 'involved or attached' to those deeds or action in as much as we shouldn't be bothered about the rewards or punishments incumbent on such deeds or actions. We must do them dispassionately and with detachment. The action or deed should be treated as one's offering to the God as well as an offering to the sacred fire sacrifice. This will ensure that the actions or deeds are not unrighteousness, corrupt or evil. On the contrary, whatever is done in which a person's subtle sub-conscious says is not the correct thing to do will be deemed to be unrighteous, unethical and unlawful, and therefore cannot be an offering to either the God or the sacred fire sacrifice.

(iv) Raj Yoga is the psycho-spiritual practice of exercise and breath control; it involves the various steps involved in meditation and contemplation, as is generally understood by the term Yoga. This Yoga lays emphasis on physical training of the body and the mind, and is the subject matter of numerous Upanishads dealing with such exercises (e.g. Yog Chudamani of Sam Veda). It deals with such subjects as Pranayam, purification and activation of Naadis, kindling of Chakras (subtle energy centers in the body) etc.

These four types of Yogas are not mutually exclusive; they coalesce and overlap with each other and their main aim is to help the aspirant seeker in his pursuit of 'self-realisation'.

There is another platform of Yoga as propounded by the greatest exponent of this philosophy, i.e. sage Patanjali. According to him, *Yoga consists of eight-fold path*. These are briefly the following—(1) 'Yam' or self restraint; (2) 'Niyam' or observance of certain sacrosanct rules; (3) 'Aasan' or postures for meditation; (4) 'Pranyam' or breath control exercises for purification of the body and mind; (5) 'Pratyahar' or withdrawal of the mind and its control; (6) 'Dhaarna' or having a firm conviction, faith and belief on the sanctity and truthfulness of the chosen path; (7) 'Dhyan' or contemplation and concentration of the faculties of the mind and intellect; and (8) 'Samadhi' or a perpetual trance-like state in which the aspirant loses all awareness of the external world and even himself, and remains perpetually in meditation. These eight-fold path of Yoga have been listed in Varaaha Upanishad, canto 5, verse no. 11—11 ½ of the Krishana Yajur Veda tradition.

The Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes these terms in detail in its Brahman (canto) 1, section 1, verse nos. 3-10.]

50. Those great ascetics who have successfully controlled their various vital winds by diligently following the principles of Yoga (meditation), and have consequentially attained the high stature of self-realisation when they have experienced the glory and radiance of the consciousness residing inside their own self as their Atma—such ascetics become free from all diseases (both physical as well as spiritual), and attain a divine state of being (existence) which has no beginning or end (because they would have activated their dormant cosmic energy and shifted the focus of their identity from being that of the gross and perishable body that has a limit scope, to that of the Atma which is subtle, sublime, eternal, infinite and imperishable).

Such realised and acclaimed ascetics are renowned as being those who are truly expert in the knowledge of the Sankhya Shastra, as those who have truthfully understood the meaning of this school of Indian philosophy (50).

51. The spiritually exalted and eclectic state of sublime existence marked by natural and inherent virtues of exemplary peace, tranquility, serenity, bliss, beatitude and felicity is the one that should be the aim of all spiritual aspirants.

The only way of controlling the restless, vagrant and wayward tendency of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) is to exercise diligent control or restraint over the Prans (vital winds) with a singular aim of containing the Chitta. [Refer also to Canto 4, verse nos. 42-45, 53-54, 87, 89, 92; Canto 5, verse nos. 40-43.]

[That is, if one wishes to exercise restraint over his mind and contain its inherent restiveness, he should learn to practice the various methods by which the movement of the vital winds can be controlled. This implies, inter alia, practicing Pranayam and other methods prescribed according to the principles of Yoga. Its metaphysical connotation is that the aspirant should control the urges of the body and its sense organs to seek gratification, to run behind their respective sense objects in the material world in the hope of finding happiness, joy, comfort, pleasure,

satisfaction and bliss in them, and to allow one become a surf to one's inherent Vasanas (passions etc.), Vrittis (inherent and natural tendencies etc.), Sankalps (determinations, ambitions, volitions etc.), Kamnas (hopes, desires etc.) and all such natural inclinations of a man that are part and parcel of life in this mundane gross existence.

These natural tendencies of the man would compel his mind to instruct the body to take necessary steps in order to satisfy them. This is metaphorically indicated in the Prans being restless and active as all the functions and activities of the body are governed and controlled by different vital winds which are collectively called Pran. If the Pran is controlled, the activities of the body would be automatically controlled. If the body is controlled, the mind would not be disturbed by the constant flow of information from the gross external world which the organs of perception in the body collect and continuously pass on to the mind. In this context, refer to Canto 3, verse no. 10 and its accompanying note, and Canto 5, verse no. 41.

Obviously, when one frees one's self from these fetters that shackle the Spirit to the gross world can he ever expect to find peace and rest of the mind. And unless the mind is rested and quiet the sub-conscious cannot find rest simply because the latter acts as a store-house of information collected by the active mind for future referral and advice, and till the time the mind does not stop collecting inputs from the external world the sub-conscious cannot find rest. It's like the relationship between the boss and his secretary—the mind being the boss and the sub-conscious being the secretary.] (51).

52. When one high goal which is the chief aim of one's efforts is accomplished, all the rest of the milestones and subsidiary goals that come in the way of reaching this destination are deemed to have been successfully crossed or attained or accomplished.

[When one has accomplished success, say for instance, in reaching the state of Samadhi, or in obtaining the state of Turiya which is the fourth and transcendental state of existence of consciousness, then obviously other stages that come before these must have been passed successfully before one reaches this destination. Another more worldly example is this—if one has passed his post-graduate examination and successfully obtained his M.A. degree, it is natural to deduce that he must have already passed his under-graduate examination and must have acquired the B.A. degree. There is no doubt in it.

So, if one has become successful in controlling the Chitta, it follows that he must have successfully controlled the Prans as well as other factors such as the various Vasanas, Vrittis, Sankalps etc. which act as metaphoric milestones on the way up. If they are not crossed or literally vanquished, it is not possible to reach the eclectic goal of controlling the Chitta.

Similarly, the control of the Pran necessitates the control and regularization of the Chitta, because a wayward and restless mind would never allow the creature to ever rest in peace, and a restless creature is one whose sense organs are fidgety and ever desirous for self-gratification depending upon the intensity and measure of the Vasanas, Vrittis and Sankalps that he harbours. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 40-49 in this context.]

Thus, achievement of the eclectic spiritual goal of self-realisation, Brahm-realisation, and of finding spiritual peace, eternity, beatitude and blissfulness is possible only by a coordinated effort to successfully overcoming all the intervening hurdles, and obtaining success in mastering the art of having complete control over all other factors that act as symbolic milestones en-route to the averred spiritual goal.]

When one has reached the highest state of spiritual realisation when he is neutral to the gross external world and the gross body, his Pran (life-factors present in the body and represented by the vital winds) and Chetna (consciousness) both become unified and one¹. [When a spiritual aspirant has reached the higher state of self-realisation, there is no difference between his vital winds and his consciousness. Both flow together in the various Naadis or nerves and veins in the body. That is why it is said in the Yoga Upanishads, while describing the process of Kundalini activation and diverting the Pran in to the Sushumna Naadi, that when the Pran reaches the top of the head the ascetic experiences the thrill and ecstasy that comes with witnessing the presence of supreme ‘consciousness’ inside him, and that when his Pran makes its exit out of the body by escaping through the Brahm Randhra, the hair-like slit in the cranium, the ascetic ‘himself’ is deemed to have left the gross body—this is because his ‘consciousness’ that is known as the Atma and the truthful ‘self’ of the ascetic has left the gross body in the guise of his subtle spark of life known as the Pran!] (52).

[Note—¹Other Upanishads that describe the relationship between the ‘Pran’ and the ‘consciousness’ are, inter alia, the following—(i) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-12. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 10; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 17. (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 35-38; Canto 4, Brahman 4, verse nos. 1-2.]

53. Both these two entities—i.e. the Pran (vital winds that infuse life into the body of a creature) and the consciousness (known as the Atma and the truthful ‘self’)—are interdependent. One is the basis of the other. If one decays or comes to ruin, the other would follow suit.

[This is clear by simple logic. The vital winds keep the body alive, active, healthy and vibrant. They help in imbibing food and drink; they help in digestion, extraction of various nutrients from the food and drink imbibed, and their proper distribution to all the corners of the body uniformly so that each pore of the body is nourished. They help in the elimination of waste; they help in regulating circulation and other functions of the internal organs of the body, they help the body to remain robust and strong, they maintain pressure inside the body and give it its shape and contour. In short, the health, strength, energy, vitality, vigour and the overall functioning of the body have a direct relation to the vital winds.

If, say, the Apaana wind becomes feeble or refuses to carry out its designated functions properly, the food would not be digested, the nutrients would not be extracted, and the waste would accumulate inside the body. In other words, if the Prans become weak the ‘ascetic’ too becomes weak because the body becomes weak, and since the truthful identity or the ‘self’ of the ascetic is the ‘pure consciousness’ known as the Atma, it follows that the ‘consciousness’ too is subjected to miseries when the Pran becomes weak. This is because the Atma lives inside the body, and when the latter is subjected to miseries it is natural that the resident Atma would also suffer.

The role of the ‘consciousness’ is equally important for the ‘life’—literally called the ‘Pran’—of a creature. The term ‘consciousness’ is a synonym for life—when one organ is paralyzed, we say that it has lost its ‘consciousness’, that it is not conscious, and that it is therefore ‘dead’ though the vital winds may be functioning properly. Further, Yoga Upanishads describe how the ascetic is able to divert his vital winds into the Sushumna Naadi (the main duct running through the spinal cord) and enables them to reach the top of the head from where they exit out of the body through the Brahm-Randhra, thereby providing ‘Mukti’ of liberation and deliverance

to the 'ascetic' from the shackles of the gross body. The 'ascetic' here is obviously the 'Atma' because the latter is the true 'self' of any living being, and not the vital winds collectively known as the Pran.

The Atma and Pran share certain virtues that are common to them both—as for instance they are both all-pervading, all-encompassing, infinite, omnipresent, immanent, immutable, form-less, invisible, uniform, universal, and ethereal cosmic entities. As far as sustenance of life in this creation is concerned, they are both equally important and necessary. In this aspect they share a symbiotic relationship with each other. Rather, they are, for all practical purposes, synonymous with each other—for when we talk about life we imply both the Pran as well as the Atma. Life cannot be imagined in its full and truly vibrant form if we exclude any one of these two eclectic entities from its meaning.

But if one were to decide which of the two is superior, then the unequivocal answer would be—it is 'the Atma'.

It is just like giving two names to the same entity depending upon the situation and usage. So, if the 'consciousness' becomes weak, or when the ascetic has not realised his true 'self' and able to practices self-control over his senses, the Prans too become weak by remaining out of control and wasting their energy in senseless indulgences and worthless pursuit of the world by instigating the body to be involved in the myriad activities of the material world. Likewise, when the Pran becomes weak, the soul is subjected to immense sufferings because the body in which the soul lives suffers when the Prans are not able to sustain and support it properly.]

Thus, a wise and self-realised enlightened ascetic understands that his Mukti (spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation) depends upon establishing a synergy and coordination between the two—the Pran (vital winds) and the Chetna (consciousness) that are present inside his body. This is main objective of Yoga—to establish a harmony between these two quintessential units of the body of a living being (53).

54. You (Nidagh) must stop paying any attention at all that your mind and sub-conscious might be inclined to pay to the things in this world. You must abandon all sense of Ahankar (pride, ego) with relation to anything or anyone in this world. [In other words, first you must stop paying attention to this world and thinking that a particular thing or person is important, and therefore worthy of acquisition or being acquainted with. Then, as a second step, stop being proud of your possessions or acquaintances. Do not have any sense of ego or false pride in yourself or your acquisitions or contacts.]

When you are successful in developing this eclectic state of enlightened existence, you would be deemed to have attained the highest state of existence. [This is because you would be calm, serene, peaceful, blissful and rested; you would be deeply happy and fully contented; you would have no desires left to be fulfilled; you would have no wants and no attachments; you would not have any enmity with anyone on the one hand, and no affections for anyone on the other hand—which in turn would enable you to maintain neutrality, detachment and dispassion in this world.] (54).

55. The supreme Consciousness is the only supreme Authority in this creation; there is nothing beyond or superior to it. [That is, the supreme Brahm is the only Authority in creation; nothing transcends it.]

It is faultless and taintless; it is universal and uniform; it is immaculate, pure and clean; it has no ego, pride and haughtiness in it. [In other words, when you realise that your 'self' is an entity known as the 'consciousness', you would also realise that you have these above mentioned auspicious virtues in you. And, that you are not an ordinary creature who is part of this mortal world, but an exalted Being that is the supreme Authority in creation. In other words, you would realise that you are Brahm personified! But the magic is that this realisation would not make you egoistic, proud or haughty that you are the supreme Brahm personified. Instead, you would become humble, calm, tranquil, equanimous and holy with this realisation.] (55).

56. This grand and majestic supreme Consciousness is eternal and everlasting; it shines perpetually and steadily in this creation; it neither fades, nor rises and sets.

[It is like the celestial Sun. The latter is perpetually shining, and modern science has proved that the Sun neither rises nor sets, but it is the rotation of the earth around its own axis that creates this delusion. So, the 'consciousness' never takes a birth or dies; it remains steady. It is only out of ignorance of the reality that one thinks that he takes a birth and that he dies.]

This supreme Consciousness is known by various names—such as Brahm, the Parmatma, etc. In fact, this cosmic super Consciousness is the Supreme Being himself personified (56).

57. Oh Nidagh! Be fulfilled by being firmly convinced that the 'great and transcendental Authority known as the supreme Brahm is no one else but me (i.e. my 'truthful self' which is the pure consciousness called the Atma)'.

Do not worry for the future or brood for the past. [That is, live in the present. Since the cosmic Consciousness that Brahm is, is eternal and constant, and since your truthful 'self' is this same Consciousness called the Atma, it follows that what you are at present will be the same in the future, and was so in the past. You are stable and steady; you do not change in your essential form, though of course you have to adapt yourself to changing environment, situations or circumstances.] (57).

58. [Verse nos. 58-61 are fine examples of the principles of 'Positive Thinking'. If a man follows their advice, if he implements the prescribed maxims in his personal life, he would be energized by positive vibes which are bound to have a cumulative constructive influence on his psychology and his overall personality. He would be a changed man; he would observe that all negativity in his life would be dispelled by these thoughts, and their place would be taken by cheerfulness, happiness, contentedness, vibrancy and positivity. These eclectic ideals are further enumerated in verse nos. 68, and 91-92 of this Canto 5.]

Exist in the present; think of what you observe in the present. [Do not bother yourself of the unseen future or the unchangeable past over which you have no control. You have control over your present by the virtue of deciding how you respond to the given set of circumstances or choices that are before you. But this choice does not apply to the past or the unseen future.]

Since you have selected the best of what is available at the present point of time, be contented and happy. [In the present time you have decided to approach me, your teacher Ribhu, to learn how to get spiritual peace and deliverance, and you are being shown the best path available. So be greatly happy and feel most privileged at

the great good fortune that is made available to you; make a correct choice and rejoice. What is the point in lamenting your past, and how can your future be ruined when you make the correct choice now? So stop brooding, feeling depressed, and worrying unnecessarily. Don't bother about the past because you can't change it or do anything about it. Take care of the present because it has a direct bearing upon your future, and thus you can modify or control what your future would be. Be rested and assured about your future because it is now that it is being moulded, and it is you who can tweak it the way you like. Correct and positive actions taken by you now in the present would ensure a better and positive future for you inspite of the fact that your past was unpleasant and demeaning for you. Be rest assured of the truth and the effectivness of this doctrine; there is no doubt about it.] (58).

59. Be full of the eclectic and glorious virtues of equanimity, steadiness, uniformity and evenness of mind.

Think—'I do not criticize or demean or insult or cause any kind of slight to myself as well as to anybody else. I do not also praise or honour or laud anyone, including myself (i.e. I do not boast of my achievements or qualities; I do not feel proud and have any ego in me).

I do not feel exultant or cheerful or lucky or happy and excited when some auspicious or good situation or opportunity appears before me, nor do I sulk or regret or feel bad, dejected, depressed, sad, unfortunate and un-privileged under the opposite set of conditions which ordinarily would give immense sorrows and miseries to a less-enlightened and less-wiser man.'

That is, I have developed stellar spiritual qualities of remining detached, dispassionate, non-involved and renounced (59).

60. Oh sage! Think that your mind and heart have calmed down and have overcome their natural fickleness, frivolity and unsteady nature. Be free from all regrets, grief and sorrows.

Calm down your tendency of being always on the edge, fidgety and restless, meeting deadlines and being in a tearing hurry, racing against time and always feeling that you have not done enough, or that so much is to be done in so short a time, leaving you agitated, panting, huffy and short of breath. That is, do things at an easy pace; do not get unduly disturbed by the things to be done; do not get emotionally attached to what you do or the results of these deeds. Do not allow yourself to be too much involved in the deeds that you must do while living in this world, though you must do them diligently and honestly nonetheless because of the fact that you live in a world that survives on the philosophy of doing deeds and not remaining idle. You being an honest, noble and conscientious man are expected to be sincere, truthful, honest and diligent in whatever you engage yourself in.

This would help to calm down your mind, make it steady, and give it rest and peace. Think—I have a calm, steady, rested and peaceful mind. Therefore, I do not have any disease! [This is a very pertinent, significant and important observation. All the major ailments that afflict the creature have their genesis in the mind. An agitated, fidgety, upset and restless mind sets off a chain reaction in the body and secretes such chemicals that are injurious to the body's natural healthy condition. This is one of the reasons why a modern man suffers from so many diseases—his mind is never at rest and is in a constant state of flux, is jumpy and fidgety, is full of desires and rapacity, had deadlines to meet, ands is bombarded by information from all over the world. Its restless and fidgety nature is further poked by modern technology, such as the tablets

and the mobile phones connected to the internet, that a man uses even while he is in bed, and is supposed to give his weary body some rest.

Such a mind is therefore eternally un-contented and eternally restless. This is also the reason why spiritual pursuits, study of the scriptures, meditation and contemplation and other such noble pursuits are beneficial for health and the overall welfare of the aspirant—they calm down the mind and rein it in, they make it focused on the work at hand, and inculcates in it the grand virtues of peacefulness, tranquility, serenity and contentedness.] (60).

61. Oh Brahmin (Nidagh)! Think—‘I do not know the difference between someone being my friend and the other being a stranger. [In other words, all the living beings are the same for me; I treat all alike.]

I do not treat anything as being mine and the other as belonging to someone else. [For instance, I do not treat a person as being ‘my daughter or son’, and the other person as being not mine but someone else’s daughter or son. I do not consider the material things around me as belonging to me exclusively; I do not cling to them and become possessive. I know that all such notions and relations are limited to the gross body and not to the Atma which is free from such fetters of having physical ties or relationships. All are equal in my view, and therefore I do not regard something as being mine and get attached to it at the mental level, or treat it as belonging to someone else and getting jealous about it, because that ‘someone else’ is also another form of the pure consciousness known as the Atma that is also ‘me’. In other words, it is actually ‘me’ in that form which the ordinary world treats as ‘him’ or as the ‘other person’.]

In short, I have no sense of duality, or a notion of distinction between ‘this’ and ‘that’ in this world. I treat everything equally, and with the highest degree of equanimity, fortitude, uniformity of view and level-headedness that comes with having an eclectic wisdom and spiritual enlightenment that enables me to see the ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ behind external appearances. This ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ is always the same and uniformly ‘one’, and therefore I do not allow myself to be misled by differing external façades.’ (61).

62. If one vanquishes and eliminates the numerous Vasanas that are inherent in him (i.e. if he is able to overcome all the worldly passions, desires, lust and longings; all the attachments with and attractions for the numerous material things of the world and its sense objects), it is only then that he is sure of being free from the fear of old age and death.

[If a man has Vasanas in him then he would want to enjoy to the hilt the numerous comforts and pleasures that his sense organs derive by interacting with the respective objects of the material world. Lured by the charms of the world, he would yearn for it and would want more of everything that is available, never being contented with whatever he has. His desires, passions, lust and yearnings would have no end. But unfortunately, as old age approaches, his body would be worn out and not able to meet his demands. This causes extreme frustration and its accompanying dismay with a sense of increasing misery and an enhanced degree of greed and rapacity. The result is obvious to imagine—he would lose whatever semblance of comfort and pleasure that he thought he was enjoying earlier in life.

As old age takes over, the body and the vital winds become feeble and less active; they lose their stamina, vigour, abilities and energy. But if a man is not able to control his Vasanas, the weakened Prans and aging body are unable to cope with its

demands, leading to dissatisfaction, misery and dismay to the man. So, he begins to fear old age and an infirm body.

He fears death because he fears losing the much flaunted wealth and fame that he has so assiduously built or accumulated over years, and which he protected so selfishly all along. Death would snatch from him the physical world which was so charming and pleasing for him, the world that gave him so much material comfort and pleasure of the senses. Death would rob him of the opportunity of continuing to roll in and enjoy the material comforts of the world that gratify his sense organs. Death would deprive him of contact with the world of sense objects that he is so attached with, fond of, and longs for. Death would kill his body which he, out of his ignorance, delusions and stupidity, has all along been regarding as his 'true self' and identity, and no one wants himself to be harmed, no one wants to suffer. Death would take away from him a body that he had so painstakingly nourished and taken care of, the body for which he had done so many unscrupulous deeds and committed so many sins during his lifetime. In other words, all his efforts made during his long stint in this world are brought to a naught and knocked out in a jiffy by a single blow of 'death'. Hence, it is natural that he loathes the thought of dying; he begins to harbour a morbid fear of death.

On the other hand, a man who has no worldly Vasanas would not be mentally or emotionally attached to anything in the world, and so when his body becomes old and infirm he would not fret and fume at his inability to satisfy the urges of his organs. He would not be afraid of death because he is not attached to this world, and therefore has no worry that he would be forced to separate from something which is too dear to him to part from when he dies. Rather, he would be happy that at last and finally an opportunity has come to him to break free from the fetter of the gross body which had imprisoned his Atma for so long.

Besides this, he would have developed a high degree of equanimity and wisdom by this time to realise that this world as well as the gross body are perishable and transient entities which are destined to die, that 'death' occurs to the physical body and not the Atma which is his truthful 'self', and that all material things in this world are related to the body and not to the Atma in any manner whatsoever. Hence, there is no locus standi in his fearing for something that is on the one hand unavoidable, and on the other hand does not affect his 'true self'.]

That knowledge which comes when the mind is free from Vasanas—i.e. when the mind is unbiased and not pre-conditioned and prejudiced, when it can think rationally and intelligently without being prejudiced in favour of something or against something else—is said to be true knowledge. [It is this sort of truthful knowledge that would enable the man to reach high level of enlightenment and realisation. He would not be bogged down by mundane and deluding considerations; his decisions would not be tarnished by gross considerations pertaining to the material world that is however mortal and perishable.] (62).

63. When the Vasanas are eliminated from the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious), all sense of duality ends. This is because the natural urge to feel that 'what I have is inferior to what the other person has, and therefore I too must have it' is eliminated when the Vasanas are conquered. With this holistic view of existence, the sense of duality too ends. [Since the wise and enlightened man has no desires for anything left in him, his natural urge to think that there is a difference between what he has and what the other person has, and therefore he too must have it, also ends. Vasanas arise when a person thinks that he does not possess something which he finds so attractive

and pleasant in the world. This notion of deprivation ignites the desire to get that thing anyhow, by hook or by crook. The man's whole being becomes possessed by the thoughts of the thing longed for. But when he has developed detachment and dispassion, when he has inculcated in his inner-self a profound degree of equanimity and dispassion, he would no longer be attracted towards any of the material charms of this world; he would no longer be obsessed by their thoughts. So, he Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) would not harbour any thoughts of that thing. A Chitta that sees everything alike and is not prejudiced for or against any particular thing would obviously be calm and peaceful.

Thus, the end of the Vasanas and the eclectic thought that arise in the Chitta that there is no duality in this world go hand in hand.]

When the Chitta is freed from being torn between two things or two options, it becomes exemplarily calm, rested, serene, blissful and happy. It becomes free from all dilemmas, perplexities, bewilderments, confusions, doubts and indecisions related to the truth and reality (63).

64. In this state of eclectic and realised existence, what remains, after all the delusions, dichotomies and confusions are eliminated, is the 'essence' of everything in this creation. This 'essence' is the eclectic entity which is described as being Advaitya, or non-dual and one of its only kind.

This exalted and sublime entity, the 'essence', is without an end and a birth (as it is eternal, infinite and imperishable), is un-manifest and invisible (though it pervades throughout the creation uniformly, and this creation is in effect its revelation), is imperishable and does not undergo decay or decimation (because it is eternal, infinite, steady, constant, uniform and universal), is unruffled, calm, serene, tranquil and peaceful, is immune to and free from being demoted, denigrated, falling from grace, declining, or losing its exalted stature in creation, is unique, un-paralleled and one of its only kind in this creation so much so that it has no beginning and end (because it is endowed with the magnificent and mystical qualities of being infinite, eternal, constant, immutable, immanent, uniform, universal and steady in all phases of time and era).

When a spiritual aspirant develops this highly evolved vision of life and creation, he is able to attain the exalted state of transcendental existence when he sees uniformity and non-duality in this creation, when he sees only one spiritual 'truth' known as Consciousness or Brahm all around him, and thus he is deemed to have attained the highest spiritual stature obtainable in this world. This attainment or spiritual achievement makes him Brahm as well as 'self' realised (64).

65. This eclectic and sublime entity (referred to in verse nos. 63-64 above) is 'one' and only one of its kind. It is without a beginning or an end. It is pure and undiluted supreme Consciousness personified. It is without any sort of faults, impurities, taints, shortcomings and corruptions. It is vast, universal, all-encompassing, all-pervading and all-inclusive. It is so mysterious that nothing is subtler than it.

It is this divine and holy entity that is known as Brahm. And, indeed, it is 'me'. I am indeed Brahm personified! There is no trace of doubt or confusion in this fact. [That is, my truthful form called the 'self' or the Atma is the same supreme transcendental Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness that possesses the grand, magnificent and majestic virtues enumerated herein above, and that resides in my physical body, giving 'me' an identity and personality. 'I' am this 'Brahm' in its most sublime and subtle form. Of course, this statement should come from the heart to have

any meaning; otherwise it is a boastful claim lacking conviction; it would be hollow, and without pith and substance. Refer also to verse nos. 20-21 of the present Canto 5.] (65).

66. This eclectic and divine entity (i.e. the supreme transcendental Brahm which is pure cosmic super Consciousness) is beyond the purview of different dimensions of time and space. It is absolutely immaculate and exemplarily clean, pristine and uncorrupt. It is exceptionally beautiful, bewitching and charming.

It is always risen—i.e. it is always evident, is unchanging, constant and steady, is immanent and eminent, is an entity whose presence does not need proofs, verification or authentication.

It is vast and all-encompassing. It is wholesome and absolutely complete in every conceivable way.

Though it reveals itself in myriads of forms that encompasses all aspects of creation, but itself it is one and non-dual, having only one meaning and one interpretation. [That is, though the world—which is regarded as a manifestation of a single Brahm—is known by different names, is seen or perceived or interpreted differently by different people under different circumstances and premises, the ‘essence’ from which this world is made, i.e. Brahm, is only ‘one’ and has only one meaning. This meaning is one because it is the ‘truth and reality’, and it refers to the pure and cosmic Consciousness that is a universal, immutable, uniform and unchanging entity. There may be doubts and debates as to whether a given thing in this world is true or false; there may be different names of a single thing in different places, different eras and different languages, but the ‘truth’ known as the supreme transcendental Brahm, or as cosmic Consciousness, is one and universal by its inherent nature.]

You (Nidagh) must understand this and become as steady as Brahm by being Brahm-realised or self-realised. Remember, there is no difference between being Brahm and self ‘realised’, as the ‘self’ is none other but Brahm personified (66).

67. This sublime essence and eclectic entity of creation (known as Brahm and cosmic Consciousness) is the only thing that is of any worth in the entire existence; it is all there is to it, and there is nothing beyond it.

It is peaceful and serene. It is without a beginning, a middle or an end.

It is extremely neutral and fulfilled because it neither lacks anything nor does it want anything.

It does not take a birth (because it is universal, uniform, constant, unchanging, immutable, infinite, eternal, has never died or perished, and is without an end or beginning).

Be contented and rested with this eclectic and holistic view of creation and your own self (because your ‘self’ is the same divine, sublime and holy entity known as the cosmic Consciousness called Brahm) (67).

68. Think in these eclectic terms—‘I am not bonded or under any obligations; I am unfettered and eternally free. [This is because my truthful form is the Atma which is an ethereal entity that cannot be butted and bounded by artificial means; I am ‘consciousness personified’ that has no fetters attached to it.]

At the same time, I am not even free and liberated. [Since I was never under any sort of bondage in the first place, there is no separate existence for me now which can be regarded as being free and liberated. This notion of someone being free and

liberated, or being delivered from some bondage or misery or troubles applies to him who had been suffering from this torment earlier, but it does not apply to me in any measure whatsoever. I am eternally free and liberated.]

I am without any spiritual or moral ailments (taints, corruptions, flaws, shortcomings, inconsistencies, perversions, fetters and other such negativities). [I am holy, immaculate, wise, enlightened and self-realised. I have full control over myself and lead a well-regulated, righteous and auspicious life. So I do not suffer from any sort of moral and spiritual flaws or faults that can gnaw into my conscious and compromise my welfare much like a bodily disease eating into the health of the body, and sub-sequentially giving immense pain and discomfort to the creature.]

In fact, I am the supreme essence of everything in this living creation, the essence that is known as Brahm, the pure Consciousness.

I am absolutely free from all thoughts of duality. I am, on the other hand, fully convinced of the doctrine of non-duality, universality and uniformity in creation. [This doctrine is the basis of Vedanta or the Upanishads. Briefly, it stresses that there is only one truth and reality in creation that is known as 'consciousness'. At the cosmic level it is called Brahm, and at the individual level it is known as the Atma. It is the same consciousness that has assumed the form of this multifarious world of astounding diversity, but when one wishes to see the 'truth and reality' he would find that it is only 'one' and not two or more.]¹

This non-dual, sublime, eclectic, holy, divine, supreme and transcendental entity known as Brahm is indeed characterized by the grand and glorious virtues known as 'Sat' (truth and reality), 'Chit' (consciousness), 'Anand' (bliss, beatitude, felicity and happiness). Hence, this divine Brahm is known as 'Sat-Chit-Anand'².

You (Nidagh) must cultivate the habit of always thinking in these terms. This would make you attain the exalted state of 'Jivan Mukti'³—i.e. you would be freed from all fetters even while you are alive in this mortal and deluding world, and have a gross body (68).

[Note—¹In the context of this verse, refer verse nos. 58-61 of Canto 5.

²Refer verse no. 29 of Canto 4, and verse no. 74 of Canto 5.

³Refer Cantos 3 and 4 which describe the concept of Jivan Mukti elaborately.]

69. It is the gross body and its sense organs of perception that enables a creature to be aware of the external gross world of material things because the latter is perceived by the mind only through the medium of the sense organs. The organs of perception have corresponding sense objects in the external world towards which they are naturally inclined to be attracted and relate to. If the link is snapped, if one is successful in sufficiently training his sense organs to be self-restrained, then it is very easy for him to get rid of the external world, and along with this riddance comes the end of all accompanying delusions, distortions, hallucinations, nuisance and mischief that not only entangle the creature in a vicious grip but also rob him of his peace, tranquility, bliss, contentedness, steadiness and happiness. This is natural because a bonded creature is like a serf, and a serf or a slave can never be happy in the true sense.

Therefore, you (Nidagh) should get rid of this world and its entrapping temptations by exerting control over your own body and its sense organs. Once you achieve success in this, your inner-self would become calm, rested, peaceful, tranquil, contented, blissful and happy. You would, as a consequence, enjoy the nectar and beatitude and felicity that come with self-realisation, i.e. with experiencing the enlightenment that comes when one comes to be aware of the true essence of this existence known as the Atma, the pure consciousness.

[You cannot effect any change on this vast world which is beyond your means, reach and control, but of course you can surely and definitely control yourself. There is no excuse on this account. And once you do so, you would be able to enjoy the bliss and happiness that comes with riddance of all torments and miseries from which a person suffers because of his involvement with this world which is nevertheless a treasury of misfortunes, pains and miseries, and of which delusions and distortions are characteristic features. A creature would be deemed to be utterly stupid if he, in spite of all the sufferings that he is subjected to, does not even attempt to find a way out of the quagmire in which he has landed himself. So, you would be well advised to take care of your own spiritual welfare by controlling your own involvement with this world, and the easiest way is to exert control over your body and its sense organs.] (69).

70. ‘This thing is beautiful, attractive, charming and worth acquiring’, and ‘that thing is not so’—such thoughts that create a notion of distinctiveness, a sense of difference between two given things that one is better than the other, the idea which is the basis of conjuring the sense of duality, are the basic cause of your mind getting trapped in the web of prejudices that lead to delusions. This in turn distracts and diverts your mind from its chief goal and keeps it swiveling between the truth and the falsehood, which in turn create uncountable sorrows, troubles, grief and miseries for you. They keep you perpetually on the tenterhooks, making you miserable, unsatisfied, restless, fidgety, indecisive and agitated. Your life would be spent pursuing one and avoiding the other, without any chance of finding rest and peace ever. You would be swiveling between choices, and you would be tossed and turned violently in this deluding world without ever finding your goal.

A wise and intelligent man is one who strives to find peace, stability and rest by burning such fallacious notions and banishing such distracting thoughts from his inner-self by the fire of the eclectic virtues of equanimity and having an evenness of world-view. He who understands and practices the noble and grand tenets of non-duality or Advaitya, and trains his mind to remain firmly rooted in its eclectic philosophy without wavering and demurring in the least is indeed successful in achieving this grand spiritual goal in life.

Such a man would be of a steady, steadfast, calm and well composed mind and intellect. And it is such a mind and intellect that can be his aid in achieving an astounding and exemplary level of peace and tranquility in life. He no longer has to suffer from any of the dilemmas, delusions, perplexities and confusions that a distracted and bewildered mind forces him to face. He does not have to face the various torments and miseries that come in their wake.

[When you think that a particular thing is good your mind would be unconsciously and involuntarily attracted to it, get attached to it, and would long for it. Then you would be sub-consciously obsessed with that thing; that thing would literally ‘possess you’ at the mental and emotional level, making you a virtual slave of it. How can a person who is bonded and shackled as a serf can ever hope to lead a carefree and liberated life? On the other hand, if you think that a particular thing is not good for you, you again would be obsessed with the desire to get rid of it or avoid it. It is not always possible to do so in the prevailing circumstances in which you live in this world. So this thing would constantly pinch you, causing you endless miseries and grief. Obviously, you would be torn between these two opposing situations—one which would pull you towards itself, and the other that would cause revulsion in you. Your life and its time and energy would be consumed in oscillating between the two.

So the best way out is to be resilient, steady, unwavering, equanimous and fortitudinous.] (70).

71. Enhancement of truthful and correct knowledge that enables a man to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, what is erroneous and what is truthful, is possible by the study of the scriptures and company or guidance of those who are wise, learned, experienced and erudite. [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 81-82 in this context.] (71).

72. The truthful knowledge that pertains to the supreme transcendental Brahm is like a virtual spiritual remedy for all the ailments that torment a creature in this world.

[This is because this knowledge would enlighten him of the basic tenet of the Upanishads and other holy scriptures that whatever that exists in this creation is a manifestation of Brahm. The creature's own true 'self' is also this Brahm personified in the form of his Atma which is pure consciousness. This Brahm is characterized by the grand virtues of being, inter alia, all-pervading, all-encompassing, immaculate, eternal, imperishable, constant, wise, untainted and free from any corruptions and diseases. Refer also to Canto 5, verse nos. 64-68.

All the myriad miseries and sorrows that trouble the creature in this world are due to the ignorance of this truth and reality. Once he becomes well-informed and educated about who or what Brahm is by reading the scriptures and consulting wise men, he no longer would have to suffer from any of the spiritual dilemmas and bewilderments that keep an ordinary creature bogged down and squirming in discomfort throughout life. He would no longer would be torn between doubts and confusions; he would no longer feel miserable because all sorts of feelings and emotions that create a sense of misery, grief, trouble and sorrows are limited to the body and do not at all affect the Atma which is Brahm personified.]

This Brahm is the 'Truth' that is infinite, imperishable, eternal, steady, immutable, constant, universal and uniform. This Brahm has no beginning, middle or end. This Brahm is immaculate, pristine pure, untainted, sublime, divine and holy.

Brahm is indeed and truthfully 'supreme and transcendental' (72).

73. Brahm is a divine and sublime entity that is so mysterious, enigmatic and mystical that inspite of manifesting itself as the creation which is visible and experienced first hand by the living being, it is like the sky element which is seen everywhere, which pervades everywhere, which encloses everything in creation like an envelop, which harbours everything in creation and there is nothing that is not within the parameters of the sky or untouched by the sky, but ironically and mysteriously and miraculously which cannot be grasped or touched or felt by the sense organs of perception of the body of the creature no matter how hard he tries. [That is, Brahm possesses the unique characteristics of the sky element as enumerated above. Brahm is indisputably and unequivocally there—but it cannot be seen, felt, smelt or tasted like the sky element.]

Hence, Brahm cannot be touched and felt by the skin, seen the organ of sight (eye), tasted by the organ of taste (tongue), or smelt by the organ responsible for smelling (nose).

Brahm cannot be measured and known by any specific yardsticks or criterions. It is precisely for the above reason why it is honoured by the epithet of being 'supreme and transcendental' (73).

74. Oh Suvrat (one who is steadfast and committed to his chosen path; here referring to sage Nidagh)! Think positively and be firmly convinced in the holiness of your ‘true self’ which is the Atma that is fundamentally divine by nature as it is a personification of the supreme Brahm that is characterized by the grand virtues of being ‘Sat-Chit-Anand’ (i.e. truthful, consciousness, and bliss) and ‘Anant’ (i.e. one that has no end; one that is infinite and eternal). [Refer Canto 4, verse no. 29; Canto 5, verse no. 68.]

Think and believe—‘I am Brahm; I am a personification of Brahm’. I am that Brahm who is so absolutely perfect, immaculate, untainted and pure that there is nothing in him that can be considered as being un-worthy and fit for being got rid of. Such eclectic thoughts and firmness of conviction would pave the way for your permanent spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. [Refer Canto 5, verse nos. 8, 20-21, 57 and 65 also.] (74).

75. With this holistic approach to your own ‘self’ you will realise that this Atma, which is the pure consciousness, is the only entity that prevails everywhere, whether you are in the state of Samadhi (which is a trance-like state obtained in higher stages of meditation) or interacting with other creatures in this world (i.e. are involved in the routine affairs of this world).

[When you are in the state of Samadhi, you would be experiencing the bliss that comes with the non-involvement of that aspect or part of your self that is sublime and subtle, i.e. your Atma, with the gross aspect or part of you which consists of the gross sense organs of the body. Since it would be deemed that ‘you’ (i.e. your ‘true self’; your Atma) have detached yourself from the body during Samadhi, it is natural that ‘you’ would also have detached yourself from the external material world, because it is the gross body that is in contact with the world, and not the Atma. Put simply, during the state of Samadhi, you would be non-involved with the world. Since the world is the cause of all your mental and spiritual problems, it is again natural that you would be protected from these problems, and this would translate into your experiencing bliss, contentedness, beatitude and felicity. Your physical body may be involved in the affairs of the world and suffer its consequences, but your Atma is free from such entanglements and their upshots.]

This Atma is eternal and constant, being steady and unchanging. It is all-pervading and omnipresent.

The Atma is known as ‘Kutastha’ because it is an entity that occupies a high position, is unalterable, unchanging, steady, immovable and constant, and is most secret, enigmatic, hidden and esoteric¹.

The Atma is free from all faults and shortcomings (75).

[Note—¹The *Sarwasaaro-panishad*, verse no. 10-11, and the *Tejobindu Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 62, both of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, also describe the Atma as Kutastha.]

76. The fact that though Brahm is characterized by the grand virtue of being non-dual, immutable, indivisible and constant (which is a steady refrain of all the Upanishads) it still appears to be in numerous forms that are always changing and so divergent in nature by revealing itself in the form of this world that has mind-boggling number of uncountable forms is because of the factor of Maya (i.e. the delusion-creating power of Brahm) that acts as a conditioning element that tampers with the real Truth. [That is, Brahm appears to be so different, or having a dual nature, because of the interference of Maya. This Maya creates an artificial distortion and prevents the

reality to be known. It hides the Truth behind the smoke-screen of fallacious thinking, imaginations, delusions and misconceptions.]

It must not be forgotten that the Atma is fundamentally 'one' and 'non-dual', or Advaitya, because it is Brahm personified.

[That is, it must never be thought that two individuals having two different gross bodies would have two different Atmas; that therefore there are as many 'selves/selves' as there are creatures. The Atma is always 'one' and not 'two or more'. The uncountable number of creatures is simply the uncountable number of bodies that this single Atma has assumed for itself.

The simplest way to understand this concept is to take the example of water. A molecule of water consists of two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen, and its chemical formula is H₂O. For a chemist water would always mean H₂O, but a layman would differentiate between a sample of water in a cup and that in the river.

Water is also known by different names—viz. as liquid water, as any viscous fluid, as ice, vapour, moisture, mist, cloud or rain, as river, stream, sea, ocean, well, pond, lake and so on. But a wise man knows and understands that all of them are one or the other form of the same element called 'water' having the same chemical formula.

Similarly, a wise and enlightened man would know that the Atma in all the creatures is one, and therefore such a man would treat all the creatures alike. On the contrary, an ignorant man would think that all creatures are independent individuals, and that they have separate identities that are unique to them. Of course this latter notion is superficially true because this world is conditioned by Maya to treat the external gross body as the identity of all living beings, but fundamentally it is wrong and based on fallacious premise. This is because the 'true self' of all the creatures is their Atma, the pure consciousness residing in their bodies, and not the gross body itself.]

Therefore, the Atma is universally Advaitya or non-dual and one. The Atma has no delusions and misconceptions. It is not at all affected by any of the taints and delusions so characteristic of this gross world (76).

77. The sky element is a uniform entity that is universal and immutable because it cannot be divided or fractioned or portioned. But the same sky is given different names according to the space it occupies—for instance, it is called 'Ghatakash' when it is present in the vacant space of a pot, and 'Mahakash' when it is considered in its cosmic form that is present outside the body of the pot. And, when the pot is broken, both the forms of the sky, viz. the Ghatakash and the Mahakash, become one and the same, having no separate existence or name. Hence one concludes that the different names assigned to the sky element is basically fallacious, and has its genesis in ignorance of the fundamental truth about the sky. [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 16; Canto 2, verse no. 37; Canto 4, verse no. 24.]

Similarly, the Atma is universally the same entity; it uniformly pervades throughout the creation, both at the micro level of an individual creature, as well as the macro level at the plane of creation or world at large. Therefore, to treat the Jiva (a living being; a creature) as being separate or different from Ishwar (the Supreme Being) is an erroneous idea based on fallacious premises and ignorance of the truth.

[The Atma is the same in all the creatures, and this Atma is nothing but pure consciousness that is an entity established as being divine, sublime, subtle, universal, uniform, immutable, indivisible, eternal, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent etc. It is this same Atma that resides in the gross body of any given

individual as well as in all other creatures in existence. This is the micro-level view of the Atma. At the cosmic level, it is the same Consciousness that exists at every level of creation; it is this Consciousness that is the cause of this creation, its development, growth, expansion, and its conclusion. Even after the end of one cycle of birth and death, it is this Consciousness that prevails, and then becomes the fountainhead from which the next cycle sprouts forth, and upon which it rests.

This Consciousness known as the Atma is the central pivot around which the whole wheel of creation revolves. This fact is elucidated in a number of Upanishads¹. Since the Atma is one and immutable, it is the same irrespective of the level or plane of creation in which it exists. Again, the Atma is pure consciousness and nothing else. Therefore it follows that there is no fundamental difference between the Jiva and Ishwar as both are the same ‘consciousness’ or Atma personified.]

The treatment of an entity that is universally and indisputably ‘one’ and non-dual, i.e. which is never ‘two or more’, as having more than one forms or existences is indeed fallacious and extremely absurd.

Therefore, to treat the Jiva, the living being or the creature, and the Ishwar, the Supreme Being, as two distinct or separate entities is fallacious, erroneous and misconceived². This distinction or separation comes because one is not aware of the ‘truth and reality’, and is deluded to believe in the concept of duality or Dwaitya.

[Suppose we have different types of ornaments made of ‘gold’. A wise person is one who recognizes them all as ‘golden ornaments’, and not by their individual names, shapes or sizes, or even their usage. It is raw gold that has been crafted by the goldsmith into so many shapes and sizes, giving the same element known as ‘gold’ its myriad names and different market values. If ‘gold’ is removed from these ornaments, all of them lose their intrinsic value and inherent importance.

Similarly, everything in this creation—and that includes the Jiva—is a manifestation of Brahm. Since the Jiva is a living conscious entity that harbours the Atma, the pure consciousness, in its body, it has a special relationship with Brahm as the latter is the universal cosmic Consciousness that resides in each unit of creation. In other words, it is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that has transformed itself into the living being known as the Jiva. It is just like ‘gold’ being transformed into an ornament having a name other than ‘gold’.] (77).

[Note—¹(a) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no. 3-4, 6; Tripdvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph 3-14 (which describes the ‘Sudarshan Chakra’ of Vishnu); Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 6-7 (which describes the wheel or Chakra that is present in the navel and how it keeps the creature trapped in it).

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, 6; Canto 5, verse no. 12; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.

²Refer also to the following Upanishads on the concept of non-duality between the *Jiva and Brahm*—

(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Rudra Hridaya Upanishad; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 17, 81-110; Tejo Bindu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-43, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-51, 60-64, Canto 4, verse nos. 2-30, 69-79, Canto 5, verse nos. 1-75, 90-96, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-72; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 7-8; Skanda Upanishad, verse nos. 2-7; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/15; Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 56-58; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 70, 73.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Adhyatma Upanishad; Subalo-panishad, Canto 3, 5, 7 (verse no. 1), and 9 (verse no. 16); Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse no.18; Niralamba.

(c) Rig Veda—Atma-poojo-panishad; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 1.

(d) Atharva Veda—Atmo-panishad; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 77; Par Brahm Upanishad, last stanza of verse no. 2; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 20-21.

(e) Sam Veda—Maho-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 7.]

78. When an ascetic becomes self-realised and enlightened by concentrating his mind on the pure conscious Atma which is sublime, subtle and self-illuminated, he is able to experience its divine illumination everywhere without exception. [That is, in the higher echelons of spiritual attainment, a self-realised ascetic begins to see the ‘truth’ of the doctrine of Advaita or non-duality all around him in the form of the universal presence of the cosmic Consciousness. In other words, he sees nothing but Brahm everywhere. He sees the universal ‘truth’ behind the façade of falsehood.]

When he is firmly established in deep meditation and contemplation, he naturally becomes self-realised and self-enlightened when the sublime illumination emanating naturally from the ‘consciousness’ comes to the fore and begins to shine and light up his inner-self in a brilliant light known as ‘spiritual realisation’. It is then that he gets acquainted with his ‘truthful self’, his ‘real self’. [This is his Atma; it is pure consciousness. It is distinct from the gross body which is ‘dark’ if it is not ‘lighted’ by the presence of the self-illuminated Atma from the inside.] (78).

79. When a self-realised and enlightened ascetic develops a holistic and natural view of non-duality as he begins to see all the creatures as a reflection of his own self, and the same time realises that there is no basic difference between his own self and the other creatures because all are mirror images of the same cosmic entity known as pure Consciousness—it is then that he truly becomes a personification of the supreme Brahm. [He would have realised that ‘he’ is not the physical gross body but the sublime ‘consciousness’ known as the Atma, and that this Atma is the same in all the creatures. This Atma or ‘consciousness’ is known as Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. Since the entire creation is a manifestation of this cosmic Brahm, it obviously follows that it is also a mirror image of ‘his’ own ‘self’, which is his Atma in the form of ‘consciousness’. His own Atma is Brahm personified in his gross body in the same way as it is present in the gross bodies of all living beings. Refer Canto 5, verse no. 61.] (79).

80. When an ascetic remains in a perpetual state of meditation and contemplation, and is able to develop a state of mind which sees no distinction between any two or more given things or situations in this world, when it has developed an exemplary level of wisdom that enables it to see the underlying uniformity and universality amidst external varieties, variations and dichotomies that are apparent in the external features of this creation—it is only then that such an ascetic is deemed to be inseparable and indistinguishable from the Atma. He is regarded as an image of the Atma which is universal and uniform in this creation (80).

81. [Verse nos. 81-89 outline how this eclectic state of existence is realizable by an ascetic. Seven steps are outlined in this connection, and they are called the ‘seven Bhumikas’.]

The way to achieve this glorious goal is to study the scriptures (especially the Upanishads which succinctly and wisely present a refined or distilled version of the voluminous scriptures which are otherwise like an ocean that is more prone to drown the aspirant than to take him to the other shore of spiritual liberation and deliverance), having or developing contacts with noble, enlightened, wise and learned men, developing a sense of renunciation, dispassion and detachment towards this world and the body, and constant, consistent and persistent practice. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 71 in this context.]

This is considered as the first method or 'Bhumika'¹. It is the first step that an aspirant must take in order to realise his spiritual goals (81).

[Note—¹The word *Bhumika* refers to the stages of development of wisdom. It also means the background, characteristics, qualities, traits, attributes or virtues that helps one to become spiritually wise and enlightened. It would mean to view the pure conscious self known as the Atma against the backdrop or background of certain level of spiritual development. Bhumika is also the role certain characteristic features of this creation play in the spiritual evolvement of an aspirant. It involves inculcation of certain auspicious virtues in a man that would act as standards to determine the level of spiritual development or evolvement or enhancement he has attained. The Bhumikas would act as the gold-standard to judge a man's stature in the sphere of spiritualism. Hence, the term Bhumika would mean certain characteristics that must be present in a person, or certain spiritual criteria against which he must be weighed or judged if he is to be called an enlightened and self-realised person or a person who has obtained spiritual liberation and deliverance for himself, a person who has freed himself from the fetters that shackle others to the mundane life in this world.

Bhumika is an indication of the degree of spiritual achievement of an aspirant, and refers to one or the other aspect, step, level or stage of one's spiritual progress.

The concept of Bhumika has been explained in detail in two Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, viz. (i) Akchu Upanishad which elucidates the seven Bhumikas of Yoga in its Canto 2, verse nos. 27-42, and (ii) Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-4—1.11, 1-35—2, and Canto 5, verse no. 71-75, which lays stress on Yoga and draws a parallel between Bhumika and the three steps of Pranayam, such as Purak, Kumbhak and Rechak.

The present Annapurna Upanishad describes the metaphysical connotations of the term Bhumika in the context of the steps that a spiritual aspirant is expected to follow before he becomes truly self-realised and enlightened, and thereby attain spiritual liberation and deliverance.

Types of Bhumikas—(i) Seven types of Bhumikas—refer: Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 27-42; the present Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 80-89. (ii) Four types of Bhumikas—refer: Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 71-75.]

82. The second Bhumika (method or step) is to deeply think, to ponder and contemplate.

The third Bhumika is to establish strong relationship with and have constant company of men who are noble, wise, self-realised and enlightened. [Compare this statement with what has been said in verse no. 81 where it was mentioned that one should develop contacts with them. In this verse he is advised to foster these contacts and mature them into healthy relationship. It is only then that the goodness of these holy men would transmit to the aspirant.]

The fourth Bhumika is the elimination or annihilation of the Vasanas that are natural to a person. [The Vasanas are the passions, lust, desires and yearnings that a creature has for the material world and its numerous charms and temptations. It is to be noted that a greater part of this Upanishad's Cantos 1 till 5 are dedicated to the

concept of Vasana, its negative affect on the creature's spiritual well-being, how to overcome these Vasanas, and what the benefits of elimination of Vasanas are. In the case of the present Canto 5, special reading can be made of verse nos. 15-18, 37-40, 48 and 62.] (82).

83. The fifth Bhumika is to remain in a perpetual pure state of existence marked by blissfulness and enlightenment that comes by realizing the truthful existence of the 'consciousness'. This state is untainted and unaffected by the grossness and delusions of the world around the aspirant.

Such enlightened and self-realised persons appear to be half awake and half asleep. They are 'awake' in the sense that outwardly they go about the routine of life in this world like other ordinary men, but internally they are un-involved in what the body does and unconcerned with the result as well. This happens because they are lost in the thoughts of the Atma, or are in a perpetual state of meditation and contemplation. Thus, for all practical purposes they are 'asleep' because their mind and sub-conscious do not register any of the events of the outside world like a man who is physically sleeping. [Obviously, this refers to the Turiya state of existence of consciousness which is equivalent to the state of Samadhi. Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 28, 48-52; Canto 4, verse no. 62-63; Canto 5, verse nos. 49, 78-80 in this context.]

Such persons are said to be Jivan Mukta—i.e. one who has attained spiritual liberation and deliverance inspite of going about his routine life in this world, and having a gross body that is still alive. [The concept of Jivan Mukti has been elaborately dealt with in Cantos 3 and 4 of this Upanishad.] (83).

84. This state of Jivan Mukta (as described above) marks the sixth Bhumika. In this state of existence, the creature is not aware of the external gross world and its material charms or temptations of its sense objects. His sense organs (and therefore the body) are no more attracted by their respective sense objects in this world because his mind and sub-conscious have virtually become defunct and inoperative. [This is a natural corollary of his having practiced the tenets of renunciation and detachment from the world, having studied the scriptures, and having established communion with wise men.]

During this state he lives blissfully and in a high level of ecstasy. It is equivalent to the Sushupta state of existence of consciousness.

[The Sushupta state is the deep sleep state of existence which is the third level of existence for the consciousness. During this state—which comes after the dreaming state known as Swapna—the mind and the sub-conscious are made inoperative as far as the relationship between the creature and the world is concerned. In this state, the creature does not even dreams, and hence he is completely rested and blissful. The reason is that even during dreams he is very much involved in the activities of the world of dreams at a subtle level of existence though his physical gross body might be resting in the physical gross world. So if he wakes up directly from dreams, he is restless and tired though the world thinks he had rested all the while he lay down sleeping. This is because his mind was not at all at rest during dreams. As a result, the creature is exhausted and drained of his energy if he dreams throughout the period of his sleep, and when he wakes up he is not refreshed but as weary as before. This condition is not applicable during the Sushupta state when the mind too goes to sleep. Therefore, during the Sushupta state the creature finds complete rest. It is a state of complete oblivion when the world—both at the gross plane as well as the subtle

plane—simply vanishes. The practical result is that when one sleeps soundly without dreaming, he wakes up refreshed and rejuvenated.

From the perspective of the physical existence in this world, the Sushupta state is a natural bestower of calmness, tranquility, restfulness and peacefulness to the troubled creature who is endlessly harassed by the countless problems of the existence in this physical gross world. From the perspective of metaphysics and spiritualism, it is a bestower of spiritual bliss and peace.] (84).

85. The transcendental state of existence, which corresponds to the fourth state of existence of consciousness, is known as 'Turiya'¹. It is one of its only kind, and marks that stage of consciousness when the bliss and peace obtained by it during the third state of Sushupta (as described in verse no. 84 above) becomes deep, permanent and steady. In this state the aspirant attains the level of peace, bliss, stability and calmness that is attainable only when one is truly free from all bondages and obligations. It is equivalent to his obtaining Mukti (liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) of a high order, the Mukti which is known as 'Kaivalya' because it is unique and one of its only kind as no other form of freedom provides the spiritual aspirant such a high intensity of peace, bliss, calmness and stability which Turiya state does.

Hence, this Turiya state is the sixth Bhumika characterized by exemplary beauty and divine qualities of the Spirit marked by a high degree of glorious virtues such as 'Samtaa' (having equanimity; evenness of mind and thought; stability, calmness and poise; treating everything and everyone alike; remaining unfazed, unmoved and unaffected under all circumstances), 'Swachataa' (purity and cleanliness of the inner-self), and 'Saumyataa' (simplicity, humility, piety, gentleness and an unpretentious nature) (85).

[Note—¹Turiya state—refer Canto 1, verse no. 25; Canto 3, verse nos. 10, 13, 16, 18; and Canto 5, verse nos. 16, 46.]

86. The state of existence that is beyond the Turiya state, i.e. the fifth state of existence of consciousness corresponding to the sixth Bhumika (as narrated in verse no. 85) above is the higher state of transcendental existence known as 'Turiya-Teet' (literally 'one that is beyond Turiya'), provides the spiritual aspirant 'Nirvana', which is complete and absolute spiritual liberation and deliverance of the soul. It is the state when the ascetic obtains his final emancipation and salvation. It frees him, once and for all, from all the fetters that had been shackling him for generations after generations to this deluding world and the gross body. It is the final resting place and the destination for his soul, his Atma or his 'self'.

[It ought to be noted here that all the earlier Bhumikas are stepping-stones for the spiritual aspirant for reaching this final citadel of enlightenment when his Atma finds its final spiritual goal in life. When he reaches the Turiya-teet state of existence, he is finally and irrevocably Mukta—i.e. he will no longer be entangled in this world, he will no longer be influenced by Maya (delusions), Vasanas (worldly passions) and Vrittis (worldly tendencies) etc., he will no longer need any other kind of liberation and deliverance which can be superior to this state for he will have found his ultimate spiritual destination which would undoubtedly give him complete rest, bliss, peace, beatitude and felicity. It would mark the crowning glory of all his spiritual endeavours undertaken through generations. It is the pinnacle of self-realisation and synonymous with Brahm-realisation. It does not matter now whether or not he retains his gross body, for the latter has become irrelevant now. Similarly, it matters not now whether

or not he interacts with the world at the physical plane, for the world has become non-existent for him now. Such a highly evolved and exalted state of transcendental existence of the consciousness or the 'self' is known as 'Nirvana'.]

The seventh Bhumika (aspect, step, level, stage of one's spiritual progress) which is equivalent to the transcendental state of existence of consciousness—whether it is in the preliminary or earlier stage called the Turiya, or the higher echelons of spiritual realisation called the 'Turiya-teet'—is indeed the best and a highly mature stage in one's spiritual progress; it is literally the highest rung of the spiritual ladder for an ascetic.

It is not the stature that can be easily attained by all living beings. In other words, it is rare to be successful in attaining the Turiya-teet state of existence (86).

[Note—In the context of this verse, refer also to Canto 5, verse nos. 107, 109-114.]

87. The first three Bhumikas (outlined in verse nos. 81-82) correspond to the Jagrat or the waking state of consciousness which is the first state of existence in metaphysical terms. The fourth Bhumika (outlined in verse no. 82) when all awareness of the external physical world cease, and it appears to the world seen in one's dreams, corresponds to the second stage of existence of consciousness called the Swapna or dreaming state.

[During this state of existence of the spiritual aspirant, the entire world appears to be like a dream for him though he may appear to be active in this world and be a physical participant in its activities. But this participation or activity done by him is only superficial and perfunctory in nature, because internally he is totally oblivious of what is happening around him in the physical world. The reason is he is completely absorbed in meditation and contemplation; his mind and sub-conscious are trained to remain detached from the world and the gross body. Since it is the mind that makes a man aware of the world as well as of the activities of the body, when the mind is defunct, the world and the body too become non-existent for all practical purposes.

Hence, just like the case when a man is totally unaware of what is happening in the physical gross world when he is dreaming in his sleep, an ascetic who has successfully attained the fourth Bhumika or stage in his spiritual progress too remains oblivious of what his gross body physically does in this material world, as well as the physical fact that the material world of sense objects is actually there. His mind simply does not pick up any impulses brought in by the organs of perception in the body.

This eclectic fourth Bhumika is compared to the dreaming state of existence called 'Swapna' because during dreams the subtle aspect of the mind known as the sub-conscious is active and it conjures up a fascinating world of dreams which is a mirror image of the physical gross world in which the man lives. A man participates in the world of dreams much in the same manner as he does in the physical world, but his body is not involved and neither does he remember anything of it when he wakes up from dreams.

Similarly, a self-realised ascetic or spiritual aspirant who has progressed in his spiritual endeavours to reach the stage of fourth Bhumika appears to be physically involved or active in the gross world, but internally he is totally unaware of anything around him. He is absorbed in meditation and contemplation; he is lost in the thoughts of his Atma and experiencing the nectar of spiritual bliss that drips from it.

Therefore, for all practical purposes, the world is like a dream for him—an imaginary entity that has no substance and meaning, a fantasy of the mind that has no

reality and truth in it. He may look as if he is an active participant in the activities of the world, but none of the things of the world or the deeds done by his body affect his inner-self which remains steadfastly calm and composed as if nothing has happened at all. This eclectic state of existence is compared to dreams because in the latter case a man is also involved in numerous activities in the imaginary world created in his dreams, but when he wakes up into the realities of life none of the things that he had encountered during his dreams, and none of the events that had occurred in his dreams, have any relevance for him when he wakes up to face the realities in the practical life in this physical world. He will not even remember the things he did or saw during his dreaming phase of existence though at the time when he was seeing the dream he was an active and personal participant in all the events of the dream.] (87).

[Note—There are basically five states of existence of consciousness in metaphysical terms—viz. Jagrat or waking, Swapna or dreaming, Sushupta or deep sleep, Turiya or one that transcends the Sushupta but is the initial stage of complete spiritual attainment and self-realisation, and Turiya-teet which marks the higher stage of transcendental existence which is complete and absolute.]

88. True Anand (bliss, happiness, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity) is so overwhelming and all-embracing that it is like a thick bank of dense and dark cloud that covers the sky during the rainy season. It is obtained during the Sushupta state or the deep sleep state of existence of consciousness that comes after the Swapna or dreaming state.

When it is viewed with the perspective of the different Bhumikas, the Sushupta state of consciousness metaphorically corresponds to the fifth Bhumika. [Refer verse nos. 83-84.]

That is, the fifth Bhumika is that state of consciousness which is equivalent to the Sushupta state when the aspirant lives in the world much like he would do when he is in a state of deep sleep or sound asleep. There is no disturbance of any kind now—he does not even see a dream that might keep his subtle mind engaged and restless, which in turn would translate into the Atma being entangled at the subtle level of existence as it happens during the imaginary world of dreams. The Atma does not find peace and rest during the Swapna phase of sleep (i.e. during the dreaming state) because the subtle mind keeps nudging at the Atma constantly while the world of dreams lasts, thereby robbing the Atma of its chance of finding peace and tranquility in a serene environment which it seeks to obtain while it sleeps. During this phase of deep sleep called Sushupta, the Atma endeavours to eliminate all disturbances arising from the world by completely eliminating them by making the body sleep soundly and the organs of perception becoming totally defunct.

[This is the basic reason why a man wishes to ‘sleep’—his ‘true self’ known as the Atma wishes to find rest and peace. The Atma wishes to break free from the constant turmoil and miseries of worldly existence, and instead find some time to take complete rest and find peace in a tranquil and serene atmosphere to rejuvenate its self. When his body is physically asleep, the sense organs too go into hibernation. The effect is that the world ceases to matter because the latter is known by the man only through his various sense organs—such as the eye which sees, the nose which smells, the ears which hears, the tongue which tastes, and the skin which feels. So, when the man is asleep, his Atma is able to eliminate the physical gross world. But ironically, this is not the end of its troubles—because the sub-conscious mind is very much active even as the active aspect of the mind that actually perceives the world through

the inputs received by the body and its sense organs goes into hibernation when the physical body sleeps.

Hence, for all practical purposes, the Atma does not get what it had wanted by making the body 'sleep'. The Atma does not find true peace and rest when the man dreams even though he may be physically asleep because the subtle mind is active, and it in its turn keeps the Atma engaged in another world of imagination known as the world of dreams. The only difference between the two types of worlds is that while the world of the waking state was physical and gross, the one of the dreams is subtle and imaginary. Hence, the only difference between the engagements of the Atma in these two worlds is in the degree and level of involvement, and whether this engagement is of a gross nature or of a subtle nature. Other than this, involvement of any kind and the subsequent restlessness that it creates for the Atma is the same in both the cases if it is not properly trained to keep itself aloof from all entanglements altogether, whether at the gross level of the waking state or at the subtle level of the dreaming state.

Therefore the Sushupta state marks that stage in the Atma's quest for peace and tranquility when it shuns even the subtle world of dreams. It is this stage that is being referred to as the 'fifth Bhumika' in this verse.]

Metaphysically, this stage is characterized by bliss and peace because the mind and the sub-conscious are both defunct and inoperative. There is nothing to disturb the calmness, rest, peace, tranquility and serenity of the Atma in this stage of existence. It is the next higher step as compared to the Swapna stage.

[Whereas during the Swapna or dreaming state of existence the subtle aspect of the mind was active though its gross aspect was inactive, during the Sushupta state even this subtle aspect is made defunct. With the mind out of the scene, there is a sense of an all-encompassing and all-pervading tranquility and serenity as far as the Atma of the spiritual aspirant is concerned. The world vanishes even at the subtle level of imagination which was not the case during dreams, because in the latter case this subtle world existed.

With the world completely annihilated, there is no instigator or tempter left that would provoke any kind of restlessness and agitation in the Atma which incidentally happens to be the 'true self' of the spiritual aspirant or ascetic. Whereas in the earlier two stages of Jagrat and Swapna he was oscillating between two worlds—one of a physical variety and the other of a subtle kind respectively, in the Sushupta state both of them simply become non-existent, and hence irrelevant for a wise man. The peace and tranquility that he experiences at the Sushupta stage of existence of consciousness is holistic and overwhelming; it has depth and sublimity.]

The next higher stage is the sixth Bhumika. [Refer verse no. 85.] It corresponds to the Turiya state of existence which is metaphysically the fourth state of existence of consciousness. It is the preliminary stage of the higher levels of spiritual attainment, and marks a step further ahead than the one represented by the Sushupta stage.

[In this stage of Turiya, achievements of the Sushupta stage are made more permanent, stable and effective; they acquire depth. Whereas the consciousness is susceptible to reverting back to the Swapna state from the Sushupta state, and in fact it actually oscillates between the two, when it enters the Turiya state its peace and tranquility along with their attendant bliss and ecstasy become perpetual and robust. The Turiya state is the stepping stone for the highest state known as the Turiya-teet which literally means the one level of existence which transcends all known exalted states, and beyond which there is no higher state of blissful and divine existence.

However, the Turiya state itself is a state when self-realisation dawns upon the mental horizon of the spiritual aspirant. He is filled with an overwhelming sense of extreme spiritual bliss, tranquility, serenity, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity. It also corresponds to the state of Samadhi.] (88).

89. The seventh Bhumika corresponds to the last stage called the Turiya-teet state of existence of consciousness characterized by complete spiritual realisation, enlightenment and attainment. It is the highest level of transcendental existence of the consciousness. The achievements of the Turiya state are made strong, robust and permanent in the Turiya-teet state. [Refer verse no. 86.]

It is so mystical, mysterious, enigmatic, esoteric and profound that it cannot be fathomed or known or described or grasped by either the mind or the faculty of speech. That is, what one experiences during this state of existence cannot be explained by him in words; it cannot be understood by application of the mind and its ability to analyse, rationalize and logically prove something to be true. It is simply experienced and witnessed by the spiritual aspirant himself, and not by anyone else (89).

90. When the inner-self has been sufficiently trained to be completely indifferent to all the things of this world and their numerous temptations, when the inner-self becomes practically unconscious to them or immune towards them, when the world and its sense objects do not evoke any kind of reaction in a man, it is then that the spiritual aspirant is said to have attained Mukta—i.e. he is deemed to be liberated and delivered from all the entrapments, delusions and other faults related to this world, along with their attendant problems. There is no doubt about it. [The term 'Mukti' has been defined in Canto 4, verse nos. 1-3 and 56 also.]

This happens when the man develops a profound sense of equanimity and dispassion when he begins treating all things equally.

[He will not find one thing or situation more attractive or charming than the other, and therefore there is no attention paid to it. A wise and self-realised man who has reached a high level of enlightenment would treat everything in the same manner; he would see no difference between things that give the body comfort and pleasure, and the other thing that inflicts pain to it. Therefore he will not be tempted to be emotionally attached or infatuated with something vis-à-vis another thing. This exemplary attitude of neutrality, fortitude, indifference, non-attachment and dispassion that accompanies the virtue of profound equanimity that he is able to cultivate, the quality of having evenness of mind and thoughts that he inculcates, the ability of being steady, calm, serene, poised and unruffled despite being constantly buffeted and tossed around by the powerful forces of temptations of the world—these grand virtues will free his Atma from being attached to, or attracted towards, or yearn for any particular thing in this world. This situation is tantamount to his liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle an un-realised, ignorant and deluded man to the gross world and its material gross objects.] (90).

91. The high level of neutrality and equanimity that a wise, erudite, enlightened and self-realised aspirant develops inspires him to think in these eclectic terms—'I don't die or perish, nor do I take a birth and live a mortal life. I am not subject to debates as to whether I am truthful or false. I do not come within any worldly criteria and definitions. I am not anything that can be perceived by the organs of perception or grasped, judged and understood by the various faculties of the mind and intellect.'

[Here, the pronoun 'I' refers to the spiritual aspirant's 'self'—which is his pure conscious Atma, and not his gross physical body.]

A wise man who has developed these eclectic thoughts and wisdom becomes steady, consistent and unwavering in his calmness of demeanours as well as a composed and well-balanced approach to life and its problems. He is perfectly neutral, indifferent, unattached and dispassionate. He stops thinking about anything at all, and therefore is not subjected to numerous doubts, confusions and delusions that are hallmarks of this mortal and gross material world of ever-changing forms, a world of inconsistencies and delusions (91).

92. He thinks—'I am not attached to, infatuated with, attracted towards or longing for anything or anyone. I am imperishable and steady, and therefore immune to decay, disintegration, deformation and demotions. I do not have any lust, passion, desire or yearning for anything. All my Vasanas (worldly passions and yearnings) have calmed down and eliminated; I am free from them.

I am not a fraction of anybody else; I am complete and wholesome; I am immutable and indivisible. [That is, I am not a son of any father. I am not a fraction of the cosmic Consciousness, but rather I am this Consciousness entirely in its wholesome form.]

I am like the sky element that cannot be measured or fathomed, that is eternal and infinite, that is immutable, constant and unchanging.'

A person who thinks of himself in the above terms is indeed a spiritually liberated and delivered soul. Such a self-realised, wise and enlightened man thinks of nothing; he is completely neutral and dispassionate. He is not moribund but immortal. He is not gross but sublime and subtle (92).

[Note—Positive thoughts as proclaimed here have also been asserted in Canto 5, verse nos. 58-61, and 68.]

93. He is free from the mind that is tainted by the notion of ego and pride. He is a person with an immaculate, perfectly clean and uncorrupt mind and intellect. He is indeed wise, enlightened and realised.

He does not come to any sort of demotion and degeneration; he is imperishable and eternal. He remains calm, serene, tranquil and composed. He develops an exemplary degree of equanimity and neutrality towards all things and situations in this world.

A person who has successfully inculcated these eclectic virtues is indeed a spiritually liberated and delivered soul. Such a self-realised, wise and enlightened man thinks of nothing; he is completely neutral and dispassionate (93).

94. A wise, enlightened, self-realised and erudite spiritual aspirant who is convinced that the essential and most important factor that is uniformly and universally present in each and every unit of creation (the factor that keeps the creation intact, the factor without which the entire edifice of creation would fall apart like the beads of a garland when the thread is removed from it, the factor which infuses 'life' and 'consciousness' in the otherwise inane, inert, lifeless and gross creation)—the factor that is invariably and uniformly present in such diverse units of creation as the tip of a blade of grass or twig (that is miniscule and most minute like the point of a needle), the sky (that is all-pervading and all-encompassing, beyond which nothing exists, which harbours the entire gamut of creation within its parameters), the sun (which is the only celestial body that gives light, energy and heat to the entire world; which is

the sustainer, protector and nourisher of life on this earth; which forms the pivot of the solar system around which all the planets revolve), the human being (considered the most evolved and highly intelligent species living on earth, the species that keeps the rest of the creation under its control and rules over this world like a king), and the gods (who are auspicious souls that are superior and more powerful than the humans, and have control over them)—is indeed the factor that is also known as his ‘true self’, the entity that he calls ‘me’, is a person who is deemed to be liberated and delivered from all the entangling fetters of this world. He does not think of anything else at all; he is rested, peaceful, serene, calm and quiet. Verily, he is divine, holy and most exalted (94).

95. You (Nidagh) must rise above all mundane and material considerations in this world. Do not harbour any ideas, notions or thoughts that are basically entrapping, erroneous, misleading, gross and deluding. In other words, be blessed with a high degree of equanimity and neutrality of the mind and intellect; be unfazed by the ever-changing nature of the world and its equally transient charms, comforts and pleasures; do not have any emotional attachment with any of the material things of this world of sense objects.

When all delusions, doubts and confusions arising out of a sense of duality are removed, what remains is one single entity that is the ubiquitous and quintessential ‘truth’ which is non-dual, uniform, universal, irrevocable, unequivocal and irrefutable. This eclectic, unique and sublime entity is known as ‘Brahm’.

Think in this holistic way and realise the truth of the statement ‘this Brahm is none but me’, or ‘I am no one else but this Brahm.’ [This is one of the great Maha Vakyas or spiritual Truths as proclaimed in the scriptures. In this context, refer also to Canto 5, verse nos. 8, 20-21, 57, 65, 74 and 95.] (95).

96. A wise and enlightened man who has abandoned all thoughts of this material world of sense objects that come within the purview of the faculty of speech (i.e. the world that can be physically perceived, understood and analyzed, and then can be defined, described or narrated by words expressed through the medium of the faculty of speech), and instead focuses his attention on the entity that is beyond the scope and reach of the faculty of speech and its power to describe anything in words (i.e. the transcendental world and the state of existence of consciousness that is so sublime and subtle that it can neither be grasped by the mind and intellect, nor can it be understood and expressed in terms of words, because words have their own limitations and they are not able to describe an entity that is absolutely sublime and subtle, and is therefore indescribable and indefinable)—such a man attains the steady and transcendental state of extreme bliss, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity.

He remains submerged and engrossed in the thoughts of the pure conscious Atma; he lives in a transcendental subtle world of the sublime Atma where there is nothing but an all-pervading sense of bliss, happiness, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity.

[This world is not like the gross world that relates to the gross body and its various organs and faculties, and that is why the speech is unable to describe it in words. The mind is also a part of the gross body of the creature, though of course it is subtle in nature as compared to the other gross organs of the same body, such as the organs of perception (eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin) and the organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, excretory and genitals). It is actually the mind and the intellect that ‘expresses’ its experiences by the medium of words. That is, the faculty of speech is a vocal instrument of the mind and intellect by which it narrates about what it perceives

of the world. Since this physical world is gross, the mind and intellect are able to do so.

But when the same mind and intellect experiences something in the subtle world of the consciousness, a world that is transcendental in nature, a world that is so sublime and subtle that it is beyond the scope of the gross organs of the body to perceive in any way, the mind and the intellect fail miserably in their attempt to describe what they experience or witness in this highly ethereal state of existence of the creature.

[In brief, that which is extremely sublime and subtle such as the Atma cannot be subject matter of reach and description by a thing as gross as the vocal cord of the body, or even by the mind-intellect which is also a part of the gross body. Things that are extremely sublime and subtle cannot be described in words because words have their own limitations. For instance, one cannot exactly describe how 'sweet and succulent' a sweet dish is in words. The best way to know it is to actually taste it.]

The mind and the intellect do not have the necessary wherewithal, the caliber, the ability and the expertise, the sufficient knowledge and power to first comprehend what they experience or witness in the state of transcendental existence of consciousness, and then encapsulate this experience in apt words that can do justice to what has been actually experienced or witnessed. All attempts to narrate or define what has been experienced or witnessed fall far short of the actual thing. So the mind and intellect prefer to keep silent so as not to prove that they are incompetent and incapable. Obviously then there are no words to narrate what the aspirant experiences or witnesses during the transcendental state of his existence when only the subtle world of the Consciousness or the sublime world of the Atma lives.] (96).

97. A self-realised person who has attained the transcendental state of existence and realised that his 'true self' is not the gross body but the pure conscious Atma or soul is the one who literally abandons all involvement in worldly deeds (because the deeds are done by the gross body and limited to it alone, without affecting the purity and neutrality of the Atma in any manner whatsoever).

He is eternally contented and fulfilled (because he has no desires and wants as he has conquered all his Vasanas, or worldly yearnings and passions, as well as the various Vrittis, or his natural habits and inherent temperaments that are the basic cause of all sorts of discontent and discomfort of the creature).

He needs no support of anyone for his existence, and is independent of all. [That is because 'he' is the Atma which is an almighty ethereal Spirit that is all powerful and the supreme Authority of creation. This Atma is the supreme Brahm, the Lord of creation, personified. It is an entity that supports this creation from the within by revealing itself as the 'life-giving consciousness'; it supports the body by injecting 'life' or Pran inside it. It is the Atma that lends 'life' and 'consciousness' to the gross body, but it is not the other way round.]

It remains totally indifferent to, uninvolved in and unaffected by something being auspicious and righteous and the other being the opposite, because it is neutral, dispassionate and detached from this mundane world where such distinctions and differences exist and matter. His level of existence is much higher and ethereal, and is so spiritually evolved that he is unconcerned or un-influenced by worldly criteria that distinguish between two given things or situations or deeds, judging one as good and auspicious, and other as bad and inauspicious. For him, everything is the same and alike. He maintains an exemplary level of neutrality and equanimity of approach towards everything and everyone in this world. He is not bound to any fixed notions

or ideas; he is not biased against something or in favour of something else, treating one as being inauspicious and the other as auspicious respectively.

In other words, he is independent and free. He is not attached to any particular thing or obsessed by it.

[He is attached to none; he is neither attracted towards something that is good and auspicious, nor is repulsed by something that is bad and inauspicious. Nothing is righteous or unrighteous for him. In other words, he has put into practice the eclectic philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta that speaks of oneness and uniformity in creation, which emphasizes that there is only one fundamental Truth known as Consciousness that pervades throughout this creation as its essence and reality, and that this Truth is uniformly good, auspicious and holy. So there is no question polarization, leading to two options or choices—one that tells that a thing is good, and the other that defines a thing as bad.

This concept of one thing being good, auspicious and holy, and the other being the opposite of it does not apply to an enlightened and wise man, because he does not judge anything from its external appearances but from its internal or intrinsic value. And this 'internal factor', which really matters and is worth of paying any attention to in all entities in creation, is the universal Consciousness which is invariably pure, holy and auspicious. Hence, the question of one entity being good and the other being bad does not arise at all because all of them have the same universal Truth known as the Consciousness as their core, and it really does not matter how good or bad the exterior appears to be in this world.

Since Advaitya Vedanta affirms that there is fundamentally no difference between any two living entities in creation when their real and truthful form is examined, because this essence is the pure consciousness that is inherent in all the units of creation, there is therefore no locus standi in seeing any kind of difference between two given things. Hence, a wise and enlightened man does not judge a thing as being auspicious or inauspicious from its external appearances, but realises that the 'Truth' that actually matters is eternally auspicious and holy.

If the underlying Truth of creation, the universally pure 'consciousness' that forms the essence of all things that exist in this world, is unequivocally and indisputably good, holy and auspicious, then there is no ground to believe that something is good and the other is bad because these definitions are limited to the external gross aspects of creation which is different from the reality and the truth hidden behind it. In metaphysical field, this 'Truth' is known as the Atma or the 'self' of the creature. It is the 'consciousness' that lends the otherwise inane and gross things in this world their 'life' and 'worth'. It is always holy and auspicious¹.] (97).

[Note—¹We can take an example to understand this point. Suppose a priceless piece of diamond is covered by a thick layer of dust or mud or is smeared in slush; it might also be covered in a thick sheath of dirty cloth. Now, seen from the outside this diamond would appear a worthless piece of stone of no great value to a layman who would be more inclined to judge this diamond by its external looks, shine and polish rather than even attempt to find out its real intrinsic value or worth.

On the other hand, an expert diamond merchant or anyone who knows the real worth of a diamond would 'see' its intrinsic value and worth instead of being fooled by its covering of dust, slush or the dirty cloth. Even if the diamond appears lusterless and drab because it is not polished and therefore lacks its brilliant shine, he knows that this physical appearance is not the reason why he should reject it, nor is it the deciding factor as to the intrinsic or inherent worthiness or otherwise of the given sample of diamond.

Now, these two men are asked 'what is it'? The first man would reply that it is a worthless stone and should be thrown away, while the other would say it's a priceless gem and should immediately be grabbed. The majority of people who hear the second man would call him 'mad' because the diamond does not physically and externally appear to be what he says; rather it looks true that it is worthless as diagnosed by the first man. So, while the diamond is discarded by the first man, it is grabbed by both the hands by the second man. Amongst the audience, a person would be deemed to be wise and intelligent if he decides to research about the worthiness or otherwise of this diamond himself, or would prefer to accept the advice given by an expert in gems who knows his turf and is aware of what he is saying.

In the field of spiritualism and metaphysics, one would be doing well if he follows the advice given by the scriptures because they know precisely what they are saying better than anyone else. So we see that the external appearances can be very misleading, erroneous and fallacious. Hence, it is absolutely wrong to decide about the truth and reality of anything by relying upon its external appearances only.]

98. Even as the pure crystal, which is inherently colourless, only reflects the colour of its surroundings without itself become coloured or tainted, the basically pure inner-self only appears to be superficially involved in doing the various deeds necessitated by the demands of existential life in this world, but internally it is absolutely unaffected by any of the deeds or their results, good or bad. [In other words, a wise, erudite, self-realised and enlightened man is not at all moved by his surroundings or circumstances or events in this ever-changing world. He maintains his exemplary calmness, steadiness, tranquility, serenity and poise in spite of the turmoil and changes characteristic of this deluding and transient world that surges around him in a continuous flow of waves. He would do what he is supposed to do, and even do it with full attention of mind so that the task is done with the best of his abilities, but internally he is not at all influenced or affected by either the deed done or the consequences that accrue due to those deeds. In fact, he is a firm believer in the eclectic doctrine that his true 'self' known as the Atma is not the doer of anything, and that all the deeds that are done in this world are actually done by the gross body. He would have inculcated in him a high degree of dispassion and detachment not only from the deeds but also from the world so much so that he expects nothing as a fruit of the efforts made by him. His neutrality and non-involvement as well as his transcendental state of existence which goes beyond the gross and the mundane level in which this world exists is proved when he neither demands his share of the rewards of good and auspicious deeds, nor feels sorry or any measure of regret or frustration when the expected results are not forthcoming.

Thus, his inner-self remains pure and untainted as ever. It is not at all affected by the numerous delusions and faults associated with this world. None of the negativity associated with the gross world and equally gross body ever are able to corrupt his immaculacy and pure inner-self which remains as absolutely clean, pristine pure, incorruptible and untainted as a piece of pure crystal.

Just like the case of a crystal appearing to be superficially darkened when some shadow falls on it, or assumes the colour of its immediate surroundings without allowing its inherent purity and cleanliness to be at all affected by them, the inner-self of a wise, self-realised and enlightened man too appears to be superficially involved in the affairs of the world like an ordinary creature, but internally and intrinsically it is always consistently immaculate, untainted, un-corrupt and pristine pure.] (98).

99. He (i.e. the man who possesses the grand virtues outlined in the foregoing verses) moves around in the world as if he has no worries, regrets or sorrows of any kind, singing merrily like a lark and spending his time worshipping and singing praises to the supreme Lord. But internally he is calm and neutral.

[In other words, on the surface it appears that he is greatly enjoying his life which is devoted to the Lord and is involving himself in the various formal rituals that revolve around worshipping and showing honour to the Supreme Being because he exhibits such external signs as undertaking physical process of formal worship, participating in ceremonies and festivals, doing rituals and offering formal prayers etc., but actually these deeds or actions of his are only superficial and done by the body. Internally, his inner-self known as the Atma, which is his 'actual and truthful self', is not at involved in them in any of the formal forms of worship of the Lord at all. He knows that the Lord he worships and adores, the Lord to whom he offers prayers and whose glories he sings is not present outside anywhere in this world, but the Lord is present within his own 'inner-self' as the 'sublime, pure and divine consciousness' that is known as the Atma. This Atma is no other entity but the 'cosmic Atma' known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness itself, which resides inside his bosom as his 'true self'.

The visible signs of blessedness marked by ecstasy, exhilaration, happiness and joy are superficial or external indications of his being in constant communion with the supreme Lord internally. External forms of worship are done by the body, and prayers come within the jurisdiction of the faculty of speech. But it must be remembered that all these steps do not mark the pinnacle of spiritual enlightenment—simply because it has already been said that the Supreme Being is beyond the scope of the mind and intellect as well as the faculty of speech, and therefore he cannot be praised in words which have their own limitations, he cannot be worshipped in any gross form in an equally gross world. This is because 'he' is extremely sublime and subtle, and he has no physical forms and its attributes. The Lord is not present outside anywhere in the world; rather 'he' lives in the inner-self of the worshipper himself.

The supreme Brahm is formless and without any kind of attributes as it is an ethereal entity known as cosmic Consciousness. This 'cosmic Consciousness' resides in the gross body of the creature as his Atma or his 'pure self'. So how can Brahm be worshipped outside when it resides inside one's own bosom?

Besides this, a self-realised, truly wise and enlightened man is expected to have cultivated total neutrality towards everything that has an external dimension, and therefore remains aloof from whatever the body does. Since external forms of worship and offering of prayers involving the gross body and its sense organs as a way of honouring the Lord, paying obeisance to him and remembering him is a tradition in this mundane world which perceives and understands everything only from the physical perspective rather than the sublime and the subtle, the wise man also allows himself to participate in this ritual because otherwise he would be insulting the Lord. But internally he is just observing formalities associated with mundane existence.]

Such a wise, enlightened and self-realised person obtains a high degree of equanimity, neutrality and fortitude, always remaining stoic, even, calm, poised, unruffled, unmoved and unaffected by anything at all. Therefore, he is neither subjected to sorrows and grief on the one hand, or to happiness and joys on the other hand.

Even as pure crystal is unaffected or untainted internally by any of the numerous colours and the shadows of the surrounding world that fall on it (as described in detail in verse no. 98 above), such a man is also unaffected internally by

the company in which he has to live in this world. The world and the society have no influence upon him and his inner-self; none of their negativities, corruptions and shortcomings have any sort of effect upon him (99).

100. He does not praise anyone. He remains free from any kind of faults and shortcomings. He does not know what is worship or praiseworthy, nor does he know who is to be worshipped and praised.

[This is because of two basic reasons—(i) Firstly, he sees non-duality in this world. He sees only one transcendental Brahm or the cosmic supreme Consciousness prevailing everywhere, he knows that whatever that exists in this creation is nothing but one or the other form of Brahm or the cosmic supreme Consciousness, so there is no cause for distinguishing between any two given entities, and regarding one as being worthy of worship and honour, and the other as not. (ii) And secondly, he knows that this Brahm resides in his own ‘self’ as his Atma, as his own pure consciousness, that this Brahm is the only Truth in creation, that ‘Truth’ has no physical forms, that the ‘consciousness’ is beyond the reach of the faculty of speech and the grasp of the mind and the intellect, so therefore one would be doing wrong by praising someone or something else that is not this Brahm, not this consciousness, not this Truth. Hence, praising another man for instance, a man who has a gross body and numerous limitations that do not apply to the only Lord of creation, is best avoided as it is ignorance-based and would be highly improper, un-behaving and unbecoming for a wise and learned man of his enlightened and exalted stature.]

Such an enlightened and self-realised man does not distinguish between union and separation.

[This is because he has cultivated the eclectic view-point of non-duality in creation. He sees uniformity and universality in creation. He is of the view that the ‘true self’ of a creature is his pure conscious Atma which is an ethereal entity, this Atma is Brahm personified, Brahm has the sublime virtues associated with the sky or air element—i.e. it is immutable, indivisible, inalienable, uniform, universal, eternal and one infinite whole. Hence, there is no question of one entity in creation being ‘separate’ from the other in its fundamental form, or one creature being separated from the other due to any reason whatsoever, death for instance. This is because what separates the two creatures from one another, or what creates an illusion of separation between them, is the gross body which has physical dimensions, limitations and reach. The body of creature ‘A’ would be obviously different and therefore separate from the body of another creature ‘B’.

But the ‘true self’ of the concerned creatures is not their bodies but their Atma which is an ethereal, universal, divine and all-pervading cosmic entity known as the ‘consciousness’ which is non-dual, immutable and constant. Hence, this Atma is the same in all the living beings though their physical bodies are independent of each other. Therefore, in their basic form all the creatures are primarily inseparable and indistinguishable from one another, because their basic identity is their Atma and not the gross body.

Hence, for a wise, enlightened and self-realised man there is no cause of there being any kind of separation between any two given creatures or entities in creation.

For the same reason there is no reason for there being a separate ‘union’ between them—because there has been no separation in the first place. From the metaphysical and spiritual perspective it means that the individual’s Atma and the supreme Lord of creation known as the Parmatma are one entity that are inseparable from one another. The individual and the Parmatma appear to be different and

separated from one another because of the erroneous and fallacious notion that uses the gross body and its physical appearances to identify any single entity.

The only difference perhaps is in the plane of existence that they are perceived in—for while the individual's Atma exists at the plane of the gross perishable world, the Parmatma exists at the plane of the sublime and eternal world.

Another reason for this appearance of separation is that while the term 'Atma' is employed to indicate the cosmic consciousness as it exists at the microcosmic level in the body of the individual living being known as the Jiva, the term 'Parmatma', literally meaning the 'supreme Atma', is employed to indicate the same cosmic consciousness but exists at the macrocosmic level of existence. The term 'Parmatma' is synonymous with the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm, while the term 'Atma' refers to the Soul, whether it is of the individual creature or of the entire creation.]

Being endowed with such highly evolved thoughts, eclectic views and ripened mind, being a thoroughly enlightened, extremely wizened and a highly self-realised man he remains free from the obligations and compulsions of having to conform to traditional ways of behaviour and conduct. He does not have to follow any routine set of rules and laws in this world. [In other words, he does not have to follow any given set of rituals to worship the Lord; he does not need a prayer book or remember any set of hymns by heart to pray to the Lord; he does not need to do any specific kind of auspicious or noble deed to cleanse his inner-self or absolve himself of the bad and evil consequences of his sins and misdemeanors; he does not have to practice any given set of sacraments and observe other religious practices in order to prove that he is a holy man; he is not expected to do anything or conform to anything to prove his enlightened and self-realised exalted and transcendental state of existence.

He therefore does not have to do anything especial to attain Mukti (liberation, deliverance, salvation, emancipation)—because Mukti is natural for him; it is a natural progression for him; it is effortlessly obtained by him. In fact, he has already broken free from the shackles of ignorance and delusions, and lives a life free as a bird flying freely in the sky.] (100).

101. For a truly wise and enlightened man it does not matter whether he leaves his gross body (i.e. dies) in a pilgrim site or in the house of a low-caste man, because for him both are equal. True knowledge has kindled enlightenment of the highest order in him, and he has no desire or preference for one kind of death over the other. Such a man is sure to find Mukti, or spiritual liberation and deliverance.

[He understands that the body is inherently gross and is like a sack of despicable things such as urine, stool, mucous, blood, bones, veins etc. None of the constituent parts of the body are holy and praiseworthy. Besides it, his 'true self' is the pure conscious Atma which is absolutely holy and immaculate as well as distinct from the body. The Atma leaves the body or discards it much like a snake peeling off its external cuticle and wriggling out of it. His spiritual destiny does not depend upon where this gross and despicable body is abandoned, but on what he had done during his lifetime as well as the thoughts that were in his mind and the desires he had at the time of leaving the gross body. So, if his mind is fixed on the supreme transcendental Brahm, he will surely reach this destination notwithstanding the physical place where he dies. If, on the contrary, his mind yearns for the world and its material comforts and pleasures at the time of death, if he is attached to this gross world and its charms, then merely dying in a pilgrim site would do him no good.] (101).

102. To have various Sankalps¹ (volitions, making vows, determinations, aspirations, firm desires related to anything in the world) is the main cause of tying a creature in fetters that shackle him to this world. Therefore, a wise and erudite man must abandon all forms of Sankalps.

True Moksha (real and final freedom; true emancipation and salvation; liberation and deliverance) comes when one has abandoned all kinds of Sankalps (102).

[Note—¹The word *Sankalp* refers to the various ambitions, desires and aspirations that a creature has, and his decision, his volition, his firm determination, the strong vows and resolutions that he makes in order to be successful in fulfilling them in this world. All these are all collectively called Sankalp. It is under the influence of delusions and erroneous conception of the 'truth' about the world and its material objects as well as about his own self and the real goal of life and spiritual well being that one harbours numerous ambitions and has so many aspirations that impel him to make so many resolutions and vows for their realisation, and then these decisions drive him to do so many things in the hope of achieving that illusive success in obtaining eternal well being and peace for himself which he so eagerly yearns for. These different Sankalps are therefore motivated and driven by delusions and erroneous conception of the 'truth'.

The concept is described in detail in the following Upanishads also—(i) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7, section 4. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 67, Canto 5, verse nos. 2, 16, 63, 97-98. (iii) Atharva Veda's, Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 10.

Refer also to our present Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 23, 43, 47-48, 103-104 in this context.]

103. Be alert that all desires, wants and yearnings related to this mundane and entrapping occur because there is a relationship or link between the thing desired or wanted or yearned for and the person who desires or wants or yearns for them. This creates a determination in the person to acquire those things that he desires; he will make a firm vow to do his best to attain success in reaching his goal desired for in life; he will make all efforts to fulfill his wishes; he aspires to achieve success in all his endeavours that would help him satisfy his hunger for the things desired or yearned for.

In short, the genesis of having various Sankalps lies in the existence of a link between this world and its objects on the one hand, and the concerned creature on the other hand. Obviously, if this link is broken or dismantled, the Sankalps would come to an automatic end.

Hence, in order to inculcate the auspicious and noble virtue of not having any kind of worldly Sankalps, i.e. to remain neutral, dispassionate, detached, indifferent and stable, one must break the link between his consciousness and the gross existence. In other words, he must cultivate wisdom of the highest order, become self-realised, and acquire true knowledge of the Truth and Reality of existence in order to find fruitful Moksha or Mukti, i.e. to find true freedom from all entanglements that tie down a creature to this world of delusions and its countless temptations that are basically entrapping by nature (103).

104. Do not have the notion that there is something worthy of acceptance, and that there is someone who accepts. Do not think in these terms that there is a distinction between one thing and the other.

In other words, do not harbour any kind of desires for any thing by thinking that you do not have it and therefore you must acquire it. If such thoughts are not

banished from you, they would impel you to harbour various desires and make determined bid to acquire them—which means you will harbour various Vasanas for them and then make numerous Sankalps to fulfill them. Therefore you would be well advised to discard all notions and thoughts of all kinds by becoming absolutely neutral and detached from everything in this world (104).

105. If you harbour even the slightest thought that a certain thing is dear to you or attractive for you or beneficial for you, then you are deemed to be shackled and bonded to it and the world in which it exists.

On the other hand, if you have developed the level of wisdom and neutrality that inspires a natural sense of detachment, dispassion and renunciation in you, when you naturally do not have any desire or attraction for anything arising in your inner-self, it is then that you are deemed to be liberated and delivered from all fetters that shackle ordinary creatures to this entrapping and deluding world and its numerous temptations inspite of your living in the same world like an ordinary creature.

[This is because internally you would be not attached to anything; you would not be shackled to anything, or bound in fetters by anything. You would be like a free man living in a house, rather than a bonded slave living in the same house. A wise man would be doing his assigned duties in the gross world through his equally gross body without getting involved in anything at the subtle level of his internal self. Therefore, his 'self', i.e. his Atma, remains free from all the entanglements that ordinarily results by being involved in this world. He is deemed to be Mukta or free.] (105).

106. Do not harbour any trace of attachment with or having any sort of interest in anything in this gross world, right from the inconsequential blade of grass or a worthless twig to your own body that seems to be so precious for you.

This exemplary level of un-attachment and dispassion should be all-inclusive and holistic in nature. That is, you must apply this noble and eclectic virtue on all things in this world—whether it is movable (such as living beings) or immovable (such as rocks and trees). Do not have any interest in them at any level of your existence [Refer also to verse no. 118 of the present Canto.] (106).

107. Do not harbour thoughts that a particular thing is truthful, good and auspicious, and the other is not. Become totally dispassionate and neutral towards everything. Develop equanimity and train your mind to remain even, calm, serene, detached and steady under all circumstances.

A person who has developed and practices such high level of detachment and dispassion is the one who lives a life in the Turiya state. That is, he lives a life of transcendental existence by rising above the mundane and gross considerations, and instead dwelling at a sublime plane of existence. He is able to translate the theoretical aspects of Turiya state of existence of consciousness into a practical way of life.

[That is, inspite of living in a gross world and allowing his body to do the necessary things as expected of him, he remains aloof from and untainted by any of the things of this gross world and its numerous deluding temptations.] (107).

108. The thoughts, beliefs, ideas, convictions and emotions that are auspicious, noble, righteous and holy, that are steady themselves and make the creature who is fortunate enough to possess them also equally steady and unwavering in his chosen spiritual path by inculcating in him a high degree of equanimity and evenness of mind, that

make him quiet, calm, serene, tranquil and rested (as opposed to those thoughts or emotions or beliefs that create an atmosphere of uncertainty, perplexities and confusion in him)—are the ones which empower and actually lead to the concerned creature's spiritual liberation and deliverance even while he is alive and has to live in a gross body that interacts with the gross physical world.

In other words, such a creature who acquires the above auspicious virtues attains 'Jivan Mukti'—i.e. he obtains the exalted state of being spiritually liberated and delivered from the shackles of this mundane life even while he is alive, has a gross body, and interacts in a routine manner with this mundane world of material sense objects. None of the temptations and turmoil of the physical world would ever be successful in chipping into and deforming or fracturing his eternally calm and peaceful inner-self (108).

109. The Turiya (i.e. the transcendental) state of exalted existence is neither the Jagrat state (or waking state) nor the Swpana state (or dreaming state)—because during the Turiya state there is no trace of any kind of Sankalps at all. [The Sankalps are the various volitions, vows, firm desires and determinations that a creature makes in relation to the gross world and its numerous sense objects as well as various achievements and fulfillments that are to be attained in this world. This situation prevails only as long as the creature is aware of the world; he desires fruits that accrue to him by voluntarily getting involved in doing various deed with an avowed aim of attaining success in fulfilling his desires in this world. When the mind and the sub-conscious become defunct during the Turiya state of existence, the world and its material attractions simply cease to exist and matter. For all practical purposes, a creature who has reached the transcendental state of Turiya is as good as dead vis-à-vis the world. He neither is concerned with the physical world that prevails in the Jagrat or waking state, or the imaginary world that exists in the Swapna or dreaming state.]

The Turiya state is not even the Sushupta state of existence (i.e. the deep sleep state) because in the latter case the creature lies like a gross and lifeless log of wood. [During the Sushupta state he neither thinks nor imagines. Since the mind is defunct, he does not perceive anything of the world, he does not have to apply his intelligence either to analyse them and make deductions and choices. At the same time, his sub-conscious is asleep, so that he does not even file away any sort of information in his memory bank for future referral. But the Turiya state is not lifeless and gross like the condition that prevails during the Sushupta state—for in the Turiya state he is very much alert and active, but this is limited to his physical body and that aspect of the mind that is concerned with routine mundane affairs. His inner-self, his sub-conscious and subtle mind is not at all involved in what his physical body does and remain immune to all the sensory impulses gathered by the sense organs of perception. So in effect it means that he would appear to be going about his life in a routine manner like other compatriots, but internally he is neither involved nor aware of anything. Thus, he is peaceful and calm inspite of being surrounded by the torrent of existential problems in this world. This is equivalent to the electic state of existence known as Samadhi.] (109).

110. Those who are of a calm, controlled and stable mind, temperament and demeanours, those who are truly wise, enlightened, sagacious and erudite see the physical world in which they live in the same way that they would see it in a Truiya (transcendental) state of existence.

[That is, they do not get involved in anything related to this gross world of deluding material charms; they do not allow their inner-self to be at all influenced by any of the tainting and deluding effects of the world despite living in it in an ordinary manner and participating in its activities in a normal manner; they do not get entangled in anything in this world, and remain aloof and distanced from them at all levels of existence, viz. the emotional, the sentimental, the intellectual, as well as both the active and subtle levels of the mind which includes the sub-conscious.

They do not shun the world and run away from their duties and responsibilities, but their inner-self remains fully anchored to the grand virtues of peace and tranquility that such wise and enlightened men have acquired for themselves. They are not affected by the world in the least; they do not lose their calm and poise under any circumstance or provocation; they treat the world and its material sense objects as being virtually non-existent at the level of their mind and sub-conscious. Thus, it really does not matter to them whether or not the world exists, whether or not they interact with it or perform various deeds in it.

They have realised that it is the gross body that actually lives and comes in contact with the equally gross world, and that their 'true self' is not the body but the pure conscious Atma which is immaculate and independent of both the body and the world. It is the body that does deeds and interacts with the world, it is the body that either suffers or enjoys the material charms and pleasures of the world, and not the Atma. The world is transient, unsteady, changing and perishable like the body, but the Atma is unlike them both. So, a wise man lives in a transcendental state of Turiya all the time. He treats the world and everything else with marked stoic neutrality, indifference, detachment and dispassion. His calmness and composure is never disturbed or affected; it is all-pervasive and overwhelming.]

On the other hand is a man who is ignorant and deluded. He treats this body as his 'self' and this world as 'true'. Therefore, he is submerged and sucked-in in the rapidly turning whirlpool of this ever-changing and unfaithful world that is most deluding and entrapping. He is then tossed and kicked around by its countless surging waves representing agonies, pains, miseries and torments, and is made all the more wretched, miserable and restless by the body's never-ending demands for gratification and its physical sufferings. He naturally would lose all semblances of peace and calmness; he is never steady, rested and composed. [His condition is like a plank of wood caught in the rough sea during a fierce storm, or in a vicious whirlpool somewhere in the middle of the ocean.] (110).

111. When all Ahankar (pride and ego) is extinguished, when one develops a high degree of equanimity, fortitude and neutrality as well as an evenness of mind and demeanours, and when all the mischief, restlessness and wayward tendencies of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) are reined in—it is then the creature is said to have achieved the Turiya (transcendental) state of existence (111).

112. It is an unequivocal opinion or a definitive proclamation of all the scriptures that when all Maya (delusions) and Avidya (ignorance) are eliminated, what remains is indeed the Truth. It corresponds to the transcendental supreme state of existence which is absolutely calm, peaceful, composed, serene and tranquil, as well as the state when there is no perplexity, consternation, confusion, bewilderment and doubt. This state is verily the exalted state of Brahm-realisation (112).

113. This Brahm (or the state of Brahm-hood) is marked by extreme calmness and peacefulness. It is like the eternal, infinite and imperishable sky. It is pure, untainted, un-corrupt and immaculate of the highest order. It is self-restrained and orderly. It is constant, unwavering, steady, unchanging and immutable.

Indeed, this Brahm is none but the Atma or soul of creation. It is the famous and almighty supreme Lord of creation (113).

114. Oh Anagh (one who is sinless; here referring to Nidagh)! Become silent and composed. Abandon all mental and intellectual restlessness and perplexities.

Discard all inclinations to think of anything; be neutral and immune to all thoughts (because any kind of thought would entangle you in a web of doubts and confusions as there are numerous doctrines and many aspects of the same Truth which would create more confusions in your mind than removing them, and two, thoughts would keep you on your toes and would not allow you to rest even for a while).

Leave aside all the Vrittis (natural inclinations and temperaments) that are the integral part of the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious). [Refer Canto 1, verse no. 42.]

Be of an exemplary calmness of mind and composed demeanours; cultivate a high degree of mental steadiness. This will pave the way for your Nirvana—or the final spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 86.] (114).

115. By dwelling in the thoughts of the Atma, the pure consciousness, by taking the shelter of the Atma, by remaining in close proximity of the Atma that resides in your (Nidagh's) inner-self, become as calm, tranquil, serene and peaceful as the Atma itself.

Acquire an external appearance of a man who is dumb and speaks nothing, a man who is blind and sees nothing, or a man who is deaf and hears nothing. [In other words, become quiet and self-contented. Behave as if you are ignorant and stupid inspite of being highly wise, self-realised and enlightened—because this unconventional and odd demeanour would help you to avoid unnecessary mental disturbance and constant nagging by this world, for you would be deemed to be useless for the inhabitants of this selfish world who have a natural tendency to tend to only those people who serve their self-interests. You would be left to yourself in obscurity to live a serene life in peace and tranquility.]

Turn inwards and dwell in your quintessential inner-self rather than being extrovert and dwelling on the objects of the senses in this material world of temptations.

Become thoroughly cleansed of, or be free from all worldly impurities, corruptions, shortcomings and faults that might taint your inner-self.

This will make you fully contented and fulfilled. You would have acquired wholesome enlightenment and self-realisation (115).

116. Oh Dwij (a respected Brahmin; a wise and learned man of high birth)! Even while you are awake, behave as if you are fast asleep. [That is, even while you go about your routine life in this world, remain totally indifferent to and detached from everything in it. It is an aphorism for remaining distanced from this world despite physically living in it. This is equivalent to the Turiya state of existence as described in this Upanishad.]

Do what is necessary and prudent in this world according to the demands of the prevailing condition or situation at the time, but do not allow your inner-self to be entangled in it or affected by it or influenced by it at any internal level of the sub-

conscious and the Atma. Remain internally detached and distanced from everything that you do with your gross external body while you interact with the world. Maintain your exemplary dispassionate attitude towards the world inspite of being buffeted by numerous inputs of temptations that constantly bombard you while you remain active in this physical world. Let none of the external behaviours and environment of the gross physical world of material sense objects ever affect or influence your inner-self; let none of the impurities, faults, shortcomings, pollutions and corruptions of the gross world ever taint or tarnish your inner-self and compromise on its immaculacy and pristine pure nature (116).

117. 'The Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) is powerful and authoritative, it can supersede me, it can undercut my resolve and firm determination to remain aloof and detached from this world, it can cause hindrance in my spiritual progress, and development of wisdom and enlightenment, it is hard to rein in, etc.'—these notions are the cause of all the great miseries and problems that you face.

On the other hand, the notion that the 'Chitta has no existence if I do not wish it to be relevant, that the Chitta has an importance only as long as I wish it to be so, or that the Chitta is subordinate to me' is a harbinger of great peace and happiness.

[The creature perceives this world and is tempted or attracted by the numerous objects in it by the medium of the mind and the sub-conscious. The mind keeps the creature on tenterhooks, and never allows him to rest in peace. He wants this and that; he is always un-contented and miserable. On the other hand, when the mind and the sub-conscious are tamed, the creature is able to find peace and rest.

Hence, to treat the Chitta as being the Authority which must be obeyed is the cause of all grief, and to treat the Chitta as being merely an instrument in attaining one's goals in life would make the same Chitta a provider of peace and happiness.]

Therefore, dissolve your Chitta in the Chidakash (the infinite subtle sky that surrounds the consciousness). Vanquish it for good.

[It is an aphorism for making the mind and sub-conscious irrelevant in the context of the consciousness. The sky is a vast, fathomless and infinite vacant space. Anything that is crushed and strewn in its deep bowls would be lost for ever, irretrievably and untraceably. So, the idea here is that a spiritual aspirant must vanquish his Chitta to such an extent that it becomes irrelevant and cause no obstacles in his spiritual progress and development once and for all.] (117).

118. Just like a piece of stone cannot distinguish between any given two entities and treat one as beautiful, charming and attractive while the other as ugly and repulsive, you too should adopt the same attitude towards everything in this mundane gross world. Treat all things equally, and develop a high degree of equanimity, neutrality and dispassion towards them. For you all things must be alike, whether they are charming, beautiful and attractive or not just like the instance of the stone cited herein above. [Refer Canto 5, verse no. 106 also.]

With this state of the mind and attitude it is possible for one to overcome all emotions and thoughts that develop in him vis-à-vis the world. He would be able to literally conquer the world (118).

119. The great philosophical truths that were proclaimed at the beginning of creation are the ones which are reiterated in the scriptures called the Vedanta or the Upanishads. It should not be taught to those who do not have the proper aptitude and properly attuned mind-intellect that can receive this knowledge and understand it

correctly. It should also not be taught to anyone who is not one's son or a devoted disciple. [That is, this eclectic knowledge should not be given to incompetent people as they would make a mockery of it. It is just like the case of not handing over the scalpel to an un-authorized or an incompetent or ill-trained or unscrupulous man who pretends to be surgeon, but is not even a third-rate doctor, as that would be tantamount to giving him a license for mass murder.] (119).

120. A fortunate person who is initiated into the grand and eclectic spiritual knowledge enshrined in this Annapurna Upanishad by a learned and acclaimed teacher is able to become Jivan Mukta (i.e. he is able to attain spiritual liberation and deliverance even while he is alive) and attain the high stature of being Brahm-realised. Indeed, he becomes a personified form of Brahm himself.

Verily, this is what this Upanishad proclaims. Amen! (120).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 17

Surya Upanishad/Suryo-panishad

This Upanishad is dedicated to the Sun God as a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm. It affirms that both are one and the same Divinity, the Sun being a visible form of the invisible Brahm, the Supreme Being.

Since this is the case, the famous Gayatri Mantra (narrated in verse no. 2) which is used to offer prayers and obeisance to the Sun God is deemed to be actually meant for Brahm who is being worshipped through it in his manifested splendour and brilliant form as the celestial Sun. In Vedic times, the Sun was the principal deity to whom all worships were offered.

The Sun obviously was the natural choice to represent Brahm for the ancient sages and seers when they were searching for a visible and practical metaphor to act as symbol for the stupendous glories of Brahm and to be an apt image for the Supreme Being who is so esoteric, enigmatic and mysterious that it was simply impossible to truthfully give an idea of the immensity of the divinity, powers and dynamism of Brahm except to point out to the Sun as a personification of Brahm. When one saw the brilliant Sun he got an idea of the profundity and stupendity of Brahm's glories. The Sun's brilliant illumination, exceptional radiance and dazzling splendour could be easily and most naturally used as a metaphor for the matchless glorious virtues and the sublime divinity of Brahm. Like Brahm, the Sun was the epicenter of life on earth, and just like Brahm the entire creation revolved around the Sun as far as the creature was concerned. Therefore, in practical and physical terms, the Sun was a visible manifestation of Brahm. All worship that was offered to the Sun God was actually being offered to Brahm, the Supreme Being. Or we can say that when one wished to offer prayers to the Supreme Being, he did it to the Sun because the latter was deemed to be Brahm himself personified. All hymns, including the

famous Gayatri Mantra, dedicated to the Sun God are therefore actually meant for Brahm.

The astronomical fact that all the planets of the solar system revolve around the Sun and are held in their respective place or position in the void of space by the gravitational and magnetic pull of the Sun is a proof of the metaphysical philosophy that the entire creation revolves around Brahm, and it is dependent upon Brahm just like the planets depend upon the Sun for their survival. Had there been no Sun, the planets would collide with each other or drift away and get lost in the vast and fathomless bowls of the cosmos.

This Upanishad begins by naming the Rishi (the seer or sage who had first conceptualized this eclectic doctrine and composed the hymns in honour of the Sun God), the Devta (the patron deity of the hymns to whom the prayers are offered), and the Chanda (the poetical style employed in composing the hymns) of the famous Gayatri Mantra narrated in verse no. 2 of this Upanishad.

Verse nos. 3-6 outline the origin of this creation from the Sun God, emphasizing in its course that all the Gods of the Trinity as well as the supreme Brahm are represented in visible form of the Sun. Verse no. 7 describes the eight-letter divine Mantra of the Sun God. It is called the 'Suryaasthakshari Mantra'. Finally, the benefits of repeating this Mantra are enumerated in verse no. 8. It is to be noted that this Upanishad gives results when its Mantras are offered to the Sun God in the Hindu month of Ashwini (roughly October) when the Sun is in the asterism of Hasta. It is believed that this empowers the worshipper to overcome the fear of death also.

A hymn especially dedicated to the Sun God, called the 'Surya Sukta', is included as a separate appendix of this volume. The Savitri Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition is also very relevant in the context of this Surya Upanishad; it is included as Chapter 13 of volume no. 2 in this series.

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----Shanti Paath----

The meaning of this Shanti Paath is given in appendix no. 1 of this volume.

1. Now we shall elucidate upon the Upanishad expounded by sage Atharvaangiras¹. The Rishi (the one who had first pronounced it) of the great Mantra is Brahma, the creator; its Chanda (style of composition) is Gayatri²; and its Devta (patron God or deity to whom it is offered or who is honoured by its hymns) is Aditya, the Sun God.

Its Beej (seed) Mantra is 'Hansa' and 'So-a-Ham'³ which are empowered by the dynamism of the Fire God known as 'Agni-Narayan'. Its Shakti (inherent energy, vitality, strength and dynamism) is known as 'Hrillekha' (eager desire, agility, impatience, avidity, ardour, yearning and curiosity). Its Kilak (peg) is 'Viyat' (the infinite sky and other elements related to creation)⁴.

This Mantra (hymn of this Upanishad) is invoked for achieving success in obtaining all the four great fruits of one's endeavours⁵.

A wise and erudite person is known and honoured as Brahmin (i.e. a learned and wise one) only if he fully understands the metaphysical import and the significance of the Sun when he offers prayers in the form of the Gayatri Mantra and offers his worship to the Sun God. He must understand why worship is offered to the Sun instead of other entities, and the importance of the celestial Sun vis-à-vis the

creation from the perspective of life in this world (i.e. life on earth where he lives). He must realise that the celestial Sun is not merely a heavenly body like so many other stars in the cosmos but a living and personified form of Brahm, thereby making the invisible Brahm visible to the creature in all its magnificence, majesty, brilliance, splendour and finery.

The Sun is a living symbol, a visible image and an apt metaphor for the supreme transcendental Brahm. The Sun is the pivot around which the entire wheel of creation (i.e. life on earth; the world with which the worshipper is directly concerned) rotates. The Sun is the base which supports the edifice of life in this world. It is the harbinger of life, its progenitor, its sustainer, its nourisher and its protector.

The Sun is at the core of this world, and has the same relation with it as the Beej Mantra has with any given Mantra, and the vowels have with the Sanskrit language. The Sun God is present as the essence of the six vowels of the Sanskrit language⁶.

While offering worship, the Beej Mantra is employed to do what is known as Shandanga Nyas⁷. [It is the process whereby the energy and dynamism of any given Mantra are invoked and established on six important points on the body of the worshipper.] In the present case it implies that the Beej Mantra of the Sun God is invoked to do Shandanga Nyas by the worshipper. Shandanga Nyas is also called Anga-Nyas because the powers and dynamism of the Mantra is being invoked and established on 'six parts' ('Shad') of the worshipper's body ('Anga').

So, when a learned Brahmin offers his worship to the Sun God and uses the famous Gayatri Mantra to honour the Sun, or offers his oblations to the Sun God by making offerings to the sacred fire during the sacrifice—he is actually worshipping and paying his obeisance to the Supreme Being known as Brahm. When he is offering his worship to the celestial Sun, he is not doing so in favour of some lifeless celestial gross body which one of so many other brilliant stars in the vast bosom of the cosmos, but he is actually worshipping Brahm who is as dynamic, brilliant, luminous, radiant, splendorous, self-illuminated, eternal and life-sustaining as the Sun. He recognizes these facts and is fully aware that what he offers as oblations and whatever prayers he offers to the Sun are actually being offered to the Supreme Being. This wisdom and intellectual enlightenment is the basis why a person is called a true Brahmin.

[In other words, if he does not understand the significance and importance of the Sun from the perspective of metaphysics and spiritualism, his worshipping the Sun goes in vain. No spiritual benefit is obtained by him if he merely goes through the rituals and motions of offering worship or repeating a set pattern of words in the form of hymns mechanically without knowing to whom they are actually being offered or for whom they are meant.]

To facilitate worship and to aid easy access to the Lord known as the Sun God who represents Brahm, his form as a deity is visualized. This form of a deity has the following characteristics—The Sun God is honourably seated on a red lotus flower. He rides a magnificent and divine chariot having seven brilliant horses⁸. His countenance is like molten gold or yolk of an egg (i.e. shining or glowing yellow). He has four arms (like that of Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation) out of which two hold a lotus flower each, the third is held in the 'Var Mudra' (a posture that grants the boon of fulfillment of all the desires of his worshippers, devotees and refuge seekers), and the fourth hand is held in 'Abhaya Mudra' (a posture that grants fearlessness).

He is the divine Lord who keeps the 'Kaal Chakra' (the wheel of life consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death) rotating (1).

[Note—¹*Atharvaangiras*—The name is used to refer to two ancient sages who are credited for starting the worship of the Fire, and by implication of the Sun God as the latter is a cosmic receptacle of the eternal fire element. Now let us have a brief view of the life of these two great sages.

(a) *Sage Atharva*—Sage Atharva is the ancient sage who first revealed the fourth Veda called after his name, i.e. the Atharva Veda. He was the son of Brahma, the creator, according to Vedic mythology. He first brought down fire from the heaven to earth, and hence was the first sage to have propagated the worship of the sacred fire. The word 'athar' is the absolute word for the fire element, and hence this sage was named 'Atharvan' to commemorate this auspicious deed of his. He made the supreme Fire God, who is synonymous with the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being called Brahm, make this earth as his habitat, thereby paving the way for the forthcoming generations to utilise the stupendous powers and potentials of this fire element in practical terms here on earth itself. Since he brought the fire down on earth, he was also the first to initiate the process of worship of this element, both in its sublime form as the Fire God and its more tangible and gross form as the sacred fire worshipped during formal ritual of the fire sacrifice as well as in other informal forms as done by various sections of society in their daily lives. In fact, sage Atharva was considered as the Fire manifested, so pure and holy he was.

When he brought the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire from the heaven, he offered Soma (the extract of a herb called Som and used as a holy and sanctified liquid-offering meant to be offered to the Gods for their eternal life and sustenance) to him to please him and to show respect to this God who was now the guest of honour for Atharvan. In order to please him further while offering Soma to him, the sage chanted the hymns that he had learned from his father, the creator Brahma. This started the practice of offering of Soma to the sacred fire during the ritual of the fire sacrifice along with the chanting of hymns of the Atharva Veda.

According to the Purans, his earthly wife was Shanti, the daughter of Kardama Prajapati. He is regarded as a personification of the Fire God, and is often invoked in conjunction with another great sage named Angiras (who was another son of Brahma). In this form he is called 'Atharvangiras' (Atharvan + Angiras) and is regarded as the father of the Fire God to commemorate the fact that these two sages are responsible for the honour and exalted position that the Fire God occupies in the pantheon of Gods, and also the fact that they were responsible for propagating the worship of the fire as the most holy and the most sacred form of worship of the Supreme Being.

According to Mundakopanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 1, Atharva is the eldest of the six mental-born sons of Brahma. Brahma had first taught him the best metaphysical knowledge called Brahm Vidya, and Atharva had later taught it to Angiras, his younger brother and first disciple (Mundakopanishad, 1/1/2). The descendents of Atharva came to be known as Atharvaan, and those of Angira as Angiras. One of the many important sages preached by sage Atharva was Shandilya/Shandilya, son of sage Shandila, and this teaching is contained in an Upanishad called the 'Shandilya Upanishad' dedicated to sage Shandilya to commemorate this great occasion. This is the fourteenth Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition and deals with Yoga and Brahm-realisation.

Since sage Atharva had started the practice of worship of the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice and had used the initial Mantras taught to him by his father Brahma, the Mantra of this Veda came to be known after him as 'Atharvaa', and since his brother Angira had carried forward this practice started by his older brother by actually invoking these Mantras during formal sacrifices held from time to time after the first exercise, the Mantras came to be known after both the brothers 'Atharvaangiras'.

The Mantras of the Atharva Veda which were initially pronounced by sage Atharva came to be known after him as 'Atharvaa', and those by the two brothers jointly as 'Atharvaangiras'.

According to Mahabharat, the great epic related to Lord Krishna penned by sage Veda Vyas, Atharva had searched out the fire concealed in the ocean (Mahabharat, Vanparva, 222).

Some of the Upanishads taught by sage Atharva are the following—Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Mundak Upanishad, Atharva Shikha Upanishad and Shandilya Upanishad—all belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition.

Since he was the worshipper of the Fire God, it is natural for him to worship the Sun God as a manifestation not only of the supreme Brahm but also of the Fire God. The hymns dedicated to the Sun God as contained in the Surya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, which is the seventh Upanishad of this Veda, is attributed jointly to sages Angira and Atharva.

(b) *Sage Angira*— This sage was associated with the branch of ancient sages who adored and worshipped the sacred Fire as a manifestation of the Supreme Being. A number of Vedic hymns are attributed to him. He is the sage who first started the ancient tradition of 'fire worship', was the first sacrificer and the forefather of sacred rituals. He had achieved such great mastery of the fire element that he could replace the Fire God and take over his duties during rituals if the latter did not oblige the worshipper. The Purans describe him variously as being the mental-born son of Brahma, the creator, and as having sprung forth from the sacrificial fire of the Varun God (the Water God; also sometimes referred to as the Sun because the latter is responsible for rains).

He is believed to have four wives who were actually personified eclectic virtues that he possessed rather than any physical woman—Vasuddhaa (personified absolute purity), Shraddhaa (personified faith and conviction), Svadhaa (personified self realisation and self restraint) and Sati (personified chastity and immaculacy). Brishaspati, the moral preceptor of the Gods, was one of his sons. The Pittars (the Spirits of dead ancestors) are also believed to be his sons. His daughters are the following—Raka, Sinivaalli, Kuhu which are actually phases of the moon rather than any physical lass.

He is lauded as the great teacher of Brahm Vidya, the metaphysical knowledge of Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Absolute. This explains why he is associated with such prime and incorruptible elements of Nature as fire and light—the former is the great universal purifier and the infuser of life in this creation, while the latter is synonymous with truth, enlightenment, knowledge, erudition and wisdom. Being self-realised and a titan amongst the great sage of his time who initiated the tradition of worship of fire and light, he is regarded as an embodiment of illumination, and this is why he is visualised as being associated with illuminated objects in the dark sky, such as the planet Jupiter and a star in the constellation Ursa Major.

Being an exalted sage and seer, he is regarded as being one of the 'Saptarishis'—the great seven Rishis of the first Manvantara (the age or era of Manu, the first Male of creation).

The disciples of Angira adopted his name as their surname or title, and hence came to be known as 'Aangiras'—the descendants of Angira. They were Kshatriyas (the warrior class) by birth, but Brahmins by vocation and practice. They were said to be experts in sacerdotal laws, performance of occult practices such as magic and holding traditional rites.

Angira is credited with authoring the book of Law, called Angiras Smriti, and a book on Astronomy. The Angiras Smriti is a short book having 151 verses and deals mainly with repentance of sins.

Sage Angira was the younger brother of sage Atharva who was the eldest son of Brahma. Brahma had taught the great metaphysical knowledge called Brahm Vidya,

the knowledge that enlightens the creature about the supreme Brahm who is the ultimate Absolute Truth, the Reality and pure conscious cosmic Soul of creation, first to Atharva, and then Atharva had taught it to his brother Angira—refer Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1, verse no. 2. These two brothers are credited with starting the practice of worship of the Fire God in the form of the sacred fire of the fire sacrifice as well as other forms of the fire as worshipped by different sections of the society.

Since he was the worshipper of the Fire God, it is natural for him to worship the Sun God as a manifestation not only of the supreme Brahm but also of the Fire God. The hymns dedicated to the Sun God as contained in the Surya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, which is the seventh Upanishad of this Veda, is attributed jointly to sages Angira and Atharva.

²Gayatri Chanda—The *Gayatri Chanda* has 24 letters and syllables in all which are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$.

³References to the two eclectic Mantras *So-a-Ham* and *Hans*—(a) *So-a-Ham* = This Mantra has been described in a number of Upanishads—viz. (i) Sam Veda = Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 83. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 28; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 17, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11-2, Canto 5, verse nos. 69-72. (iii) Atharva Veda = Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 12-32; Canto 2, verse no. 1; Surya Upanishad, verse no. 1.

(b) The Mantra *Hans*—There are a number of Upanishads that describe the Hans Mantra—viz. (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131, Canto 2, verse nos. 5, 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 52, 54-55. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hanso-panishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93. (iv) Atharva Veda—Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 13 (which asserts that the Hans Mantra should be repeated continuously and silently by a spiritual aspirant); Surya Upanishad, verse no. 1.

⁴The *Beej Mantra*, its Shakti and its Kilak—The Beej Mantra is the seed from which the rest of the Mantra is formulated. Just like a huge tree depends upon its seed to come into being, the Mantra too depends upon the Beej Mantra for its structure coming into being. Sans the Beej Mantra, the rest of the Mantra loses its effect, dynamism, strength, vitality, powers and meaning. Likewise, the world would lose its energy and dynamism without the Sun. The world draws its strength, energy and vital life-sustaining forces from the Sun in the form of its light and heat just like the Mantra does from the Beej Mantra.

Any Mantra has the following six parts—

(i) The *Rishi of a Mantra* is the sage or 'seer' who had first visualised a particular Mantra as a divine formula having stupendous spiritual and mystical powers and potentials. He was the one who was the first person who had envisioned a particular metaphysical concept during one of his meditative trances.

He had first visualised or conceived this Mantra, he is the one who had first discovered this mystical formula, then determined and verified its astounding mystical and divine authority, majestic potentials, glorious spiritual powers, and proved its efficacy not only in the sphere of metaphysics and spiritualism but also in more materialistic terms as having certain mysterious powers, which when properly

harnessed, could give worldly rewards or benefits to the user of these mystical Mantras. He had tested the effectiveness and potential powers of the esoteric Mantra, and then given it the status of a holy and divine mystical formula which can enable the worshipper to attain desired results. Such divine and eclectic revelations were made known to the rest of the world in the form of hymns composed in various poetical composition styles called Chandas.

Hence, the Rishi of a Mantra is the one who had first conceptualised it, who had first discovered it, who had first composed its hymns and witnessed its powerful might first hand. He tested the mystical powers of this hymn and then taught about it to his disciples for their welfare. Therefore, the Rishi is the first exponent of a particular Mantra as well as its first teacher and preacher. He is honoured for this by first remembering him when worshipping a chosen deity through a particular Mantra in order to pay homage to his memory and seek his blessings. He was like a modern day scientist who does long research and arrives at some astounding discovery and tests its truthfulness and effectiveness in practical terms. Then that discovery is named after him.

The Mantra was prescribed as a divine mystical formula that could be used for doing Japa (repetition of some spiritual formula that can give the seeker the benefits that he seeks), as a mystical formula to be used during formal religious fire sacrificial rituals, as a means to concentrate the mind and intellect on the divinity during meditation and contemplation, and as esoteric and magical charm to be used as cryptic symbols of certain occult forms of worship where charm instruments, called the Yantra, are used to invoke divine blessings and intercession.

Thus, they rendered the otherwise mere neutral letter or group of letters into something divine and sublime, and infused it with supernatural powers, bestowing them with their renowned importance, significance and value. Therefore, the name of this particular sage or seer was invoked along with the invocation of the Mantra to honour his contribution as is the practice even in modern times when chemicals and formulae and various other scientific discoveries such as stars, comets, galaxies, distant black holes etc., or new concepts in physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences are named after the scientist who first discovered them.

The difference between a *Rishi* and a *Muni* is that the latter did not divulge their realisation but preferred to keep their spiritual discoveries to themselves as the word 'Muni' is derived from the root Mana means the subtle mind and heart. On the other hand, the 'Rishis' used to preach and teach others about their astounding spiritual realisation and discoveries.

(ii) The *Chanda* is the classical style of poetic composition in which the Mantra is composed. For example, the most popular style is called 'Gayatri' in which there are three lines of eight letters or syllables, totaling twenty four letters or syllables in all.

(iii) The *Devta* or God is the patron deity to whom the Mantra is dedicated. Usually it is the supreme transcendental Brahm to whom the Mantra is devoted. But in case specific God or Goddess is being worshipped using a Mantra, then it would be obviously that particular God or Goddess who would be the Devta. For instance, Goddess Saraswati is the patron goddess being worshipped by using Mantras specifically dedicated to her as said in Saraswati Rahasya Upanidhad, verse no. 5 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

(iv) The *Beej*, literally the seed, is the syllable or letter which is the basic sound-form from which the Mantra has sprouted much like a tall tree having its origin in the humble 'seed'. During formal ritualistic forms of worship using worship instruments as well as during the process of 'Anga Nyas', which is the invocation of the chosen deity and assigning various designated parts of the body where this deity is to invest its supernatural powers for the benefit of the worshipper. The Beej Mantra is the root or seed formula around which a particular Mantra is built, and which gives the Mantra its basic and inherent power and mystical strength.

(v) The *Shakti* of the Mantra is the mystical, astounding, divine and holy cosmic dynamic powers that the particular Mantra possesses; the latent and powerful energy of the Mantra which makes it so effective and praiseworthy. The Shakti is the concealed latent but most magnificent and dynamic potentials of the Mantra which are reflective of the patron deity's supernatural authority and powers. The Shakti is the mystical dynamic cosmic powers of Nature that are encrypted in the Mantra's syllables and letters. In other words, the mysterious power, authority and dynamism of the Mantra is called its 'Shakti'. Or, the Mantra is the worshipped deity manifested in the words or letters of the Mantra, complete with all its supernatural powers and authority. The word Shakti itself means 'energy', so the Shakti of the Mantra is the Mantra's dynamic energy that is subtly present in it in a coded form. Proper use of the Mantra helps to de-code this energy and unleash or activate it.

(vii) The *Kilak* is like the peg that helps a Mantra to be established in the body of the worshipper of a particular deity of that Mantra, or to the mystical worship instrument used during occult practices to invoke the supernatural powers of the deity thorough this Mantra and invest this instrument with these divine and mystical supernatural powers. It is like a nail to fix the Mantra at the designated point in the body.

⁵The four great fruits—(a) Artha—meaning wealth and material prosperity; (b) Kaam—meaning fulfillment of all desires; (c) Dharma—meaning possession of auspicious and righteous virtues; and (d) Moksha—meaning obtaining spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

⁶The vowels are at the core of the Sanskrit language. All sounds are based on these vowels. They are added as prefixes or suffixes to the consonants and other vowels to form different letters and words. Therefore, if the vowel is eliminated from the language, the latter would become a cacophony of meaningless sounds and unable to survive just like this vast world of myriad variations and countless forms which would not exist if there is no Sun.

The six basic vowel sounds of the Sanskrit language are the following—(i) 'A' as pronounced in *along*, *sun*; (ii) 'E' as in *if*, *nip*; (iii) 'U' as in *full*, *wool*; (iv) 'Ay' as in *may*, *ray*; (v) 'O' as in *oh*, *organ*; and (vi) 'Ri' as in *ring*, *wring*.

⁷*Shadanga Anga-Nyas* —*Anga Nyas* and *Kar Nyas* of any Mantra using its seed or root called the 'Beej' of that Mantra are the two basic rituals of invoking the divine powers of the Mantras which are basically mystical formulas employed in religious practice, specially during occult rites and meditation of which this Khechhari is a part. The word 'Kar' means hand, and 'Anga' means body, while 'Nyas' refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the body are touched and certain Mantras are said. It also means the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the invoked Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points. Therefore, Anga Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra's supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and reposting it on the various locations of the body and its vital parts, such as the limbs, the abdomen and chest, the throat and forehead etc.

In other words, the process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra's divine mystical powers in the worshipper's own body and make it sinless, holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take its seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is not only getting constant protection from this godhead but also has been dutifully purified and made auspicious. The body is now the symbolic seat of Divinity represented by the deity, and from the metaphysical perspective it has been now officially made the abode of Brahm as all the Gods are nothing but manifestations of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation. With the deity firmly established in the body of the worshipper, the latter is deemed to

personify all the glorious, majestic, divine and magnificent virtues exemplified by the worshipped deity.

In the context of the Beej Mantras, it refers to invoking their divine cosmic dynamic powers and establishing them on various parts of the body, or assigning the patron Gods of these seed Mantras some specific part of the body so that they can establish themselves there.

Hence, doing Kar Nyas with the Beej Mantras would be to establish these symbolic Gods representing the cosmic, divine and mystical powers that are encrypted in the different Beej Mantras on the hand of the practitioner, while Anga Nyas would be to do the same on other parts of the body such as the chest, abdomen, shoulders, throat, forehead etc.

Primarily there are six sites according to the same Ram Rahasya Upanishad's verse no. 23 where the primary seed or root words, called the Beej Mantras, are invoked. They are the following—the Brahm-randhra (top of the skull), the central point of the eyebrows, the heart, the navel, and the two thighs = 6 sites. Hence, invoking the Beej of any given Mantra and sanctifying these six locations by it is called *Shandanga Nyas*—the word 'Shad' meaning 'six', the word 'Anga' meaning 'parts of the body', and the word 'Nyas' meaning 'establishing the Mantra on these parts'.

The Shuk Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 20, describes how the divine Mantra OM is used for the purpose of doing 'Shadanga Nyas' and 'Anga Nyas'.

⁸The *seven magnificent horses of the Sun God*—These are represented by the seven colours of the sunlight. These colours are violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red.]

2. [This verse is the famous Gayatri Mantra¹ dedicated to the Sun God.]

It is the supreme transcendental Brahm represented by the divine ethereal and monosyllabic word OM who pervades uniformly in this creation consisting of three planes of existence—viz. the terrestrial world represented by the word 'Bhu', the extra-terrestrial world (or the world above the surface of the earth) represented by the word 'Bhuvaha', and the heavenly worlds represented by the word 'Suwaha'.

He (Brahm) is the creator, sustainer, nourisher and protector of this creation. His majesty, grandeur, brilliance, splendour, radiance, dynamism, energy, powers, prowess and authority are represented by the celestial Sun. Therefore, the Sun is honoured and revered as a representative of the supreme Brahm. The Sun is indeed a metaphor and a symbol of the dynamism, the glories, the majesty and the magnificence of Brahm.

We honour the Lord (the Sun God as a visible manifestation of Brahm) and meditate upon his divine form that is holy and sublime.

Let this Lord inspire or motivate us and our mind-intellect to move towards wisdom, erudition, sagacity, knowledge and enlightenment, and away from the darkness of ignorance and delusions. [Just like the arrival of the Sun in the horizon removes the all-engulfing darkness of the night, let the knowledge of Brahm illuminate our inner-selves so that we can see the spiritual 'truth' hidden in our own bosoms, behind a thick blanket of ignorance and delusions, as the pure consciousness known as the Atma.]

Let the Sun light our spiritual path and pave the way for our emancipation and salvation; let the Sun give us proper intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on a path that is auspicious, righteous and noble.' (2).

[Note—¹The Gyatri Mantra—(a) The *Gayatri Mantra* has two versions which are presented here. According to one version, it is based on the typical 'Gayatri Chanda'

which is a poetical composition consisting of three stanzas or lines each having eight letters or syllables. The total number of letters or syllables is thus twenty four. The Gayatri extolled by Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14 is the one strictly conforming to this rule. On the other hand, the usual and commonly known Gayatri Mantra has four steps or stanzas and is based on the composition style called the 'Anushtup Chanda'.

The 'Gayatri Chanda' is used to compose the sacred hymns of the Vedas. Amongst the different composition styles, this is regarded as the best style of Chanda in which the Vedas were revealed (Jaimini Brahmin, 2/227) because it has the divine virtue and supernatural powers that provides protection to the Pran of the person who says the Gayatri Chanda and elevates his stature to that of the celestial Sun.

Let us first see the typical *Gayatri Chand pattern* of this divine Mantra. The Gayatri Mantra based on the style of this poetical composition is described in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14, of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. This Mantra having three steps is extolled as the one which is superior to other forms of the Gayatri Mantra having four steps because this three-stepped Mantra is synonymous with Pran, i.e. it is the life or the essence of all that exists.

The Gayatri Mantra having three lines is the following—"Tatsaviturvarnyam Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat". The fourth line honours and glorifies this Gayatri as a manifestation of the Sun God, and as brilliant and splendorous as it. It is—"Paro Rajase Savadoma". Since the Sun is a visible manifestation of the supreme Brahm who is the Transcendental Consciousness of the entire creation at the macro level, having the Atma resident in the bosom of the individual creature as its micro level counterpart and Pran as its subtle manifestation, the Gayatri Mantra is in honour of the supreme Authority of creation, i.e. Brahm.

Now the question arises that if the three lines are the complete Mantra, then what was the purpose of including the fourth line? It must be especially noted in this context here that this fourth step of leg of the Gayatri Mantra does not consist of any word which is a part of the main Mantra, but is only meant to establish its divine stature as the citadel for all spiritual Mantras; it is intended to give this Gayatri its place of honour in the pantheon of divine Mantras. Besides this, the fourth leg is visualised as a symbol of stability because anything that has four legs is more stable and steady as compared to one with only three.

Therefore, last stanza is like an epithet highlighting the magnificent divinity and spiritual value of the Gayatri Mantra. It is akin to the Sun shining in the sky, and all other planets and their satellites such as the moon shine because they reflect this light from their surface. The Sun is at the centre of the solar system even as the Gayatri is at the symbolic hub of all divinity and spiritually empowered Mantras. It is also akin to the Pran which supports life in a gross body of a creature and is an acronym for life as a whole. The Pran symbolically illuminates the dark realm of the body from the inside while the Sun does the same from the outside.

The actual Gayatri Mantra that should be preached to the spiritual aspirant consists of the first three steps as described in verse nos. 1-3 of Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14.

This famous Mantra is dedicated to the Sun God who is a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm. It is this Mantra—which is a group of ethereal words having profound spiritual value and metaphysical importance. It is called Gayatri because it gave protection to the Pran--Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14, verse no. 4. It has been accepted as a manifestation of Pran in Shatpath Brahman, 1/3/5/15, while it is praised as having the potentials of Agni (fire) present in the faculty of speech known as Vak in Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/2/9/3, as Tej (energy) in Shatpath Brahman, 1/8/2/13, and as Brahm (the supreme transcendental consciousness) in Maitri Brahman, 4/3/1. According to the Purans (mythological histories of the Hindus), the Gayatri has been praised having manifested in the form of the Trinity Gods—Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the

concluder--Skanda Puran, Kashi Khand, Purva, 4/9/58. Whatever that exists is a revelation of Gayatri because it is a manifestation of Brahm—Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/1. In fact this whole earth that gives refuge to all the life forms in this world is a manifestation of Gayatri-- Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/2. By worshipping it, a person is blessed with worldly assets such as abundant livestock and flourishing family, a long, healthy and active life, wealth and fortunes, good name and fame, as well as spiritual attainment in the form of Brahm realisation—Atharva Veda, 19/71/1.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 3, verse no. 6 describes that this Gayatri Mantra should be pronounced while one collects the urine of the cow as a necessary step in a ritualistic process of preparing the sacred Bhasma or the ash of the fire sacrifice that is to be worn by a spiritual aspirant.

The Gayatri Mantra is mentioned in its primary form in the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14 and other Upanishads, such as the Savitri Upanishad which is entirely dedicated to it, the Maitrayanyu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7, the Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, Section 12, verse nos. 1-9 belonging to the Sam Veda tradition, and Narsingh Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 5-9. Besides these, the Gayatri Upanishad appears as eight assorted verses or Kandikas numbering 31-38 of the Gopath Brahman belonging to the Atharva Veda.

It has been said in the scriptures that Brahmins, the highest class amongst the humans and who are regarded as the most learned and wise amongst them, were born from Gayatri, thereby drawing a parallel between the highest stature and exalted standing of Brahmins amongst the creatures and the Gayatri amongst the hymns. It is pertinent to note here by the way that Kshatriyas, the warrior class, were born from the Chanda known as Trishtup, and Vaishya, the trading class, from the Chanda known as Jagati. In other words, the divine and eclectic powers encrypted in the Trishtup Chanda revealed themselves as the Kshatriya, and those of the Jagati as the Vaishya. The Trishtup Chanda has four lines each having eleven letters or syllables, totaling forty four letters or syllables in all, while the Jagati Chanda has six lines with eight letters or syllables each, totaling to forty eight letters or syllables.

The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda describes *four Gayatri Mantras*. Canto 7, paragraph no. 40 mentions three Gayatri Mantras—viz. the Nrisingh Gayatri, the Sudarshan Gayatri and the Brahm Gayatri, while Canto 7, paragraph no. 54 mentions the fourth Gayatri Mantra called the Veda-Gayatri. Let us see what they are

(a) The *Nrisingh Gayatri Mantra* is ‘Vajra-nakhaaye Vidmahe Tikshna-dantraaye Dhimahi Tannaha Singaha Prachodayat’. Briefly it means ‘The Lord has nails as strong as Vajra (the sturdy weapon of Indra); he is splendorous as the electric; his teeth are very sharp; he is an embodiment of knowledge and intelligent; and he is in the form of a lion. Let me move towards this Lord to seek his blessings.’

(b) The *Sudarshan Gayatri Mantra* is ‘Sudarshanaaye Vidmahe Hetirajaaye Dhimahi Tanna-schakra-ha Prachodayat’. Briefly it means ‘The divine Sudarshan Chakra of the Lord is dazzling and blindingly splendorous like the electric; it is most dear to the supreme Lord of creation (Vishnu) and enables him to rule over the entire creation; this Lord is an embodiment of wisdom and skills; and this Sudarshan Chakra is indeed a manifestation of the Lord himself. Let me move towards this Chakra to seek its blessings.’

(c) The *Brahma Gayatri Mantra* is ‘Tatsavituvarenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayaat’. Briefly it means ‘That truthful and divine supreme Lord is luminous and splendorous as the self-illuminated Sun. He is excellent, the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, and a divine entity. I offer my oblations to him. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire my intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that I am purified and move on the righteous and noble path.’

(d) The *Veda Gayatri Mantra* is ‘OM Tatsavituvarenyam, OM Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi, OM Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayaat, OM Paro Rajase Saavadom Omaapo

Jyoti Rajoamritam Brahm Bhu Bhurvaha Suvoram.’ Briefly it means ‘OM salutations! That truthful and divine supreme Lord is luminous and splendorous as the self-illuminated Sun. OM salutations! He is excellent, the best, and the most exalted divine Lord who is a destroyer of sins. OM salutations! I offer my oblations to him. May he imbibe, infuse and inspire my intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that I am purified and move on the righteous and noble path. OM salutations! The Lord is the Supreme Creator of creation. He has created the sky, the Vedas, the water, the light and the ambrosia of life called Amrit. He is the Brahm who has created the terrestrial world (Bhu), the world of the sky or lower heavens (Bhurva) and the upper heaven or the higher reaches of the cosmos.’

(e) This Gaytri Mantra appears in the Vedas as follows—the Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).

(iii) There are 24 *Rishis of Gayatri Mantra*. They are the following— Vamdev, Atri, Vashistha, Shukra, Kanva, Parashar, Vishwamitra, Kapil, Shaunk, Yagyawalkya, Bharadwaj, Jamdagni, Gautam, Mudgal, Veda Vyas, Lomas, Agstya, Kaushik, Vatsa, Pulastya, Manduka, Durvasa, Narad and Kshyap.

The 24 Chandas (metres) of Gayatri Mantra are the following— Gayatri, Ushnik, Anushtup, Vrihati, Pankti, Trishtup, Jagati, Ati Jagati, Shakvari, Ati Shakvari, Dhriti, Ati Dhriti, Viraat, Prastarapankti, Kriti, Prakriti, Akriti, Vikriti, Sankriti, Aksarapankti, Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Jyotismati.

There are 24 *Devtas (Gods or patron deities) of Gayatri Mantra*. They are the following—Aagneya, Prajapati, Saumyam, Ish, Savitri, Aditya, Bhrishapti, Maitravarun, Bhagdaivatya, Aryamaishvar, Ganesh, Twastra, Paushna, Indra, Vayu, Vamdeo, Maitra Varunidaiv, Vaishvadev, Matrik, Vaishnav, Vasu Dev, Rudra Dev, Kuber and Ashwini.

The 24 *Shaktis* (divine powers or the female aspects of creation) of Gayatri Mantra are the following— Vaamdevi, Priya, Satya, Vishva, Bhadravilasini, Prabhawati, Jaya, Santa, Kanthaa, Durga, Saraswati, Vidruma, Vishlesa, Vyapini, Vimla, Tamopaharini, Sukhma, Vishwa-yoni, Jaya-vasa, Padmalya, Paraa, Sobha, Bhadra and Tripada.

The 24 *Varnas (colours or shades) of Gayatri Mantra* are the following — Campakam (yellow), Atasi (hemp), Vidrum (coral), Sphatik (crystal), Padam (lotus), Tarun-aditya (rising sun-red), a mixture of Shankha (conch), Kunda (white jasmine) and Indu (moon), Pravaal Padma (red-lotus), Padmaraga (emerald), Indranilamani (sapphire), Mukta (pearl), Kumkum (a red colour or copper colour made from the pollen of the flower of the plant *Crocus sativus*), Anjam (collyrium-black), Rakta (blood red), Vaidurya, Ksaudra (champa; yellow), Haldi (turmeric yellow), Kunda Dugdha (white as jasmine), Ravikanthi (sun-white), Shukpuccha (a tail of a parrot), Shat-patra (white lotus), Ketaki (light yellow), Mallika and Karavira.

The 24 *Tattvas (essence, elements, fundamental principles) of Gayatri Mantra* are the following—earth, water, fire, air, space (called the 5 Mahabhuts), smell, taste, vision, sound, touch (called the 5 Tanmatras), generative organ, excretory organ, feet, hand, mouth (called 5 organs of action), nose, tongue, eyes, skin, ear (called 5 organs of perception), Pran, Apan, Vyan and Samaan (called vital airs).

The 24 *Mudras (postures) of Gayatri Mantra* are the following— Sumukham and Samputam, Vitatam and Vistrutam, Dwimukham and Trimukham, Chaturmukham and Panchmukham, Sanmukham, Adhomukham, Vyapakanajalikam, Shakatam, Yampasham, Sanmukho-mukham, Vilambam, Mustikam (closed fist), Matsyam (fish like), Kurmam (tortoise), Varahakam (boar like), Singhkrantham (lion like), Mahakrantham (a great lion like), Mudgar (Pelion like), Pallavam, Trishulyoni (trident like), Surabhi (cow like), Akshamala, Lingakam (phallus like) and Ambujam (blue lotus).]

3. The Sun God is the Atma (the soul, the essence and the basic life infusing, life supporting and life protecting element) of this creation. [That is, without the Sun no life in any form is imaginable or viable in this world.] It is the Sun that is the cause of all life forms coming into being in this world—i.e. it is the Sun God who is the progenitor of all living beings in this world because it is the Sun that provides the world with its energy, heat, light to sustain life in it; it is the Sun God who is the harbinger of life on earth; it is the Sun God from whom all the life forms are born.

It is from the Sun that the Yagya (fire sacrifices), the Parjanya (the life-giving rain), the Anna (food; crops) and the Atma (consciousness; life and its vital signs) have come into existence. And it is the Sun that sustains and protects them all (3).

[Note—When we talk of ‘life’ and the ‘world’, we mean life on earth. It is a matter of established fact that of all the planets it is only the earth that harbours life as we know of it. It is also an equally established fact that all forms of life, whether in the form of single-celled organism such as the amoeba or paramecium, or the complex form of life such as the human being or the animal, are all dependent upon the Sun for their survival, either directly or indirectly. Members of the plant kingdom as well as the animal kingdom owe their existence to the Sun. If there was no sunshine, life would freeze to death. The very existence of the habitat of earth—known as the solar system—is dependent upon the Sun, and it is from the latter that it derives its name ‘solar system’. It is the gravitational and magnetic field of the Sun that holds the planets in their fixed circuit in the vast fathomless void of deep space, and prevents them from floating or drifting away into the deep abyss of the cosmos. It is the Sun that makes the planets revolve around it in a pre-determined circuit and in a systematic manner.

‘Life’ and ‘Sun’ are synonymous with each other. Dependence of life on the Sun is a metaphoric way of saying that existence depends upon Brahm, because the Sun is said to be a visible manifestation of the invisible Brahm. The Sun symbolizes all the best of the virtues and glories of Brahm; the Sun is a personified form of the dynamism, energy, brilliance, magnificence, splendour and majesty of Brahm; the Sun is the best instance of the life-sustaining and life-protecting virtues of Brahm because no life is sustainable or tenable without the presence of the Sun.

References of the Upanishads dealing with the Sun God—

- (a) Rig Veda = Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, Canto 2, verse no. 4.
- (b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Savitri Upanishad.
- (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15.
- (d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Akchu Upanishad, Cantos 1 and 2; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1; Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2; Naryan Upanishad, verse no. 1.
- (e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-8; Surya Upanishad; Gayatri Upanishad; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 24, 27-28 (says that the Sun is a metaphor for Brahm); Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 11 (which highlights the importance of the worship of the Sun God); Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 6, verse no. 12; Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph no. 4 (Brahm as splendorous as the Sun).

The Sanskrit word for the Sun God or Aditya is *Surya*. This word has three connotations—viz. (i) Sarteha—one who moves. This refers to the Sun because it moves constantly across the sky. It also refers to the supreme cosmic Consciousness that makes all movement possible. (ii) Sviryate—this means one who receives and accepts. This virtue refers to the fact that all offerings offered to the fire sacrifice are done in the presence of the Sun, and since the latter is the celestial cauldron of fire all

the offerings are deemed to be offered to it. In another plane, it refers to the Jiva, the living being, who receives stimuli from the world and then accepts them and deduces that the world from where they originate is real and true. (iii) Suvateha—meaning one who shines. This is very obvious in the case of the Sun. This virtue refers to the supreme Self or supreme Consciousness that is self-illuminated and self-effulgent.

Sun God or Surya appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the 'eye' of the Viraat Purush, and at the time of creation when this Viraat Purush revealed himself as the individual creature such as for example a cow, a horse and a man, the Sun God took up residence in the eye (refer Aitereyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4). He is also regarded as visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9). The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). The Sun is like the Atma of all the creatures (Akchu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

The Sun is the brightest, the most splendid, the brilliantly radiant, the most majestic and grandest entity in the entire firmament. The whole length and breadth of the sky is lit with its light; all the objects present in the sky, visible or invisible, are illuminated by its light. It is the eternal and infinite celestial source of light, heat and energy; it inspires, fosters, sustains and protects life in this world; it is synonymous with and a metaphor for life in all its dimensions. Its splendour and radiance makes it an apt metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment. As an embodiment of this virtue of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity he has been held in high esteem and as the great teacher and preacher of eclectic knowledge pertaining to the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. He had assumed the form of a horse and revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda to the great sage Yagyavalkya. He was also the teacher of Hanuman, said to be incarnate Wind God and Lord Shiva, and who was the great, most ardent and the wisest devotee of Lord Ram.

From the physical perspective also, the Sun is regarded as a fount of light, energy and heat which supports life in all forms in this physical world. No life is imaginable without the presence of the Sun.

According to mythological accounts, the Sun God was the son of sage Kashyap and his wife Aditi from whom all the Gods were born. He is said to be a revelation from the eye of the Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu who is the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing vast and invisible form of the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm. The physical Sun in the sky is the Viraat Purush's visible form. He was married to Sangya, the daughter of Vishwakarma who is regarded as the architect, builder and planner of the Gods. Sangya had two sons and one daughter from the Sun God—viz. the sons named Shraadha-dev also called Vaivaswat Manu and Yam the god of death, and the daughter named Yamuna which is also the name of a famous river in India. Sangya could not bear the intensity of the Sun's heat and light, so she left her 'shadow' or image and herself went away disguised as a mare to do severe penance. From this 'shadow' were produced two sons and a daughter. The two sons were Shani God who is believed to be full of malice and evil forebodings reflecting the genes of his mother as a dark shadow, and Saarvarni Manu, and the daughter was Tapti literally meaning one who is fierce and hot. In due course of time, the Sun God found out that his real wife Sangya was involved in doing severe Tapa, so he was extremely pleased with her and brought her back. It was from her form as a mare that the Ashwini Kumars were born. They derived their name from the root 'Ashwa' meaning a horse. These twin sons of the Sun God are regarded as the medicine men of the Gods.

The Sun is the source of light, heat and energy for this earth. The Sun regulates seasons and rains, it controls the cycle of day and night, thereby regulating all aspects of life on earth. It is a symbolic personified and visible form of Brahm, the sublime

form of the Supreme Being also known as the Viraat Purush, the vast and infinite macrocosmic form of Brahm. No life is imaginable without the Sun. Therefore, it is Pran personified. The Moon is lighted because of the Sun; the Moon has no light of its own but shines due the light of the Sun falling upon it. Therefore, the Moon showcases the magical power of the Sun to light up even distant bodies which have no light of their own. In other words, this Pran element represented by the Sun is capable of injecting life in an entity which has no life of its own, here the instance of the Moon. Since the Moon is lighted due to the inspiration provided by the Sun, it is like the Rayi. The Sun is the inspirer, and the Moon is the inspired one.

The Sun is an excellent example of the gross and the subtle aspects of Brahm. The eternal fire that is burning inside the disc of the Sun is the subtle aspect of Brahm; it provides the power and energy to the Sun to shine and burn. This fire is the 'inspirer' of the gross aspect of Brahm. The disc of the Sun is the 'inspired'—the heat, light and energy that the physical body of the Sun gives is due to the fire burning inside it, but no one can see this fire. The viewer sees the disc of the luminous Sun only which is the inspired aspect of the Sun. The hidden fire in the Sun is the Pran of the Sun because it lends the latter its worth and power to shine. This 'Pran' of the Sun, i.e. the fire burning inside the Sun is Brahm manifested in its subtle form. The visible disc of the Sun, with its dazzling brilliance and splendour, giving out heat, light and energy is the manifested aspect of Pran or Brahm; it is the gross body of Pran or Brahm. Hence, it is the Rayi of the Sun.

But the fire burning inside the Sun is not the complete picture of Brahm which is a transcendental entity that surpasses all definitions. At the most, the fire represents only one of the numerous virtues of Brahm. Therefore, to say that the hidden fire inside the Sun is Brahm personified in a subtle form is only a 'part or fraction' of the entire truth. In fact, the fire is a 'subtle image' of Brahm just like the external luminous disc of the Sun is the 'gross image' of Brahm. The fire embodies some of the grand virtues and characteristics of Brahm. The fire is the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm, and hence it is the 'Rayi' of Brahm because it is inspired by Brahm to burn and give out light and heat. In the context of the Sun, this fire becomes the 'inspirer' and the Sun becomes the 'inspired'. The Sun being a visible manifestation of the stupendous glories of Brahm is therefore the 'inspired' aspect of Brahm. The 'inspirer' Brahm is invisible. So when one worships the Sun as a manifestation of Brahm, he does so both in its subtle ('Amurta') and gross ('Murta') forms as mentioned in this verse. When the gross is worshipped, the subtle is automatically deemed to be worshipped. They both represent the 'inspired' aspect of the sublime Brahm that transcends both the gross and the subtle. Brahm is the universal 'inspirer' of both.

The Sun is at the core of life on earth; it helps in producing food crops of all varieties such as cereals, pulses, vegetables etc. that are eaten by the living being to survive and gain energy and strength. Without the light, energy and heat of the Sun there would be no vegetation on earth. Hence, the Sun is the 'inspirer' and the 'food' that is produced by the grace of the Sun is the inspired. When the food is eaten it gives the creature energy, strength and vitality. Therefore, that secret and invisible aspect of food that is used by the creature to derive energy, strength and vitality is the Pran of the food, while its external form, its external body is the gross aspect of this Pran. When this food is eaten and digested by the eater, the Pran is transferred to the eater in the form of the latter's own Pran, and the strength, energetic activity and vitality that the body of the eater shows is the inspired aspect of this Pran. The food therefore is the Pran, and the eater is the Rayi.

All the units of Nature that depend upon some Principal, such as the Moon depending for its light on the Sun, are called Rayi. These units may be visible (having a gross form) or invisible (having a subtle form).

In mythology, the Sun God revealed himself as Sugriv, the king of the monkey race, during Treta-Yug when Lord Ram incarnated, and as Karna during Dwapar when

Lord Krishna came as an incarnation of Vishnu. Sun God rides a chariot driven by Arun who is the son of Vintaa (his mother) and the elder brother of Garud, the legendary heron or eagle who is the mount of Lord Vishnu. The seven horses of the chariot represent the seven colours of the Sun's light. He is constantly on the move and controls and regulates the seasons, months, solstice and year.

The Surya Mandal, i.e. the divine abode of the Sun God, has been narrated in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 10, verse nos. 1-23. It is also referred to in the Tripadvibhuti Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 as falling in the path of a spiritual aspirant who, upon leaving his gross body, is going astride the Garud (the divine vehicle of Vishnu which is represented by the OM Mantra here) through the path of the sky to the heaven where Lord Vishnu lives.

Atharva Veda's *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 28 describes why Aditya or the Sun God is worshipped by wise men. "Aditya (the Sun) illuminates the world (i.e. it provides the world its light, life, energy, heat and dynamism). This is why Aditya is worshipped and honoured by wise and erudite persons who seek purity and knowledge.

[The Sun gives 'light' and removes 'darkness'. In other words, it grants knowledge and wisdom by removing the darkness of delusions and ignorance. Since the celestial Sun is employed as a metaphor for Brahm and the Atma, it follows that one meditates and contemplates upon the latter two entities to attain true spiritual knowledge and enlightenment that would remove one's darkness caused by worldly delusions, and which is the cause of all his fears and perplexities.] (28)."

According to Yoga Upanishads, the Sun God has his symbolic presence in the navel of the body in the Nabhi Chakra or the Manipur Chakra, and as the fire element in the Mooladhar Chakra, the Swadhisthan Chakra and the Kundalini. The dynamic energy of the sun represented by its life-giving powers is revealed in the form of consciousness that flows in the Pingla Naadi, the nerve passing through the right nostril.

The *Akshu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition lists some of the virtues of the Sun God in its Canto 1, verse no. 1 which is exclusively dedicated to his grand virtues as follows—he provides the creature with the ability to see; he lights up the world for him; he provides the creation with its life and sustains it; he moves across the sky with his army of light rays to protect the world from darkness; he personifies the three basic Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama much like Brahm; he takes the creature away from darkness representing delusions and ignorance towards light symbolising wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment; he is like the Swan—pure and immaculate; he is the bearer of life; he is the Jatveda (one having whatever is born or created as his property; the all-possessor; one who knows everything and is known by all creation; the word is usually applied as an epithet for the eternal fire element of which the sun is a visible manifestation and container); he is as intrinsically valuable as molten and purified gold; he is Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance for a noble cause) personified; he is the emperor of creation and is crowned with a glittering crown and wears an equally glittering robe consisting of rays of the sunlight; he is the son of Aditi, the mother of Gods, and he lives as 'sight' in our eyes.

Aditya or the Sun God, or his visible form as the celestial Sun, has been repeatedly regarded by the Upanishads as a visible *manifestation of the Viraat Purush* who himself is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. For example, Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad—1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15; Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is the *eye* of the Supreme Being—refer Aiteriyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and finds his abode in the creature's eye—refer Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

The *Prashna Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6, 8 describes the Sun God as the *Pran*—the vital life giving factor in creation, the life consciousness, and in Canto 1, verse nos. 9, 12-15 as *Prajapati*—the creator, motivator, nourisher, sustainer, protector and caretaker of the subjects of this creation. He is called the Fire God or the Vaishwanar Agni, the Viraat Purush, the Pran or life consciousness that supports all life in this world—Canto 1, verse no. 7.

The *Akchu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is fully dedicated to the Sun God. It has two parts—in its Canto 1 sage Sankriti offers prayers to the Sun God, and Canto 2 contains the metaphysical and spiritual teachings of the Sun God for the benefit of the sage.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1, says that the Sun God is known as 'Mitra', literally meaning a friend. This is because the Sun God's benevolence and life-sustaining abilities make him a fast friend of every single living being in creation. He fosters life and is a friend of life rather than being its enemy by annihilating it. He helps the world to develop and grow as well as to acquire its stupendous magnificence and glory—refer *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is also known as 'Savita'—refer *Savitru-panishad* of Sam Veda tradition, and *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, Canto 2 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

The *Narayan Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in *Brahmo-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/27 says that Surya or the Sun God is a manifestation of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified.

The Sun God is one of the ten Lokpals or custodians of the world because all forms of life on earth revolve around the benevolence of the Sun.

'Aditya' or the Sun God appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda-- 1/41/4-6; 2/27; 8/47/14-18; 10/185; Sam Veda—395; 397; Yajur Veda—23/5; 34/54; Atharva Veda—5/3/9-10; 16/3.

The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 11 describes the great Mantra of the Sun God.

The *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 4 asserts that the supreme Brahm is comparable to the celestial Sun or Aditya in its splendour and visible glory.]

4. I bow most reverentially before Lord Aditya¹ (the Sun God). You are evidently the one who inspires all activities and the deeds done by all living beings. You are the visible manifestation of the Trinity Gods such as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, nourisher and protector, and Rudra the concluder of creation. You are a personified form of the four Vedas, viz. the Rig, the Yajur, the Sam and the Atharva. Therefore, you are an evident revelation of the Chandas (because the Vedas are composed in Chandas which are special poetical styles in which their hymns are composed) (4).

[Note—¹Aditya— According to mythology, there are said to be *twelve Adityas* which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the

form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/34 says that the Adityas are none but manifestations of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

According to *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad* 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyawalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man.

Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation.

According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata, Arayama, Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta and Vishnu.

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as *Dhata* during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as *Aryama* during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as *Mitra* during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as *Varun* during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as *Indra* during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as *Vivaswan* during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as *Pusha* during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as *Kratu* during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as *Anshu* during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as *Bhag* during the tenth Hindu month of Pausa also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as *Twasta* during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as *Vishnu* during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

Since the Sun God is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Viraat Purush, he is like an Emperor who, during his sojourn across the sky which is like his vast realm, is accompanied by many sages called Rishis, celestial courtesans called

Apsaras, celestial musicians called Gandharvas, servants called Rakshas or demons, guards known as Bhalls, and serpents called Naags. The Rishis walk in the front singing the Lord's glories in sacred hymns; the Apsaras dance to the music scores by Gandharvas; the Rakshas (demons) push the chariot from rear; the Bhalls take care of the chariot and guide it along, while the Naags pull it forward.

These attendants are also different like the forms in which the Sun God is worshipped in different months as described above. The list is outlined month-wise in the following sequence—Rishi, Apsara, Gandharva, Raksha, Bhalla and Naag.

- (1) The month of Chaitra—Rishi is Pulastya; Apsara is Kritsthal; Gandharva is Tumburu; Raksha is Heti; Bhalla is Rathkrit; and Naag is Vasuki.
- (2) The month of Vaishakha—Rishi is Pulaha; Apsara is Punjiksthal; Gandharva is Narad; Raksha is Praheti; Bhalla is Ojaha; and Naag is Kachaneer.
- (3) The month of Jyestha—Rishi is Atri; Apsara is Menaka; Gandharva is Hahaa; Raksha is Paurusheya; Bhalla is Rathaswan; and Naag is Takshak.
- (4) The month of Ashadha—Rishi is Vashishta; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Huhu; Raksha is Shukra; Bhalla is Chitraswan; and Naag is Sahajanya.
- (5) The month of Sravan—Rishi is Angira; Apsara is Pramlocha; Gandharva is Vishwaivasu; Raksha is Varya; Bhalla is Srota; and Naag is Elapatra.
- (6) The month of Bhadrapad—Rishi is Bhrgu; Apsara is Anumlocha; Gandharva is Ugrasen; Raksha is Vyagha; Bhalla is Aasaan; and Naag is Shankhapal.
- (7) The month of Ashwin—Rishi is Gautam; Apsara is Ghritaachi; Gandharva is Dhananjay; Raksha is Vaat; Bhalla is Suruchi; and Naag is Sushen.
- (8) The month of Kartik—Rishi is Bhardwaj; Apsara is Varchaa; Gandharva is Parjanya; Raksha is Senjit; Bhalla is Vishwa; and Naag is Earaawat.
- (9) The month of Margashirsha—Rishi is Kashyap; Apsara is Urvashi; Gandharva is Ritsen; Raksha is Vidyuchhatru; Bhalla is Taksharya; and Naag is Maashankha.
- (10) The month of Paush—Rishi is Aayu; Apsara is Purvachitti; Gandharva is Sfurja; Raksha is Arishtanemi; Bhalla is Uurna or Oorna; and Naag is Karkotak.
- (11) The month of Magh—Rishi is Jamdagni also known as Richik-tanaya; Apsara is Tilottama; Gandharva is Shatjit; Raksha is Brahmapet; Bhalla is Dhritrashttra; and Naag is Kambal.
- (12) The month of Phalgun—Rishi is Vishwamitra; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Suryavarchaa; Raksha is Makhaapet; Bhalla is Satyajit; and Naag is Aswatar.

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Adityas, along with the Vasus and Rudras etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

The *Devi Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 4 says that the Adityas or the various forms of the Sun God are manifestations of the Mother Goddess, who actually represents the dynamism of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess is the energy, authority and powers of Brahm that are employed by the latter to create and control this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. The Aditya or the Sun God is this dynamism of Brahm revealed at the macrocosmic level.

The Sun is said to have *twelve Kalaas* (shapes, forms, dimensions or aspects) and the Sun with each Kalaa would therefore be known by that name. They are called 'Dwaadash Aditya', meaning the twelve forms in which the Sun God is known. They are the following—Tapini, Taapini, Dhumraa, Jwaalini, Ruchi, Shushumna, Bhogadaa, Vishwaa, Bodhini, Dhaarini and Kshamaa.

That is why lord Ram was said to belong to the solar race because he had twelve Kalaas possessed by the Sun. There is an obvious parallel here.

The *eight Adityas*—According to the Taittiriya Brahman, 1/1/9/1 gives the name of only eight Adityas—(i) Mitra, (ii) Varun (iii) Aryaman (iv) Ansha (v) Bhag (vi) Dhaata (vii) Indra, (viii) Vivaswan.]

5. It is from Aditya (the Sun God) that the primary elements of creation such as wind or air, earth, water and fire as well as light were born or created. The sky and directions also have their origin in Aditya. [These primary elements of creation owe their existence to the Sun.]

It is from Aditya that the Gods and the Vedas have emerged.

It is Aditya that heats up the universe in the sense that the former keeps the latter warm and provides it with its energy, vitality, strength and dynamism.

It is Aditya that is manifested in the form of the four aspects of the Anthakaran (the subtle aspects of the inner-self)—i.e. the Mana (subtle mind and subtle heart), Buddhi or intellect, Chitta or the mind and the sub-conscious, and Ahankar or pride and ego¹.

It is Aditya that is present in the form of the four vital winds called Pran that sustain and foster life in all living beings in this creation—viz. the Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana, and Vyan².

It is Aditya (i.e. the dynamic but subtle life-infusing energy) that keeps the five organs of perception in the body active and alive. These organs are ears (that hear), skin (that feels), eyes (that see), tongue (that tastes and speaks), and nose (that smells and breathes).

It is Aditya that has revealed itself in the form of the five Tanmatras of the five organs of perception, or the active functions carried out by these five sense organs of perception—such as speech or voice (which relates to the ears because it is the ear that hears the word that is being spoken), touch and feeling (which relates to the skin), form, colour and shape (which relates to the eyes), taste (which relates to the tongue), and smell (which relates to the nose).

It is Aditya that has revealed itself in the form of the five Tanmatras of the five organs of action, or the active functions carried out by these five sense organs of action—such as the function of speech or voice which relates to the mouth (because it is the mouth through which a creature speaks), the function of taking, receiving or accepting anything which relates to the hands (because it is the hand by which a creature takes or receives or accepts anything), the function of going somewhere or the function of mobility which relates to the legs (because it is the leg which helps a creature to move and go to the desired destination), the function of excretion or elimination of waste from the body which relate to the excretory organs (because it is the anus and urinary organs which help a creature to remove waste products from the body), and the function of deriving pleasure which relates to the genital organ (because it is through this organ that a creature enjoys the immense pleasure that accompanies sex).

It is Aditya that is an embodiment of the virtues of Anand (bliss and happiness), Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment), and Vigyan (analytical or higher level of Gyan)³ (5).

[Note—¹The four aspects of the *Antahakaran*—References: (i) Atharva Veda = Tripavibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 11-12; Canto 5, paragraph nos. 10-11 (how to clean the Antahakaran). (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shaarirak Upanishad, verse no. 4. (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda = Trishikhi Brahman Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6; Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9; Canto 2, verse no. 3.

This is the subtle body of the creature consisting of four components such as the mind (Mana), the intellect (Buddhi), the faculty of reasoning, thought, discrimination, understanding and the ability to pay attention and focus the mind and intellect on any

subject (Chitta), and the notion of ego, pride and vanity, and their attendant arrogance and haughtiness (Ahankar).

The word *Antahakaran* literally means the ‘inner instrument’ of the creature by which his mind works and receives the world. The word has two components—viz. ‘Antaha’ meaning ‘inner’, and ‘Karan’ meaning ‘instrument that causes the mind to work’. The external organs of the body such as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which are the organs of perception physically receive the inputs from the external world, but their actual functioning is due to this Antahakaran or the inner instrument of the subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect complex because if the latter malfunctions the former are useless.

Out the three states of existence of the creature, viz. the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states, the mind is active in the first two states only, and therefore the Antahakaran is related to only the first two states of existence. But even here its main field of activity is internal and not external as is implied in the word ‘Antaha’ itself which means ‘inner’. Therefore, the external organs of the body such as the organs of perception and action are only subsidiary and play an ancillary role only vis-à-vis the activity of the ‘inner self’ consisting of the mind, intellect and sub-conscious as well as the subtle heart which is the seat of various sentiments and emotions. This is simply because the inner self receives inputs from the outside world through the instrument of the external organs, and all the activity of the inner self in relation to the world in which the creature lives depend upon these external organs directly or indirectly.

The Antahakaran functions in four different ways and gets four different names according to these four functions. (1) It is called Chitta or sub-conscious mind and its ability to receive information and remember while performing the function of reception and retention. (2) It is called Mana or mind when it performs the function of questioning, doubting and willing. (3) It is called Buddhi or intellect when deducing, deciding and determining. And (4) it is called Ahankar or ego, self pride, arrogance of knowledge when it identifies itself with each of these functions—when it thinks that it has the ability to remember, to question and debate, to decide and will.

The word would therefore briefly mean the inner self of the creature consisting of the subtle body rather than the outer self consisting of the gross body. It is said to be one of the 19 Tattwas or essential elements that came into being at the very commencement of creation. According to the *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 4, these 19 Tattwas are as follows—five organs of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin) + five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and genital) + five Prans or vital winds or airs (Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyan) + four Antahakarans (Mana, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankar) = nineteen.

Depending upon how one interprets the word ‘Antahakaran’, it is said to have one, two, four or five components.

The Antahakaran *one dimension or aspect* is called the Mana, but this Mana itself has two subtler aspects—viz. the mind and the heart because the notion of Mana as it affects the inner self of the creature revolves around the various tugs, pulls, pushes and prodding that the different hues of character traits such as emotions, sentiments, impulsiveness, spontaneity etc. exert on the creature. The word ‘Mana’ cannot be restricted to the dictionary version of the term as meaning only the mind, because the heart plays an equal important role in the entire setup. This fact has been elaborately described in Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse nos. 101-102.

The Antahakaran with *four dimensions* is described in Shaarirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 4. These four dimensions are Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankar or Abhiman (pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, vanity, false self-importance etc.). Again it would be noted that the subtle component of the heart play a secret role in this setup

because the ingredient of pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance along with their sentimental and emotional quotient are very closely related with the heart.

The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 5, verse no. 24 describes four Vrittis that affect a man's behaviour, thoughts, temperaments and deeds. These are also called the four Anthakaran.

The Anthakaran with *five dimensions or aspects* is described in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6, and in Paingalo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, and in Canto 2, verse no. 3—both of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. The five components of Anthakaran are—(i) Mana (mind), (ii) Buddhi (intellect), (iii) Chitta (the faculty of concentration and memory; knowledge and consciousness), (iv) Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance), and (v) Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature) which decide the basic nature of a person and the way he would react to a given circumstance, the way he would deal, behave and interact with the world, the way he would interpret things, the way he thinks, the things that would appeal to him and the things he would abhor etc.—all depends upon the mental setup tinged with the fundamental character traits that are firmly ingrained in him.

Since the mind, intellect and the sub-conscious are involved in the definition of Anthakaran, it would follow that the following too would be included as the five components of Anthakaran—(i) Praman—knowledge that helps to establish the truth; (ii) Viparyaya—ignorance, delusions, illusions such as imagining a snake in a piece of rope; this is erroneous knowledge; (iii) Vikalp—alternatives; that knowledge which is acquired by hearing of it but may not present the correct picture, such as for example a wooden puppet—there seems an apparent difference between plain wood and the puppet, but they are basically the same and defined with the same word 'wood'; this knowledge is neither true nor false for to say that the puppet is different from an ordinary piece of wood because of its distinctive shape and value would be as much true as saying that it is plain wood; (iv) Nidra—meaning sleep; when a man remains oblivious of any truth just like anything gets hidden in darkness though it is very much there, that man is likened to a man sleeping soundly in spite of the goings on around him and therefore remaining unaware of them; and (v) Smriti—literally meaning memory; it refers to that knowledge which is based on experience and witnessing so that it is etched in memory; such knowledge becomes robust and gets soundly established in mind with the passage of time.

²The functions of the five vital winds are briefly as follows—(1) Pran— this is the main vital wind and usually refers to the breath without which life is not possible; it is the vital wind located in the upper part of the body. It is the wind that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without this wind infusing life in the body no other wind would be of any significance to the creature. It is present in the mouth, nose, heart, navel, big toe of the leg. (2) Apaana—this is the wind that passes down the intestines, and is responsible for ingestion of food, its digestion in the intestines and the final excretion of the waste product from the body—its grosser content through the anus and its fluid contents through the urinary system of the kidneys. This is the wind that moves down in the body and is chiefly located in the lower part of the body—in the intestines and anus, lower abdomen, thighs, knees. (3) Samaana—it is uniformly present throughout the body and as the name itself suggests it is responsible for uniform pressure and balance in the body besides equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body by maintaining proper circulation of blood. Therefore its functions somewhat resembles that of Vyan wind. It is said to be especially present in the ears which are said to be the specialized playing field for the Samaana wind as it helps maintain balance in the body through the semi-circular canals in the ears. It also helps to coordinate the ears and the intellect because the latter would base its decisions on what it hears with the aid of the ears. (4) Udaana—this is the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it

also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough. It is predominantly present in the hands, legs and the various joints of the body. (5) Vyan—this wind helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body as well as to ensure equal distribution of nutrients in the body by maintaining circulation. Hence, it works in close coordination with the Samaan wind. It also helps to control the functioning of the other winds. It is located in the ears, thighs, waist region, heels, shoulders and throat. Refer Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-7.

³Aditya or the Sun God is a brilliant source of life in this creation. Without the Sun this world would be enveloped in a dense shroud of darkness. 'Light' is a term used for wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment. 'Darkness' on the other hand stands for ignorance and delusions. Knowledge removes all kinds of fears arising from ignorance and uncertainty which create confusion, consternation, perplexity and confoundedness in the creature.

Just like the brilliant light of the Sun removes the darkness of the night, the light of knowledge and wisdom removes all darkness of ignorance and delusions.]

6. I bow most reverentially before the Sun God who is like a dear friend for me (because he takes good care of me and of my welfare). Protect me from death (and its horrors and accompanying fears).

[The worshipper requests the Sun God to bless him with a long, healthy and fruitful life. All living beings are mortal, so even to think that a creature would become immortal by praying to any God is a foolhardy proposition. The basic idea is lead a healthy and productive life till the end. When a man leads an auspicious life governed by the laws of Dharma, i.e. a life that is righteous, noble and correct, then his honourable fame and pleasant memory lasts even after his gross body perishes or is shed at the time of its physical death. This is equivalent to his becoming immortal. On the other hand, if a man leads an ignoble life that is dominated by evil and preponderance of negativity, then obviously he is best forgotten as soon as his gross body dies, and this is tantamount to his actually dying and fading away from the memory of the society.

The Sun God provides energy, vitality and strength to the living being. Even modern science has established that sunlight is absolutely essential for the body because, amongst so many other reasons, one is to help the body to produce Vitamin D which is necessary for the strength of the bones. All living beings depend directly or indirectly upon the plants for their food, and plants produce food by the chemical process called 'photosynthesis', which again directly depends upon sunlight. The worshipper is requesting the Sun God to grant him a disease free and healthy life, a strong and active body, and a mind that is not only agile and intelligent but is inspired towards noble, auspicious and righteous path, a path shown by the eternal, fluorescent as well as incandescent source of brilliant light known as the 'Sun'.]

I bow most reverentially before the Sun God who is the cause for this world coming into being (as well as responsible for its sustenance, well-being, nourishment and protection), and who is magnificently radiant and brilliantly splendid.

[The brilliance and dazzle of the Sun is a measure of the intensity and profundity of the glory and divinity of Brahm, the Supreme Being and the Supreme Father, from whom the entire creation has come into being. This is because the Sun is a visible manifestation of Brahm. Just as nothing supersedes the brilliance and splendour of the Sun, nothing is greater than the virtues and glories of Brahm.]

It is due to the Sun that all living beings, whether they are able to move or not (i.e. animate or inanimate), have come into being, and it is the Sun that sustains,

nourishes, takes good care of and protects them. At the end, it is in the Sun that this creation collapses and dissolves.

[In this cosmic visualization of creation, the Sun stands as a visible manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. Since the creation has emerged from Brahm, it is sustained by Brahm, and it merges with Brahm in the end, it follows that it is deemed to have emerged in the presence of the Sun, is sustained by the Sun, and it ultimately dies in the presence of the Sun. This is why cremation is done by Hindus only during the day time in the presence of the Sun God.

Modern science has proved that energy changes its form but never vanishes or perishes. For instance, the electric energy is converted to light and heat in the electric bulb, and into kinetic and heat energy in an electric motor. Likewise, the dynamic life-sustaining energy and vitality of the Sun is transferred into the gross body of the creature when he takes birth, and is reversed at the time of his death.

The visible Sun in the sky is a tangible form of Brahm, and it suits this description because one cannot actually 'see' the blazing Sun with the gross organ of sight known as the eye without getting blinded just like it is impossible to actually 'see' Brahm with naked eyes. Brahm is 'indirectly seen' by way of experiencing the glory of pure consciousness that comes with the inner sight of wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation even as the presence and existence of the celestial Sun can be witnessed by looking at it with closed eyes when its blazing splendour is reflected as a radiant glow which lights up the inner side of the closed eyelids. The entire living world around us is directly dependant upon the Sun, and it is impossible to imagine life without the Sun and its light, energy and heat.]

I am a personification of the Sun God.

[Here, the term 'I' refers to the pure and truthful 'self'—i.e. the Atma. Hence, this declaration means that the Sun is a visible image of the Atma which is the essence of life in this creation in the form of cosmic Consciousness that infuses life, vitality and dynamism in this creation, and signifies the latter's worth, importance, meaning and essence.

This statement is similar to and reflective of the other Maha-Vakyas or the great sayings of the scriptures in relation to Brahm and the enlightened view of a self-realised man who declares 'I am a personification of Brahm'. Since the Sun God is a symbolic embodiment of the glorious virtues of Brahm as manifested not only in the Sun's dazzling splendour and brilliant radiance but also in its ability to foster and protect life on earth, it is indeed an honest and truthful statement by a self-realised man when he declares 'I am a personification of the Sun God'.

It must be borne in mind here that the Sun that is being referred to here is not the gross physical sun that is one of the millions of celestial stars in the universe, but an entity that symbolically stands as a visible image of Brahm. Ancient sages and seers had chosen the Sun to represent Brahm as the former is the most brilliant and splendorous entity in the known world that could be singled out and chosen to represent a divine entity known as Brahm that is equally brilliant and splendorous. No other object matched the Sun in brilliance, radiance and splendour that it could be selected to represent Brahm.]

The Lord known as Savita (the Sun God) is my eyes.

[This alludes to the fact that the Sun is the symbolic eye of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross form of the supreme Brahm. It is this Viraat Purush who had transformed or metamorphosed himself as all living beings in creation. Therefore, the individual worshipper is one single unit of the myriad and uncountable individual microcosmic forms of the Viraat Purush, and by corollary the eye of this single

individual worshipper is a miniature form of the celestial Sun that represents the eye of the Viraat Purush.]

The Sun God is indeed the Lord famed by the name of 'Parvat' who has revealed himself as the eye.

[The word 'Parvat' literally means a mountain. Here it implies that the Sun is a cosmic source and a fountainhead of immense brilliant light which enables the creature to see the world in all directions. No other celestial entity is as eternal and brilliant a source of light as is the Sun. This is proved by the fact that the world is invisible during the darkness of the night when the Sun is not present though the moon and the stars are. All the lights of a big city shining simultaneously are not able to remove even a fraction of the darkness of the night which a single Sun is able to do even when it has still not come above the horizon at the time of dawn.

Hence, the 'eye' which stands for the Sun is not the gross organ of the body known as the physical eye, but the dynamic ability of the creature to perceive things with a form, colour and shape. The magical ability of the gross organ of the eye to 'see' and become aware of the world is regarded as a revelation of the Sun God to light up the world for the Atma which lives in the gross body. The Atma, the 'self' of the creature, would not be able to see the outside world without the help of the ability of the eye to 'see' just like the case of the world being not visible during the night when the Sun is absent. Since the individual creature is an image of the Viraat Purush, his eye is also an image of the Sun which is the eye of the Viraat Purush.]

Again, since the Sun is a metaphor for the eclectic virtues of wisdom, erudition, sagacity and knowledge, it follows that the ability of the creature to peer deep into the metaphysical aspects of creation and become aware of the hidden truth that cannot be seen by the external gross organ of sight known as the physical eye is the 'actual seeing' of this world. It is the inner-sight of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment that is a symbolic and metaphoric revelation of the Sun God inside the creature. Here, the word 'seeing' or 'the faculty of sight' do not refer to the gross viewing of the physical world of material sense objects, but refers to the awareness and realisation of the subtle and sublime aspects of life that deal with the absolute spiritual 'truth' that is hidden behind its exterior façade.]

Let the Lord known as Aditya who bears (sustains, nourishes, takes care of, and protects) all the living beings enable my eyes to see.

I know and am well acquainted with Aditya, the Sun God. I remember and meditate upon Lord Sun who is adorned by thousands of brilliant rays of light.

Let that Sun God inspire us and takes us forward.

Lord Savita (the Sun God) is present everywhere—in the front and the rear; in the north and the left direction, as well as in the south and the right direction.

Let Lord Savita create all things needed by me.

Let Lord Savita give me a long life (6).

7. 'OM' is the monosyllabic Mantra (divine word) representing the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. 'Ghrini' and 'Surya' are the two words, each having two letters or syllables. [Ghri + Ni = 2; Su + Rya = 2. The word 'Ghrini' means sunlight, heat, ray of light, wave of heat, light and energy. The word 'Surya' means Sun.] And finally, the word 'Aditya' has three letters or syllables. [Aa + Di + Tya = 3. The word Aditya refers to the Sun God.]

With the help of these words one derives the great eight-lettered Mantra known as the 'Suryaashtakshar Mantra' dedicated to the Sun God. [The word 'Ashtak' means eight. Hence, 'Suryaashtakshar' means a phrase (Mantra) having eight

letters or syllables. This eight-letter Mantra is therefore ‘OM Ghrini Surya Aditya’. It briefly means—‘Salutations to Brahm represented by the word OM. Your radiance and splendour are revealed in the form of the brilliant rays of the Sun and its heat, light and dynamism. You have revealed yourself as the visible celestial Sun, as well as the God known as Aditya in the heavens.’] (7).

8. A person who does Japa with this Mantra daily (i.e. who repeats this Mantra during meditation as a routine practice) is truly called a Brahmin (i.e. a wise and learned man). One is freed from the horrors and fears of great troubles and tribulations by doing Japa with this Mantra while facing the Sun. His poverty is eliminated. He is pardoned from the evil consequences or sin of eating things not meant to be eaten. He is exonerated from the sins of going on the wrong path (i.e. following a path or doing deeds in life that are regarded as sinful, pervert, inauspicious, improper and unrighteous). He is forgiven for speaking things not worthy of being spoken, such as telling lies, speaking ill of others, tattling, using uncouth words, being abusive, speaking when not required to do so, being insincere and dishonest in what one says, pretensions, boastfulness, conceit and deceit in the spoken word etc.

This Upanishad should be read as a prayer during the noon while sitting facing the Sun. A person who does this is immediately freed from the five horrible sins that he might have committed. [The five great sins are the following:- killing of a Brahmin, drinking wine, theft, having sex with the wife of one’s teacher, having lustful feelings for one’s daughter, and to keep company of those who indulge in any of these sins.]

This eclectic and divine knowledge is known as ‘Savitri Vidya’—literally meaning the profound knowledge pertaining to the radiance, splendour, glory, magnificence, light, energy and dynamism of Savita or the Sun God. It should not unnecessarily be praised in front of ineligible and incompetent people (because they would only ridicule it).

The man who is wise enough to read it or recite it in the morning hours is indeed fortunate and lucky. He is blessed with wealth in the form of abundance of livestock as well as the knowledge of the Vedas (scriptures). [That is, he gets respect and fame that comes with acquisition of material prosperity (symbolized by abundance of livestock) and knowledge of the primary scriptures known as the Vedas.

If this Upanishad is read or recited thrice daily, at dawn, noon and dusk, the person is rewarded with the auspicious effects equivalent to performing hundreds of fire sacrifices.

A person who offers worship to the Sun God using the Mantras incorporated in this Upanishad during the period when the Sun is in the asterism known as the Hasta (which falls roughly in the Hindu month of Ashwin, corresponding to the month of October)—is able to conquer or overcome death.

A person who is an expert of this Upanishad and its metaphysical import is also able to conquer or overcome death.

This is the grand Upanishad and its secret knowledge. Amen! (8).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 18

Atma Upanishad/Atmo-panishad

This Upanishad is dedicated exclusively to the theme of the Atma, the cosmic Consciousness that is at the root of life in the entire creation. The Upanishad expounds upon the three aspects of the Atma which is a cosmic entity that is primarily non-dual, immanent, omnipresent, single (i.e. without any company), immutable, indivisible, universal and uniformly one and wholesome as well as the common denominator in all units and aspects of this creation.

The *first* aspect of this universal Consciousness is known as the 'Atma'. The Atma is that aspect of creation which is its quintessential truth and soul, and without which this creation and its constituent units would have neither any meaning nor any substance whatsoever. The Atma is the cosmic Consciousness that pervades in each and every single unit or aspect of this living world, and without which this existence with all its myriad forms, its magnificent varieties, its stupendous charms and beauty, and its vibrant dynamism would just have no meaning or relevance. Without the Atma the gross body of the individual Jiva, the living being or the creature, would not be alive and active; the body and its components would be dead had there been no consciousness in them. Hence, broadly speaking, the term 'Atma' is applied to the soul of existence; it is synonymous with life and its magnificence, beauty, vitality, dynamism, energy and vibrancy. It is like the 'atom' in the physical sciences which is at the core of all elements in this creation, and nothing is imaginable without the atom.

The *second* aspect of the cosmic Consciousness is known as the 'Antaraatma'. This word has two parts—viz. 'Anatar' meaning inner or hidden or secret, and 'Atma' meaning of course the universal consciousness known as the soul. Therefore, the Antaraatma (or Antar-Atma) is that aspect of the cosmic and universal Consciousness that lives inside the body of an individual creature as his 'true self'. Generally speaking, when we use the term 'soul' vis-à-vis a living being, it is the Antaraatma that we refer to, because it is the consciousness residing inside the gross body of the individual that gives the individual his unique identity.

Therefore, whereas the plants also have the Atma in them for the simple reason that all plants are part of the same living creation to which the animals belong. In practice there is virtually no difference between the 'Atma' and the 'Antaraatma' because the latter means the former that lives inside the subtle space of the creature's body as his 'self'. When we talk of 'the voice of conscience', we mean the voice of the Antaraatma because it is the person's inner voice or inner self speaking to his mind and intellect at a subtle level of existence.

Further, if the Atma lends consciousness or life to the gross and inane body and its individual organs of action and perception, it is the Antaraatma which lives inside the same body as the 'self' of the individual creature. It is just like the case of assigning different names to the same sky element or the air element depending upon the function they perform or their existential circumstances. For instance, the sky inside the mud-pitcher is known as the 'Ghata-kash' ('Ghat' = pitcher; 'Akash' = sky) and the space within the walls of a monastery is known as the 'Matha-kash' ('Math' = monastery; 'Akash' = sky). Similarly, the same air element is known as 'Pran', 'Apan', 'Vyan', 'Udan', 'Samaan' etc. depending upon the location in the body and the different functions the air performs.

The above two terms used for the universal cosmic Consciousness, viz. the Atma and the Antaraatma, pertain to the grosser level of creation because they relate to the physical world limited to the creation that is of any relevance as far as the individual creature is concerned, and with which he is directly related. But it must be remembered that this Consciousness is 'universal, unbound, cosmic, ethereal, infinite, eternal, indivisible, immutable, immanent, omnipresent and all-pervading. Therefore surely there is definite *third* dimension to it—and this is the supreme transcendental Atma that is all-encompassing and almighty. This 'supreme transcendental and almighty Atma is known as the 'Param-Atma' or 'Parmatma' ('Param' = supreme, transcendental and one above or beyond which nothing exists). This Parmatma is Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The Parmatma is the cosmic and universal aspect of the Atma that is characterized by the grand virtues of being supreme, almighty and transcendental. The Parmatma is the grand Authority of creation.

The cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm is established as being an entity that is beyond comprehension, definitions, attributes, qualities, forms and rational logic; it is very unique, one of its only kind, and highly paradoxical by nature. It cannot be seen, but everything that is seen is due to Brahm, and is a manifestation of Brahm. It cannot be comprehended, but all knowledge is a form of Brahm. It itself has no forms, but all things that have a form are one or the other forms of Brahm. It cannot be heard, but whatever is heard is the sound of Brahm. [This is where the concept of 'Shabda Brahm' comes into play.]

This Upanishad expounds the tenet of non-duality or oneness between the Atma and the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm, as well as the great metaphysical truth that whatever that exists in this creation at all levels, whether visible or invisible, whether microcosmic or macrocosmic, whether living or inane, is a manifestation of one single Brahm. It outlines the astounding but paradoxical virtues and qualities of Brahm that makes it so unique and unparalleled in creation.

The Upanishad establishes beyond doubt the truth of the existence of Brahm. It cites several examples and similes to help elucidate the principles of metaphysics that it propounds. For instance, it takes the example of the sun which does not diminish in its brilliance inspite of appearing to be darkened during the solar eclipse to establish that Brahm and Atma always remain eternally untainted and uniform even though one attributes it with so many changeable virtues and colourful characteristics, some positive and others negative, because of their association with this delusion and ignorance ridden gross world.

Other examples cited to emphasize this fact are the mistaking of a piece of rope for a snake, and the dead left-over cuticle of a snake to be a live serpent. Then it cites the case of a child playing with toys, forgetting its hunger or pain, to help understand how wise people remain engrossed or submerged in the thoughts of Brahm and the Atma inspite of the incessant restlessness, the flux, the miseries, the troubles and tribulations along with the upheaval of the topsy-turvy world surrounding them.

Hence, the only way to realise the true nature of the Atma is to free one's self from delusions and ignorance. When this happens, the creature is deemed to have obtained Mukti, or spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. This implies that he has obtained complete self-realisation whereby his one Atma is dissolved or merged with the cosmic Atma known as Brahm even as two samples of milk, oil or water become indistinguishable from one another when they are mixed together.

There is another Upanishad very similar to the present one, and it is called the ‘Atma Prabodha Upanishad’ as it teaches about the Atma and endeavours to make a spiritual aspirant enlightened about the sublime and eclectic concept of the Atma. It is included as Chapter no. 4 of volume no. 1 dealing with the Rig Veda Upanishads in this series.

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---Shanti Paath---

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1-A. The primordial Purush (i.e. the Supreme Being) who had no forms and attributes revealed himself in three forms, or he assumed a form which had three subtle aspects. These three forms are known as ‘Angiraa’—literally meaning a body with individual parts or organs or units. [‘Ang’ = body; ‘Angiraa’ = parts or units of the body just like sparkles of fire are called ‘Chingaari’.]

Therefore, the primary Purush—who is primarily non-dual, immutable, universal and one uniform whole—assumed three names depending upon the role he had to play in this creation. Each of these names is associated with a ‘form’ that has its own characteristic features, qualities and attributes. [A particular or specific name is assigned to anything that has a known specific form and a specific role. Anything that has no specific form or role cannot be given a specific name. For instance, ‘sky’ is an all-pervading, all-enclosing, immanent, indivisible and immutable element. But it is known by different names when it assumes different roles or forms—viz. ‘Ghat-aksh’ when it is present inside a clay pitcher, ‘Matha-kash’ when it is present inside the building of a monastery.]

These three forms of the cosmic Purush are known as the ‘Atma’, the ‘Antaraatma’, and the ‘Parmatma’. [It ought to be clearly understood here that the primary Purush being referred to is the supreme transcendental Brahm which is the cosmic Consciousness of creation. This ‘Consciousness’ is known as a ‘Purush’ because it lives inside this creation as its integral and inalienable part or component. It is like the case of the atom which lives as an integral and inseparable part of all things; if the atom is removed then the thing ceases to exist. Therefore, the Purush is the quintessential element that is the ‘soul and the spirit’ of everything in existence. No life is imaginable and tenable without the consciousness is soul that is also known as the Atma. It is ‘consciousness’ because without it life is not feasible and the creation dies.] (1-A).

[Note—The three aspects of the Atma are also described in Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 10-12.]

1-B. [Now, the distinctive features, the characteristic attributes and individual forms of these three aspects of the universal cosmic Purush, the Supreme Being known as Brahm, are being enumerated—]

The ‘Atma’ is that aspect of the cosmic Consciousness (known as Brahm or the supreme Purush) which has assumed or acquired a gross physical body having the following characteristic features—it has a skin, flesh, hairs, thumbs and toes, fingers, a spine that forms the rear part of the body, nails, knees, an abdomen, a navel, genital organs, waist, thighs, skull, eyebrows, forehead, arms, sides or flanks, a head, and

eyes. The Atma that has such a gross form is the one that goes on rotating in the endless cycle of birth and death. [It is because the Atma is virtually trapped in the cage of the gross body. It is much like the case of a free-flying bird voluntarily getting trapped in the snare of the bird catcher because of its greed for the bait laid out by him. The Atma too gets ensnared in the gross body because it wants to enjoy the material comforts and pleasures of the world, and the only way it can do so is by assuming a body, for it is through the organs of perception and action of this body that the world can be perceived and enjoyed.] (1-B).

1-C. Now, the subtle form of the same Atma which is distinct from its gross form is being described. It is called the 'Antaraatma' or the 'inner Atma', the 'inner-self'.

[The word 'inner-self' has two components—viz. 'inner' which literally refers to Atma that resides in the gross body as described in verse no. 1-B, and 'self' which refers to the fact that the Atma is the true identity of the creature. This Antaraatma is invisible as it is extremely subtle, and is hidden inside the grosser physical aspect of the Atma represented by the gross body. It represents all the subtle virtues and characteristic qualities that are inherent in any creature, and which together determine his overall personality and character. The Antaraatma defines the inherent and basic nature, inclination, temperament and thought processes of any given creature that mark the latter's subtle level of existence that is invisible to the naked eye as opposed to the gross aspects of his personality and characteristic features defined by the physical body that is visible.]

The 'Atma' is an all-pervading universal entity known as the 'cosmic Consciousness' that uniformly permeates throughout this creation and the living world. It gives life in the form of consciousness to all living beings, whether they live on the earth or in the sky. [The Atma is at the core of life, and in this sense it is like the atom in the physical sciences.]

The 'Antaraatma' is that aspect of the same cosmic Consciousness that resides inside the gross body of all living beings as their 'inner self'. This Antaraatma is the one that inspires or motivates the creature to do or not to do anything, and thereby regulate all his activities and deeds.

The Antaraatma is the Atma (pure consciousness) that lives in the subtle space of the gross body of the creature, a body that is made up of the 'earth element'.

It is the Antaraatma that exhibits emotions of either happiness or sorrows.

It is the Antaraatma that exhibits such characteristics as having Kaam (passions, lust, desires, yearnings) and Moha (attachments, infatuations, delusions).

It is the Antaraatma that has doubts and confusions, and it is the one that engages in debates and arguments. [This is because the Antaraatma is the 'true self' of the creature who has any doubt or confusion, or who engages in debates and discussions, and not the physical gross body which is not his 'true self'].

It is the Antaraatma that has a memory of past events, and is able to recall them. [Again this is due to the same reason that the Antaraatma is the 'true self' of the concerned creature who remembers anything of the past. The actual living entity that is recognized as the 'creature' is his Antaraatma, and not the physical body which harbours the mind and the sub-conscious that are merely instruments that the Antaraatma employs to remember and recall.]

It is the Antaraatma, as the living entity known as the creature, which distinguishes between a male and a female.

It is the Antaraatma that either makes a person magnanimous and charitable, or makes him miserly, of a selfish disposition, and greedy so much so that he has no regrets for usurping things belonging to others.

It is the Antaraatma that makes a man speak in different languages, and in different tones and tenors of speech. It makes him speak in different ways—such as in a whisper, speaking sweetly, softly and mildly, or in a shrill voice having a high pitch, or a voice that is grave and baritone, or in an irritable and angry voice full of rancour and spite, or scream either in pain or revulsion. It is the Antaraatma that expresses its feelings and emotions by way of the spoken word of grief, anguish, despair or sorrows on the one hand, and of cheerfulness, ecstasy, happiness and joy on the other hand.

It is the Antaraatma that makes a creature feel depressed or dejected on the one hand to such an extent that he sulks and loses all interest in life, or makes him exuberant, excited, exhilarated and ecstatic on the other hand so much so that he dances and sings with merriment and joyous abandonment.

It is the Antaraatma that thinks that it has an end, a beginning, and a course of growth and development. [This is because the Antaraatma, which is actually the pure conscious Atma that is the true self of the individual creature, becomes so much deluded by the virtue of its close association with the perishable and mortal gross body of the creature that it begins to identify its ‘self’ with the body, and in this process it forgets that it is the entity known as the Atma which is eternal, which remains steady, and which is unchanging. The Atma does not take a birth nor does it die because it is eternal and imperishable. The Atma is the spiritual ‘Truth’ of existence, and ‘Truth’ is something that remains steady, constant and eternal. Therefore, this statement that the Antaraatma thinks that it dies or has an end, that it takes a birth or has a beginning, and that it changes or grows and develops refers to the Atma that lives inside the gross body of the creature and has assumed the characteristics of the body. The very fact that the Atma begins to think that it has an end, it has a beginning, and it undergoes a change shows that it has undergone some sort of metamorphosis and has lost its pristine purity. This is because it becomes associated with the gross body which takes a birth, which develops and grows, and which dies.]

It is the Antaraatma that hears, smells, tastes, thinks, learns and knows, and does various deeds. [This statement reinforces the logic about the Antaraatma being that aspect of the Atma that has abandoned its subtle and sublime form as a pristine nature entity that is an ethereal Spirit and the cosmic Consciousness. Instead, it has assumed a grosser form of a body, the primary reason why the Atma is called the Antaraatma in the first place, and therefore begins to carry out the functions of the body—such as hearing, smelling, tasting, thinking, learning and doing deeds.]

In spite of all these shortcomings, the Antaraatma is known as the ‘Vigyan-Atma’—literally meaning the knowledgeable Atma, the Atma that is wise, all-knowing, omniscient, and enlightened. It is the one that not only hears but understands the real meaning and the intention of what he hears. It is the one that not only thinks but thinks wisely, righteously, intelligently and rationally. It is the one that not only reads the scriptures but understands their hidden meaning and intention. [This virtue of the Antaraatma of being wise and learned is due to the basic nature of the Atma which is nothing but pure and un-adulterated Consciousness. It is this aspect of the Atma that an ascetic or a wise man wishes to realise when he studies the scriptures, especially the Upanishads, and does meditation and contemplation. It is this aspect of the Atma that is understood and known by a self-realised and

enlightened man. It is this aspect of the Atma that distinguishes an ordinary creature from a highly wise and enlightened man.]

This wise, erudite, sagacious and intelligent aspect of the Antaraatma is the one which studies all the different scriptures and become learned in their philosophies and doctrines. It is the one that studies and learns the various branches of the scriptures—such as the Purans (ancient history), Nyaya (laws of conduct), Mimansa (thorough discussion and commentaries on the scriptures) and other limbs of scriptural study. It is this aspect of the Atma that actually hears them, understands them, accepts them and believes in them. It is the wise and intelligent Antaraatma that accomplishes stupendous feats in this life.

The Antaraatma is that aspect of the otherwise neutral and dispassionate Atma that develops some kind of attraction towards anything, or is inspired to do a thing because it finds it attractive and interesting (1-C).

1-D. That aspect of the Atma which is supreme and transcendental is known as the Parmatma. It is synonymous with Brahm which is 'Akshar'—i.e. a divine entity that is imperishable and eternal, as well as the one that is represented by the monosyllabic word OM that is known as the 'Akshar'. ['Akshar' means a letter as well as something that is imperishable.] It is this aspect of the Atma that is worthy of worship and honour.

This cosmic form of the Atma, the pure Consciousness, is known or attained by the means of the eight-fold path of Yoga (meditation). These eight means are the following—Pranayam (breath control), Pratyahar (control of the mind), Dharna (firmness of conviction and remaining steady in one's chosen path), Dhyana (contemplation and meditation on a chosen object), Samadhi (the trance-like state of transcendental existence), Yoga (physical exercises of meditation that bring about a coordination between the various vital winds, and helps one to establish a union between his individual 'self' with the cosmic Self known as Brahm), Anuman (imagination and deduction arrived at by analysis of available facts), Atma-Chintan (introspection, contemplation and deep pondering).

This cosmic form of the Atma is known as the Parmatma or the supreme Atma. It is also known as Brahm, the supreme transcendental Consciousness. It is as small as the seed of the huge banyan tree, is like a small grain of rice as compared to the whole crop, and is smaller than the hundredth-thousandth fraction of the tip of a hair follicle.

[In other words, the 'Consciousness' that is known by various names such as the Atma, Antaraatma and Parmatma is as small as the atom of an element in the field of physical science. The atom is the basic unit of all the elements in existence, and though it is itself extremely small and microscopic in form, it reveals itself in the form of huge things having magnificent and myriad shapes and sizes. The cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm is compared to the seed of the huge banyan tree because the tree is hidden inside the seed in a most subtle and microscopic form, and emerges from it in the form of a huge structure known as the banyan tree which finally perishes to leave its genes hidden inside the seed that produces a new generation of the banyan tree. Similarly, this creation has its subtle presence in Brahm, it emerges from Brahm, has the genes of Brahm in its every pore, and at the time of its conclusion it merges into Brahm, only to re-emerge from the same Brahm.

Just like the seed and the tree being intricately and inseparably related to each other, the cosmic Consciousness and the individual creature's 'self', the supreme

transcendental Brahm and the individual's Atma, the Parmatma and the Atma of creation are also inseparably linked with each other.

Again, the individual Atma (soul) of a creature is a representative of the cosmic Atma that lives in all the living beings in this creation. This universal truth is explained by the analogy of the Atma being like single grain of rice of a whole crop. All grains are alike; all the creatures are also alike because it is the same Atma that lives in them. The entire crop consists of individual units of the rice grain; the entire creation too consists of the individual creatures having the same Atma being present in them.

The Atma is miniscule and microscopic; it cannot be physically seen or measured or given a dimension just like the tip of the hair follicle.]

The irony is that while this Brahm is easily accessible to or attained by one person, it remains totally inaccessible to or unattained by another person inspite of the latter making the best of efforts to realise Brahm.

Brahm is never revealed in physical form, and hence it never dies. [Only things that are born or that make their presence in physical terms are destined to come to an end. Anything that is not born need not die.]

Brahm is neither dry nor succulent. It neither moves nor remains static. It does not shake or vibrate. It does not break up into parts. It is free from any specific Gunas (attributes, virtues, characteristics and qualities).

Brahm is the universal benchmark for Absolute Truth and Reality, and it cannot be measured against or compared with anything else. It is therefore one of its own kind, being matchless and unparalleled.

Brahm is the primary and most pure form of all the elements (Bhuts) in creation.

Brahm is a personified form of purity and immaculacy.

Brahm is the cosmic Atma or the universal Spirit or Soul that has no forms and attributes.

Brahm is one of its only kind, being non-dual and unparallel in creation.

Brahm is highly subtle, miniscule, microscopic and atomic in form.

Brahm is absolutely immaculate and pristine pure.

Brahm is faultless, taintless, uncorrupt, and without any blemishes and shortcomings.

Brahm has no word or sound by which it can be heard and known. Similarly, it cannot be felt by touching, cannot be seen because it has no physical gross form, cannot be perceived as some kind of taste, and has no smell that can be smelt.

Though Brahm is an eternal fount and an embodiment of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment), it is so neutral that it is deemed to exhibit no signs of Gyan.

Brahm is beyond the reach of imagination and thoughts.

Brahm has no desires, aspirations and expectations (because it is eternally fulfilled and contented).

Brahm is all-pervading, all-prevailing and omnipresent.

Brahm is an entity that is beyond comprehension; it is beyond the reach and purview of the mind and intellect. It is a supreme transcendental Atma about which nothing can be specifically or assertively said or ascertained.

Brahm is so holy and divine that it makes others, that are not holy and divine but with which it comes in contact, also holy and divine.

Brahm does no deeds.

This supreme Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness, the all-pervading Atma or the Supreme Being known as the Lord of creation called the Parmatma) has no world of its own (because it is formless and all-pervading; the entire creation is its abode). [The Sanskrit word for world is 'Sansar'—literally meaning something that is always on the move and is ever-changing. Therefore, Brahm has no Sansar in the sense that it is steady, unchanging and uniform.] (1-D).

1-E. This Brahm is a synonym of the Atma, the cosmic Consciousness. It is most immaculate and pristine pure. It is auspicious and a provider of all goodness and auspiciousness to others. It is only one and non-dual, being unparallel and without a second in creation. It is the universal and uniform Brahm which is all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-inclusive that is also known as the Atma, and vice versa (1-E).

2. It is Brahm that is manifested or revealed or visible in the form of this creation or world. Indeed, whatever is perceived, seen or known either out of wisdom and knowledge, or out of ignorance and delusions is nothing but this single Brahm in all these forms. Whatever distinctive forms that this basically uniform creation takes, distinctions that are created out of ignorance of the reality, or created out of wisdom when one is able to separate truth from falsehood, are nothing but Brahm (2).

3. It is Brahm that is visible in the form of a disciple as well as a teacher. [This is because the Atma in both of them is the same.]

In reality and truth, whatever that is seen, whatever that exists here, there and everywhere else, are nothing but the same Brahm in each of these individual and collective forms (3).

4. In fact there are no such separate concepts as Vidya (knowledge) and Avidya (ignorance). Similarly, there are no two distinctive possibilities of there actually being a world on the one hand, and there being no existence of the world at all on the other hand.

The essence of the matter is that Brahm can be known only when one becomes aware of the reality and the truth of creation (in the form of the all-pervading, invisible, formless, eternal, infinite, immutable, almighty and cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma). It is this 'Truth' that is the fundamental cause of creation; it is at the root of creation; it is the quintessence and the soul of creation (4).

5. 'This world is false'—this knowledge or realisation is in itself a provider of liberation from the shackle that tie the creature to this world. It is like the case when one sees a pot or pitcher in his front; he does not need any other proof of the pot's or pitcher's existence as he is seeing it himself first hand. Hence, when a person has become self-realised and understood the fact that besides the pure consciousness known as the Atma there is nothing that is spiritually true, he would not need any more convincing and prodding to treat the gross world, sans the Atma, as false.

[When he understands that this world is not true he would not be attracted to, tempted by and entangled in any of its material things or sense objects and their attractions and charms. Any wise man with basic intelligence would not like to deal with falsehoods and illusions. Therefore, this wisdom that the world is false and illusionary would automatically free him from remaining entangled in the world and tied down by the fetters represented by it and its temptations. No intelligent and wise man would like to deal with anything that has no permanence and truth.] (5).

6. Just like one not needing any proof to be convinced of the actual existence of anything that is clearly seen in front, one also does not need any proof to be convinced of the existence of the pure consciousness known as the Atma because it is clearly evident in all forms of life that are seen all around a wise and intelligent observer. This Atma is eternally and universally self-evident, self-illuminated and self-established. That is, since everything is a manifested form of Brahm, no separate or independent proof of the existence of Brahm, and by corollary the Atma, is needed. Both the Brahm and the Atma are self-proved.

[Since 'life' and 'consciousness' are synonymous with each other, since the Atma and Brahm are one and the same, because both the Atma and Brahm are synonymous with the cosmic and universal 'Consciousness', it logically follows that this 'living world', or world that has the universal factor of 'consciousness' in it, is an evident proof of the existence of the Atma and Brahm.

While the term 'Brahm' is applied to the universal Consciousness when we wish to speak of it at the macrocosmic level or plane of existence, the term 'Atma' applies to the same Consciousness that lives inside the body of an individual creature as his inner self or the Antaraatma. While Brahm is the Atma or the soul of creation because the latter cannot survive without the former, the Antaraatma is the Atma or the soul of the individual creature because the latter's body would not survive without the former. The common denominator in all aspects of the living world is the 'Atma', the 'Consciousness'. Sans this Atma, this world loses its meaning. Brahm is the cosmic form of the Atma, and therefore Brahm is also known as the Parmatma, the supreme Atma.

Taken in a broad perspective, even the spiritual knowledge enshrined in the scriptures is the latter's 'Atma' because if one were to remove this knowledge then the scriptures become merely voluminous treatises on mythology and literature. Study of such scriptures without grasping their spiritual message would be similar to the studying of any other book.] (6).

7. Even as one becomes sure about the identity of a person having, for instance, the name Devdutta when the latter identifies himself with this particular name, and this individual with the name Devdutta would always be the same person no matter where he lives and what time of the day it is, this essential truth known as the pure conscious Atma too is the same no matter in what form it exists, or no matter what form of a body it has assumed for its self. The Atma is a divine, sublime, living and conscious entity that is self-evident and self-established in all planes of existence and dimensions of time. Its sublime virtues, divine nature, unique identity, pristine purity and absolute truthfulness do not change under any circumstance. The Atma does not need some proof to establish its purity, immaculacy, divinity and holiness. The Atma is an eternal, uniform, immutable, steady and constant entity that will always be the same no matter what form it has taken (7).

8. When a self-realised person who has understood the truth of Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness, as well as the truthful nature of his own Atma which is the same Consciousness residing in his inner-self, a person who has become fully enlightened and spiritually attained by experiencing the presence of Brahm within his own inner-self as the pure consciousness known as the Atma declares 'I am Brahm', it is deemed to be his honest and sincere statement of what he has personally experienced and witnessed.

[In other words, when a self-realised man says ‘I am Brahm’, he is referring to the fact that he has indeed realised the truth that his ‘self’ known as the Atma is none else but the supreme Brahm itself. The Brahm that resides in his body as his Atma becomes his Antaraatma, his truthful inner-being, his truthful inner-self. To put it differently, the Antaraatma is the microcosmic form of the cosmic Atma that is known as the Parmatma, the supreme Atma, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. Such a wise and enlightened man is not referring to the gross physical body when he uses the pronoun ‘I’ to mean Brahm.

The two factors of creation—the first being the individual unit known as the creature, and the second being the all-encompassing and all-inclusive aspect known as Brahm—have the Atma or the cosmic Consciousness as the common denominator. The former is known as the Antaraatma while the latter is known as the Parmatma.

Therefore, the term ‘I’ would refer to the Antaraatma, and the term ‘Brahm’ would refer to the Parmatma. Both have the common factor of the Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, as the unifying element. Hence, basically both are the same. Refer verse no. 22 below.]

Even as the entire world is illuminated by the light of the single sun, the whole creation is also illuminated or made live and conscious by the light and consciousness effusing and radiating out from a single, non-dual Brahm (8).

9. To cite any instances or logics or proofs to establish the existence and truth of Brahm would be unwarranted, irrational, incongruous and irrelevant because it would be wrong, unjustified, absurd and ridiculous to prove something that is a self-evident ‘truth’ by measuring it against or comparing it with things or instances that are themselves doubtful, contentious and untruthful. Such an attempt would be a disgraceful, despicable, lowly and mean effort because it is an attempt to cast aspersions or express doubts about an entity that is self-established, self-evident, self-illuminated, holy, divine, sublime, immaculate, and beyond reproach.

In other words, who can judge the truthfulness of the ‘Absolute Truth and Reality’? What or who can ever prove it? [That is, no one can prove something that is self-proved; no one can prove ‘truth’ to be ‘truthful’. No one can deny, for instance, that the Sun is self-illuminated.]

The divine and eclectic entity known as Brahm that ‘illuminates’ (gives life and meaning to) everything in this creation is indeed self-illuminated and self-evident (like the instance of the Sun cited above). [Just like the Sun that lights up the whole world with its own light and needs nothing to illuminate its own self, Brahm too gives life and meaning to this creation but does not need or require anything for its own existence. Just as the Sun needing no evidence or proof to establish its presence in the sky, Brahm too does not need any proof or evidence to establish its authenticity and truthfulness. The physical fact that the Sun is the sustainer and protector of life on this planet and is the center around which all the planets of the solar system revolve can be wisely used as a metaphor to drive home the point that Brahm is at the center and the source of all life in this world.

It is the same divine Brahm (as ‘Vigyan’ or refined knowledge) as a source of eternal ‘light’, a term used as metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment of the highest order, which makes the Vedas, the Purans and other primary scriptures have any meaning and worth. It is the same Brahm (as the ‘Atma’ or the cosmic Consciousness) that enables a gross body that is inherently inane and lifeless to become a ‘living being’ known as the Jiva or the creature.

[In other words, it is Brahm that is highlighted or illuminated in the form of knowledge and wisdom contained in the scriptures, and it is Brahm that is revealed in the form of the living world.]

(9).

10-11. Just like a child forgets about his hunger and bodily pains when he is enjoying himself while playing around with attractive things (toys) because he is absolutely engrossed in playing with his toys, a wise and enlightened person who remains engrossed and submerged in the thoughts of Brahm also derives such a high degree of bliss, ecstasy and spiritual thrill that he remains free or immune from the tainting effects caused on his inner-self by such negative qualities as having any kind of Mamta or Ahankar. ['Mamta' = attractions towards and infatuations with anything related to this gross world, along with its uncountable charms and temptations. 'Ahankar' = ego, false pride, vanity, arrogance and haughtiness.]

He is naturally inclined to be free from having any kind of desires, longings, yearnings, aspirations and wishes. He prefers to stay alone in a serene environment that is conducive to his spiritual peace and tranquility that comes when one is fully submerged in meditation and contemplating upon Brahm (10-11).

12. Such an acclaimed, wise, enlightened and self-realised man is contented within and without. He is happy and satisfied in the thoughts of his own Atma that is fully contented and fulfilled. He understands the fact that this Atma, which is his 'true self', has risen above the mundane and gross existence that imposes limits on his physical gross body. Therefore he feels always happy and ever-contented because sorrows and dissatisfactions are characteristics of the gross body and not of the subtle and sublime Atma. His 'truthful self' transcends the grossness and the shortcomings of the physical body which undergoes sufferings, pains and miseries of various denominations. This 'truthful self' known as the Atma is never disturbed by the problems associated with the body as well as the world. Therefore, such a self-realised person enjoys natural happiness, contentedness, peace and bliss of the purest kind.

Hence, a self-realised and enlightened man is always satisfied, and feels himself to be spiritually rich and well provided for inspite of his being poor in material wealth, and not possessing the sense objects of pleasure and comfort in this world. Similarly, even if he is helpless and lacks physical resources, he still regards himself as very powerful and resourceful (12).

13. Inspite of fasting or not having the opportunity to relish delicious food, or eating with great moderation whatever bland food that becomes available to him, a self-realised man still always feels contented and filled as if he has had a sumptuous meal.

Similarly, inspite of having to externally distinguish between different things, different situations and different creatures due to existential reasons in this world arising out of practical aspects of life, internally he treats them all alike and sees no difference between them. [This is because he has realised that differences and distinctions are limited to the gross physical body which is visible, and which is the one with which one interacts in this gross physical world. But this body is not the 'true identity' of the creature; it is the Atma that lives inside this body that is his 'true self and identity'. This Atma is not only the true identity of all living beings but is also a non-dual and immutable divine entity that is always the same, uniform and

unchanging. Therefore, externally he might see physical differences any two given entities, but internally he sees uniformity and universality in creation.]

Externally he does all deeds in the physical world, but internally he is not doing anything at all. [This is because the deeds are done by the gross physical body and not by the sublime and subtle Atma that lives inside the body. Since the Atma is his ‘true self’ and ‘real identity’, it is deemed that ‘he’ remains non-involved in the deeds done by the body which is only an external covering for the ‘Atma’. In simple terms it means that a wise, enlightened and self-realised man is one who does not get attached to deeds, who remains aloof from and indifferent to the deeds, and therefore does not expect any results from these deeds. For all practical purposes, ‘he’ has not done anything at all. He is merely a neutral and dispassionate observer of what his body does.]

Indeed, he has attained such a high level of equanimity, non-attachment, dispassion, indifference, neutrality and renunciation towards everything in this world that in spite of his appearing to be enjoying one or the other thing, he is deemed to be not enjoying of them from all practical angles. He might be enjoying or suffering in the physical world, but these are superficial emotions limited only to the gross body, and not affecting his ‘inner true self’ in the least (13).

[Note—This verse essentially describes how a self-realised man who has attained the citadel of spiritual knowledge feels, thinks and behaves.

He remains satisfied with whatever he eats. He treats everything, everyone and every situation with utmost equanimity, fortitude and dispassion though he might have to show preferences for some of them over others, but it is due to the compulsions of existential circumstances that he does so. In fact, he is completely non-partisan in his attitude; he is exemplarily neutral towards and detached from all of them.

Similarly, he goes about his routine life and its affairs in a detached and dispassionate way. This means that externally he appears to act and behave like other ordinary men, but internally he is unconcerned by what his body does and what would be the result of its deeds. This is the basic reason why he neither expects to be honoured for his good deeds, nor is he bothered if he is admonished or reprimanded for his misdeeds; he neither feels happy at being successful, nor is he dismayed at failures. No good results of the deeds done by him are able to tempt him to enjoy them or exult in them—for he knows that the good deed was done by the body and therefore ‘he’ (i.e. his true self, the Atma) has got no moral right to either enjoy its results or feel exhilarated at the laurels heaped on him. In other words, his Antaraatma remains calm and steady under all situations.

Therefore, his ‘true self’ known as the Antaraatma, the subtler form of the cosmic Atma residing in his inner self, has no reason why it should worry about the deeds done by him (i.e. by the enlightened man’s body) or why it should be entitled to either enjoy or suffer from the consequences of such deeds. [It is the gross physical body that does anything, and not the Atma. Therefore, there is no reason why the Atma should either be blamed for any misdeeds done by the person or praised for any good deed done by him.]

14. A truly wise, self-realised and enlightened person knows that the Atma actually has no physical gross body because it is an eternally ethereal and sublime Spirit or Consciousness that is most subtle by nature.

Since the Atma has no grossness in it, it follows that it does not have any kind of physical gross body, and therefore it cannot have any physical attributes, shapes and forms. Only something that has a physical existence in a gross world can have

any given set of parameters and definitions that distinguish it from other entities. This situation has a limiting affect, but the Atma has no such inhibitions.

But the paradox is that the same ethereal Atma begins to exhibit the gross limitations, inhibitions and compulsions because when it allows itself to be associated with the gross body of the creature in this physical world. Hence we deduce that though this ethereal Atma is inherently and eternally immaculate and free from any taints and restrictions, when it lives in a gross body of the creature it becomes tainted and contained like the body. In fact, this association creates an illusion that the Atma and the body are the same things; that they are inseparable and indistinguishable from one another. The reality is quite the contrary.

Therefore, inspite of living inside a body that cannot go everywhere it wants, and even if it goes somewhere it takes some time to reach its destination because it has to travel a physical distance which can be actually measured in physical terms, the Atma on the other hand can go anywhere it wishes in an instant, without facing any obstacles and having any kind of limitations imposed on its mobility and reach. [Put in simple words it means that a wise and self-realised man understands that though it may not be possible for him to reach the supreme Brahm in the physical sense of the word, or that it might not be possible for him to reach heaven with his body and enjoy the peace and happiness that prevails in heaven, he can well neigh to do so by shifting his attention to the Atma or the soul. It is this reason why self-realised ascetics who have accessed the Atma, or who have come to witness and experience the divine virtues, powers and glories of the Atma are said to have attained Brahm-hood as well as enjoy the eternal fount of bliss and peace that had always eluded them when they had thought that their 'self' was the physical body, and that it was this body that can be instrumental in their successful attainment of happiness, peace and bliss on the one hand, and liberation and deliverance from all worldly miseries and torments on the other hand.

A man who is fully convinced of this fact and is well-versed in all its implications is said to be an expert in the knowledge of Brahm. [This is because the Atma and Brahm are both the same cosmic Consciousness that is an ethereal, sublime, subtle, holy and divine entity which has no gross forms and physical attributes. This cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm is all-pervading, all-including, all-encompassing and omnipresent. While the term 'Brahm' is applied to the cosmic Consciousness when the latter is considered at the macrocosmic level or plane of existence, the term 'Atma' refers to the same Brahm when it permeates or pervades uniformly in this creation and lives inside it as its fundamental aspect, as its reality and essence, as its quintessential soul. The term 'Antaraatma' is to indicate the 'Atma that lives inside' the creature (the individual living being) as his true self at the microcosmic level of existence.

But from a broad perspective of metaphysics and spiritualism, all the three terms—viz. Brahm or the Parmatma, the Atma, and the Antaraatma—are the same, and synonymous with each other.] (14).

15-17. Such a highly wise, spiritually enlightened and self-realised man does not distinguish between one thing as being acceptable and the other as being unacceptable, or treating one entity as dear and the other as not being dear. [This is because he knows that the Atma is always one and the same, it never changes because it remains constant and steady, and that this Atma is the only thing worth paying attention to, so there is no point in distinguishing between any two entities based on

their physical features or attributes which are gross by nature, ever changing and not the true identity of the entity under consideration.]

Likewise, the notion of one thing being auspicious and the other being inauspicious does not have any meaning and importance for him.

To illustrate this point the instance of the solar eclipse can be taken. During the eclipse, the sun appears to be enveloped in a shroud of darkness. But this is an erroneous belief held only by those who are ignorant of the actual phenomenon, because the sun does not lose even a miniscule fraction of its brilliant light and luminosity during any of the phases of the eclipse. The darkened disc of the sun is only due to the interference of the moon as it comes between the sun and the viewer on the earth, and not due to any demon named Rahu (a demon with only a head; the torso is called Ketu which corresponds to the comets) devouring or ingesting the Sun God as a revenge for having his body dismembered. It is actually the shadow of the moon that appears as a dark shroud falling on the earth, and it has got nothing to do with the sun. The gradual eclipsing of the sun's bright disc and its subsequent restoration is also due to the movement of the moon in the front of the sun's disc as seen from the earth, and not due to the Sun God entering the demon Rahu's mouth and then coming out of his severed neck.

[This paragraph clearly shows that ancient seers and sages who had preached the Upanishads were not only expert in the intricacies of metaphysical philosophy but well acquainted with the physical sciences also. They knew that the solar eclipse is not due to some demon's head devouring some god known as the Sun but merely a physical phenomenon whereby the moon came in between the sun and earth in such a way that it obstructed the view of the sun as seen from the earth. It was the moon's movement in the front of the shining disc of the sun that gradually obscured its view from earth and gave the impression of the sun being gradually disappearing in the dark mouth of some unknown entity feared to be a demon. When the moon finally moved away from the front of the sun's bright disc, it was assumed that the Sun God has emerged from the demon's mouth. These bright and intelligent sages and seers knew that it was both the movement of the moon across the face of the sun's disc, and the dark shadow of the moon falling upon the earth that is known as the eclipse of the sun, and the notion that some severed head of a demon known as Rahu had devoured the Sun God is a cock-and-bull story perpetrated by mythology having no ground and truth in it.

Further, it is to their credit that they had the bold courage and the firmness conviction to take the risk of castigation, sneer and rebuke by upholding the truth and speaking out in its favour inspite of what they said going against traditional views and beliefs that were even endorsed by the Purans which themselves were part of the scriptures. Hence, they fearlessly debunked such ridiculous and absurd ideas of solar eclipses or lunar eclipses occurring due to either of the sun or the moon being devoured by some imaginary demon!

Indeed such highly wise and knowledgeable sages and seers were the chosen ones whom the Lord of creation had selected to preach the Upanishads and their truths because the Lord knew that His divine knowledge and wisdom can be safely entrusted in their hands. He knew that such men of wisdom and truth would not turn the truth on its head just to please the society or serve their vested self-interest. Therefore it follows that it is not everyone's cup of tea to either preach the eclectic philosophy and knowledge contained in the divine Upanishads, or to understand and accept such teaching as the irrefutable and incontrovertible quintessential 'truth' without falling prey to doubts and confusions about their authenticity and spiritual usefulness.]

Similarly, those who treat a self-realised and highly enlightened spiritual man who has knowledge of Brahm, a man who has experienced and witnessed Brahm first hand, as an ordinary man who has a gross physical body, or identify such an acclaimed and highly spiritual man only by his physical gross body and its characteristics, are definitely very stupid and highly ignorant.

The fact of the matter is that those who are Brahm-realised live like a snake living inside its dead cuticle till the time it comes out of it effortlessly. [That is, their true 'self' simply lives inside the gross body which is as good as dead for them. They live in this temporary dwelling till the time comes to leave it. For all practical purposes, such enlightened souls live a life that is perpetually detached and freed from the entrapments, the burden, the enslavement and the fetters represented by this gross body as well as the equally gross world of material sense objects (15-17).

[Note—In ordinary parlance, the term 'leaving the body' implies the physical death of the gross body when the Spirit is freed from its bondage. From the perspective of Yoga or meditation, it means voluntarily leaving the body as done by ascetics who withdraw all their vital winds or the life-giving Prans, and divert them to the head from which they escape into the outer atmosphere through the hair-like slit known as the Brahm-Randhra located in the top of the skull. This liberation is known as Videha Mukti—i.e. liberation and deliverance from the shackle of the body by abandoning it. It is also known as Kaivalya Mukti because it is a one-way freedom in the sense that the freed soul would not have to re-enter the prison of the body any time in the future.]

18. This gross body of the creature is moved here and there and kept active by the vital winds present inside the body, winds which are collectively known as Pran¹, just like pieces of wood floating on rivers and waterfalls are made to wobble, bob, toss, tumble, flop-flop, flick and dance around by the swift currents of water in these rivers and waterfalls (18).

[Note—¹The vital winds present inside the body of a creature are responsible for all the activities of the latter. The vital winds control all the internal and external functions of the organs of the body. There are a number of Upanishads that elaborately deal with this concept.

The way the vital winds control the functioning of the body has been explained in detail in note of verse no. 10, Canto 3 of the *Annarpurna Upanishad* which is Chapter no. 16 of this volume.]

19-20. A truly wise, learned and enlightened person understands that whatever circumstances he has to face in this life, both the pleasant and favourable ones as well as the unpleasant and unfavourable ones, are determined by his destiny over which he has no control. This is because the destiny is pre-determined and decided upon by the cumulative results of his past deeds as well as the desires that he had harboured then. He understands that the suffering that his body is being subjected to in the present life or time is not of his present creation, but a punishment or reaction for his past. So he cannot do anything about it, and therefore it is worthless to fret and fume. Instead, he would be wiser to bear whatever comes his way with exemplary calmness, fortitude, forbearance and equanimity because by adopting this attitude he would not lose his mental bearing and maintain his internal peace and happiness. Fretting and fuming would exhaust him without any positive outcome; feeling helpless and distressed would push him further down in the bog of miseries and grief.

Therefore he neither despairs nor regrets at his present situation or the sufferings he is being subjected to. He maintains his calmness and stoic attitude. He

does not even exult or celebrate or feels proud and superior to others for any good happenings or unexpected good fortunes coming his way for the same reason—because he knows that they would have come to him nevertheless, and when the good effects of his past deeds wear off, these good tidings would come to an end in spite of his best of efforts to retain them. Such sorrows and happiness are both transient and unreliable. He would be stupid to feel respectively despaired or exhilarated by them.

Besides this wisdom, he also knows that his ‘true self’ is the Atma, the pure consciousness known as the soul, and that all the sufferings and enjoyments are limited to the gross body and have no bearing upon this Atma. Hence, there is no point or reason to either feel unhappy or happy. All worldly emotions and feelings are limited to the gross body, and the pure conscious Atma has nothing to do with them.

Therefore, a truly wise, enlightened and self-realised person who knows that this ‘true self’ is the pure conscious Atma and not the gross body develops a holistic view of existential life, and remains neutral towards what the body does or does not do. He pays no attention to what is witnessed or experienced by the body in the gross world of material sense objects, such as the feelings of either distress or dismay on the one hand, or of happiness and elation on the other hand, because he understands that whatever the body faces in this life is simply the cumulative result of its past deeds that have determined its fate, lot or destiny. So it is better for him to remain calm and relaxed for he has no control over them because they are past and gone. They can neither be negated nor rectified. Getting restless and peeved by misfortunes, or exhilarated and excited at good fortunes is a misplaced idea and a fallacious notion which only snatches away his mental peace and spiritual bliss without giving any positive results that can be of any help to him.

Such a wise person who develops complete equanimity, neutrality, detachment, dispassion and non-involvement in what is seen, or even with what is not seen but imagined, is the one who is regarded as the most exalted and the best in the community of wise ones known as Brahm Gyani—literally those who are well-versed in the eclectic knowledge of the mysteries of the enigmatic, esoteric and mystical Brahm. In fact, they are Lord Shiva himself personified.

[This is because Lord Shiva is said to be extremely wise and highly self-realised. He remains in a perpetual state of Samadhi, a spiritual state of higher consciousness when the practitioner is constantly doing meditation and contemplating upon the Truth. Shiva is totally oblivious of the world around him so engaged is he in meditation and contemplation. Therefore he also remains submerged in an ocean of bliss and tranquility because nothing of this world ever disturbs his peace. A self-realised person also attains a similar state of existence which is full of spiritual bliss, mental peace and happiness.]

Such a Brahm-realised person who is deemed to be an image of Lord Shiva is regarded as spiritually liberated and delivered, one who has truly obtained emancipation and salvation though he is still alive and has a gross physical body (19-20).

21. When all external attributes, qualities, definitions and characteristics of the Atma, which are however absolutely superficial, inadequate and imaginary, are removed, the pristine pure and untainted Atma that remains is nothing but an image of Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness. Hence, the Atma becomes one with Brahm and indistinguishable from the latter when all external considerations and qualifications which are extraneous to the Atma and not its intrinsic virtue or quality are removed.

[In other words, all the best of adjectives, epithets, definitions and qualifications that are ascribed to the Atma are insufficient to describe what the Atma actually is. They cannot even reflect the surface of the grandness, the magnificence, the divinity and the sublimity of the Atma, what to speak of them being able to describe the Atma comprehensibly. If fact, words which are the medium employed by anyone, even the scriptures, to make an attempt at describing the greatness of the Atma have their own limitations and reach. How can anything (i.e. the words of a language) that is itself limited and has a limited reach be ever able to grasp another entity that is limitless and infinite (i.e. the Atma)? The Atma cannot be butted and bounded within the parameters of words and definitions which are the usual conventional means to speak about and describe any known thing that is the 'truth' in this world. The 'truth' of the Atma is not the ordinary truth as the word is understood to mean in relation to the mortal things in this world; it the 'truth' about an entity that is immortal and infinite. Just like the principal (i.e. the Atma), this 'truth' is also immortal and infinite, and hence indescribable.]

It is like the case of an expert theatre artist who, while on stage, wears colourful costumes and assumes the personality of the character he portrays to such an extent that even his own kith and kin do not recognize him while he enacts his role on the stage. But behind the stage when he dons his own clothes, he reverts back to his original personality that is known to them.

[The Atma lives in a gross body, and for all practical purposes this body becomes its de-facto personality and identity as long as it lives inside it. In other words, like the expert theatre artist, the Atma too plays its role to perfection by adopting the characteristics and personality traits of the body. Since the Atma is the 'true self' of the creature, it follows that the latter also becomes identical with and identified by the body in which the Atma lives, instead of the Atma itself.

Being an expert and a perfectionist in whatever it does, the Atma plays its role to perfection, and the result is that even though the man may be internally well learned and enlightened his external behaviour is like an ordinary man.

But when the same Atma leaves the body (as happens in higher states of meditation when the pure consciousness, the Atma, leaves the gross body along with the vital winds known as the Pran through the hair-like slit in the top of the skull, called the 'Brahm-Randhra', to merge with the cosmic Consciousness present everywhere), or when it detaches itself from the body (again as it happens when one is highly enlightened, realised, renounced, detached and dispassionate)—it regains its primary form and virtues that are independent from those of the gross body. It is this Atma that is highly pure and enlightened, it is untainted and unshackled, it is unbound and unfettered, it is infinite and limitless, and it is eternal and immortal as opposed to the Atma that had lived in the shadow of the gross body.

The natural form and virtues of the Atma are like the brilliant and self-illuminated Sun, while the Atma that lives inside the gross body is like the Sun seen through a thick bank of clouds or during the solar eclipse.

The Atma with a gross body is known as the 'Jiva-Atma', while the Atma without the gross body is the 'Parmatma'.] (21).

[Note—It is the gross body of the creature which has given some kind of physical identity, countenance, form and contour to the otherwise formless, featureless and attribute-less Atma simply because the latter lives in the former just like air living inside the mud pitcher and acquiring the form and characteristic of the latter as cited in verse no. 22 below. When the body is discarded, either actually by the process of death, or symbolically by not paying any heed to it, the Atma is deemed to be liberated from this shackle. Once this comes about, the Atma is no longer identified

with its gross external sheath known as the body which covers it from all sides, but by its own subtle and sublime form which is ethereal and invisible, and which is Consciousness personified.

The Atma with a body is known as the Jiva-Atma, while the Atma without the gross body is the Parmatma. The Jiva-Atma is a mortal being, while the Parmatma is the immortal being. The Jiva-Atma has a number of shortcomings and limitations, while the Parmatma is not subjected to such inhibitions.]

22. A person who knows, understands and realises the true form and nature of Brahm indeed becomes a personified form of Brahm. [Refer verse no. 8 above. He understands that his 'true self' is the pure conscious Atma that is another form of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. He understands that the body is only the temporary habitat of the Atma, and that it is not his truthful self.]

He appears distinct or different from Brahm only due to the gross form of the body in which he (i.e. his Atma, which is his true self) lives. He, in fact, is no one else but Brahm (because his 'true self' is the pure consciousness known as the Atma which is a microcosmic form of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm or the Parmatma).

It is like the case of the air trapped inside an empty clay pitcher assuming the form, shape and size of the body of the pitcher, but when the pitcher is broken this air merges completely and seamlessly with the outer atmospheric air, without any effort. [Here, the air inside the pitcher is the Atma, the body of the pitcher is the gross body of the creature, and the atmospheric air is Brahm. The breaking of the pitcher is like death of the physical body when the Atma merges with the cosmic Atma known as Brahm.] (22).

23-25. A person who is fully Brahm-realised and truly enlightened becomes one with Brahm. He becomes a personification of Brahm when all extraneous factors and gross considerations are eliminated.

Just like two separate samples of milk, oil and water become one and indistinguishable from one another when these two samples are mixed together, the condition of a self-realised ascetic who has experienced the Atma and who knows the truth of the Atma as well as his own 'self' is also the same. That is, there is no distinction left between him and his conscious Atma. His 'true identity' is no longer the physical gross body, but the pure consciousness known as the Atma.

Having attained this eclectic and the most exalted spiritual state of existence when he has risen above the limitations imposed by the gross body, and stops being known or identified by the virtue of his gross body, the self-realised and Brahm-realised aspirant is said to have attained Videha Mukti which is equivalent to Kaivalya Mukti. Videha Mukti is freedom of the 'self' known as the Atma from the fetters of the gross body known as the Deha. Kaivalya Mukti is so-called because it is a unique and matchless form of liberation and deliverance in the sense that when this sort of Mukti is obtained there is no fear or chance of ever getting trapped and shackled again. It is final emancipation and salvation of the soul. A person who obtains Kaivalya Mukti as a result of Videha Mukti does not have to take birth again in this world¹.

All forms of Avidya (delusions and ignorance) that act as causes which result in re-birth are burnt by him in the fire of knowledge and enlightenment that comes with realisation of the Atma, the pure consciousness (23-25).

[Note—¹It is like the case of the air present inside the clay pitcher merging with the outer air when the pitcher is *actually broken*. Even if the earlier air, known as the

Ghatakash, tries its best to go inside the pitcher once again, it would not be successful for the simple reason that the pitcher no longer exists as it has been *broken*. But a hypothetical situation exists when it can be said that this Ghatakash can enter another pitcher if it is very eager to remain trapped inside one when it finds residence in some new pitcher being moulded by the potter. So we come to a very interesting conclusion here—we have *two types of Videha Muktis*—one which is ‘Kaivalya Videha Mukti’ as outlined in this verse above, and the other is simply ‘Videha Mukti’ as symbolized by the Ghatakash entering another newly moulded pitcher.

The metaphysical import is obvious—a wise, enlightened and Brahm-realised person discards this gross body with total renunciation and detachment from both the world and the body and the countless temptations they offer. Such a man obtains ‘Kaivalya Videha Mukti’. On the other hand, if he has some desires left, even auspicious ones such as self-less service or studying the scriptures or doing charitable work, he would be inclined to take a new birth to fulfill his desires and unfinished tasks. Then he would be heading towards only ‘Videha Mukti’ by discarding the gross body at the time of death. Since he had been doing auspicious and noble deeds during his lifetime, and has noble intentions and desires, he would take a high and noble birth, and in his new life would be a torch-bearer for the rest of the society, but it would not be the termination of his journey through the cycle of birth and death.]

26. How is it possible that an enlightened and a highly realised ascetic who has virtually become Brahm personified after having attained high degree of self-realisation and its attendant enlightenment ever take a birth again because creation and its expansion are the effects created by Maya (the powers of Brahm to create delusions) which this ascetic has already conquered and eliminated from its roots.

All fetters and bondages having their genesis in Maya, and all obstacles that this Maya creates in the path of one’s Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance) would no longer apply to an ascetic who has eliminated Maya as a stepping-stone to Brahm-hood.

[The very fact that he is ‘wise and enlightened’, the fact that he has developed a high degree of renunciation and detachment from the world as well as the body and their respective allurements and temptations is due to his having vanquished Maya. Elimination of Maya is a pre-requisite for being Brahm-realised in the first place. Hence, when Maya is trounced, there is no question of this creation ever raising its evil hood again. All the problems are created when one is not aware of the truth and is instead enveloped in a shroud of ignorance and delusions. For instance, a man becomes terrified when he sees a length of harmless rope when he thinks, out of ignorance of the truth and its attendant delusions, that it is venomous snake. He is also horrified to see a lifeless cuticle of a snake if he does not know that this cuticle has no life in it and is simply a dead piece of discarded skin. But once he becomes aware of the truth, he loses all fears of these two things.

All spiritual problems are created by Maya; the Jiva (the living being) is subjected to all spiritual torments and mental dilemmas because he is embraced by Maya. When he breaks free from its clutches he is like a slave finding his final freedom from eternal slavery. Under the overpowering influence of Maya, he had erroneously treated his gross body as his ‘self’, and had treated the world as real and truthful. When this Maya is eliminated, then obviously this erroneous notion is dispelled and the light of true knowledge shines through much like the brilliant rays of the sunlight breaking through the shroud of thick cloud to illuminate the world, which in this case is his inner self. Say, how can the darkness of ignorance and its accompanying phantoms and ghosts live when the bright sun shines? He realises that his ‘self’ is not the body but the pure conscious Atma, and that this Atma is an eternal,

sublime, ethereal and a holy Spirit as compared to the gross body which has characters that are the opposite of those possessed by the Atma. For instance, the body dies and perishes while the Atma is an eternal and imperishable entity. He understands that birth and death are limited to the gross body and have no relevance vis-à-vis the Atma.

He also realises that this Atma is a microcosmic image of the macrocosmic Atma of the entire creation, and that the latter is known as Brahm. That is why when a self-realised ascetic proclaims 'I am Brahm' he is speaking an absolute truth without any pretensions and deceit.

The Atma in its cosmic form is known as the 'Parmatma', the supreme Atma. Neither the Atma nor the Parmatma ever takes a birth or dies.] (26).

27. When one is under the false impression that a harmless length of rope is a dangerous venomous snake, he is afraid of the former; he becomes terrified of the rope. But when he comes to know the truth, this fear disappears on its own. He would no longer be afraid of the rope because he knows that it is not a snake¹.

This explains the difference between false and misleading knowledge, and true knowledge that shows the correct path. While the former kind of knowledge leads one to be trapped in fetters of ignorance and delusions, the latter type of knowledge is liberating and a provider of deliverance to the creature. While ignorance creates a trap that shackles a creature in a snare of delusions, knowledge frees him and is emancipating as well as empowering. While ignorance bogs him down, knowledge sets him free (27).

[Note--¹References of this concept—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda: Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 17; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 34; Yogkundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 79-80; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-2, 22; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 48-49; Canto 6, verse no. 77. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda: Niralamba Upanishad, verse no. 14.]

28-29. Brahm has no pretensions and coverings; it has no deceit, conceit and falsehoods associated with it. Therefore, it is the unadulterated and naked 'truth' that has no distortions whatsoever.

Whether or not one believes in the existence of anything is actually the function of the intellect and the mind. It is the mind-intellect that decides for a creature whether anything exists or does not exist in this world.

This intellect-mind complex is a subtle part or component of the gross body which is like a covering of the Atma, the pure consciousness, representing Brahm. The fact of the matter is that Brahm has no such thing as a mind-intellect complex for the simple reason that Brahm has no gross body with its various components, including the subtle component known as the mind-intellect.

Therefore, Brahm, the pure cosmic Consciousness, is never deluded, is never confused and is never in any doubt about the 'truth' of anything, including this world. One of the obvious reasons for this is that Brahm is the one who has created this world by employing his own dynamic powers of creating Maya and has employed his own Shakti (powers, authority and energy) to give it its shape. Therefore Brahm clearly knows the secret of this world; he is aware how it has come into being; he is privy to its hidden mysteries.

Because of the fact that the Atma (the pure self) of a living being is none else but this Brahm in a personified form, it follows that a wise and self-realised person knows that this world is false and imaginary; that it is a creation of Maya and its

stupendous maverism known as Maya Shakti. He allows his 'self' to interact with this world only to the extent that is absolutely necessary for him because he has to live in it till the time the Atma has completed its journey and reached its destination. This 'destination' is final spiritual liberation and deliverance, final emancipation and salvation—which are collectively called 'Mukti'.

By corollary, once the world becomes irrelevant for a self-realised and enlightened man, his body too becomes equally irrelevant. This is because both the body and the world are gross and a part of the creation of Maya which has trapped his soul in its vice-like grip.

Since all delusory notions arising out of Maya that make the existence of the world possible (like the case of a snake existing in the rope) are functions of the mind-intellect, it follows that the Atma has no such conceptions arising in it because it is free from Maya and its effects, as the Atma is naturally and intrinsically highly enlightened, self-illuminated, knowledgeable and wise.

In other words, only when the Atma is under the influence of Maya does it regard the world as true, meaningful and relevant. Once the veil of Maya and its grip is removed, the Atma is able to perceive the truth of the world—and this 'truth' is that the world is imaginary and entrapping; it is the result of the imagination of the fertile mind, the mind that makes a man think that the rope is a snake!

When the stupidity and ignorance of the mind and intellect are done away with, both the fallacious conception of the rope being a snake, and the inherently false world to be true are done away with. Thereafter only the truth prevails, and this 'truth' is the spirituality of the 'self' which is nothing but the pure consciousness known as the Atma.

So we conclude that when Maya is removed, the Brahm (in its personified form as the Atma of the living being) is convinced that the world is false and gross by nature (28-29).

30. How can one imagine (i.e. one cannot and should not imagine) the presence of various artificial divisions or classifications in Brahm like the ones that are applied to the sky (by the virtue of which the sky is given many names, such as the Ghatakash or the space enclosed in an empty pitcher, the Mathakash or the space within the walls of a monastery, etc.). The fact is that Brahm is pure, untainted and immaculate, it has no Kalaas (divisions or fractions), it is neutral and un-involved in anything, it is calm, serene, placid, unmoving and tranquil, it is holy, sinless and divine, it has no darkness associated with anything negative, it is non-dual and matchless, and it is the supreme transcendental Atma, the cosmic Consciousness personified (30).

31. The truth of the matter is that Brahm presents an array of great paradoxes in creation. For instance, it neither takes a birth (because it never dies to take a new birth as it is eternal, imperishable, infinite, constant and immortal) nor can it be said that it has no birth (this is because the world is a visible manifestation of Brahm; it is Brahm that is revealed in the form of the world and its inhabitant creatures, both of which are known to have a beginning or have taken a birth).

Similarly, Brahm does not remain in fetters (because it is eternally free as the ethereal Spirit or the cosmic Consciousness or the Truth that can never be shackled by un-truth or delusions), but paradoxically it appears to be butted and bound (because it is revealed in the form of the physical world which has a parameter, and is clearly definable and limited by certain characteristic features).

[Brahm, in its primary form, is eternal, indefinable, infinite, form-less and attribute-less, but when the same Brahm is revealed in the form of this creation or the world it becomes finite and assumes for itself certain attributes and features so typical of this world.]

Brahm is not an aspirant of anything, it does not desire anything (because it is completely fulfilled and self-sustained), but when revealed in the form of a Jiva (the living being) it appears to have so many aspirations and desires (for the obvious reason that Brahm has allowed its self to be surrounded by Maya which creates the impression that Brahm needs something, that Brahm has to sustain itself by seeking sustenance from the outside world).

Brahm has no desire for Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation—simply because it is eternally free).

Brahm is not Mukta (free) either (because he has the cosmic responsibility of looking after this creation which constantly dies and takes birth again in an endless cycle, making Brahm, the Supreme Being, virtually entangled in this responsibility).

This is indeed the great truth of the supreme Brahm. Indeed, Brahm is ‘supreme’ because there is nothing beyond it, and there is nothing without it. Nothing escapes Brahm; nothing exists that is not Brahm, but at the same time Brahm transcends everything known and understood in the form of this creation. Amen! (31).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 19

Pashupat Brahm Upanishad/ Pashupat Brahmo-panishad

This is a revealed Upanishad as it was first preached by the creator Brahma himself to sage Valikhilya. It is sub-divided into two parts—the first is known as Purva Kanda, and the second as Uttar Kanda. It primarily deals with the great metaphysical concepts of Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation, and uses the metaphor of Hans, the divine Swan that is used as a symbol of high purity and wisdom, to establish that Brahm and the pure conscious Atma residing as the ‘true self’ in the inner-being of all living creatures are the same divine entities. Just like the divine Mantra OM which is dedicated to Brahm and is synonymous with the latter as it is deemed to be an all-pervading cosmic sound manifestation of Brahm, the word Hans, when used as a Mantra, also implies both the Atma as well as the Brahm. ‘Hans’ is a broad term that is used as a metaphor for all that is wise, divine, holy, pure, immaculate, uncorrupt, auspicious and noble, qualities that apply to both the Brahm and the Atma.

The Upanishad derives its name from the fact that Brahm is known as ‘Pashupati’ (Kanda1, verse no. 32) because Brahm, manifested in the form of the eclectic virtues of wisdom, conscience, intelligence, virtuousness, righteousness, nobility, propriety and auspiciousness, as well as in right deed, conduct and thought, helps a man overcome, vanquish and control the natural animal-like savage instincts

in a living being. It follows that anyone who has learnt to exercise exemplary control over his sense organs and their natural urges and instincts is a personification of Brahm. Since Brahm is represented by the Atma as well as by its symbol known as Pranav or OM, it follows that by taking the aid of the Atma or the word Mantra OM one can directly access Brahm.

Attainment of Brahm-hood is therefore directly related to the realisation of the Atma which is a microcosmic counterpart of the cosmic divinity known as Brahm. This Atma is the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the body of the individual creature and forms his true self. The word OM acts as a catalyst in the process of establishing a unity between this Atma and its principal form Brahm. Therefore, attainment of self-realisation and Brahm-hood are synonymous with each other and go hand in hand; they are marked by the grand virtues of wisdom, enlightenment and knowledge of the 'truth'. These virtues free the spiritual aspirant from the fetters of ignorance (Agyan) that had cast a thick veil of delusions (Maya) around him that acts as an abominable and foreboding obstacle in the path of his Mukti (which means his spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation).

The Upanishad emphasizes and establishes the fact that the best form of religious sacrifice as well as worship is that which is done internally as opposed to the external rituals and formalities. It goes on to elucidate that Brahm, the Supreme Being and the Lord of creation, is to be found in the inner-self of the worshipper and nowhere outside. It points out that all external paraphernalia of religion only have a symbolic value, and in this context it cites the instance of the sacred thread, the two great fire sacrifices known as the Vajpaye Yagya and the Ashwamedh Yagya, the observation of Sandhya which means the offering of prayers three times a day, the bird Hans, the Mantra OM employed during worship, and so on. True knowledge of Brahm that is rich in wisdom and a source of one's spiritual enlightenment and freedom is the Sutra (formula or thread) that links the Atma (i.e. the 'self') of the creature to the supreme Brahm (i.e. the Supreme Being and the supreme Self), and paves the way for his final Mukti. Then it also says that each unit of creation, including the great Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder, are only 'images' of Brahm in as much as they depict one or the other of the countless glories and virtues of Brahm, but they are *not* Brahm in the complete sense (verse no. 10). This Kanda outlines the method of meditating upon Brahm with the help of aids such as Hans and Pranav. These grand topics are covered in Kanda (Canto) 1.

The ideas expressed in the first Kanda are further elaborated in Kanda 2 which outlines how the supreme Brahm has a paradoxical nature in the sense that while the whole creation is its image, is regulated and empowered by it from within, Brahm still is absolutely different from any of its images and things that it controls and empowers. During the course of enumerating the glories and virtues of Brahm, this Kanda also outlines the eclectic characters and way of thinking a Brahm-realised and enlightened person.

The knowledge of Brahm is the greatest spiritual asset that any wise and erudite person would strive to acquire because it leads to eternal contentedness and extreme spiritual bliss.

Since this world is a creation of Maya (delusions), it has no pith and substance, and to pursue it is like voluntarily falling in a dark pit. Brahm-realisation on the other hand helps one to finally break free from the endless cycle of birth and death by attaining emancipation and salvation.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Purva Kand/Canto 1

1. Once upon a time, the self-born creator Brahma had a desire to initiate the process of creation and create the subjects or creatures that would inhabit or populate the would-be creation.

In this process, he created Lord Kameshwar (Lord Shiva who is regarded as the Lord who rules over, and therefore controls, all worldly passions and desires) and Vaisrawan (so-called as he is the son of Vaishrava, the creator of the world; he is also known as Kuber, the treasurer of Gods) (1).

2. Vaisrawan who was the son of the creator Brahm and was also known as sage Vaalkhilya¹ asked his father—‘Oh Lord! What is the knowledge of this world (or how can one know what this world is)? Who are the patron Gods or deities of the two extreme states of existence of consciousness known as the Jagrat (waking state) and Turiya (transcendental state)? Who controls this world (or who is the Authority that regulates everything in this creation)? What is the proof of the existence of Kaal (various aspects of time or phases of life; the end of everything that has come into existence)? By whose command and on whose strength do the moon and the sun rise and shine? Who or which is that Authority whose glories and virtues are as infinite, eternal, vast and immortal as the sky?

I wish to hear the answers to all these questions from you. So please be kind to elaborate upon them. No one else except you has knowledge of the answers of these questions. Therefore, oh Brahmin, please enlighten me about them.’ (2).

[Note—¹*Vaalkhilya*—He was the head of a family of sages born from Kratu, the father, and Kriyadevi, the mother. There are said to be sixty-thousand Vaalkhilyas who are supposed to be siblings. They were of the size of a thumb. Once they had helped sage Kashyap perform his fire sacrifice successfully, but became tired. When Indra, the king of Gods, saw them weary, he laughed at them, thereby incurring their wrath who cursed him that he would be punished for his impertinence and arrogance by Garud, the legendary vehicle of Lord Vishnu.]

3. The Swayambhu (self-born) Brahma (the creator) replied—‘The Maatrika Vidya¹ is the one that has created the entire world. [It is the knowledge that deals with the intricacies and finer subtle details of the process of creation, details that are esoteric and mysterious. It would answer your question ‘How was this creation created?’]’ (3).

[Note—¹The *Maatrika Vidya* is the esoteric and secret knowledge of creation that deals with the Shakti or the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being known as Brahm that first stirs the neutral and calm primordial cosmic gel by injecting in it the first spark of life, which in turn sets off a chain reaction that culminates in the form of the creation as it is known now. The word ‘Maatrika’ literally means a small mother. Since the process of creation is so complex that it required a number of complicated processes taking place simultaneously, with each individual element and each single dynamic source of energy playing its crucial role in the composite phenomenon of creation, these were called ‘Maatrikas’ because they were all like little mothers who had got together and used their combined energy, resources and abilities to create or conceive a cosmic embryo, nourish it, and allow it to develop to maturity so that the

creation could be revealed in the way it finally did. They conceived and harboured this creation in their collective womb, and had nourished and sustained it till the time it was born in the matured form as we know it today.

In modern science we know that any finished product requires a chain of steps to be meticulously undertaken before it is finally produced. The science of organic chemistry teaches us that numerous chemical products are created by tweaking the basic molecular structure of various elements in association with the ubiquitous carbon atom that is at the central core of all organic formulas.

Similarly, the creation of this universe was not an isolated event, but it required countless subtler steps undertaken in a systematic form that worked together towards one goal, and that goal was the revelation of this creation. Many small steps and countless numbers of subtle factors that were insignificant in themselves, but assumed great importance as part of the cosmic mosaic of creation, contributed to the creation of this world. Each of these factors and elements are the Maatrikas of this creation. This world is a 'creation' precisely for this reason—it was moulded from primary ingredients that had no significant value of their own, but when they were subjected to many adjustments and experimentations they produced a 'world' that is rich in dynamism and energy, a world that has no resemblance to any of these primary ingredients. Each step was equally important and equally significant, because one miss-step would have caused the entire process to malfunction and come to a standstill.

Each of these 'steps' are metaphorically cited as the various 'Maatrikas' in the field of metaphysical interpretation of this celestial phenomenon. Here, the word Maatrika is related to the Mantras which are divine formulas used in meditation and contemplation, and hence implies the hidden energy and dynamism of the letters of the Mantra which give it its inherent stupendous powers, potentials and authority as well as its holiness, divinity and sanctity.

The process of creation involved cosmic efforts by the creator who is said to have performed a cosmic fire sacrifice in order to initiate this process, and had obviously employed certain Mantras, as any fire sacrifice needs the use of Mantras for its proper sanctified process. As would be seen in due course, the Mantra employed by Brahma was *Hans* that is a synonym Mantra for *Pranav* or *OM*. The inherent dynamism and energy of this Mantra is contained in its syllables or letters, and it is this dynamism and energy that not only initiated the process of creation but also sustained it during its period of development and growth that culminated in the birth of the visible creation.

In brief therefore, the 'Maatrika Vidya' is the esoteric knowledge (science) which pertains to the individual letters or syllables of any given Mantra dedicated to any given deity who represents one or the other aspect or facet of the Supreme Being known as *Brahm*. The Maatrika Vidya deals with the mystical power, energy, authority and strength, i.e. the dynamism that is inherent in any given Mantra, but which is based on the individual units (i.e. the individual letters or syllables) of the Mantra. That is, if one knows what the individual units of a Mantra are, then he can correctly predict the power and abilities that not only this Mantra possesses but also of the deity that this Mantra represents.

For instance, it is well established that the Mantra 'OM' stands for *Brahm*. Therefore, the Maatrika Vidya of OM would be a comprehensive understanding of its finer sound components and their alphabetical counterparts, along with their spiritual significance and metaphysical import, as well as the combined astounding spiritual powers, dynamism and energy that they incorporate in themselves when they form the Mantra known as 'OM'.

References: (i) *Krishna Yajur Veda* = *Brahm Vidya Upanishad*, verse no. 62-63; *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse nos. 21-22. (ii) *Atharva Veda* = *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12 (which says that the first outer ring, called the

Chakra, of the worship instrument of Goddess Tripura has eight Matrikaas enshrined in it).]

4. This Vidya known as Maatrika Vidya has two forms—one with two syllables or letters (i.e. the Mantra ‘Hans’¹), and the other with three syllables or letters (i.e. the Mantra ‘OM’² or Pranav). In fact, both these two forms of the Maatrika Vidya are the same. It also has another eclectic but esoteric form or derivation or variation having four letters or syllables³ (4).

[Note—¹The *two letters of Hans* are ‘Han’ and ‘Sa’. This Mantra has been elaborately described in a number of Upanishads. Refer References for the term ‘Hans’ (a divine Swan)—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93. (d) Atharva Veda—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4

²The *three letters of OM* are ‘A’, ‘U’ and ‘M’.

³The *four letters of OM* are ‘A’, ‘O’, ‘U’ and ‘M’.

The profound metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of OM has been succinctly summarised in the following Upanishads. They are:--

(a) Rig Veda—Naad Bindu Upanishad.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli (Canto) 1, Anuvak (sub-canto) 8; Amrit Naad Upanishad, verse no. 2, 4, 24-25, 31-32; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 2, 9-18 (which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation), 37, 102; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1, 6; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 136-139; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 2-12, 69-71 ½ which narrates how each letter of OM stands for different aspects of creation; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11—1.34, and Canto 5, verse no. 70; Shuk Rahashya Upanishad, verse no. 20 describes how OM is used for the purpose of ritualistic worship according to the Tantra philosophy involving Anga Nyas, Shandanga Nyas etc.; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 42-43 ½ describe how the three states of existence (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) and the three types of bodies (gross, subtle and causal) came into existence as manifestations of the three letters A, U and M of the word OM; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 38.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Taarsar Upanishad, Canto 2, and Canto 3, verse nos. 1-7; Hans Upanishad, verse nos. 6-17.

(c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad verse no. 74-81, 85-88; Pranavo Panishad which has only 13 verses dedicated to OM.

(d) Atharva Veda—Ram Tapiniopanishad, canto 3, verse no.5-9; Prashna Upanishad, full Canto 5; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 4,6; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 8-12; Atharvashikha; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 5; Canto 4, verse no. 3; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 2-8; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 6, verse nos. 3-4.]

5. I, the creator Brahma, am the only Lord of the three worlds [That is, I am the sustainer, nourisher and protector of the three worlds consisting of the terrestrial realm, the heavens, and the nether world.] (5).

[Note—Here the pronoun ‘I’ that the creator Brahma uses actually is meant to imply the Supreme Being known as Brahm who has manifested or revealed himself in the form of the creator Brahma. In fact, the very name of the creator, i.e. ‘Brahma’, is

derived from the root 'Brahm', and it means the creative form of the Supreme Being. In other words, when Brahm, the Supreme Being, decided to create this world, he took the form of Brahma. Therefore, Brahma, the great and grand forefather of creation, is actually Brahm involved in the process of creation himself.

Being a direct and the first revelation of Brahm, the Supreme Being, before the initiation of creation which necessitated the involvement of Maya (delusions), the creator known as Brahma is regarded as the wisest and the enlightened One. That is why the primary scriptures known as the Vedas are his produce.

Later on, as the process of creation commenced and moved ahead, the need was felt for Maya because unadulterated Truth could not be made to appear in more than one form, and to make the world it was necessary to have wide variations of forms, qualities and features. So, either the creator could have abandoned the entire process of creation by deciding to maintain the Truth and shun all falsehood altogether, or to overlook this stumbling block and create delusions of reality if he actually wanted to give shape to his dream project of creation. Hence, the creator willingly set aside the real Truth and created its image in the form of an imaginary 'truth' that was so perfect that it seemed to be a real image of the Truth. But in reality the product was a complete 'falsehood' for the very simple reason that it was 'created' and not pre-existing.

This declaration of Brahma that 'I am the creator' is not boastful or wrong really. This is because he is the wise One and also the most enlightened One. His statement is reminiscent of what a self-realised and wise spiritual aspirant declares, and which is also endorsed by the Upanishads. He asserts 'I am Brahm; I am Brahm personified'—a declaration that is regarded as one of the many great sayings or the Maha Vakyas of the Vedas. Here, the pronoun 'I' does not mean the physical body of the person making this statement, but refers to his Atma which is his real and truthful 'self'. It is not at all a boastful and arrogant statement but one that comes spontaneously from the inner-self of a wise and honest man. This Atma is an image of Brahm that resides in the body. The individual is an image and a microcosm of the entire creation—with his gross body representing the visible aspect of creation and his Atma representing Brahm that lives in this world as its soul and essence.

Therefore, when the creator Brahma says that 'I have created this world', he is not being untruthful or boastful, but is making an honest declaration as he knows who his 'true self' is.

Therefore also he is indeed 'the only Lord of the entire world'—because he is the Supreme Being himself personified in his form.]

6. All phases of time and eras are under my control and command. [Like in the previous verse and in the following verses also, the pronouns 'my' or 'me' refer to the Supreme Being carrying out the divine work of creating the various components of creation.] (6).

7. It is me who has created and set out a pattern for the day and the night (7).

8. The Tej (light, illumination and dynamism) that is inherently present in the sun, the moon, all the stars and constellations are my glories on display (8).

9. The sky (which is incorruptible, vast, infinite, eternal, all-pervading and all-encompassing) is my subtle but macrocosmic form. The three Gunas (i.e. the subtle qualities that are inherent in all living beings in this creation, and which decide the character traits and the personality of each single individual in creation; the qualities known as Sata, Raja and Tama)¹, which are also called the three Shaktis (dynamic

powers), along with the Maya (the power of creating delusions)² are also my glories and dynamism revealed in these forms.

[In other words, whatever character traits and virtues that are displayed by all the living beings in this creation are reflections of the astoundingly varying forms that the cosmic authority, the power, the energy and the dynamism of the supreme Brahm can take. It also implies that the term Brahm has a holistic import as it incorporates the extremes of the good as well as the bad, and all that lies in between. There is no surprise in it simply because it conforms to the philosophy that says that there is nothing in this creation that is not Brahm. Hence, if goodness is Brahm, then the bad as well as the mediocre are also Brahm! This is why Brahm defies all definitions and parameters, and is the greatest paradox of creation. Brahm is the circumference of creation beyond which there is nothing.] (9).

[Note—¹The *three Gunas* are the basic three qualities that determine the character of all living beings in creation. They combine in different ratios to impart an individual with his unique personality and character traits. The creator needed these Gunas to give individuality to all the creatures of his creation.

Briefly, these three Gunas are the following—(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of *Sata Guna* are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This *Sata Guna* is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The *Vasanas* that have the *Sata Guna* or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the *Satwic* desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The *Raja Guna* is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the *Satwic* qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The *Vasanas* that have the *Rajasic Guna* or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with *Satwic* quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It

leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamsic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

These three Gunas are called 'Shaktis' because they are powerful enough to determine the way the world behaves and thinks; they are the dynamic aspect of creation that control all characters and facets of personality of all the creatures of this creation. Being responsible for a creature's thought processes and how he acts and behaves, these Gunas even have a say on his future and destiny. These Gunas are the powerful and forceful drivers that determine where the destiny of the world is headed.

The *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 77, says that these three Gunas are the basic Dhatus (elements) in creation.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Brahman 3, verse no. 1 says that all the three Gunas depend upon the level of one's Vidya or his level of wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment.

The *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 116 elucidates how these three Gunas are like the three Granthis (knots) of the body as far as the ascetic is concerned.

The *Shwetashwatar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 10 describes the relationship between Prakriti, Maya and Gunas in a very succinct manner.

How the three Gunas *affect the man's character* have been very precisely and expressly narrated in *Shaarirako-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda in its verse nos. 7-13.

How the three *Gunas were used by Brahm to create this world* has been beautifully described in *Paingalo-panishad*, 1/7 and 2/3. Canto 2, verse no. 3 describes how Sata and Raja were used, while Canto 1, verse no. 7 narrates the use of Tama.

The *Shwetashwatar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 6, verse no. 16, describes how the supreme Brahm was the creator of all the three Gunas.

The concept of *Gunas affecting the Atma* has been elaborately dealt with in various Upanishads, for example the *Maitrayanyu Upanishad*, 1/11, 2/5, 3/5, etc. of the Sam Veda tradition.

The *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse no. 2 describes how the three Gunas were used by the supreme Creator to create this world.

Colour of the Gunas—Upanishads symbolically refer to the *three primary colours* when they describe these *three basic qualities* in the creature. They are white for the Sata Guna, red for the Raja Guna, and black for the Tama Guna. Refer—*Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, 4/5; and *Paingalo-panishad* 1/3. The *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 9-13 describes these Gunas has having the following colours while it analyses the various components of the Manta OM. The colours are grey or white for the Sata Guna, yellow for Raja Guna, and dark for the Tama Guna.

The *Chandogya Upanishad*, 3/5/4-3/9 and 6/3-4 of the Sam Veda uses these three colours to describe the different types of characters called Sata, Raja and Tama defining the three basic types of creatures and their individual personality traits and temperaments that exist in this creation.

The *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 9-13 describes the colours of the Gunas as follows—"The first letter 'A' is symbolically of a yellow colour and represents the predominance of the 'Raja Guna' in this creation. The second letter 'U' is symbolically of a white or grey hue and represents the predominance of 'Sata Guna' in this creation. Finally, the third letter 'M' is symbolically of a dark colour and represents the predominance of the 'Tama Guna' in predominance."

The *Paingal Upanishad*, 1/3-9 of the Shukla Yajur Veda clearly states that these three colours were the ones with which Nature representing creation was born and how the supreme creator had subtly entered the entire creation to be uniformly present in its very minutest of corner.

In Tantra texts, these three Gunas are treated as the three Granthis or knots. The *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda is one such. In its Canto 1, verse no. 116 it describes how the three inherent Gunas (qualities) of Sata, Raja and Tama that are naturally present in all the creatures are likened to knots or Granthis that create obstacles in his spiritual progress and the shine of his consciousness to come to the fore. Verse no. 117 describes the benefits of this achievement.

²*Maya*—The term broadly means 'delusions' or the situation which creates an illusion of reality which is devoid of truth and matter.

It is a manifestation of Brahma in the sense that it reflects his dynamism and glories to create wonders out of nothing and real-life illusions that resemble the truth so much that it is hard to distinguish the false from the truth.

Maya is also said to be of *three types*, called the 'Triguna Maya', because of the dominance of one or the other of the above three Gunas in any given situation. Thus, when the Maya is dominated by the Sata Guna, it is called 'Sata Guni Maya'; when it is dominated by the Raja Guna, it is called 'Raja Guni Maya'; and when it is dominated by the Tama Guna, it is called 'Tama Guni Maya'. These have been described in verse no. 10 below.

Maya has *three names*—viz. (a) Maha Maya—or the great powers exhibited by Brahm at the cosmic level. This Maya is the progenitor of all other types of Mayas which keep the individual creature trapped in their net. The Maha Maya is the virtual mistress of all the delusions and misconceptions and their attendant ignorance that keep all the creatures of this creation enthralled by their deceptive charm. (b) Yog Maya—this is the stupendous magical powers created by the union of the supreme authority of creation known as Brahm, and the mystical and esoteric powers that delusions and hallucinations can create for the creature. (c) Maya Shakti—this is the 'shakti' or power and authority displayed by Maya in association with Brahm from whom it acquires its stupendous energy and powers.

Refer also to Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 33, 44-45 of our present Upanishad in the context of Maya.]

10. The Maya that has the Tama Guna in dominance is represented by Rudra (the angry form of Shiva that brings about destruction and annihilation of creation).

The Maya that has the Sata Guna in dominance is represented by Vishnu (the sustainer, protector and the benevolent care-taker of creation).

The Maya that has the Raja Guna in dominance is represented by Brahma (the creator who indulged in the tricky job of creating all sorts of delusions and illusions, as well as the world with all its material sense objects and the subjects that would populate it and enjoy it, thereby keeping the creator engrossed in its magical charms).

The Maya that has a combination of the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna appearing in equal proportion as a dominant factor, with the Sata Guna taking the back seat, is represented by Indra and other Gods. None of the Gods in the countless number of Gods in the pantheon can be said to possess Satvic qualities—i.e. none of them can be cited as an example of exemplary qualities of virtuousness, nobility, auspiciousness, righteousness, truthfulness, holiness, piety, purity, chastity, incorruptibility, trust worthiness, sincerity, honesty and other good virtues that the Sata Guna stands for.

[None of the Gods are a perfect image of the Supreme Being known as Brahm as they represent only a tiny fraction of one or the other aspect of Brahm. So, while Brahm includes all of them in its being at once, none of them can claim to be Brahm in its entirety, for they represent only one particular aspect of Brahm. For instance, the creator Brahma represents that aspect of Brahm which ‘creates’; Vishnu symbolizes that aspect of Brahm which is concerned with the sustenance of creation; and Rudra stands for the power of Brahm to rein-in and crush even the most formidable of creatures and bring about an end of this creation mercilessly and ruthlessly if it spins out of control. It ought to be noted that the Sanskrit word ‘Rudra’ and the English word ‘ruthless’ have the same root—i.e. ‘ru’. Similarly, Shiva is that aspect of Brahm which is marked by the grand eclectic virtues of high wisdom, enlightenment, dispassion, renunciation and spiritual beauty. It is this aspect of Brahm that is lauded in this Upanishad as the ‘Pashupati Brahm’—i.e. the Brahm which has controlled the animal-like, evil and corrupt world. In other words, Shiva who trounces the wicked and the evil is the Lord regarded as the closest God to Brahm.]

Out of this pantheon of Gods it is only Lord Aghor (Shiva) who stands out as being neutral, full of equanimity, and as being indifferent to the effects of one or the other Gunas in the true sense.

[That is, he is not at all influenced by the dominance of one or the other Gunas. His character is absolutely immaculate, steady and untainted because it is not at all affected by the characteristic influences of any of the three Gunas. This is why Lord Shiva is equated with Brahm, the Supreme Being. This is also why he is called ‘Maheshwar’—the Great Lord, an epithet not even applied to Vishnu who is so loved by the creatures of the creation because he takes care of them. And therefore, this aspect of Shiva is equivalent to Brahm, the Lord who is also known as Pashupati—one who controls animal-like instincts which impel all creatures to remain indulged and engrossed in enjoying the sense organs and the sense objects of this world.] (10).

11. Pashupati Rudra (i.e. Lord Shiva)¹ is the doer or performer of all Yagyas (fire sacrifices; he represents the Brahma priest). Lord Vishnu is the Adhvaryu (the priest who takes care of the details of the rituals). And Indra (the king of Gods) is the Hota (a special category of priest)².

*The Supreme Being known as the ‘Maheshwar Brahm’³, the Great Ishwar (Lord God) known as Brahm, who resides in the inner-self (of all the living beings as the pure consciousness known as the Atma) is the patron deity, the Brahm (the God), to whom the sacrifice is offered, and he is the one who enjoys the benefits of the fire sacrifice. This supreme Lord is also known as ‘Manas Brahm’—literally the Supreme Being who lives in the subtle heart as well as in the conscious and the sub-conscious mind of the creature. It is this Lord who is the real beneficiary of all the good and auspicious deeds done by the creature. In other words, the real beneficiary of all good and auspicious deeds is the creature himself, and no one else. This is because the ‘true self’ of any creature (living being) is his Atma, his pure conscious soul, and the Atma

is a microcosmic counterpart, a perfect image, of the supreme Consciousness known as Brahm or Pranav.

[The term 'Mana' has two components—viz. the 'subtle heart' because it is here that the Atma lives, and 'subtle aspects of the conscious mind' because it is here that the grand virtues that distinguish Brahm, such as wisdom, enlightenment, knowledge, deep insight, intelligence, erudition, sagacity, the ability to discriminate and differentiate between the right and the wrong, etc. are located. That is, the real benefit of doing the fire sacrifice with devotion and faith is derived by the Atma or the inner-self of the creature which finds auspiciousness and holiness with this endeavour. The fire of the sacrifice symbolically burns all the taints and impurities that may have mired the purity and divinity of the Atma because of its association with this world full of corruptions and impurities.] (11).

[Note—*This stanza can be interpreted as follows also—'The real beneficiary of the fire sacrifice or any other forms of auspicious deeds is the supreme Lord known as 'Maheshwar', the Great Ishwar, who is also known as Brahm. This Brahm resides in the subtle Mana (heart, conscience and sub-conscious mind) of the aspirant as his Atma which is pure consciousness and the concerned individual's 'true self'. In other words, the real beneficiary of all good and auspicious deeds is the creature himself, and no one else.

¹The *Sharav Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 which stresses that 'Isha' or the Lord Shiva, who is regarded as the supreme Lord of creation, is also known as 'Pashupati'. His divine consort is said to be 'Swaha'. In mythology, Swaha is a personification of the oblation offered to the fire sacrifice. Swaha is also depicted as the daughter of Daksha Prajapati and wife of Agni, the Fire-God; she is said to preside over burnt offerings. Her body consists of the four Vedas and her limbs are the branches of the Vedas, called Angas.

²The *Brahma priest* is the head, the senior most and elder class of priest who is a representative of Brahma, the creator and patriarch of creation. Brahma was the first God who did the cosmic fire sacrifice and started the tradition of fire sacrifices and worshipping of the Fire in order to empower one to successfully undertake any given enterprise. This priest uses the hymns of the Rig Veda.

The *Hota priest* is the priest who offers oblation to the sacred fire; he uses the hymns of the Atharva Veda. The Hota priest offers the oblations on behalf of the patron who finances the fire sacrifice. Since in earlier times only kings and other noble men had the wherewithal to hold elaborate fire sacrifices involving huge outlay of money, the king of Gods, Indra, is cited here as being the Hota priest as he made arrangements for the material things needed for the completion of the fire sacrifice. Besides this point, Indra was the God of rain, and therefore his nod was needed for a good harvest from which the grain could be collected to be offered to the supreme deity. Therefore, metaphorically and by implication it was Indra who was himself offering the oblations to the Supreme Being.

The *Adhvaryu priest* chants the hymns of the Yajur Veda. With the same logic as applied for the Hota priest, Vishnu was the Adhvaryu priest because he took care of the nitty-gritty of creation; Vishnu ensured that the details of maintenance of creation were taken care of like this priest who takes care of the Mantras associated with the various Gods and Goddesses who preside over the various aspect of the mundane life on earth.

³It is to be noted here that the term 'Maheshwar' is traditionally applied to Lord Shiva who is also known as Rudra. But a fine distinction must be made between Shiva who is honoured as Maheshwar, and Shiva who is known as Rudra. Rudra is not the complete Brahm as clearly stressed in verse no. 10 for the simple reason that the lowly quality of Tama Guna dominates him, and it is due to this Tama Guna that he is so angry and wrathful. On the other hand, that form of Shiva which is holy, wise, enlightened and self-realised, and which is the patron deity of ascetics and sages

is known as Aghor, the renunciate and dispassionate form of Shiva who is ever-submerged in meditation and contemplation. This Shiva is pure, holy, truthful, enlightened and blissful. These are the hallmark virtues of the Atma, the pure consciousness that is 'Chinmaya' (truthful, enlightened, blissful—refer verse no. 14). Hence, the Shiva who is 'Maheshwar' is the one who possesses the eclectic qualities possessed by the Atma at the individual level of creation, and of the supreme transcendental Atma known as the supreme Brahm at the cosmic level of creation.]

12. The 'Manas Brahm' (as described in verse no. 11 above) has a subtle, a divine and a sublime form or aspect or facet known as 'Hans'¹, 'So-a-Ham'², etc.

[This Manas Brahm obviously is the pure conscious Atma as the divine bird Hans, the Swan, is frequently used in the Upanishads as a metaphor for the Atma to indicate the latter's immaculacy, holiness, purity and divinity, along with a high degree of wisdom, enlightenment and erudition. Since the Atma is also the 'self' of the creature, a person who performs a fire sacrifice with a holistic approach is expected to become highly self-realised and spiritually awakened or enlightened so much so that when he declares 'I am that Brahm' (So-a-Ham), he actually means it and is not being pretentious or deceitful. He is deemed to have understood the esoteric meaning of the term 'Brahm' vis-à-vis his own truthful 'self' known as the Atma.]

This symbolic fire sacrifice (that is done to attain this eclectic state of existence when the aspirant becomes enough self-realised to understand that he is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified in the form of his Atma known as Hans) is actually done by practicing meditation upon Naad.

What is it? When the seeker of Brahm becomes completely submerged in the thoughts of Brahm and the Atma, when he continuously meditates upon the pure consciousness by employing the Mantra 'Hans' (as described in a number of Upanishads for this purpose), his inner-self begins to resonate with the sound of Naad³ (i.e. the cosmic sound which is said to be generated by the vibrations in the ether created by the resonance of the cosmic Consciousness). This sound flows in a continuous stream like the flow of oil on a clean surface. Its vibrations reverberate in the nerves and veins of the practitioner's body so much so that he becomes oblivious of everything else in this world.

Any disruption in this state of transcendental existence of continuous bliss and stability is the state of existence known as the Jiva—i.e. the Atma that lacks steadiness of bliss and tranquility, and is therefore tossed and tumbled around by the changing nature of the gross world around it.

[In other words, the 'Jiva' or the living being is an entity that is different from Brahm by the virtue of its losing its connection with the Atma, the pure consciousness. Otherwise, there is no distinction between the Jiva and Brahm.] (12).

[Note—¹The eclectic Mantra *Hans*—refer verse no. 4 of this Kanda/Canto 1 and its note. The metaphysical importance and relevance of a Swan vis-à-vis the Atma have been explained as note of verse no. 20 of the present Kanda/Canto 1 of this Upanishad.

²The Mantra *So-a-Ham*—This Mantra has been described in a number of Upanishads—viz. (i) Sam Veda = Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 83. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 28; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 17, Canto 4, verse nos. 1.11-2, Canto 5, verse nos. 69-72. (iii) Atharva Veda = Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15.

³*Naad* is the cosmic sound that is said to be generated in the cosmic ether due to the vibrations caused by pulsations of Consciousness. It is the subtlest form of sound

and stands for the subtlest form of dynamism of this cosmic Consciousness that the Upanishads prefer to call Brahm. In this manifestation of Naad, Brahm is called Pranav. The cosmic sound of Naad is encrypted in the form of the monosyllabic Mantra known as OM. Therefore it follows that OM is a word manifestation or representative of the cosmic Naad which stands for the cosmic form of life-generating energy and dynamism called Consciousness. The divine entity that possesses this virtue is the Supreme Being known as Brahm.

Now, Hans is a bird—i.e. it is a living being with a gross body which harbours the same Consciousness inside it in the form of the Atma. This Atma possesses all the eclectic virtues that Brahm possesses. Therefore, for all practical purposes, both the 'Hans' and 'OM' refer to the same cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, albeit at two different levels of creation. While the term 'OM' refers to the existence of the Consciousness at the cosmic level in the form of Pranav or Brahm, the term 'Hans' refer to the same Consciousness that resides inside the gross body of the individual creature as his Atma.

This word OM is an ethereal sound that is used during Yoga or meditation exercises to contemplate upon Brahm because its repetition results in submerging the practitioner in a continuous and overwhelming stream of sound waves, of increasing frequency and pitch, that are generated by the vibrations caused by continuous repetition of OM. The sound reverberates throughout his inner being so much so that it reaches a crescendo. It is then that the practitioner is said to hear the cosmic Naad, the cosmic background sound in the ether which is believed to be generated by the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. It is much like the case of one listening to a favourite radio station only when he catches the particular frequency.]

13. This Hans (Atma) is an image or personification of Parmatma, the supreme Atma which is the cosmic Consciousness. Hans moves or prevails both in the outside world as well as in the inner-self of the creature (i.e. the microcosmic aspect of creation). In the inner-self, this Parmatma lives in the form of the 'Suparna' (a divine bird that is auspicious and with golden wings).

[Here, the Suparna refers to the Hans, the divine Swan from the perspective of the Upanishads. From the perspective of the Purans, the word 'Suparna' though refers to the bird Garuda which is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. But since Vishnu is also known as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, all-pervading, invisible gross body of Brahm.

Therefore, the verse, simply put, means that the Parmatma, the supreme transcendental Atma, lives in the inner-self of a living being as his individual Atma. This Atma is wise and enlightened. It is likened to the bird Swan because this bird is regarded as a metaphor for these grand virtues. Again, just like the Swan that floats majestically and with dignity on the surface of the water of a lake, remaining unaffected by the impurities present in the water, the Atma too lives in a body with the same attitude and dignity. A wise man understands that he bears the cosmic Consciousness in his inner-self as the Atma which is as immaculate and dignified as the Swan floating on the surface of a lake.

There is another reason why the metaphor of the Swan is used for a wise man who is lost in deep meditation on the 'self' and the 'truth'. The neck of the Swan is curved inwards like the alphabet U with its beak lying almost parallel to its abdomen as it floats calmly on the surface of the water. For a casual observer this posture reminds him of a person who is lost in some deep thoughts. Hence, when ancient sages and seers were searching for an instance to illustrate the state of existence of a man lost in deep meditation and contemplation they hit upon the metaphor of the Swan as being the most appropriate one.] (13).

14-15. [This verse describes the symbolic form of the Hans, the enlightened Atma, in its subtle form. In other words, a wise and enlightened creature who has become self-realised understands that Brahm has a subtle body as represented by the entities enumerated in this verse, and not a gross form as represented by the world and the way the different Gods have been depicted to exist in this creation by the Purans. This fact is also endorsed in verse no. 10 which expressly states that none of the Gods are truly holy and divine and complete in the correct sense! This is because all of them have one or the other of the three Gunas as the dominant factor, whereas Brahm is truly holy, divine and immaculate because he has all of them in equal proportions, thereby one neutralizes the other. In other words, the Gods are not neutral; they are not perfect. On the other hand, Brahm is not only neutral but also perfect. These Gods represent one or more than one divine aspects of Brahm, but not Brahm in its entirety.]

Anything that is extremely subtle and sublime cannot be visibly seen as opposed to one that is gross, but subtle and sublime entities have a wider reach, are infinite, and are inherently free from either worldly taints or limitations that come with being gross. That is why Brahm par-se is invisible while the same Brahm's various manifestations in the form of different Gods are visible to a devotee as endorsed in the Purans.

Now, Brahm also lives as the Atma of the individual Jiva (living being; the creature) and as the Gunas that this Jiva possesses. The obvious difference between the Gods and the Jiva lies in the degree of subtlety that their Atma displays. So whereas the Atma that lives inside the Jiva is surrounded by the grossness associated with the physical body, the Atma of the Gods is of a highly subtle nature. A Jiva can become God-like if he sheds his grossness and worldly tendencies. This is the aim of all spiritual practices. However, if the spiritual aspirant has even a trace of desires left in him, though this desire may be of a noble and righteous nature, he would not get complete Mukti, and instead become God-like. The Atma that has assumed a subtle body of a God becomes omnipresent and very powerful as compared to the Atma that lives in a gross body of a Jiva. While the Atma as the 'self' of a God has no shape and attribute, that which is the 'self' of the Jiva has a definite shape and attributes.]

The 'Hans' (Brahm; the cosmic Consciousness; the Atma) is revealed in this creation at a subtle and microcosmic plane in the form of the following—(i) as the ninety-six Tattwas (principal elements)¹ of creation, (ii) as the eclectic virtues (and the sublime entity represented by them or which is a personification of these virtues) that are compositely known as 'Chinmaya' (enlightenment, wisdom, consciousness, and bliss), (iii) as the three Gunas (inherent qualities in creation, such as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna), (iv) as the nine Tattwas², (v) as the three Trinity Gods such as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder of creation who are manifestations of the three aspects of the dynamic energy (the 'fire power' that drives the dynamo of creation) of this Hans (Brahm), (vi) as being either tied by the various Granthis³ (spiritual knots or stumbling block or mill-stones that act as obstacles in one's spiritual progress) on the one hand, and being free from their shackling effects by acknowledging the presence of the Advaitya Granthi (the presence of the non-dual Brahm in the form of the subtle Atma) on the other hand, and (vii) as being the wearer of the sacred thread (which means that the Jiva is diligent in both the performance of the fire sacrifices⁴ as well as pursuing the sacred knowledge of Brahm by following the various Sutras ('threads'; the various spiritual formulas) as prescribed in the Upanishads and other scriptures (14-15).

[Note—¹The ninety-six Tattwas—refer Krishna Yajur Veda's *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 2-14.

Reference: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda = *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 2-14. (ii) Atharva Veda = *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 5.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda describes the 96 Tattvas elaborately in Canto 1, verse nos. 2-14.

²The nine Tattwas—The three fundamental Gunas, i.e. the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, the three basic characters of the Atma known as Sat-Chit-Anand, i.e. Sat (truth), Chitta (consciousness) and Anand (bliss), and the three forms of divinity represented by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder of creation, represent the nine Tattwas of creation.

³Granthi—The word *Granthi* literally means node, a nodule or module or knot or a wart-like or a gland-like structure. It has various connotations depending upon the context in which the word is used. For instance, it might symbolically mean the different gates in a strong fort which must be overcome or broken before one enters the fort or overruns it as done during war times.

The numerous emotional, sentimental and spiritual hurdles that an aspirant faces are also referred to as the Granthi because they are like the hard shell of the nut which is difficult to crack. Only when this shell is cracked can one find the nut. Similarly, only when one overcomes the numerous obstacles and hurdles faced by him in his spiritual pursuit that it is possible for him to have access to the fount of eternal bliss and peace that comes with Brahm realisation which is being aware of the Absolute Truth of existence.

According to the metaphysical interpretation of the term Granthi, it is the various knots present in the heart that shackle the Atma and prevent its liberation and deliverance. These Granthis are called Hridaya Granthis because they stand in the way of a man obtaining freedom from his fetters and keep him tied to this world. Once he is able to rupture them, he finds liberation even while he is still alive in this world. This fact has been clearly emphasized in *Kathopanishad*, Canto 2, Valli 3, verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. Refer also to *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, *Mundak* (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 8.

From anatomical point of view, the Granthis refer to the ganglions that help to coordinate the different nerves just like major junction boxes in the network of electric wires in a building. The word Granthi also refers to the glands that control all the major functions of the body, including those of the nerves and veins. Just like a knot that helps to tie something, these Granthis of the body bind the subtle energy present inside the body and prevent it from being dissipated or going to waste; it helps to preserve energy and stops it from being released if not wanted. If we treat them as representing the ganglions then it means that by the process of Yoga in which the subtle energy of the Kundalini is released in the spinal cord, or the Sushumna Naadi to be precise, these hitherto clogged and inactive ganglions are reactivated and they begin to function in prime shape. If we consider them as glands then it would mean that the functioning of these glands is restored by the process of Yoga, and this in turn helps the body to work properly.

The Granthi symbolises the center of power and authority because it is the nodal point from where all the authority needed for governance of the body spread out. It is also like the seat of power and authority of a king, much like the strong fortress from where he rules over the kingdom. They represent the nodal points in the body where the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva or Rudra the concluder, have their symbolic residence, and it is from here they control the functioning of the body of the individual as well as everything that he thinks and does. If the individual is regarded as the microcosm of the entire creation, then the Atma would be the supreme Brahm, and the various patron deities of the organs would be the different Gods of creation. The *Brahm Vidya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 70-71 describes the three main Granthis where these

three Gods have their symbolic abodes in the body of the individual creature—viz. Brahm Granthi, Vishnu Granthi, and Rudra Granthi. They have also been described in (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 86-89; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 67-68, 85-86.

⁴The sacred thread is worn by Brahmins when they perform a fire sacrifice. Verse no. 11 above has already established the symbolism of the three types of Brahmin priests who perform the fire sacrifice. Since the sacred thread has three intertwined strands, it means here that all the three priests should work in a coordinated manner in order to derive any benefit from the fire sacrifice. Otherwise it loses its relevance and significance just like a sacred thread that is not woven according to a prescribed manner.

Conversely, it means that the honouring of the Trinity Gods and understanding the fact that they represent the supreme Brahm and his dynamism in the cosmic form is equivalent to wearing the sacred thread in a symbolic manner by the spiritual aspirant.

Taken in simple words this verse means that just as the important aspect of creature or a living being is his Atma for which the term 'Hans' is used as a metaphor, the understanding of the essential principles of creation, such as the question as to how it was created, how it is regulated and how it would ultimately end, and other such relevant metaphysical questions is equivalent to being acquainted with Brahm because the latter is the supreme Authority that is responsible for every aspect of this creation.

The 'sacred thread' is the eclectic knowledge of Brahm that binds all individual units of creation into one single whole. It is the knowledge that it is Brahm that is the thread which runs through the various units or components of this creation as enumerated in the aforesaid verse, stringing them together to make a structure that is known as this world. This structure has two aspects or facets—one that is visible and gross, and the other that is subtle and underlying.]

16. The sacred thread known as the Yagyopavit is also known as the Brahm-Sutra¹ (referred to in the closing lines of verse no. 15). This is because it refers to the divine spiritual knowledge that pertains to the supreme transcendental Brahm.

This sacred thread also stands for the different forms of the sacred fire sacrifices; these fire sacrifices can only be done when the person who performs them wears this thread. This is because this thread reminds him that the fire sacrifice is the medium which links him with Brahm.

Again, since the fire sacrifice itself is a personified form of Brahm, it is a natural corollary that the sacred thread also stands for Brahm.

Further, the Sanskrit term for the sacred thread is 'Sutra', literally having two connotations—one obviously means 'a thread', and the other more important meaning is 'a formula, a principle, or a tenet'. Hence, to wear the sacred thread actually means to know the secret tenets of Brahm, to be aware of the principles that pertain to the supreme Truth known as Brahm, to be conversant with the formula which can provide one with access to the pinnacle of spiritual glory and attainment, a knowledge of the Divine that can make one spiritually liberated and emancipated.

The sacred thread that is used (worn) as a symbol of purity during fire sacrifices has a gross form, but its subtler form represents the purity of the fire itself (because there is nothing as powerful as the fire as far as the ability to purify is concerned).

The sacred thread, once again, is used as a symbol of purity and holiness during religious ceremonies because it represents Brahm, the supreme deity worshipped during these ceremonies. It represents the virtues and glories of Brahm,

and it is this sublime and subtle aspect of the sacred thread that is the actual one which is of any benefit to the wearer.

It symbolizes the 'Brahm-Sutra'—the esoteric secrets of Brahm, the profound principles of Brahm, the grand tenets of the philosophy of Brahm. It is the link or the bridge between the Jiva who is unaware of Brahm, and the Brahm itself.

The physical form of the sacred thread reminds the wearer constantly that his body is a shrine in which the Supreme Being is consecrated as the Atma, and so he must be very careful of his thoughts, his deeds and his actions so as not to do anything that undermines or defiles the holy nature of this shrine (body).

Therefore, the sacred thread known as the Yagyopavit and the tenets of Brahm known as the Brahm-Sutra are synonyms of each other (16).

[Note—¹The Sacred Thread/Yagyopavit/Brahm Sutra/Tri Sutra—The *Trisutra* are the three threads used in making the sacred thread worn around the neck. These three threads stand for the three Gunas or qualities that Brahm possesses. These are the following--'Sata Guna or quality' is the noble, virtuous, auspicious and good qualities present in a creature. It is marked by such high standards of ethical existence that have, as their characteristic features, such qualities as coolness of head, peace, contentedness, humility, devotion, wisdom, mercy, compassion, creativity, selflessness, service, righteousness, virtuousness, holiness and nobility of thought and action etc. As is evident, these qualities are the best qualities that one can have in him; they have a spiritual dimension to them; they are spiritually uplifting and give a divine halo to those who practice them. (b) 'Raja Guna or quality' covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, desires, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, desire to sustain etc. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being. (c) 'Tama Guna or quality' is the third quality; it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, leading him to such negative traits as sins, vices, perversions, greed, avarice, haughtiness, pride, lust, attachments, yearnings, intoxication, wild behaviour, promiscuity, evils, utter disregard for anything which is righteous, ethical and noble etc.—i.e. in brief, immoral, denigrating and depraved behaviour marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness of misdemeanours. It is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajasic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvic' qualities in them; kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajasic' quality in them; while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. Since the creation consists of all types of people, Brahm is deemed to possess all these qualities in him.

The external sacred thread is worn to remind the wearer of his duty and responsibility towards the Brahm who resides in his own bosom. When he has matured enough that he does not need any reminder for this purpose, it is expected of him to then discard the external thread, and instead remain engrossed in the thoughts of Brahm in all planes of existence, whether he is awake or asleep. This is actually what is done when one takes the vows of Sanyas (a life of renunciation) when he is ordained to discard all external symbols such as the sacred thread, the tuft of hair on the head, the water-pot, the ochre clothes, the monk's staff, etc.

The following Upanishads also deal with the concept of the sacred thread—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 4-15. (ii) Atharva Veda = Par

Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 3-20; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 17, 79, 80-82, 84-85, 88-89. The Mantra dedicated to the Yagyopavit is narrated in Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 37.]

17. The various Matras (vowel sounds; the units, letters or syllables of any given Mantra; the length and duration of invocation of various Mantras during contemplation and meditation) are like the units or parts of the symbolic body of this Brahm Sutra. [Since the term ‘Sutra’ means a formula or principle which can be known or taught only by the medium of words, and words are built around letters and syllables, it is implied here that the Matras are the different metaphysical doctrines and eclectic principles which are an inseparable component of the secrets pertaining to Brahm. They are the ‘Sutra’—the thread—which links the individual creature to the supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm. They are the Sutra—the formula—that help the individual unravel the profound secrets of the divine Brahm. They are the Sutra—the sacred tenets—pertaining to Brahm.]

A wise, intelligent and self-realised spiritual aspirant is called a ‘Hans’ (i.e. he is treated as a wise man who has great wisdom and discriminatory powers to pick up the truth and discard the falsehood) when he remains perpetually submerged in doing meditation and contemplation upon the universal ubiquitous ‘truth’ known as Brahm, or upon his ‘self’ known as the Atma. This Atma is an image of the supreme transcendental Atma known as the Parmatma. The terms Atma, Parmatma and Brahm are synonyms of each other. When he does so, he is actually doing a fire sacrifice in the true sense, though it is done in a symbolic manner. This form of fire sacrifice is done internally as it involves the mind and its sub-conscious faculties which remain focused on the ‘self’ and the truth of creation.

This form of internal fire sacrifice has far greater spiritual value than the one done in the external world. The internal form of the fire sacrifice is subtle and sublime, and consequentially its results are also subtle and sublime in equal proportion. The external form of the fire sacrifice involving elaborate and time consuming rituals is done in a gross world and involves gross forms of physical offerings. Therefore its rewards are also gross and superficial. From the perspective of the long-term spiritual welfare of the Jiva, the internal form of the fire sacrifice has far more value than its external counterpart.

Hence, in this form of the internal fire sacrifice the various Mantras he employs to meditate and contemplate are the symbolic Sutra (the sacred thread) that is worn by a person performing the external forms of the fire sacrifice. [In other words, a wise man who uses the different Mantras to meditate upon the Atma and the supreme Brahm is deemed to be wearing the sacred thread even if he does not physically wear the thread on his body. These Mantras are equivalent to the sacred thread worn during formal forms of the fire sacrifice and are equally purifying and holy. The natural corollary to this observation is that those who meditate upon Brahm, who know the secret of Brahm, who are self-realised in as much as they are well-versed about the esoteric secrets of the Atma—such people need not bother about the necessity of wearing the sacred thread on their physical body. For such enlightened and wise persons, the various Mantras and their Matras are the instruments that he employs to attain the same spiritual glory and divine achievements that others get by doing elaborate fire sacrifices and purifying rituals.]

[Which Mantra does he employ to do the symbolic fire sacrifice? This is answered now—] The Pranav or the Mantra known as ‘OM’ is the symbolic Brahm-Sutra (the secret formula which leads one directly to Brahm-realisation as it is a sound

representative of the cosmic Consciousness) that is employed in doing the eclectic form of the fire sacrifice known as Brahm Yagya (which implies an internal form of fire sacrifice consisting of meditation and contemplation upon the pure cosmic Consciousness that resides inside one's own inner-self as the Atma, the form of the fire sacrifice endorsed in verse no. 12).

The subtle and sublime cosmic Consciousness that inspires the generation of the sound of OM, or which is at the heart of OM and forms its soul, is also known as Hans. Since OM refers to the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm, the 'Hans' here refers to this 'conscious' factor which not only enables the generation of sound in the otherwise lifeless, pacific and inert cosmic ether, but also enables an equally lifeless, inert and gross body of the creature to actually hear sound. [Why does a dead body not hear anything? It is because the 'Hans' residing inside it has flown away; the 'Atma' or the 'conscious soul' has left it.]

Doing a Brahm Yagya in the proper method is a means of obtaining Moksha. [That is, meditating and contemplating upon Brahm with true wisdom and enlightenment, sans any pretensions and deceit, is the only way for attaining spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. It is the only way by which a creature can overcome the torments and tribulations associated with delusions. It is the only way by which he can break free from the cycle of birth and death to find eternal rest and peace. It is the only way by which he can find or discover the real and absolute 'Truth'.] (17).

[Note—The importance of the internal form of fire sacrifice has also been elaborately described in a number of Upanishads, viz. (i) Atharva Veda = The present Pashupata Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 12, 14-15, 17-22, 29-31; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 1, section 2, verse no. 7-10; Prashna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = (i) Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 7; (ii) Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22; (iii) Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 3-4 (which describes that the food eaten by an individual should be treated as an offering made for Shiva residing inside the body as the Atma).

The importance and the significance of the word Hans has been elaborately explained in verse nos. 4 and 12 of this Kanda.]

18. Brahm Sandhya (remembering Brahm, offering oblations and prayers to him silently by meditation and contemplation at least three times a day—at dawn, at noon and at dusk) is the way of doing the mental or internal form of the fire sacrifice.

The doing of this Brahm Sandhya is a sign that the person is remembering Brahm internally (i.e. he is meditating and contemplating upon the cosmic Consciousness residing in his inner-self as the Atma; it is a sign that he has become self and Brahm realised). [Refer verse no. 20 also.] (18).

19. A true Brahmin¹ is one who wears the Yagya Sutra (the sacred thread worn during the performance of fire sacrifices, especially the symbolic one as narrated in verse no. 16), who employs the Pranav Mantra (i.e. the OM Mantra) for his religious needs (such as when doing Japa or repetition of a Mantra done during meditation or while invoking a deity during formal forms of worship, Yoga or meditation, Dhyana or contemplation, etc.), and who is well-versed in the principles of Brahm Yagya (spiritual practices which are equivalent to a formal fire sacrifice but done in a subtle and symbolic manner which lead directly to the realisation of the supreme cosmic Consciousness and the absolute Truth known as Brahm).

The Gods (the term is a metaphor for the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, holiness, divinity, nobility etc.) are to be found in the diligent

observance of the principles that define a man as a Brahmin. [That is, if a man is a true Brahmin as outlined above, he is deemed to be living God in the sense that he would possess all the eclectic virtues that collectively defined as being ‘godly’.]

The Hans (the enlightened Atma, the self-realised and Brahm-realised person) who adheres to the principles of Sutra (i.e. who follows the grand spiritual principles and scriptural tenets that lead to Brahm-realisation, who offers his obeisance to the Supreme Being in the manner outlined in this Upanishad, who leads a life like a true Brahmin as described above, and who understands the secrets of Brahm as well as that of the Atma as a representative of Brahm) is deemed to be doing the Yagya (the fire sacrifice) in the true sense.

There is no difference between the Hans and Pranav. That is, there is no difference between the immaculate Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’ known as the Hans, and the supreme transcendental Brahm known as Pranav. [Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness that produces vibrations of life in the ether that are heard in the form of Naad (refer verse no. 12). These dynamic vibrations in the cosmic ether produce sound that is encapsulated in the monosyllabic word OM. Hence, the OM is a sound form or the cosmic Naad known as Pranav which stands for Brahm because it is the latter which has generated this sound. Only something that has life, energy, vitality and dynamism in it, anything that has consciousness pulsating in it, would be able to generate similar energy and vibrations in another entity when it comes in contact with the former.

For instance, when electricity flows in a wire and another wire is joined to it, the latter also begins to conduct electricity, but if the earlier wire was dead and there was no electric current flowing in it then no matter how hard one tries the second wire will show no electric current in it.

Similarly, the cosmic ether is neutral and calm. It is the presence of the ‘Consciousness’ in it that creates subtle waves of energy which translate into the cosmic sound known as the Naad. If we take the example of the Swan floating in the placid water of the lake, it is the pulsation created by the breathing of the bird that generate subtle ripples in the otherwise absolute calm surface of the water.

If the Atma is personified as a divine Swan known as Hans, the supreme cosmic Atma known as Brahm is personified in the form of Pranav which is name assigned to the cosmic sound known as the Naad. This cosmic sound called Naad is represented by the word OM. [Refer verse no. 17 and 20 of this Canto 1 in this context.] (19).

[Note—¹Who a true Brahmin is has been outlined in other Upanishads as well.

References: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition’s Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 14.

(ii) Sam Veda tradition’s Vajrasuchika Upanishad, verse no. 9.

The *Gayatri Upanishad* of Atharva Veda (the Gopth Brahman, Kandika 31-38) describes the Gayatri Mantra and the Savitri Mantra, and in its discussion it describes a Brahmin as being a personification of Brahm (Kandika 38). It says that a Brahmin personifies Truth and knowledge of this Truth personified as Brahm (Kandika 35-36), and the Vedas (Kandika 37).]

20. The worship of Hans¹ (Brahm; Pranav; the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness; the pure conscious Atma) is done three times a day, called the ‘Tri-Sandhya’. [This worship is called ‘Tri-Sandhya’ as it is done at three points of time in the day when one phase meets another. These are ‘dawn’ when the night meets the day, ‘noon’ when the morning meets the evening, and ‘dusk’ when the day meets the night. Refer also to verse no. 18.]

The three times symbolize the three Varnas (letters of the divine word OM standing for Brahm or Pranav). [The reference here is to the OM Mantra or the Pranav Mantra which is used to offer worship to the supreme transcendental Brahm three times of the day mentioned above. The word OM has three letters or syllables—‘A’ standing for initiation of creation symbolized by dawn, ‘O’ standing for development and growth of creation symbolized by the noon when the sun is at its best splendour and brilliance, and ‘M’ standing for end or conclusion of creation symbolized by dusk when the day ends and the darkness of night overtakes.]

This worship is accomplished by symbolically invoking the blessings of the three types of the sacred Fire².

The Atma, the pure ‘self’ and the cosmic ‘consciousness’, is a personification of these three sacred Fires. The Atma has the same characteristic virtues as that of the fire element. [That is, the Atma has the same magnificence, glory, splendour, radiance, powers, potentials, holiness, divinity and purity as the ‘fire element’. Just like the ‘fire’ gives energy, light, warmth and dynamism to the entire creation, and it is impossible to imagine life and creation without it, it is equally impossible to imagine this creation without the Atma. In the cosmic perspective, this Atma is known as Brahm. Hence, it is Brahm that infuses life and vitality into the otherwise lifeless and inane gross creation.]

While offering obeisance and worship to this Atma, the worshipper employs the ‘OM’ Mantra which also consists of three letters or syllables, and has the same potentials and divine powers as the Atma that represents the fire element because OM stands for Brahm, the Supreme Being and the transcendental cosmic Consciousness.

By corollary therefore, both the Atma and OM refer to the same divine entity (Brahm, the true self) that is symbolized by the bird Hans (Swan). [Refer verse no. 17.19.]

Meditating and contemplating upon this Hans is known as the internal form of doing the fire sacrifice (20).

[Note—¹*Hans*—The enlightened and realised person thinks of himself as a Swan and feels exhilarated that he is not an ordinary man bogged down by worldly fetters, but an exalted soul that is like a Swan.

The bird *Swan* or *Hans* is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolizing its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or Pran passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolizing the creature’s inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

A wise man is expected to pick up the truth and leave aside the non-truths from the basket full of worldly charms of astounding proportions and myriad forms of temptations present in this creation.

Those wise men who have developed the level of wisdom, erudition and sagacity that they can discriminate between what is good and what is not, what is true and what is false, what is liberating and what is ensnaring for their soul are also honoured by the epithet of being a 'Hans' (Swan) because they are just like the Swan which has the legendary ability to pick up pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk leaving behind water and other adulterants in it. Even amongst such wise and enlightened men, those who have realised the 'truth' about their own self in the real sense, i.e. have become 'self-realised' and hence 'Brahm-realised' truthfully, and have consequentially attained the highest level of enlightenment and wisdom are called 'Param Hans'—literally meaning those who have accessed the 'supreme type of enlightenment'. The grand and auspicious virtues and characteristics of such an exalted Sanyasi who is self and Brahm realised has been described in detail in the Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hans' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hans' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse no. 63).

Hans, the divine Swan, is also one of the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu had once appeared as a divine Swan to preach the four celestial sages Sankaadi who were the mental sons of the creator Brahma.

It so happened that Sankaadi approached Brahma and wanted to know how can someone, who wished to have Moksha (final liberation and deliverance from this material world; freedom from attachment to the sense objects of this world; emancipation and salvation), effectively control his mind and sub-conscious and divert them away from the material charms of the world and its sense objects, and towards the inner self where the Atma, the pure consciousness, resides?

Brahma was confused and did not have the answer. So they meditated upon Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, from whom Brahma was born. Thus Vishnu appeared as a divine Swan. The sages could not recognise the Lord in that form and asked who he was. Then Vishnu, in his form as a Swan, preached the great tenets of metaphysics and Vedanta to Sankaadi. Thus, this revelation of Vishnu as a Swan was an embodiment of the greatest and the most refined form of spiritual knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. Henceforth, Swan came to be known as a synonym for these eclectic and divine virtues. This story appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 11/13.

The Swan is depicted as a vehicle of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. In other words, those who worship Swan ride on the crest of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment.

The *Yogchudamani Upanishad*, verse no. 93 clearly asserts that the 'Hans' is a metaphor for Pran. So when it is said in the present verse that Hans shows movement for instance, it refers to the movement in the form of the vital winds such as Pran (breath) which comes in and goes out of the body, the Apaān wind that moves down the intestines and helps the movement of food in the intestines, the Udaān wind that

helps the body to rise etc. The proof of their movement lies in the fact that all the different functions of the body, including external movements such as walking, holding, speaking, eating and excreting etc. that are done by a man while awake are controlled by these winds, but when the man sleeps the external activities cease, making it appear that the vital winds are not moving. When a man is asleep, his vital winds are now moving inside his Naadis or nerves and veins in the form of his Pran or the vital life-giving factor called consciousness. But these winds present inside the body do not appear to move a bit; they do not show any vivid sign of movement at all; no one can observe the movement of the Udaan wind, the Vyaan wind or the Samaan wind and even the Apaana wind that are present inside the body of the creature. Even in the outside world, no one can actually see the wind or air move from one place to another; their movement is deduced indirectly when we observe the movement of leaves for example on a tree. Thus, this Hans in the form of the Pran shows movement on the one hand, and remains immobile on the other hand.

²The *three types of fire*:—References: (i) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 2, section 24; Canto 4, sections 11, 13, 14 and 17; Canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24. (ii) Atharva Veda = Atharva-shikha Upanishad, Kandika 1; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2. (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Kathvalli Upanishad or Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse nos. 7, 13-18; Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 8; Garbha Upanishad, paragraph no. 5; Kath Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3

The three aspects of fire are said to be the following—the terrestrial fire that sustains life on the earth, the fire of the heavens which is used by the Gods, and the fire of the nether worlds or hell which is used to punish sinners.

Worship of the three important fires have been described in Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition in its Canto 2, section 24, while Canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24 explain their great symbolic metaphysical significance.

The *Garhyapatya* fire—[Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/3-6, 4/11/1-2, 4/17/4.] This is the householder's fire. A householder has land and farm representing 'earth' in which he grows food. This food is grown with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire-place in the house. Hence, the Garhyapatya fire, or the householder's fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these 4 entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the 'fire element' because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

The fire was the central piece of all religious life in early times of the Vedic period when a fire sacrifice was deemed to be the best religious activity that a righteous man can expect to do. In this context, the Garhyapatya fire is the main fire lit during such formal fire sacrifices. The fire pit was either square-shaped or rounded. In the context of the fire sacrifice, it was used for the purpose of daily rituals, cooking or warming the offerings, heating of the vessels, to perform circumambulation, to act as a main cauldron or reservoir of the sacred fire which was to be kept perpetually burning throughout the life of the householder once it was lit.

Regarding the *origin* of the Garhyapatya fire, the Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that it was created along with Brahma the creator (the first of the Trinity Gods), the Rig Veda, the Vasus, and the Gaytri Chanda at the beginning of creation by the supreme Creator Brahm, the Supreme Being, and it represents the first leg of Brahm and corresponds to the first letter A of OM.

The *Dakshinagni* fire—[Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/7-10, 4/13/1-2, 4/17/5.] This holy fire is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins

committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

Like in the case of the Garhyapatya fire, the fire that was lit in the main sacrificial shed or site just near the main fire pit but to the south of it and where donations and charities were made was called Dakshinagni fire. The fire pit for this fire was semi-circular or bow-shaped.

Regarding the *origin* of the Dakshinagni fire, the Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that it was created along with the Antariksha (the space above the earth), Lord Vishnu the sustainer (the second of the Trinity Gods) and Rudra (Brahm's macrocosmic form as the Viraat Purush), the Trishtup Chanda and the Yajur Veda by the supreme Creator Brahm, the Supreme Being, and it represents the second leg of Brahm and corresponds to the second letter 'U' of OM.

The *Ahawaniya* fire—[Refer Chandogya Upanishad, 2/24/11-16, 4/14/1-2, 4/17/6.] The Ahawaniya fire is lit during the fire sacrifices to respectfully invoke Gods, and invite them to come and participate in the sacrifice and accept offerings made to them. The word 'Aavaahan' in Sanskrit means to invite, invoke, to pray respectfully with the intention of welcoming. Since one uses one's mouth for these purposes, the fire in the form of the strength, energy and vigour of the spoken word and the power of speech residing in the mouth is called Ahawaniya fire. This fire was lit to invoke the Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The 'electric' is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possess most stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahm in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahm present in it which gives it its punch and strength.

In ancient times it was an established belief and tradition that the way to attain heaven was through the path of the fire sacrifice. The fire sacrifice was in effect a method to harness the spiritual energy inherent in the all pervading fire element which would sufficiently empower the person performing the fire sacrifice to achieve his goal. The sacrificial pit and the heat generated from it reminds one of the modern day nuclear reactors. Even as the strength and energy and powers of the atom can be harnessed for beneficial or ruinous effects through the nuclear reactor, depending upon the temperament and mental setup of the person who masters the science of atomic energy, the fire sacrifice could be similarly used either for auspicious purposes such as attaining eternal peace and tranquility for the tormented soul, or for attaining worldly glory and conquest. Harnessing of nuclear energy requires expertise, knowledge and skills not easy to master and not accessible to all. Building and operating a nuclear facility also is a daunting and elaborate job. Similarly, the ancient fire sacrifices required special skills and expertise, and it was not simply lighting any odd evening village community bonfire to the merriment of all those who sit around it to gossip about the day's events.

Regarding the *origin* of the Ahawaniya fire, the Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that it was created along with the Duloka (the heavens), the Aditya (the Sun God), Lord Rudra the concluder of creation (the third of the Trinity Gods), the Jagati Chanda and the hymns of the Sam Veda by the supreme Creator Brahm, the Supreme Being, and it represents the third leg of Brahm and corresponds to the third letter 'M' of OM.

From this perspective of doing a fire sacrifice in order to attain spiritual eternity and liberation, the ‘units’ of the special knowledge that Yam described to Nachiketa in verse no. 15 of Kathvalli Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition probably pertain to the steps to be followed in the construction of the fire pit—such as the type of bricks used, the number of bricks to be used, the geometrical design of the sacrificial pit, the type of wood to be used in the ceremony, the Mantras to be chanted, and other such finer details which must be diligently and strictly followed if any spiritual benefit is to be derived from the entire exercise. So, the sacrificial fire pit is like an oven in which the fuel of wood is added and the science of Mantras is used to order to generate immense energy that can empower the patron performing the fire sacrifice with stupendous potentials.

On the other hand, from the metaphysical perspective of harnessing the stupendous energy latent in the eternally burning fire element, Yam must have explained to Nachiketa the different forms of ‘fire’ as a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm’s astounding energy, potentials, powers and strength. The visible symbol of the eternal fire is the sun in the sky and the energy inherently present in the body of all living beings. It is a well known fact that no life can ever exist without heat and energy of the fire element. In Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition (Canto 4, Sub-cantos 5 and 7) it has been stated that Brahm is characterized by light and illumination (as opposed to darkness) which are the characteristic virtues of the fire element. The entire Canto 3 is dedicated to the praise of the Sun God as the essence of life, and Sun is the celestial pitcher of fire element which burns eternally inside it.

The ‘fire’ has immense importance in metaphysics and it is a symbol of life and consciousness. Without ‘fire’ everything is deemed to be dead and gone.

The *importance* of the sacred Fire and its metaphysical angle has been explained elaborately by Yam, the god of death, to Nachiketa in Kathvalli Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, Valli 1, verse nos. 13-18.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 2 says that these sacred fires represent the three letters of the Mantra OM. The first fire called the Garhyapatya Agni represents the first letter ‘A’, the second fire called the Dakshinagni represents the second letter ‘U’, and the third fire called the Ahavaniya Agni represents the third letter ‘M’.

The Garbha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its paragraph no. 5 describes the following three types of fires—*Gyanagni*, *Darshanagni* and *Jatharaagni*.

Amongst these three forms of fires, Jathraagni is one that digests anything that is eaten, drunk, licked or sucked. Darshanagni is one which enables one to see things. And Gyanagni is the one which helps to discriminate between what is good deed and what is not. The divine ‘fire’ has three other forms also. Their locations in the body are as follows—the ‘Ahavaniya’ fire resides in the mouth, the ‘Garhyapatya’ fire lives in the abdomen, and the ‘Dakshinagni’ has its abode in the heart.”

According to some texts, the fire element has *three* legendary forms—viz. the ‘Agni’, which is the terrestrial fire on earth represented by the word Bhu, the ‘Jatvedas*’, which is the fire of the sky represented by the word Bhuvaha, and ‘Vaishwanar[#]’, which is the fire of the heavens represented by the word Swaha (Brihaddevatakaar, 1/67). The term appears in the Rig Veda approx. sixty times and is more often than not synonymous with both life as well as the fire element.

*The *Jatveda Fire* is the cosmic all-pervading Fire element that is uniformly and universally present wherever there is sky element or open space. It is represented by the word Bhuvaha.

Jatvedas is the name of the Sun God as well as the Fire God. The Sun is indeed the most evident form of the fire element and possesses all the virtues and qualities of the latter. When two pieces of wooden drills known as *Arani* are rubbed together vigorously, they produce fire though prior to this rubbing no fire was visibly there.

This rubbing is symbolic of the Tapa done by Brahm at the beginning of the creation to create the energy needed to initiate the process of creation which is represented by the latent fire element or its personified subtle form as the Fire God who is invisible. The more gross form of this fire element and the visible aspect of the Fire God is the celestial Sun. It has been explained by Yam, the death God, to Nachiketa in Kathvalli or Katho-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 8.

[#]The same Upanishad, in its Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 7 describes the Vaishwanar Agni.

The Kath Rudra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 3 prescribes that a man should establish the *three sacred fires* such as the Grihapatya, Dakshinagni and Ahawaniya in his own self at the time of taking the vows of Sanyas and moving out of the house.

The Fire God known as *Agni* refers to the legendary ‘fire element’, and it finds very prominent place in the scriptures. The Fire God or *Agni* appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—1/1; 1/12; 4/5; 5/1; 6/7-9; 7/1, 3-6; 12-13; 8/1, 23, 39; 10/1-7; 12/1-122 etc.; in Sam Veda—1-51; 53-55 etc.; in Yajur Veda—1/5; 2/4; 7/24; 18/72 etc.; and in Atharva Veda—6/119; 8/3; 12/3.

Since it was the first born amongst the various Gods, it was called ‘Agni’ meaning the one who comes first, that which precedes others. It is the inherent ‘fire’ element present in all the living creatures that distinguish them from non-living creatures. It is all-pervading and omnipresent, and infuses life to all the creatures (Kaushitaki Brahmin, 4/3; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 9, verse no.1). This fire helps in digestion of food (Shatpath Brahman, 148/10/1).

He is the foremost amongst the Gods worshipped on earth (Shatpath Brahman, 6/1/1/11). He is compared to the Sun in the heavens. He has 7 tongues representing the 7 colours of the rays of the Sun or the colours of light (Rig Veda, 1/146/1; 3/6/2). Since he provides nourishment to the Gods by accepting the offerings made to the sacrificial fire at the time of fire sacrifices, he is deemed to be their sustainer and father (Rig Veda, 1/69/1). Other names of the Fire God called Agni or Agne are the following—Vishwavedus, Kavi, Kavikratu, Jaatvedus, Vaishwaanar, Tanunpat, Matrishwa and Naraashansa. It is believed that he was born from the mouth of the Virrat Purush (Rig Veda 10/90/13).

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Agni or the Fire God is one of the ten Digpaals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the south-eastern direction and worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that his weapon is known as Shakti—i.e. dynamism, energy, vigour, vitality and strength.]

21. To remain deeply engrossed in the thoughts of the pure consciousness which is the true ‘self’ of the spiritual seeker, and meditating upon it to the exclusion of all other things, is known as the Turiya state of existence. This is therefore the transcendental state of existence of the creature.

If the inner-self is likened to the Sun, the esoteric and mystical entity that lends this Sun its power to give brilliant light, energy and heat to this world, which gives the Sun its glorious dynamism which not only enables it to be self-sustaining and self-illuminated but also enables it to sustain and illuminate the world around it, is known as ‘Hans’.

[In other words, it is the self-illuminated Atma hidden invisibly inside the dark gross body of the creature that inspires the latter to become active and alive; it is the consciousness living inside the body of the living being as the Atma that also lights up the world for him (i.e. enables him to perceive the world around him). This role of the Atma is similar to the eternal fire burning inside the Sun’s disc that enables the latter to remain self-illuminate and self-sustaining on the one hand, and sustain and

illuminate the world around it on the other hand. This Atma which is self-illuminated, and which lends its 'light' to the creature—i.e. provides the body of the creature with the all-important factor of existence known as the 'consciousness' that translates into 'life' of the creature—is known as Hans.

The Atma is compared to the celestial Sun because the survival of the gross body of a living being depends directly upon the Atma just like the case of the world directly depending upon the Sun for survival. Even as the living world would certainly perish without the Sun, the body, and therefore the very existence of the creature, would perish without the presence of the Atma inside it. Refer verse no. 12.] (21).

22. The fire sacrifices and its various components are like the assets of those who regard Brahm as their only spiritual wealth. This is known as 'Brahm Sampatti', the wealth that is symbolized by the grand spiritual accomplishments that comes with successfully doing various fire sacrifices.

[Refer also to Kanda 2, verse no. 1. Just like a worldly man jealously protects each unit of his material wealth—he would, for instance, fight even for a gram of gold and a small patch of land—those who know that Brahm is the only truthful spiritual wealth or asset in this creation that is worth pursuing and possessing, and that the fire sacrifices are deemed to be a manifestation of this Brahm, or they are the means for attaining Brahm, also are very careful about observing and maintaining the sanctity of the fire sacrifice.

They regard the fire sacrifice as a deemed manifestation of Brahm. One of the many reasons for this eclectic view is that the 'fire' is pure and holy like Brahm, it is self-illuminated like Brahm, and it personifies such glorious elements of creation as dynamism, energy, heat and light, factors which are absolutely essential requirements to not only inject but also maintain life in this creation.

Further, each step of the fire sacrifice represents one or the other of the countless aspects or facets of Brahm, and since the truthful knowledge of Brahm must be holistic and comprehensive to be of any spiritual good for the aspirant, it obviously follows that the fire sacrifice should be done properly and attention should be paid to each of its steps in order to derive full benefits from it. Otherwise, the fire sacrifice would be like a fractured view of Brahm. It is like the case of a orchestra when all the musicians and instruments must be in complete harmony, for one miss-step would result in the whole structure of music come crashing down. There should be zero tolerance for negligence and callousness.

The basic or central point of any fire sacrifice is the 'fire' itself. The 'fire' has the unique and paradoxical quality of being purifying as it burns all impurities which come in contact with it, but it also reduces to ashes anything that tries to play mischief with it, or which attempts to test its abilities. So, while the fire burns all impurities, it cannot burn anything is pure. For instance, the fire cannot burn pure gold, but it burns the impurities present in it.

Likewise, if one were to attain Brahm-hood, he would first have to become spiritually pure and holy from the inside. Any sort of impurities that might be clinging to the Atma would be first burnt before Brahm is realised. The creature who is accustomed to be in the company of numerous worldly attachments that have been clinging to the Atma for generations, and which have had so great an influence upon the Atma that it thinks that it cannot live without them in this world, is expected to first eliminate such spiritual bondages before he can ever hope to become Brahm-realised.

From the point of the fire sacrifice, its spiritual importance is that it helps the man to burn all his spiritual impurities and worldly taints just like gold that is freed from all its impurities if it is put in the fire. Again, if the fire is regarded as being equivalent to Brahm, it follows that meditation and contemplation upon Brahm also helps the spiritual aspirant to get rid of all his spiritual impurities and tainting effects. Once purified of all worldly taints and delusions, the Atma automatically realises the nature of its ‘pure self’—which is the ‘consciousness’, and which is Brahm personified.]

In order to attain Brahm one should devote one’s self in meditating upon Hans (i.e. the Atma) empowered by the Pranav Mantra (OM Mantra).

[That is, one should meditate and contemplate upon the pure consciousness by employing the OM Mantra during Yoga practices. This would empower them sufficiently to rise above the mundane, gross and mortal existence, and reach higher echelons of spiritualism by metaphorically riding on the back of the bird Hans or the divine Swan much like the case of one riding an airplane to go high up into the sky.

In Yoga Upanishads it has been described in great detail how the divine word OM is used in meditation to aid the ascetic to concentrate and focus his mind to realise the presence of the consciousness inside his own body. It has also been described how the two letters of the word ‘Hans’, i.e. ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’, are used to meditate while inhaling and exhaling breath during the meditation exercise known as Pranayam or breath control. Refer *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 24, 61-65.

Therefore, an expert ascetic uses both the Mantras OM and Hans in order to attain success in his spiritual endeavours. While ‘OM’ links him directly to the cosmic vibrations generated by the cosmic Consciousness, ‘Hans’ enlightens him about who the Supreme Being is. This knowledge fills him with a sense of fulfillment and blessedness as it is the culmination of his endeavours; he experiences bliss and ecstasy that comes with self and Brahm realisation—or being acquainted with the ultimate Truth and Reality of creation that eliminates all causes for his spiritual miseries and bondages.] (22).’

23. The Brahm-putra (literally the son of Brahma, here referring to sage Vaalkhilya) once again asked Swayambhu (the self-born creator Brahma)—‘Oh Lord! How many Hans-Sutras (the different variations of the Hans Mantra¹ or its different interpretations) are there, what are their forms, and how do one measure their effectiveness, truthfulness and authority? You are all-knowing, so please be kind to enlighten me about it.’ (23).

[Note—¹The importance of the Hans Mantra has been described in Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2 of this Upanishad.]

24. [Brahma replied--] ‘The symbolic Sun (representing the dynamic consciousness called the Atma of which another name is the ‘Hans’) that resides inside the subtle heart of the creature has ninety-six gloriously brilliant and splendid rays emanating from it and radiating out in every direction.

[The Atma is said to live in the subtle sky of the heart. This sky is known as ‘Hridaya Akash’. Just like the celestial Sun, the Atma too shines in this sky, from where it lends its light and vitality to the whole body of the creature which is regarded as a universe in a miniature form just like the Sun lighting up and injecting life in the whole world from its central location in the sky. Again, just like the Sun has rays radiating out from it, the Atma too effuses consciousness in the form of the ninety-six

rays. From the perspective of the physical gross body, these represent the main Naadis or nerves and veins in the body that carry life to all the corners of the creature's body. From the perspective of metaphysical concept of creation they represent the ninety-six Tattwas as outlined in verse no. 14 of this Canto 1.]

The Chit-Sutra that goes out from the nose in a continuous stream (i.e. the breath) also measures ninety-six fingers width in length.

[The term 'Chit-Sutra' refers to the breath because it is the symbolic Sutra or 'thread' that stitches together the dead entity known as the body and the 'consciousness or life factors' known as Chit. When the creature stops to breathe, the body dies, or loses its life. This breath is a continuous stream of vital air known as Pran which is a synonym for 'life and consciousness'.] (24).

25. The 'Param Hans' (i.e. the supreme Consciousness representing Brahm that resides in the body of the creature as his Atma) has its habitat in the region of the body between the left shoulder and the right side of the hip joint. [This is why the sacred thread representing Brahm is always worn by slinging it diagonally across the chest from the left side of the neck, crossing over the abdomen to the right side of the hip joint.]

But the irony is that this esoteric secret is not known to anyone.

[The location of Brahm in this area of the body is very significant because it is here that all the major internal organs of the body which are responsible for its maintenance are located. The Atma or the pure conscious soul is said to have its seat in the subtle space of the heart. This heart is the 'supreme organ' in the body for the practical reason that if the heart stops its function the body would die immediately. While the failure of other organs might not cause immediate death, failure of the heart results in instant death. No other organ of the body, either singly or collectively, would be able to keep the body alive if the heart gives up.

The Atma, being the 'supreme cause of existence', has therefore selected the heart, the 'supreme organ in the body' as explained above, to be its seat in the creature's body just like the Emperor who is seated on the best and the highest throne in the empire.

Above and below this area where the heart is located, no other vital organ is present that may affect the survival of the body. Of course one would argue that the mind and intellect located in the head (the brain) is equally an important a seat for Brahm because it has been said elsewhere in the Upanishads that the head is the seat of Brahm who had entered the body through the Brahm Randhra and enthroned himself in the mind to control the creation from there. This fact is stressed in the Aeiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda, Section 1, Canto 3, verse no. 12; and the Paingal Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 11.

But the importance is to understand the fact that the virtues of intelligence, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition and knowledge, as well as the ability to think and discriminate that are characteristic qualities of the mind and the intellect represent the grand attributes of Brahm whose true form is 'Consciousness'. It is this 'Consciousness' that we refer to when we talk of the Atma that resides in the heart. Say, what use are the mind and the intellect for a dead body, a body from which the Atma or 'life' has left? (25).

[Note—Besides this verse, there are other Upanishads which also endorse the view that Brahm *resides in the subtle space of the heart* of the creature—refer (i) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 9-10; Mundak 2, Section

2, verse no. 1, 6; 9; Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 7. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11.]

26. Those who have obtained access to Amrit (the nectar of Truth; the elixir of bliss and spiritualism) are the only ones who are acquainted with the eternally self-illuminated Hans (in the form of the Atma and Brahm). No one can obtain Mukti (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) without sincerely, honestly and truthfully, with dedication and faith, meditate and contemplate upon this Hans (26).

27. Those who wear the sacred thread consisting of nine coloured strands also wear it as a symbol of Brahm. But merely worshipping the sacred thread as a symbol of Brahm would not make them sufficiently wise, enlightened and self-realised so as to make them aware of the presence of the glorious Brahm in the form of the symbolic brilliant Sun (i.e. the Atma) present inside their own inner-self.

[That is, they worship Brahm in the external world which is fundamentally gross and perishable, and therefore not the truthful form of Brahm. The real Brahm is subtle and sublime, and it imperceptibly resides in the bosom as the pure consciousness known as the Atma. This Atma is as brilliantly self-illuminated, vibrant and dynamic as the celestial Sun which does not need any external source of light to shine, no external source to remain illuminated, and no external source to produce the fire of which it is an eternal celestial cauldron.] (27).

28. Aditya (the Sun) illuminates the world (i.e. it provides the world its light, life, energy, heat and dynamism). This is why Aditya is worshipped and honoured by wise and erudite persons who seek purity and knowledge.

[The Sun gives 'light' and removes 'darkness'. In other words, it grants knowledge and wisdom by removing the darkness of delusions and ignorance. Since the celestial Sun is employed as a metaphor for Brahm and the Atma, it follows that one meditates and contemplates upon the latter two entities to attain true spiritual knowledge and enlightenment that would remove one's darkness caused by worldly delusions, and which is the cause of all his fears and perplexities.] (28).

29. The Vajpaye Yagya¹ is the eliminator of animal-like despicable, mean, lowly, pervert and sinful instincts and negative qualities in the creature that pollute or corrupt his inner-self and are denigrating, demeaning and entangling for him. In this eclectic sense it is also the Pashuharta Yagya, literally meaning one in which animals are sacrificed (like the case of the Ashwa Medh Yagya when a horse is sacrificed)².

There is an Adhvaryu priest, and Indra (the king of Gods) is the Devta (the patron deity) of this fire sacrifice known as the Vajpaye Yagya when it is done externally in the physical world.

But when the same Vajpaye Yagya is done internally it is called a 'Dharma Yagya' (a fire sacrifice that strictly conforms to the principles of auspiciousness and righteousness) as it does not entail any killing or bloodshed or violence or pain to any creature, and therefore is most holy and pure form of sacrifice which does not leave any evil consequences (arising from killing of animals during fire sacrifices) in its wake. In this case, the Adhvaryu priest is the Param-Hans (the supremely pure and untainted Atma, the pure conscious 'self' of the worshipper) and the Devta is

Pashupati Parmatma (the supreme Lord who controls all the living beings in this creation; the supreme transcendental Brahm)³.

[The Lord is especially honoured by the epithet of ‘Pashupati’ because an enlightened worshipper targets all his spiritual endeavours towards attaining high levels of purity and holiness that entails that he first controls his basic animal-like natural instincts; he is expected to have completely exercised total self-restraint on his sense organs. Brahm is not sitting somewhere high up in the sky in an imaginary heaven, but the Lord resides inside one’s own inner-self as his Atma. This Atma is the Lord of the creature. So when a worshipper pays his obeisance to ‘Pashupati Parmatma’, he is actually honouring the Atma which has learnt to practice exemplary self-control over one’s natural animal-like instincts, characters, qualities and behaviour that are integral to all living beings, but which need to be overcome if the living being intends to find Mukti (freedom) in the real sense. Till this happens, he is virtually enslaved to these negative traits in his character which act as impediments in his spiritual upliftment and welfare.

In this context it would be pertinent to note that ‘Indra’ is not some God living high up in the heaven, but the term is a metaphor for the Authority that controls all the ‘Indris’ (the sense organs) of the body. Therefore, Indra is also another name for the Atma and Brahm, but to that aspect of the latter which is indulgent in the world. This fact is depicted in the character of Indra who is shown in the Purans as a passionate, lustful and jealous God who prefers material creature comforts and pleasures of the sense organs, rather than spiritual wisdom, enlightenment and bliss.] (29).

[Note—¹The *Vajpaye Yagya*—This is performed by one who desires unlimited dominion. This sacrifice had many special features and the number 17 plays a dominant role—for there are 17 animals that are sacrificed, 17 objects are distributed as fees for the priests, and it lasts for 17 days culminating in a chariot race in which the patron who does the fire sacrifice is made to win at any cost.

²The word ‘Pashu-harta’ has two parts—viz. ‘Pashu’ meaning an animal, and ‘Harta’ meaning to steal, remove, eliminate or dispossess. The acquisition of spiritual wisdom and enlightenment eliminates all animal-like instincts in a man. It brings out the shine and brilliance that is inherent in his Atma, the pure consciousness that resides in the body as the man’s ‘true self’. Hence, the endeavour that helps a man achieve this goal in life is called the ‘Pashuharta Yagya’.

³Animals were invariably sacrificed as part of the fire sacrifice ritual. This Upanishad strongly speaks against this practice by emphasizing the point that the actual benefit of a sacrifice is one’s own elevation from a lowly life that is no better than the one led by animals to a life befitting a human being who occupies the highest rung in the ladder of evolution and from whom auspicious virtues are expected by the virtue of his exalted stature in the hierarchy of creation. The human occupies the same position in the scheme of things that is occupied by an emperor, and therefore he is expected to behave and think nobly, righteously and auspiciously. In other words, the true benefit of doing a fire sacrifice is to kindle self-realisation, enlightenment and wisdom in a man whose Atma is unfortunately mired by the numerous faults and blemishes so characteristic, and almost unavoidable, when the Atma assumes a gross body that has to interact with a world which is equally gross. The true benefit of a fire sacrifice is to provide this Atma its final liberation and deliverance from the shackle that unfortunately binds it to this body as well as the world, a situation that has resulted in the Atma hitherto remaining trapped in a cycle of birth and death. The sacred and purifying fire of a sacrifice is expected to burn all the spiritual impurities and bring out the immaculacy in a creature, and if it fails to do so then spilling innocent blood of others (animals) would serve no purpose.

Sacrificing an innocent and helpless creature to satisfy one’s selfish desires can never, repeat *never*, please the Lord on any count. It is virtually murder on the pretext

of religion and rituals. This is why the Upanishads are regarded as so great and refined as they have no hesitation in speaking the truth and deriding unethical practices even though such practices had become a part of tradition and observed without asking questions.]

30. The divine and holy super transcendental Divinity known as ‘Brahm’ which is the subject matter of exposition, elucidation and discussion in the Upanishads, and which is espoused by the Vedas and the Upanishads as the ultimate Absolute Truth of creation, is the one which is the main focus of self-study, contemplation and research by those who are sincere to know about Brahm (i.e. by those who truly wish to obtain wisdom, enlightenment and spiritual salvation, those who wish to break free from the fetters of ignorance and delusions, those who wish not to enter the cycle of birth and death in this world, and those who wish to obtain the nectar of eternal bliss and its accompanying ecstasy) (30).

31. The actual implementation of the advice given for realisation of Brahm, the actual acquisition of wisdom, enlightenment and knowledge that leads to Brahm (as outlined in this Upanishad) is the symbolic form of the Ashwmedh Yagya¹ (the horse sacrifice).

By strictly following the tenets and philosophies that pertain to the actual truth of Brahm entitles and helps the seeker of Brahm to attain his objective successfully (i.e. to become Brahm-realised).

All the forms of Brahm Yagyas (i.e. spiritual enterprises that lead to realisation of Brahm, the supreme spiritual Truth) described in this Upanishad are equally effective in bestowing Mukti (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) to the creature.

[In other words, the main aim of a spiritual aspirant should be to become ‘Truth-realised’, which translates into being ‘self and Brahm realised’. Towards this end the Upanishads prescribe a number of paths, leaving it upon the seeker of this Truth to select the path best suited to him. The reason for the variety of path espoused in the Upanishads is because the latter realise that in practical terms no two individuals are alike just like no two patients having the same broad symptoms of any disease are alike.

To treat a patient in a holistic manner, an equal holistic approach is needed, and such approach is therefore specific to that individual. It ought to be noted here that this precisely is the approach in the field of Homeopathic system of treatment of a disease. Once a patient is treated in a comprehensive manner, there is no chance of the disease getting relapsed, and the prescribed medicine also has the least chance of adverse reaction.

Since no two situations and individuals are exactly alike, the spiritual path that would suit one would obviously not be the optimum one for the other. This is why the scriptures prescribe different and varying paths, but they all lead to one goal. The importance for a traveler is to reach his destination, and the vehicle that is used is of the least importance once the destination is reached. It is also like the case of doctor prescribing different set of medicines to different patients though their external symptoms may be the same.] (31).”

[Note—¹The *Ashwamedh Yagya*—This is called the horse sacrifice because a horse is sacrificed in it. It is most ancient sacrifice and can be successfully done by very powerful kings or emperors. The horse is let free to go anywhere it wants for one year and the land where it sets foot is either annexed by treaties or by force in war. The actual sacrifice is though for only three days. The sacrificial horse is protected by the

army and if by chance it is killed by the opposing king then the sacrifice is deemed to be defiled. In practical terms, it was a means to spread a king's area of influence.]

32. Brahm Putra (i.e. sage Vaalkhilya) exclaimed—‘The knowledge related to Hans has been revealed to me.’

When he thus proclaimed, Swayambhu (i.e. Brahma) disappeared from sight.

One must understand that the knowledge of the self-illuminated ‘Hans’ that has been revealed in this Upanishad deals with the eclectic and the divine knowledge of the pure cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma as well as Brahm.

This ‘Hans’ is also revealed in the form of Lord Rudra (Lord Shiva), who is also known as Lord Pashupati¹.

It is this Brahm that is represented by Pranav, the cosmic ethereal sound encapsulated in the word Mantra OM. It is this Pranav representing Brahm that provides one with liberation and deliverance from this mortal gross world (32).

[Note—¹Lord Shiva who has full control over his sense organs and their inherent animal-like instincts and behaviour—because he is a highly self-realised and enlightened deity who is chosen by exalted ascetics and spiritual aspirants as their patron God—is known as Pashupati, literally the Lord of animals. Since Lord Shiva tolerates no nonsense and ruthlessly overcomes the wayward tendencies of the sense organs and the mind, showing anger at them for their natural grossness and tendency to commit mischief and misdeeds, he is also known as ‘Rudra’, the angry one. Lord Shiva is uncompromising and unrelenting in his pursuit of immaculacy, purity, auspiciousness, righteousness, nobility, probity and propriety, and hence called Rudra, the angry God.

‘Rudra’ has zero tolerance for impertinence, mischief and nonsense. ‘Shiva’ is, on the other hand, calm, tolerant and forgiving. Shiva always remains in a state of meditation and contemplation, a state that is depicted in his posture of blissfulness and half-closed eyes. Rudra, on the other hand, spews fire and brimstone. While Shiva symbolizes the virtues of Brahm marked by blissfulness, tranquility, calmness, wisdom, enlightenment, self-awareness and contentedness, Rudra represents the qualities of dynamism, vitality, vigour, strength and energy present in Brahm.

The question arises ‘why did Shiva become Rudra (angry)?’ The answer is that when Shiva found that his sense organs and mind did not allow him the peace that he sought by meditation and contemplation upon the ‘Atma, the self’, he became angry over them, and severely took them to task—i.e. he became ‘Rudra’ or angry. It is like the case of a teacher who is of a very calm nature and loves his students like they were his own sons, but when he finds that his kindness and loving nature is being misused by the students who create ruckus in the class, he has to become stern and spank them in order to restore discipline and decorum. But that does not mean that he is cruel or wishes to harm his students in the least. This same thing applies to Shiva.

Shiva becomes Rudra in order to ruthlessly punish the creatures of this creation who behave like savages or animals. This is necessary for him as he is the Supreme Being who has the mandate to maintain order and balance in this creation, and he would be failing in his moral duties and obligations if he tries to maintain a false exterior of calmness when his interior is agitated by the upheaval all around. The Supreme Being that Shiva is has an obligation to uphold positive traits and the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety in this creation even if it means that his own image of being calm and forgiving is questioned and overshadowed by anger and vehemence.

Just as the case of severe and malignant diseases like cancer and tuberculosis requiring an equally strong medicine, the evil, pervert and demonic forces of creation require an equally strong antidote to be overcome.

Therefore, that aspect of Brahm, the Supreme Being, which helps the Jiva (the living beings of this creation) control evil tendencies and negativity which make him

animal-like is known as ‘Pashupat Brahm’, and the effort that a Jiva makes to achieve this eclectic goal is known as ‘Pashu-harta Yagya’.]

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Uttar Kanda/Canto 2

1. The Japa (repetition) of the Hans Mantra is equivalent to doing Japa of Brahm because this word is a letter form (word form) of Brahm. Brahm-realisation is inspired by it.

Brahm is the Parmatma (the supreme Atma, the Supreme Being) and the Purush (the primal Male; the cosmic Viraat Purush which is the invisible macrocosmic all-pervading sublime form of Brahm from whom the entire creation is revealed).

Brahm is fully endowed with grand spiritual virtues and magnificent divine glories that are compositely called ‘Brahm Sampatti’, the assets of Brahm. [Refer also to Kanda 1, verse no. 22.] (1).

[Note—The grand virtues of Brahm have been expounded in nearly all the Upanishads, some of them being the following—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 15-19, Canto 3, verse nos. 17-22; *Kathrudra Upanishad*, verse no. 12, 27-28, 30-31, 42; *Taittiriya Upanishad* Valli 3, Anuvak 10, verse no. 2-5; *Skanda Upanishad*, verse no. 13; *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 4; *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 16, 20-21, 26, 29; Canto 3, verse no. 2; and Canto 4, verse nos. 31-32; *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 35; *Saraswati Upanishad*, verse no. 50-52; *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*.

(b) Atharva Veda’s = *Mundak Upanishad*, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak 2, section 2, verse no. 7, 9-11; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 3-5, 7-9; *Atharvashir Upanishad*, Kandika 4 (full); *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8 which is fully dedicated to enumerating the grand virtues of Brahm; Canto 9, verse nos. 3, 19-22; *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 4, Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; *Shandilya Upanishad*, Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 2-5, and Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 1-8, 11-14; *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 27-31, 33, 67; Canto 4, verse nos. 35-38, 67; Canto 5, verse nos. 10, 20-21, 66-67, 72, 113; *Atma Upanishad*, verse nos. 1-D and 1-E, verse nos. 2-4, 9, 30-31; *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 13-16; Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16, 26, 28-30, 44; *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 6, 8-9, 16-17, 22; *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 7.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda’s following Upanishads—*Adhyatma Upanishad*, verse nos. 61-64; *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* Canto 2, Brahman 3 describes this Brahm’s two forms in detail.

(d) Sam Veda’s *Chandogya Upanishad*, *Keno Upanishad* and *Avyakta Upanishad*.

The uniformity and non-duality between *Shiva and Brahm* has been emphasized in— (i) Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Dakshin Murti* or *Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad*, *Pancha Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 30, *Skanda Upanishad*, verse nos. 9, 13, and *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 32. (ii) Atharva Veda’s *Shandilya Upanishad*, Canto 3, section 2, verse nos. 11-15; *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 32.]

2. When a man has become truly self-realised and enlightened about the Atma and its eclectic grand virtues and divine glories, he is deemed to have acquired the knowledge of Brahm. Such a wise and enlightened man is equivalent to Brahm; he becomes an image of Brahm; he becomes one like Brahm. What more is to be said in this matter, for there is no doubt in it.

[That is, once a man becomes truly self-realised in as much as he has realised the presence of the Atma, the pure consciousness, in his inner-self as his true identity known as the 'self', when he has understood that this Atma is the same consciousness that also resides in the rest of the creation as the all-pervading cosmic Consciousness, and that this Consciousness is known as Brahm—it is then that he realises that 'he' is not the physical gross body with its limitations but the eternal and infinite 'consciousness' known as the Atma which represents the supreme transcendental Brahm. This means, he realises that his 'true self' is Brahm personified; it does not require any further proof to establish that 'he' (i.e. the true 'self' of the concerned person) is Brahm himself personified and established in this creation in that form.

When this wisdom dawns on the mental and intellectual horizon of a person, he is deemed to have acquired auspicious and noble characteristics and virtues equivalent to those possessed by Brahm by the virtue of his becoming self-realised and understanding the truth of the fact that his Atma, which is Brahm personified, is his 'true self'.

In other words, a self-realised and enlightened man is none else but Brahm personified.]

Those who are Gyani (wise, enlightened and realised) spend their precious time in talking and discussing about Brahm, in meditating and contemplating upon Brahm, and in worshipping Brahm.

With due practice, when a uniformity, compatibility, harmony and inseparability is established between the Atma and the Hans, there would be no chance for any external interference arising from the subjects of this mortal mundane world to create any disharmony or friction or dichotomy between the two.

[That is, when the spiritual aspirant is completely submerged and engrossed in meditating upon the Atma using the Mantra 'Hans' as advised in verse no. 1 of the present Kanda no. 2, as well as in verse no. 12-13, 19-20 of Kanda no. 1 previously, all his links with the outside gross world are broken. None of the creatures or material things of the external world are able to disturb him any longer. They are not able to break the link that is established between his own Atma and the supreme Atma known as Brahm through the medium of the 'thread' represented by the Mantra 'Hans'. The fact that this 'Hans' Mantra is like a 'thread' linking the individual soul to Brahm is endorsed in verse nos. 17, 19-20, 26-27 of Kanda no. 1.] (2).

3. When the inner-self resonates with the cosmic sound called Naad (as happens when the ethereal Mantra Pranav or OM is constantly and persistently repeated during the process of Yoga or meditation) so much so that it appears to the practitioner that this Naad is springing forth from his inner-self (like ripples or waves generated in the water of a lake), the Hans (i.e. the Atma) that is experienced and witnessed then implies that the spiritual aspirant has indeed become self-realised and has attained spiritual enlightenment.

[That is, when the aspirant is drowned in the vibrations created by doing Japa with the Pranav Mantra dedicated to Brahm, i.e. the Mantra OM, a time comes when he is able to experience the presence of the Consciousness inside his inner-self. It appears to the practitioner that these vibrations created by doing Japa or repetition of OM originate from a central point in his heart, and then spread out from it to cover each point of his being just like ripples appearing in the water of a lake having their origin at one point but spreading out to its furthest corner. It is then said that he has become self-realised because he has witnessed the presence of the Atma symbolized by the Hans inside his own bosom.

It is easy to visualize this phenomenon. Suppose there is a lake whose surface is absolutely calm and placid. Now suppose there is a swan floating on this surface. The bird would breathe, and this process creates a small expansion and contraction of the muscles of the body which each inhalation and exhalation. This in turn produces subtle rhythmic pulsations of the body of the swan which passes on to the water, thereby creating subtle waves on the surface of the otherwise absolutely calm water. When one observes these waves he finds that they have their point of origin at the spot where the swan floats.

In the context of metaphysics, the 'consciousness' residing in the inner self of the creature as his Atma has its abode in the space of the subtle aspect of the heart. It is from here that vibrations of life are generated, and when they begin to resonate in the inner being of the creature they resemble the cosmic Naad because the creature is an image of the cosmos in a miniature form.

The heart is made to beat by the spark of life known as 'consciousness' present in it. The subtle vibrations created by this beating are reinforced by the vibrations created by doing Japa with OM. The energy waves generated by the beating of the heart and the rhythmic chanting of OM reinforce each other, and the two coalesce with each other to gather momentum and energy that leads to a resonating sound that makes it possible for the man engrossed in meditation to hear a reverberating sound that resembles the sound of the cosmic Naad (sound) inside his being. What is primarily a subtle form of sound becomes an overwhelming resonance that virtually drowns the hearer in its reverberating crescendo.]

When one becomes enlightened internally, it is possible to know about the truth of all things externally.

[When one is inherently intelligent and wise, it is easy for him to learn anything in this world, as opposed to a man who is basically stupid, dull, block-head and ill-witted. No matter what great efforts are made to teach him anything, he would just not understand. The same teacher teaches a class of so many students, but out of them some reach the pinnacle of glory and achievement in life while others become complete failures. How can one blame the teacher, for if his teaching was faulty then how is it that some of his students do so excellently well in life in the field of knowledge taught by the teacher?] (3).

4. The eternal blissful world is known and experienced when there is a union of Shiva (Brahm) and Shakti (his dynamic energy).

[When the Atma or the 'self' of the ascetic, which is a personification of Brahm as well as the pure consciousness, and therefore symbolized by Shiva, unites with all dynamic factors, known as 'Shakti' that are present in the aspirant's body, such as his vital winds known as Pran that keep the body active and alive, and other such factors that are absolutely necessary not only for survival but also for the wholesome growth, development and well-being of his—it is then that the ascetic witnesses extreme spiritual bliss and contentedness. With the union of Shiva and Shakti, a world of high blissfulness is obtained. The state of existence of consciousness when this happens is equivalent to the Turiya state of transcendental existence. This is the situation at the subtle level of existence.

At the gross level it is said that this physical world has come into being as a result of a union between Shiva representing Brahm as the primal Male, and Shakti which is the dynamic powers of Brahm manifested as the primal Female. Their 'intercourse' or union resulted in this creation being conceptualized. Since the world is a 'conception', it is imagined, and therefore a conjecture of the imaginative mind.

However, the union itself brought Shiva (Brahm) and his dynamic Shakti (cosmic powers) together, and it gave Shiva immense bliss. This fact is reflected in day-to-day life when one feels immensely happy when united with someone very near to him but separated for some time. Since this creation is the result of this union, it gave immense bliss to Shiva (Brahm) as it was his off spring.

A king feels immensely happy, contented and blissful when he is assured of his unrivalled authority and sway over the kingdom. Imagine his precarious situation if this authority ('Shakti') of his is challenged or snatched away from him by his enemies! A king without his Shakti or power can never find peace and rest, and therefore loses his contentedness and happiness.

Brahm was peaceful, rested, contented and blissful when he was complete and wholesome, when his Shakti was united with him. But when Brahm decided to create this creation he had to utilise his Shakti to give shape to his decision to create. Since the actual 'truth' is that nothing exists except Brahm, so when Shakti had to create a world different from this 'truth', a world which should look different from Brahm, it had to create Maya or delusions. What was the necessity for this delusion? It was necessary because if there was no delusion then whatever existed would be exactly like Brahm, but we find that it is not. Brahm wished to remain aloof from his own creation, and so it necessitated that there must be some distance between this creation and Brahm.

In other words, Shakti had to move away from Brahm. When Brahm realised that Shakti had moved away from the Truth to create the world hallmarked by 'un-truth', it is natural that Brahm got irritated, i.e. he became restless and lost peace. This explains why Brahm known as 'Shiva' became Brahm known as 'Rudra'.

From the perspective of an ascetic, if he remains submerged in meditation and contemplation when he has withdrawn the sense organs and the mind from the external world and focused their attention on his inner self, he has literally withdrawn the Shakti represented by the dynamic powers of these instruments of the body into his inner-self, which is his 'true self' known as the Atma. For him, the world does not exist. His condition is equivalent to Brahm prior to the latter's decision to first create the world and then get involved in its caretaking. On the other hand, if the same ascetic allows his sense organs and the mind to wander towards the external world, his position would be like Brahm after the rolling forward the juggernaut of creation—that is, the ascetic would lose his calm and peace.

In the present context of this Upanishad, it implies that a self-realised ascetic experiences immense bliss when he is able to bring about synchronization between his Atma and his inner-self known as the Anthakaran, along with the latter's various components, such as the Mana (subtle heart and mind), Chitta (mind and sub-conscious), Buddhi (intelligence) and Ahankar (ego), as well as the inherent Varnas (passions and desires) and the Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments that define a creature's nature and character).

When this union is effected, both the ascetic's inner world at the subtle level of existence, as well as the outer world at the gross level of existence become blissful for him. No miseries and troubles of the external world ever move him; they never disturb his calmness and composure. Refer the last stanza of verse no. 2 above.]

The three symbolic eyes of Shiva are represented by Naad, Bindu and Kalaa. It is with this eye that Shiva sees this world.

[That is, an enlightened ascetic sees this world through the eyes of wisdom instead of the physical eyes of the gross body. The physical eyes see only gross things and their external features. These eyes are unable to penetrate deep and see the truth

hidden behind the external façade. On the other hand, the third eye is the eye of wisdom which helps the ascetic to see this 'truth' just like modern X-rays help us to see behind the skin.

The Naad, Bindu and Kalaa are components of OM. Briefly, the 'Naad' refers to the concave dish-like sign on the symbol of OM; the 'Bindu' is the dot placed just above it at its focal point; and Kalaa is the changing notes of the sound produced by doing Japa with OM.

The light emanating from the third eye of Shiva seems to pulsate like the light of the glow-worm or the waxing and waning phases of the moon. Even as the phases of the moon are called its 'Kalaas', the pulsations of light emanating from the third eye are also called 'Shiva's Kalaas'. It is the same Shiva who uses the third eye to scorch the creation to ashes when he is angry, and to acquire wisdom and enlightenment when he is meditating and contemplating upon the 'self' and the 'truth'.] (4).

5. The Pranav or OM is understood to have a subtle form which is said to have three 'Angas' (parts or units), three 'Shikhas' (peaks, tips, crests), and two or three 'Matras' (vowel sounds, aspects or dimensions)¹.

When OM becomes an inseparable part of the inner-self so much so that its repetition is done automatically with each breath without any special effort, then one becomes enlightened about the secret Atma or the pure consciousness that resides in his inner-self. This realisation also implies that the ascetic is able to see the same Atma everywhere outside in this world.

[This is primarily because OM is a cosmic sound that prevails everywhere in the space of the sky in the form of Naad. In the higher echelons of Yoga, the ascetic realises that OM and the cosmic Consciousness resonate with the same frequency. When he uses OM as a medium for meditation and contemplation, he experiences this cosmic vibration of Naad resonating inside his being. Obviously, when these two forms or aspects of vibrations—viz. the one resonating inside him in the subtle space of inner organs of the body, and the one resonating in the space of the sky outside him—coalesce with each other, they reach a climax, a crescendo, when the ascetic's whole being gets submerged in the waves of ecstasy and thrill generated by the vibrations caused by the sound of the cosmic Naad reverberating throughout his inner being.] (5).

[Note—¹The *three Angas* of Pranav are the three letters of OM, viz. A, U and M.

The *three Shikhas* are the three phases of creation it represents—viz. the origin symbolized by the letter 'A', the expansion of creation till it reaches its zenith symbolized by the letter 'U', and the conclusion of creation symbolized by the letter 'M'.

The three Shikhas may also imply the three primary phases of Yoga, especially Pranayam or breath control when the Mantra OM is usually employed, viz. the Purak or inhalation of breath, Kumbhak or holding the breath inside the body, and Rechak or exhalation.

The *two or three Matras* refer to the two basic states of existence of consciousness, viz. the waking state and the sleeping state. They can be further divided into three stages, viz. the Jagrat or the waking state, the Swapna or the dreaming state, and Sushupta or the deep sleep state.

The sound of OM has two or three Matras depending upon how closely one meditates upon it and hears it. Ordinarily it seems to have only two sound—viz. 'O' and 'M'. But when analyzed closely it is discovered that it consists of three basic sounds which are equivalent to the alphabets 'A', 'U' and 'M'.]

6. A wise, erudite, sagacious and intelligent man is he who would voluntarily strive for and actually acquire the truthful knowledge of Brahm (instead of being prodded to do so though he is not sincerely interested in it, or becoming contented with some half-baked, distorted and crooked knowledge purporting to be that of Brahm who is the supreme, the divine, the perfect and the immaculate One).

When this holistic knowledge of Brahm is available to him, he himself would be characterized by the virtues of Brahm. [This is because he would realise that his 'true self' is the Atma that is a personification of Brahm. True Brahm-realisation is when the eclectic virtues of Brahm are displayed by the aspirant and reflected in his personality and behaviour so much so that he becomes a living personification of the divine glories of Brahm.]

Those who are an ocean of Gyan (i.e. those who have an abundance of spiritual knowledge and possess the glories virtues of enlightenment) assert that such a Brahm-realised man should always contemplate upon Hans (the Atma) as an image of the Sun (i.e. of the fire element) and Pranav (Brahm). [Refer verse nos. 19-20 of Kanda no. 1. See also note to verse nos. 15-16 of the present Kanda/Canto no. 2 of this Upanishad.]

[That is, they must understand that the Atma is not an ordinary entity but a divine one that possesses the glories, the dynamic powers and energy, and the supreme authority that Brahm possesses. He must understand that his Atma is as brilliantly illuminated and radiant as the celestial Sun and the Fire element, and the Sun itself is a personified form of Brahm—refer Kanda 1, verse nos. 8, 21-22, 24 and 27-28.

Therefore, much like the celestial Sun that lights up the world and gives its illumination and energy to the latter for its survival, the Atma too illuminates the body of the creature by injecting life and consciousness in it. The organs of the body are kept alive and are able to perceive the surrounding world because of the factor of consciousness present inside them. A dead body would not see or feel or hear or smell the world.

The Atma is the pivot or the axle around which the whole wheel of creation rotates or revolves just like the planets revolving around the Sun. If the Atma is removed from this creation, the latter would cease to exist and scatter away just like the planets that would drift away into the endless void of the cosmos and get lost for ever. Just like the Sun that holds all the planets in their pre-determined place in the fathomless and infinite vacuum of space, the Atma keeps the creation in place and prevents its disintegration and dissolution.

Just like a grave humming sound is heard in outer space just above the outer layer of the earth's atmosphere caused by various physical factors, one of them being the magnetic field around the rotating sphere of the earth, the cosmic Consciousness produces a humming sound in the ether that is heard as Naad. Ancient sages and seers heard this sound and called it 'Pranav'. Since only a living entity that has dynamism inherent in it can produce energy that translates into sound, they deduced correctly that Pranav is a synonym for the supreme Brahm.] (6).

7. When one has acquired a holistic knowledge of Brahm (as outlined in this Upanishad), it is only then that he can be rightly called an expert in Gyan or spiritual wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment.

Lord Shiva known as Pashupati is himself a witness of this fact; he exemplifies this fact. [This stanza explains why Shiva is known as Maheshwar and is regarded as a living manifestation of Brahm. This is because Shiva has completely

realised Brahm, the Supreme Being in the form of the pure conscious Atma. Why Brahm is known as 'Pashupati' has already been explained in verse no. 32 of Kanda no. 1.] (7).

8. The Lord (the Supreme Being known as 'Brahm') is the inspirer, commander and regulator of the Mana (emotions, sentiments and functioning of the mind and the heart) of all living beings. This motivates the Mana to get involved in all the sense objects of this material world. It is the inspiration and motivation provided by the Lord which enables the Pran (vital winds) to remain active, and the faculty of speech (voice) to speak words (8).

9-10. It is on the inspiration and command of the Lord that the eyes see things having forms and colours; it is on his orders and empowerment that the ears hear sounds. Similarly, all other sense organs work expressly on his command and are regulated by him. They are inclined to remain engrossed in their respective objects in the external world because the Lord has created them so that the Atma can perceive the beauty, the majestic charm and the magnificence of the creation crafted by the Lord through their medium.

[Since the Atma is a microcosmic personification of Brahm that lives in the gross body of the creature, it follows that it is actually Brahm himself who enjoys the sights of the world created by no one else but him. The Lord plays with his own creation through the medium of the Atma and the gross body of the creature in which this Atma lives!]

The different sense organs of perception (such as the eye which sees, the nose that smells, the ears that hear, the tongue that tastes, and the skin that feels and touches), as well as the organs of action (such as the hands that do deeds and receive anything, the legs that take Brahm albeit in the form of the resident Atma to its designated place, the mouth that helps Brahm to speak and eat, the excretory organs that helps Brahm to get rid of waste from its immediate vicinity inside the body, and the genitals that helps Brahm to reproduce the world and help it sustain its own self perpetually) are the instruments employed by Brahm to interact with and sustain the world of his own creation.

But it has been asserted in the Upanishads that the Atma is inherently neutral and dispassionate. So how and why does it get involved in the gross body through the medium of the above organs? The answer is that it is influenced by 'Maya'—the power of delusions. That is, the Jiva (living being) who is deluded and overcome by Maya is the one who gets involved or indulgent in the world, and the Jiva who is wise and enlightened is freed from this fetter. It is Maya that shrouds the Jiva's intellect and mind and makes him behave as if he is ignorant of the Truth though his 'truthful self' happens to the wise and enlightened Atma. This is the great paradox of creation.]

This inclination of the sense organs to be attracted towards their respective objects is due to Maya—i.e. by the dynamic power of Brahm which makes falsehoods appear to be real, thereby making the sense organs think that the objects of the world which they pursue are true and real, and that they would derive true pleasure and joy by being associated with them or being in their company. The sense organs are the instruments that the Atma, as a representative of Brahm residing inside the creature's body, uses to 'see', to interact and to sustain the gross world of material sense objects.

The desire of the creature to swerve towards the sense objects of the world is due to this affect of Maya, and it is not the creature's inherent and natural inclination. [This is because the true self of the creature is the Atma which is inherently

dispassionate and wise. It has no desire for material comforts and pleasures derived from the sense objects of the mortal world. But when Maya intervenes as the spoiler, the Atma gets deluded, and thereby it loses its pristine purity and becomes tainted.] (9-10).

11. The ears are dependent upon the Atma or the consciousness that resides inside the gross body. [This is because a dead body from which the Atma has left has the same ear, but it is worthless; it does not hear.] It is the supreme Brahm known as Pahasupati who subtly enters the ear as its faculty of hearing and empowers it to hear.

This is how Shiva—representing all living beings in the form of the truthful ‘self’, the ‘self’ that is as immaculate and holy as Brahm, the ‘self’ that lives in a gross body as its essential factor known as the ‘soul’ or the Atma—is able to hear (11).

12. Similarly, it is the Parmeshwar, the supreme Ishwar or Lord, who enters the Mana and regulates it from within. This is how the Mana is inspired and kept under control. This is also why the natural inclination of the Mana is always towards auspiciousness and righteousness. [Had it not been for the Maya, or the delusion creating power of Brahm, which makes the Mana, or the subtle heart, the subtle mind and sub-conscious, lose its sense of propriety, probity and bearing, the Mana would always have been immaculate and untainted.] (12).

13. [Verse nos. 13-16 emphasize the fact that Brahm is such an esoteric, mystical and enigmatic entity that logics, rationality, proofs, and application of mind and intelligence cannot help one to realise it. Brahm is beyond the grasp of any of the sense perceptions.]

The Supreme Being known as Mahehsvar, the Great Lord, is the one who not only injects life into all the sense organs of the creature’s body, but also sustains their activities besides exercising full control over them. But this Great Lord is not what is described or imagined to be (as he is beyond comprehension, and therefore beyond the purview of description) (13).

14. It is the Maheshwar that gives all the organs their shape, abilities and powers according to his desire, and in the way he wants them to act or perform specific functions to suit his cosmic plan. He also commands and controls them.

Therefore, none of the sense organs such as the eye, the mind, the organ of speech etc. can attain the same exalted stature as that possessed by their Lord. [For instance, no minister of an Emperor can claim the same stature and power as that possessed by the sovereign himself.]

None of the sense organs can ever match the natural and inherent in-built ability to act and inspire action in others as that possessed by their Lord who makes them act in accordance to his will, and strictly in line with his inspirations. [That is, left on their accord, none of the sense organs can do anything—e.g. the eye would not be able to see anything by its own. For instance, a dead man’s eye does not see anything though it is wide open. Hence, the divine entity or the quintessential factor or element that is responsible for all the organs functioning in the way they do is known as the Atma which is pure consciousness residing in the body of the creature. It is this Atma that is the ‘driver’ of all the organs and the ‘controller’ of all their functions.] (14).

15-16. A wise person who has realised that the Maheswar (Brahm) is an entity that is beyond the grasp of any of the sense perceptions of the gross body as well as the various faculties of the subtle mind-intellect complex, should discard taking recourse to rationality, logics and proofs to realise Brahm. Instead, he should concentrate on realizing Brahm by the medium of his inner-self—i.e. by contemplation and meditation, by turning inwards and focusing his attention on the pure consciousness that is self-illuminated and which resides in his bosom, rather than searching for Brahm in the external world. It is only then that he can attain true knowledge of Brahm, or become truly ‘Brahm-realised, wise and enlightened’.

It is the Atma that is self-illuminated, while the external world of Maya (or the world generated by delusions of the mind) is enveloped in darkness. Whereas the Atma is an embodiment of light and enlightenment, Maya on the other hand stands for darkness, delusions and ignorance.

[In other words, when a spiritual aspirant turns inwards in search of the ‘Great Truth’, he discovers an entity that is self-illuminated, radiant and glorious as the celestial Sun. This is the Atma. Like the Sun that can be said to be the virtual Lord of the solar system, this Atma is also the Lord of the microcosm known as the Jiva, the living being. Microcosm exists because there is a ‘macrocosm’; one logically proves the existence of the other. For instance, if there is a day then there must be a night, and vice-versa. So, if the Atma is a Lord of the Jiva, its macrocosmic counterpart would naturally be the Lord of the whole existence at the cosmic plane. The latter aspect of the omnipresent, ubiquitous, all-pervading, immutable and immanent Atma is therefore called ‘Maheshwar’, the supreme Lord the seeker was searching for when he had set out to find the truthful Lord of creation who is the ultimate and the supreme Authority. This Lord is known as Brahm, the Supreme Being.

Since the Atma is a representative of this Supreme Being residing in the inner-being of all the creatures, it follows that it is also Maheshwar. It is like the case of the same sky being assigned two different names of Ghata-Kash and Maha-kash by the virtue of the sky’s (‘Akash’) location inside the body of a hollow pitcher (‘Ghat’) and outside it respectively.

The Atma is like the flame of a lantern or a candle. This flame itself is self-illuminated, splendorous and a brilliant source of light; this flame illuminates the surrounding world by its light. Sans this flame, the surrounding area would be in pitch darkness. Similarly, the world would be enveloped in a thick veil of darkness if the Atma—the living factor of life known as the ‘consciousness’—were not present in it. To draw a parallel from the physical world, the latter would be a sea of darkness if there was no Sun to light it up.

From the metaphysical point of view, the outside world is dark because it is the creation of Maya—the power of this Maheshwar to willfully create a veil of delusions around himself. Why would the Maheshwar do so is answered in verse no. 1 of Kanda/Canto 1.

By corollary, Maya can be removed by its own creator. The clue to the creation of Maya is with the Maheshwar (Atma at the micro level, and Brahm at the macro level of creation), and therefore it is the Maheshwar himself who can dismantle it. This simply means that Maya can be overcome by the Atma itself should it decide to do so, and hence it also follows that the Jiva, the living being, is himself to blame for the shroud of delusions that he has weaved around himself because this Jiva’s truthful ‘self’ is the Atma.

The colourful world of fascinating charm and variety that is observed is actually a tapestry of delusions that the Maheshwar has created himself.] (15-16).

[Note—Earlier it has been said in Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 6, as well as in Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 21, 24, 28 etc. that the Atma, known as the Hans, is like the Sun and the Pranav. The ‘Sun’ is the only self-illuminated body in the whole of the solar system. Space voyages in modern times has established beyond doubt that the outer space is completely dark. The sky that we see as lighted from earth during the daytime is actually due to refraction of sunlight from the uncountable impurities present in the atmosphere of the earth. But just outside the upper surface of the earth’s atmosphere, in the bottom-less vacuum of the outer space, the sky is absolute dark even though the same Sun is shining at the same place as before.

The other word ‘Pranav’ refers to the background sound in the cosmic space. Science has shown that there are a number of factors for this cosmic humming, such as the magnetic field around the revolving planets, ionized solar wind blowing in outer space, and other physical factors. It has been observed that a grave humming sound is heard just outside the earth’s outer atmosphere which makes it appear that the earth is groaning as it slowly revolves around its axis. We do not hear this sound on earth because of the surrounding pollution created by terrestrial noise, but since there is absolute quiet in outer space this subtle sound becomes stark against the all-pervading calmness.

Now we come to ‘Brahm’. The term Brahm applies to ‘everything’, without exception, that exists in this creation, and obviously therefore both the noise and the quietude come within the ambit of ‘Brahm’ as do the Sun and the Pranav! In other words, the Sun and the Pranav are one or the other aspects or facets of the ubiquitous Brahm. This is the picture at the cosmic plane of existence.

The void of the space has no life par-se, so the mysterious entity, which we like to call the inexplicable forces of Nature, that keeps the hanging celestial bodies in their fixed place in the universe, that keeps the Sun burning eternally without any replenishment in its stock of fuel, which creates sound from nowhere, which created the elements from nothing—is known as Brahm. Since something that has no life, vitality and dynamism in it cannot produce any other thing—dead entities don’t create—it follows that this Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness that is regarded as the seed of life and creation. This is the rough picture at the cosmic level of creation.

At the microcosmic plane, this Brahm is revealed as the ‘consciousness’, the essential life-infusing spark, that resides inside the gross body of the creature who represents the creation in a miniature form. This ‘consciousness’ is called the Atma as it is the most fundamental and basic entity without which the creature’s very existence as a ‘living being’ known as the Jiva would be questioned and jeopardized. The word ‘Atma’ means ‘the soul, the essence, the basis, the fundamental, the principal and the elementary form’ of anything.

Since the Atma not only lights up the inner being of the body with the light of life and consciousness but is also self-sustaining and self-illuminated, it is likened to the celestial Sun. Again, since the dead and the inane entity known as the body gets its power to live by the beating of the heart, the beating which creates a subtle thumping sound as well as a silent humming or whispering as the blood flows through the blood-vessels inside the body, the Atma is also likened to the Pranav, the cosmic background sound.

Elsewhere it is said in the Upanishads that the Sun is a visible manifestation of Brahm because the latter represents the brilliance and magnificence of the glories of Brahm. In this context, refer to the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 4. The *Surya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 3 asserts that all forms of life on earth depend upon the Sun God. The *Narayan Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in *Brahmo-panishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to

the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

Brahm in metaphysical context refers to the *pure consciousness* that has two levels of existence—one is the macro level, and the other is the micro level. At the macro level this refers to the cosmic Consciousness that is universal and uniform throughout this creation, and this fact that the cosmic Consciousness is the Supreme Being himself personified is endorsed in the Atharva Veda's *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 56. At the micro level of creation, the term 'consciousness' refers to the individual's Atma, his soul. This Atma is his truthful 'self'.

In the context of the present verse of our Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, it is stunning to note that the Sun that is so blazingly splendid lives in a space of the outer sky filled with overwhelming darkness. This is how the idea of the 'Maheshwar being surrounded by darkness of Maya' originated!

It ought to be noted here that inspite of this all-engulfing darkness in outer space, the Sun continues to shine brilliantly, and any object that is turned towards the Sun too gets illuminated. In other words, inspite of the world being submerged in the delusions created by Maya, those who turn towards the 'truthful Brahm' get enlightenment and wisdom inspite of all odds stacked against them. But if they turn their back towards Brahm, they would see only miseries and insurmountable problems of life instead of hope and salvation!]

17-18. There is never a similarity between the self-evident and cognizable Atma, and the illusionary and deluding Maya.

It is well known and established by doing self research, applying of logic, contemplating and pondering deeply, separating fact from fiction, intelligent analysis and wise derivation of the truth that the supreme Atma, which is consciousness and self-illuminated, has nothing to do with Maya at all.

The debates about the truthfulness or otherwise of anything in this gross material world of sense objects that are marked by delusions are limited to the world. Such debates are the subject matters revolving around Vidya (knowledge, skill and expertise in any given subject) or A-vidya (the opposite of Vidya). It has no bearing on the Atma which is beyond the purview and jurisdiction of either the Vidya or the A-vidya for the simple reason that the Atma is an ethereal entity that transcends the defining boundaries of the gross world (17-18).

[Note—The Jiva, i.e. the living being, is either aware of things in this world or is unaware of them. The state of existence when the Jiva is aware of this world and its objects is known as 'Vidya' or knowledge and awareness, while the opposite would naturally be 'A-Vidya' or lack of knowledge and awareness. In the field of spiritualism, knowledge of the truth of the Atma is known as 'Vidya', and its lack is 'A-Vidya'.

Now, since the Atma is said to be eternally self-illuminated and enlightened, to cast doubts on its inherent divinity and greatness as well as its existence comes under the definition of 'A-Vidya', while to be sure and convinced of the same is categorized as 'Vidya'.]

19-20. From the basic or fundamental perspective of the Absolute Truth of creation, such debates are useless and a waste of time and energy. Actually, it is one Truth that is the fundamental Tattwa (essence, basis) of everything in existence.

[Here, 'Truth' refers to the Consciousness that pervades in this creation uniformly, and without which nothing would matter or exist. If there was no Consciousness, there would have been no life on Earth, and the world (earth) would be as barren a stretch of terrain as that on the planets Mars or Venus for instance!]

Whatever is visible in this physical world also appears to be 'true' because it is perceived first hand, but this 'truth' is cloaked in Maya as the instruments of the body which perceive it are themselves veiled in Maya. [Refer verse no. 9-18.]

Therefore, there is a sea of difference between the 'Truth' that is 'absolute', and the 'truth' that is 'not absolute' but is rather deluding.

The 'Absolute Truth' is a manifestation of or a metaphor for 'light' because it is self-evident and self-illuminated.

[It is different from the perceived or imagined 'truth' in the form of the world which is illuminated by the light of something else, for instance the light of the Sun. The Sun is self-illuminated and self-sustaining; it does not require anything else to make it shine and give light, or remain burning eternally. On the other hand the world is neither self-illuminated nor self-sustaining—i.e. it is not self-illuminated as it depends upon the light of the Sun to remain illuminated, and it is not self-sustaining as it depends upon the Sun for its heat, light and energy, factors that are absolute essentials for creation to survive.

Similarly, the Atma is self-illuminated and self-sustaining, whereas the body is dependent upon this Atma for its awareness of the world ('illumination') as well as its life ('sustenance')]

But, at the same time, the fact is that it is the 'light' that makes the Truth shine, whether at the cosmic level of the 'absolute' or the mundane level of the world which the creature sees with his organs of perception. This 'light' is the 'Consciousness' known as Brahm at the cosmic level, and the Atma at the individual level of the creature.

Hence, the 'light' (of knowledge) is a common denominator at all levels of existence that illuminates the Truth. That is, it is knowledge, wisdom and erudition that highlight the 'truth' by eliminating darkness in the form of ignorance of this 'truth' resulting in delusions arising out of misinterpretation, misconception, misperception, misinformation etc.

This 'light' representing the glorious virtue of knowledge, erudition, wisdom, enlightenment and sagacity that are the unique characteristics of the supreme Consciousness known as Brahm at the micro plane of existence, and as the Atma at the individual level of the creature's existence is therefore a non-dual or Advaitya virtue. It is uniform and universal in creation (because the virtues of knowledge and wisdom that stand for 'truth', instead of the ever-changing nature of 'un-truth', always remain steady, unchanging and one—or 'non-dual')

[If we regard the word 'light' as a metaphor for the enlightened Atma, then also the same logic applies, as the 'truthful Atma' is a universal, immutable, immanent and constant factor of creation, an unchallengeable factor without which this creation would lose its meaning and foundation.] (19-20).

21-22. In this way, it is the 'light' (symbolizing the knowledge or awareness of the ubiquitous factor of life known as the consciousness) that is the universal source of illumination (knowledge and wisdom) in this world. [That is, being enlightened about the truth of the Atma as a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness is a spiritually elevating and empowering experience. It not only enlightens the aspirant

about the truth of his own 'self' but also illuminates the path of his emancipation and salvation.]

It is wiser and prudent to keep quiet about it instead of speaking something about it (because it cannot be properly and completely described in words, thereby leaving it to be subjected to misinterpretation and misunderstanding, a situation that would be ruinous for the destiny of the hearer). Spiritual truths can only be experienced and witnessed first hand, and not taught or described or illustrated (like some physical experiment in a science laboratory of a college).

A person who is fortunate enough to have voluntarily obtained this eclectic divine knowledge (of Brahm and the Atma) is so unique that he cannot be categorized exclusively as being Brahm (personified divinity), or a Jiva (an ordinary living being), or anyone else in specific terms to the exclusion of others. That is, he is all of them at once; he is the 'non-dual' Brahm personified in his form. [Such a man is deemed to have reached the pinnacle of enlightenment and self-realisation. For him, it is the 'truth' that matters, and the 'truth' is always the same!]

He has no Varna¹ (i.e. he cannot be restricted to any particular class in society), or Ashram² (i.e. he cannot be categorized on the basis of any particular phase of life) (21-22).

[Note—¹The four *Varnas* are Brahmins or the upper learned class, Kshatriyas or the warrior class or noblemen, Vaishyas or the trading community, and Shudras or the working class, especially the labourers.

²The four *Ashrams* are Brahmacharya or the celibate life as a student, Grishatha or a householder, Vaanprastha or when one withdraws from active householder's life and prepares to leave home, perhaps to go for pilgrimage, and Sanyas or total renunciation.]

23-25. Such a spiritually realised man does not fall under the category of either those who obey the laws of Dharma (probity and propriety) or those who do not. Nothing is prohibited for him, nor is anything specially prescribed for him.

When he has developed a holistic view of creation whereby he sees non-duality everywhere in the sense that he sees nothing but Brahm everywhere, there is no question of his having a sense of sorrow or pain in one situation, and of joy and happiness in another situation. [23½.]

Such a highly enlightened and Brahm-realised man does not 'see' this world with its myriad forms and variations, a world which is inhabited by diverse species and types of creatures. This is because he sees or observes or perceives only 'one' (non-dual) Brahm everywhere; he sees only one 'consciousness' (Atma) lighted in this world in so many varieties and forms. He understands that all that he actually sees in the form of 'life' in this world around him with the gross organ of sight known as the eye is only the external façade which hides the reality of 'truth and consciousness' behind it. He sees nothing but Brahm in the form of this 'consciousness and truth' everywhere.

In this situation, the difference between what is Dharma and what is not do not apply to him (23-25).

26. The Atma which is supreme is characterized by being 'consciousness' that is eternal and steady. It has been in its present form since time immemorial. There are no divisions in this Atma. Any divisions or sub-divisions or forms that may be imagined of it are part of the one single whole known as the Atma, and not separate or distinct from it (26).

27. Whatever thing that exists or does not exist are but a form of Brahm. [That thing which physically exists is visible, and it represents the visible form of Brahm. That thing which is invisible represents the invisible form of Brahm.]

In this situation, a man who is truly Brahm-realised is not expected to either accept or reject anything or situation. [That is, if he sees something, he knows that it is revelation of Brahm in that particular form. If he does not see anything but learns about its presence from other sources, he is convinced that it must be true because it represents the subtle and invisible form or aspect of Brahm.] (27).

28. [Verse nos. 28-30 outline the cosmic formless aspect of Brahm which defies definition¹.]

The supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, is the one who is the foundation and basis of all that exists; he establishes everything and everyone in creation.

He has no qualifications and attributes. He is comprehensible by the mind and describable by the faculty of speech. He is invisible to the gross organ of sight known as the eye. He cannot be accepted or grasped or perceived or understood by any means. He has no family lineage or ancestor from whom he can be supposed to have descended. He has no form and shape (28).

[Note—¹The following Upanishads are some of the ones which expound upon the glories and magnificence of Brahm:--

The all-encompassing and all-pervading aspect of Brahm, known as the *Vaishwanar Brahm*, have been described in the following Upanishads: (i) Atharva Veda's = Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 3; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 4; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse no. 11. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahma Upanishad, verse no. 21; Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse no. 15.

Non-duality or oneness or uniformity between *Brahm and the Atma* has been elaborately explained in all the major Upanishads because this is the basic theme around which the philosophy of the Upanishads is built. Some of these Upanishads are the following—

(i) Krishna Yajur Veda—Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 17, 81-110; Tejo Bindu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-43, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-51, 60-64, Canto 4, verse nos. 2-30, 69-79, Canto 5, verse nos. 1-75, 90-96, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-72; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 7-8; Skanda Upanishad, verse nos. 2-7; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/15; Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 41-42.

(ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Adhyatma Upanishad; Subalo-panishad, Canto 3, 5, 7 (verse no. 1), and 9 (verse no. 16); Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse no.18; Niralamba.

(c) Rig Veda's Atma-poojo-panishad; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 1.

(iii) Atharva Veda's Atmo-panishad; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 3, section 2, verse nos. 3-4, 8; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 2; Atharvashir Upanishad (which describes Rudra as a manifestation of Brahm); Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph 4-6; Canto 8, paragraph no. 2; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 2, verse no. 2-3; Atma Upanishad; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse no. 7; Canto 9, verse nos. 7-8.

(iv) Sam Veda—Maho-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 7; Keno-panishad; Chandogy Upanishad.

The *eclectic divine virtues* of Brahm have been enumerated in countless Upanishads, for instance in the following—

(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 15-19, Canto 3, verse nos. 17-22; *Kathrudra Upanishad*, verse no. 12, 27-28, 30-31, 42; *Taittiriya Upanishad* Valli 3, Anuvak 10, verse no. 2-5; *Skanda Upanishad*, verse no. 13; *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 4; *Varaaha Upanishad*, Canto 2, verse nos. 16,

20-21, 26, 29; Canto 3, verse no. 2; and Canto 4, verse nos. 31-32; *Yog Kundalini Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 35; *Saraswati Upanishad*, verse no. 50-52; *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*.

(b) Atharva Veda's = *Mundak Upanishad*, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak 2, section 2, verse no. 7, 9-11; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 3-5, 7-9; *Atharvashir Upanishad*, Kandika 4 (full); *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8 which is fully dedicated to enumerating the grand virtues of Brahm; Canto 9, verse nos. 3, 19-22; *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 4, Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; *Shandilya Upanishad*, Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 2-5, and Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 1-8, 11-14; *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 27-31, 33, 67; Canto 4, verse nos. 35-38, 67; Canto 5, verse nos. 10, 20-21, 66-67, 72, 113; *Atma Upanishad*, verse nos. 1-D and 1-E, verse nos. 2-4, 9, 30-31; *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 13-16; Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16, 26, 28-30, 44; *Tripura Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 6, 8-9, 16-17, 22; *Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 7.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—*Adhyatma Upanishad*, verse nos. 61-64; *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* Canto 2, Brahman 3 describes this Brahm's two forms in detail.

(d) Sam Veda's *Chandogya Upanishad*, *Keno Upanishad* and *Avyakta Upanishad*.

Reconciliation between the concept of duality and non-duality—Atharva Veda's Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 8-10.

Atharva Veda's Pashupat Brahm Upanishad assigns *various names to Brahm*—viz. Maheshwar Brahm (Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 11), Manas Brahm (Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 11-12), Hans (Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 12-15, 20-21, 32), Param Hans (Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 25), Pashupati Parmatma (Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 29), Pashupati or Pashupati Rudra (Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 32); Parmatma and Purush (Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 1).

The entire *creation was produced* by Brahm as the Viraat Purush—refer (i) Rig Veda's Aiteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 1-3. (ii) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1, verse no. 1, 7, 9; Mundak 1, section 2, verse no. 1; Mundak 2, section 1, verse nos. 1-10; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-10. (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 4.

Brahm *resides in the subtle space of the heart* of the creature—refer (i) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 1, verse nos. 9-10; Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 1, 6; 9; Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 7; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 25. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 11.

Brahm *resides in the gross body* of the creature (as its Atma and Pran)—refer (i) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 3, Section 1, verse no. 4-5 (as the creature's Pran); Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no. 15; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 17, 19-20; Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16, 21-25, 31-46. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewatshwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 7; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 40; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 4. (iii) Rig Veda's Aiteriya Upanishad, Canto 1, Section 2, verse no. 3; Canto 1, Section 3, verse no. 12-14.

Brahm is the *controller of the entire creation*—refer (i) Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 2, Section 2, verse no. 7. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 1, 7.

Brahm has *countless mouths, ears, eyes and necks (heads)*—refer (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3, 11, 14, 16. (ii) Atharva Veda's Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 11, and Canto 6, paragraph no. 11. The phrase 'having countless ears' simply means that Brahm, in the form of the Viraat Purush, assumed as many forms as there were creatures who

could hear. It also means that Brahm, as the living being's consciousness, heard or became aware of everything that was happening in this creation.

Brahm is *beyond comprehension*—refer Atharva Veda's Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos.13-20, 26-30; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 29.

Brahm is *Sat-Chit-Anand*—refer Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 29.

Brahm *encloses this entire creation from all sides*, and nothing exists outside the boundary of Brahm. This fact has been asserted in the *Shwetashwatar Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 7, 9; Canto 6, verse nos. 2, 9; and in *Gayatri Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Gopath Brahman, Kandika 38.

The relationship between *Brahm and the world* has been explained in Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 42.

The uniformity and non-duality between *Shiva and Brahm* has been expounded in— (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Dakshin Murti or Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad, Pancha Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 30, Skanda Upanishad, verse nos. 9, 13, and Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 32. (ii) Atharva Veda's Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 2, verse nos. 11-15; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 32.

The *Pran or life consciousness* of all the living beings is *Brahm personified* in that form—refer Mudak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, section 1, verse no. 4; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 17, 19-20; Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16, 21-25, 31-46.

The *Pran has its origin in Brahm*—Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1, verse no. 3.

The Atharva Veda's Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 21, 24, 27, and Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 6, 15-16 assert that the *Sun and the Pranav (cosmic sound) are metaphors for both the Atma as well as the Brahm*.

The *four Paads*, literally meaning legs or pedestals or aspects of Brahm, have been elaborately described in the following Upanishads—(i) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda's Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-19; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6; and Canto 8, paragraph no. 4.

Why Brahm or Ishwar, the Supreme Being, the supreme Lord and Authority of creation, had to become a Jiva (creature) has been explained in (i) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12, and the whole of Canto 2. (ii) Atharva Veda's Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 4, paragraph nos. 9, 11-13.

Brahm is *revealed in the form of the Bhuts (elements; creatures) and pervades uniformly* in this creation so much so that nothing is there that is not Brahm—this eclectic fact is highlighted in the Tripura Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 5, verse nos. 6, 8-9, 16-17, 22.

The *non-duality of Brahm* has been exemplarily explained in the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 8, paragraph no. 2 by citing the example of gold and water.

The Shandilya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 2-5 narrate the two aspects of Brahm as being *Sakal* and *Nishkal* when sage Shandilya asked sage Atharva about it.

The *various terms used to describe Brahm*, such as Vyasthi Brahm, Samasthi Brahm, Sanhaar Brahm, Sristhi Brahm, Ubhayaatmak Brahm, Baahaya Brahm, Vyavahaarik Brahm, Aarsha Brahm—these have been explained in the Atharva Veda's *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8, verse no. 1.

The *various forms* of Brahm—(a) The *five forms* of Brahm called the ‘Panch Brahm’ have been listed in verse no. 1 and described in detail in verse nos. 5-23 of the Panch Brahm Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda.

(b) The *two forms of Brahm*—There are two names given to the two forms of Brahm, viz. (i) ‘Murta’ and ‘Amurta’ which have been described in Shukla Yajur Veda’s Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 10; Mandal Brahman Upanishad, Brahman 1, section 3, verse no. 1; and (ii) ‘Purva Tarak’ and ‘Uttar Tarak’ which have been described in Shukla Yajur Veda’s Mandal Brahman Upanishad, Brahman 1, section 3, verse nos. 1, 3-4.]

29. He (Brahm) has no gross organs such as the eye, ear, hand and leg. He is ‘Nitya’, i.e. eternal, constant and ever-present.

He is ‘Vibhu’, i.e. he is the Lord who is almighty, omnipresent, all-pervading, all-encompassing, magnanimous, eternal, infinite, all-powerful, immovable, constant and immutable.

He is ‘Sarwagat’, i.e. he can go anywhere he likes and lives everywhere at the same time in the sense that he is omnipresent and all-pervading. Besides this, being a Sarwagat he is also all-knowing by the virtue of his presence everywhere, as nothing remains hidden from him.

He is ‘Su-Sukshma’, i.e. he is smaller than the smallest, and subtler than the subtlest.

He is ‘Avyaya’, i.e. he is imperishable, infinite and in-diminishable; he cannot be fractioned or reduced in dimension, importance or in any other way whatsoever. Hence, he is free from death (29).

30. He (Brahm) is present in every instant and in every place at the same time, as he is omnipresent and all-pervading. Therefore, he is present in the front and the rear, as well as in the north and the south—i.e. at the top and the bottom, the front and the back.

He is revealed in the form of the Amrit (nectar; elixir) that drips from the eclectic philosophy of the Vedas. He is an embodiment of extreme bliss, beatitude and felicity that is obtained by imbibing the Amrit (nectar; eclectic spiritual knowledge) of the Vedas.

This eclectic supreme transcendental Brahm, who is an embodiment of ‘Brahma-nand’, i.e. who is a fount of, a treasury of extreme bliss, beatitude and felicity, is present in the ‘south’ (symbolizing not only the geographical south but also implying the rear, the bottom, the nadir, and the right) as well as in the ‘north’ (symbolizing not only the geographical north but also implying the front, the top, the zenith and the left) (30).

31. When a wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant develops this holistic and all-incorporating view of Brahm, he begins to see everything in the context of Brahm. Hence, since Brahm is also reflected in his inner-self as his own Atma, he begins to see the entire creation as it is reflected in his Atma. [A wise and self-realised man becomes enlightened enough to see the ‘truth’ lying hidden behind the veil of delusions in this world. He sees the world as it is; he has developed the high level of wisdom and erudition to sieve through all information so as to separate the grain from the chaff, the truth from the falsehood. Since his Atma has gained its pristine pure form, it is able to reflect the world in its entirety and true form—that is, in the way it actually is just like a clean mirror presents a correct and truthful image of the object viewed in it.]

This all-encompassing and holistic view of Brahm and creation provides equal opportunity to attain Mukti (liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to the 'Gyanis' (i.e. those persons who are wise, erudite, learned, enlightened etc.) as well as to the 'Agyanis' (i.e. those who are not Gyanis). [That is, if one becomes enlightened enough about the Atma then it does not matter whether or not he has studied the voluminous scriptures or done Yoga. Knowledge of the 'self' is spiritually liberating and emancipating for all, whether the man has formal knowledge of the scriptures or not, whether he has done strenuous meditation exercises or not. In fact, even if he reads the scriptures and does Yoga but does not understand what the Atma is then all his efforts have gone to vain as far as his spiritual liberation and salvation, or his emancipation and salvation are concerned.] (31).

32. This eclectic spiritual achievement that leads to the acquisition of the highest form of knowledge of the supreme Divinity (Brahm and Atma), acquaintance with the 'truth' that is beyond doubt and irreproachable, success in doing Tapa (austerity, penance, strict following of the tenets of the scriptures inspite of odds), implementing Brahmcharya (observance of strict self-control over the sense organs and the wayward inclinations of the mind and heart; following the tenets that lead to Brahm-realisation), and other such grand qualities are obtainable only by following the path shown by Vedanta (the Upanishads) (32).

[Note—The importance of the study of the Upanishads has also been stressed in Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogkundali Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 10-13.]

33. Only those whose inner-self has been thoroughly cleansed of all sorts of blemishes, deficiencies, faults and shortcomings (associated with life in this corrupt mundane world which is thickly embedded with delusions and ignorance), and is thereby rendered holy, untainted and pure, are eligible to realise or receive or accept or see or witness and experience the supreme transcendental Divinity (Brahm) which is self-illuminated.

Those who are covered in a veil of Maya (delusions) cannot ever expect to have a divine sight or view of the supreme Lord (33).

[Note—It is like the case of a man whose eyesight is weak, or who wears spectacles with dirty, tinted or cracked glasses, or whose spectacles do not have correct lenses fitted in them. In any of these situations it is obvious that his view of the world would be affected by these anomalies; the distortion in what he sees, or the defect in the view would be in direct proportion to the type and intensity of the anomaly.

On the other hand, if he has normal vision in his eyes, or if his weak vision has been corrected by the use of proper spectacles, then his view of the surrounding world would be natural, truthful and correct; it would be devoid of all artificial distortions, and would make him aware of the things as they actually exist.]

34. A wise ascetic who understands the truth of his real 'self' (i.e. of his Atma which is pure consciousness and a personification of Brahm) attains complete fulfillment. He becomes as complete and whole as the Brahm, the Supreme Being, personified in the form of his truthful 'self' known as the Atma. As a consequence, he does not have to fall in the trap symbolized by the endless cycle of birth and death. [That is, when an ascetic attains complete spiritual enlightenment, he obtains Mukti or Moksha, which means he obtains spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. He does not have to take a physical birth in this world again.] (34).

35. Just like the sky that is omnipresent and all-pervading, that is always steady and constant, not moving even the slightest from its present position, neither going anywhere nor coming from anywhere, the wise and self-realised enlightened ascetic who has understood the truth of his own 'self' as a personification of the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness and Truth known as 'Brahm' too does not move from his present position, he too does not have to go anywhere (upon death) nor come here from somewhere else (upon a new birth).

[In short, he neither goes to the heaven or hell, nor does he have to come back in this world from either of these two places to take a birth in the higher echelon of existence or being condemned to a lowly existence as a reward or punishment respectively. He is deemed to be eternally freed from the fetters of ignorance and delusions, he is unshackled and freed from the bondage created by the gross view of creation which has a limited horizon.

Having overcome the delusory effects of ignorance, he is able to reach the citadel of spiritual enlightenment when he becomes one with and inseparable from Brahm, a state of existence which is tantamount to his attaining Mukti or Moksha (freedom and deliverance) from all worldly bondages and spiritual shackles that had acted as fetters for him since time immemorial. That translates into his being eternal and imperishable like Brahm. That implies also that he neither dies nor takes a birth. He does not go to heaven or hell, and neither does he come back to live in a gross body interacting with a gross world. He is beyond such limited conceptions of creation. Like his primary form known as the Atma, which in turn is Brahm personified, he too becomes eternal, imperishable and infinite.] (35).

36. [This verse highlights the importance of eating food obtained by correct or righteous means.]

This exemplary and high degree of equanimity of the mind and thought reflects in his eating preferences when he does not distinguish between what is to be eaten and what is not to be eaten. [That is, he has conquered his taste buds and the natural urges of the tongue; he has controlled his desire for self-gratification. He eats not because something is tasty, but because it is a sort of offering to the Brahm residing in his inner-self. He treats each morsel of food as an oblation made to the symbolic form of the sacred fire burning inside him.]

This helps him to completely clean the mind and the sub-conscious of all impurities because the holiness and purity of the inner-self is directly dependent upon the type of food ingested. Food obtained by unrighteous means corrupts the mind and the inner-self, while food procured by rightful means cleanses them. So, when the food ingested is made pure and uncorrupt, the Chitta is automatically cleansed and made holy (36).

37. When the Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) is thoroughly cleansed of all impurities, faults, blemishes and shortcomings, it is only then that, on the one hand, Gyan (wisdom, erudition, sagacity, enlightenment, truthful knowledge, ability to distinguish between the right and the wrong) is proportionately enhanced, and on the other hand the numerous difficult knots of Agyan (ignorance and delusions), which are spiritual stumbling blocks for the ascetic, are progressively reduced and ultimately eliminated.

[That is, if one is able to control his mind and sub-conscious he is not only able to increase his treasure of right thoughts and wisdom but also get rid of negativity in the same ratio. His spiritual elevation thereby becomes rapid and easy.]

Therefore, only those who are not yet Brahm-realised lay importance on what to eat and what not to in order to keep themselves holy and clean.

[This statement is an indirect indictment of those who are very fussy in matters of eating only 'religiously sanctified food' that is cleaned and made holy by meaningless formalities and purification rites. Such things may fool the world into believing that the concerned person is very holy, religious and pious as he eats only clean and sanctified food, but such pretensions of holiness and purity would not actually lead to the cleaning of the inner-self of the person who finds one food as 'defiled' and the other as 'sanctified' for artificial and whimsical reasons. This is because he still has not become wise enough to understand that no external situation or thing can ever defile the nourishing quality of food that is inherently present in it, nor would any food become worthy of eating simply because some elaborate ritual was performed by it if the food is not good for the body.

The importance of any food lies in what good it does to the body of the creature who eats the food, what basic ingredients it contains, rather than the food's outer look, its monetary value, or anything else. The body is benefited by the nutrients, such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, other nutritional elements etc. that are inherently present in the food eaten, and not by its external look, texture, colour or dressing.

For a wise and enlightened man the main objective of eating anything is to extract the vital life-sustaining nutrients contained in the food eaten so as to sustain the body in which the Atma representing the Parmatma lives. It is like taking proper care of the shrine in which the deity has been consecrated. It is through a well-nourished and healthy body that the Atma can do good and righteous deeds, study the scriptures so that truthful knowledge can be accessed, and so on and so forth. A weak and decrepit body would make the incumbent Atma suffer like hell instead of living peacefully and comfortably.

Besides this, a truly wise man understands that the sacred fire is burning inside his body in a symbolic manner, being supported by the vital winds called Pran that circulate inside the body. Hence, the food eaten is not to satisfy one's taste buds but for offering oblations to this sacred fire. When food is eaten with this grand notion, the entire exercise of procuring, preparing and eating food becomes tantamount to doing a fire sacrifice in which eatables are offered to the raging fire as offerings meant for the divine Gods. In this case, the God is the Atma itself.

Say, how can any food, no matter how impure or unclean it might be, ever make the raging fire impure and unholy? Everything that is put into the fire is reduced to ashes without any distinction and favour. This is also applicable in the case of the food that is eaten by the man. Whatever variety of food one eats—whether it is delicious or bland, whether it is costly food or a staple and cheap food—all of them are reduced to fecal matter of the same type which must be eliminated at the first opportunity lest it would poison the body.] (37).

38. The reason is that the thoughts and approach to life of a true Gyani (i.e. a Brahm-realised person) is vastly different from one who is Agyani (i.e. who is not self and Brahm realised). A Gyani does not have any kind of thoughts that one thing is better than the other, or that one thing is more useful than its counterpart.

[A Gyani has developed a high degree of equanimity and uniformity of vision and thought. Since he is convinced about the truthfulness and the sacrosanct nature of the great declaration made by the Upanishads and other scriptures regarding the Advaitya (non-dual) nature of the ultimate Absolute Truth that is the actual reality of

creation, he knows that whatever exists in creation are all fundamentally the same though their exteriors and characteristics may vary widely and extensively.

The notion of one thing being attractive and the other repulsive, one situation being favourable while the other being unfavourable, one creature being a foe while the other being most dear—all such thoughts and deductions or conclusions made by a living being vis-à-vis the gross world are based on the perception of the latter by the equally gross organs of the gross body. Since the thing perceived and the medium of perception are both gross, the perception would naturally be proportionately gross.

The real ‘self’ of the wise, enlightened and self-realised man is not the gross body, but it is the Atma which is most sublime and subtle. This Atma is pure consciousness that resides in the physical body.

So, when the focus of what constitutes the ‘self’ shifts from the gross body to the subtle and sublime Atma, the notion of one thing being good and the other bad becomes redundant. It is the body that abhors certain things or situations in the world because they give pain to its organs, while it longs for others that fulfill its desire for gratification. The Atma is really unconcerned by these dilemmas and perplexities related to the world and the body because it is aloof from both of them; the Atma has the grand virtue of equanimity towards everything as well as detachment from everything as its characteristic quality.]

A true Gyani is one who regards the ‘he’ (i.e. the eater) who eats the food as Brahm, and the ‘food that is eaten’ as also being Brahm in its form.

[Though this statement appears to be ridiculous and most absurd on the face of it but when understood its hidden meaning it becomes an obvious truth. The person who eats the food is not the gross body known to the world as a certain Mr. X. The actual eater is the Atma, the ‘true self’ that resides in this body, and not the body itself, for if the body was the eater then even a dead body would eat food. The dead body does not eat, but it is the consciousness residing inside it as the Atma that keeps the body alive and enables it to eat anything. The Atma is the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that lives in the body of the eater known as Mr. X in the form of his ‘true self’; if the Atma leaves the body the latter would be dead, and no dead body eats anything. Hence, the real ‘eater’ is not Mr. X who is conventionally recognized by his physical gross body, but the real ‘eater’ is the Atma that is Brahm (Consciousness) living inside the body of Mr. X.

The ‘food eaten’ also has two components—one that is its gross exterior features or aspects represented by its shape, texture, form, size and colour, and the other is the subtle aspect represented by the nutrients that the food contains. The gross part of the food is worthless as the body automatically eliminates it as stool and urine. It is the subtle part of food that is accepted by the body. This ‘subtle’ component of food is the basic quality and value of the food; it is what lends the food its energy, dynamism, importance and life-sustaining properties much like the Atma which lends the gross body of the creature its value and importance as well as its life, strength, dynamism, vitality and consciousness. A cow eats grass to produce milk which a woman does by eating everything else *but* grass!

Hence, the inherent basic life-sustaining virtues present in the food are symbolic forms of Brahm who is the ‘life and consciousness’ of the entire creation. Even as food is absolutely necessary for conception, sustenance and growth of all living beings in this creation, and no life is imaginable without the nutritional abilities of food, no life is tenable without Brahm (or ‘consciousness’) in this creation.

This visible creation has a gross form like the visible gross form of the food eaten. No one can actually see the nutritional components of the food—such as the

various forms of minerals, trace elements, carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins etc.—that are present in it. Likewise, no one is able to see Brahm present uniformly everywhere in this creation.

Again, the scriptures have asserted that the entire creation is a revelation of Brahm, and this creation has a gross aspect that is visible, that has certain limitations and qualifications, that has a certain origin and an end. But the same scriptures have said in the same breath that Brahm is invisible, subtle, sublime, infinite, imperishable, boundless and limitless. So how do we reconcile these two apparent contradictions? Well, this is what makes Brahm so unique and one of its only kind. The truth is that Brahm is both the former as well as the latter—that is, Brahm is both the gross physical world that is visible and which has its own set of characteristics, as well as the invisible subtle world that is sublime and indefinable. It is so because ‘everything without exception’ is Brahm, and the phrase ‘everything without exception’ *includes* both the visible and grosser aspects of creation as well as the invisible and the subtle and sublime aspects! Nothing escapes Brahm; nothing in existence is Brahm-less.] (38).

39. An ascetic who has become Brahm-realised sees all the creatures as a form of Brahm. Therefore, the notion that distinguishes between two human beings, treating one as a Brahmin and the other as a Kshatriya, is meaningless for him. He accepts these artificial distinctions created in this world just like he eats even the grosser parts of the food (such as solid food in the form of various edible roots, stems, leaves, vegetables, whole grain cereals etc., or liquids such as milk, fruit juice etc.), and then eliminates them from his system.

[That is, in order to live in this world he has to accept its norms just like in order to derive benefits from the nourishment contained in any food he has to eat its gross parts as well, because the vital nutrients contained in the food are hidden behind the gross form of the food. For instance, one eats the apple whole to derive benefit from the numerous vital nutritional elements that it contains. But once the nutritional elements are extracted by the body from the apple, the residual part of the fruit consisting of its grosser aspects are eliminated from the body as faecal matter and urine.

Similarly, a man has to interact with all kinds of people in this world; he cannot do without it. But a wise man is one who endeavours to benefit or learn from the auspicious and noble virtues that are present in all the categories of people to a lesser or greater degree. Just like the body extracting things that are of nutritional value from the food eaten and eliminating the rest, a wise man should pick up good and positive qualities from all those with whom he interacts in this world while rejecting their bad and negative qualities.

Further, he recognizes all individuals as one or the other form of Brahm—because he knows that the same Atma resides in their physical bodies which appear to be different from one another. It is just like the case of water contained in different containers of different shapes and sizes—the water assumes the contours of the vessel in which it is held but all the sample of water are the same in every respect, even chemically.

So, once a wise man has accepted all categories of people as Brahm personified, he gets rid of the artificial classifications that separate them into classes known as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas etc. just like the case of the body ejecting the gross part of the food as stool and urine after the vital nutrients contained in the food have been extracted and absorbed in the system.] (39).

40. [Verse nos. 40-43 should be read together to understand their true import.]

A wise aspirant who knows Brahm as the Lord for whom 'death' is a sort of food (i.e. who brings about the end of everything in this creation; who has no fear from death; who outlives death as he is eternal and infinite; who vanquishes death which is so powerful and formidable that nothing escapes its jaws) also becomes one like Brahm (i.e. he too loses fear of death; he overcomes death).

[Everything in creation collapses into the primary source from where they had originated in the beginning much like waves in the ocean collapsing and merging into the water of the surface of the ocean from where they had emerged. 'Death' brings about the end of various units of creation at a given time, but 'death' itself is not free from the cycle of creation and destruction. A time would finally come when the Supreme Being would decide to wind up the creation, and then there would be no use of 'death' as nothing would be left to be ended, nothing would need to die. This means 'death' would become redundant, or that it would 'die' a natural death. This virtually translates into 'death' being devoured by Brahm, the paramount Authority of creation who now has no utility of 'death' when there is no creation that needs to be ended.

But this 'Authority' which empowers and authorizes 'death' to kill and end every unit of creation outlives the end of creation, because the said 'Authority' is eternal, imperishable and infinite. That is why this 'Authority' is honoured by the epithet 'supreme and transcendental'.

So, when the spiritual aspirant becomes Brahm-realised he is transformed from being an ordinary living being to a personality that is Brahm personified himself. Hence, he acquires all the characteristics that are unique and typical of Brahm, including his fearlessness from death, his eternity and infinity. Being Brahm personified, the Brahm-realised person lasts even when everything else is finished in this creation. That is, he becomes eternal, imperishable and infinite like Brahm.]

With this eclectic and holistic vision of creation, the entire world becomes his 'food'—i.e. he begins to treat the whole world as the gross form within which lies its true worth, the 'truth' and 'acceptable essence' known as Brahm. He therefore regards the world as acceptable because it is a manifestation of Brahm, because it is through this world that he can easily recognize and access Brahm just like a wise man who accepts all forms or kinds of food (i.e. who eats a wide variety of food) so that he can derive the maximum benefit from the nutrition contained in all kinds of foods. He pays attention to the nutritional value of the food rather than its exterior form.

[Even as eating a wide variety of food is beneficial for the body as it allows the latter to get wholesome nutrition from a broad spectrum of sources, the wise man is one who interacts with all sorts of people in this world in order to learn something good and auspicious from them. He accepts the positive and rejects the negative.] (40).

41. When the world is known and accepted in its essential and primary form as the Atma (i.e. when one is wise enough to understand that the element that is worth paying attention to in this gross world is the 'consciousness' permeating everywhere in it because it is the only element that has breathed 'life' into the otherwise lifeless entity), the whole gross world is transformed into an acceptable entity in spite of its grossness, its shortcomings, its faults and its corruptions.

[Behind the exterior grossness lies the subtle 'truth' just like the instance of the most ordinary food having its own unique nutritional value and importance.

When one knows that the exterior form of the visible world hides the truthful and uncorrupted Atma inside it, he would not treat the world as something to be abhorred and abandoned. This statement has great practical importance in the sense that a wise man may live like an ordinary man in this world, enjoy its privileges and charms, but at the same time have total disregard to its gross and exterior form. Other ordinary persons might not understand the grand way he thinks and the high level of his intellectual standing, but they rather prefer to treat him as one like them. But this man is widely different from them, and he is not bothered by what they think of him. This is indeed the high water-mark of spiritual evolvment that distinguishes a truly self and Brahm realised person, a person who can be rightly called wise and enlightened. Such a person has indeed understood the true meaning of the term non-duality, equanimity, dispassion, detachment, non-involvement and renunciation. What is the use of going to the forest as a reclusive hermit or an ascetic if one's mind remains hooked to the world left behind?]

Brahm, who is eternal and imperishable, constantly devours ('accepts') its own self (in the form of this visible world of which the Atma is the essence). In other words, 'Brahm continues to devour this world formed in his own image'.

[The text has the word 'Bhaksha' which literally means to eat or devour. But it does not mean to eat something in the conventional meaning of the term. It implies acceptance of something, taking out from it its essential element and then rejecting the gross and the worthless part just like one eats food, extracts its nutrients, and then ejects the gross and worthless part of the food eaten as stool and urine.

Brahm is an enlightened Being, so he would accept the 'truth' and not the falsehood. From the perspective of the enlightened man, this means that he accepts the world because it is an image of Brahm. Since a wise, enlightened and truly realised man is a personification or an image of Brahm, so when 'he' accepts the world in its true form as the Atma hidden in it, when he accepts the 'truth' that is sublime and absolute while rejecting or discarding the falsehood that is gross and meaningless, it is said that 'Brahm is accepting the world'.

Since such a man willingly grabs everything like a hungry man in order to learn something good and of positive virtue from whatever he can find, before judiciously rejecting the worthless and the gross, he is metaphorically said to be eating or devouring the world just like the case of a man eating all sorts of food items to extract their nutrition before rejecting the grosser part of the food as urine and stool.

From the perspective of the Atma, it means that it accepts the world as it is its own self. From the perspective of the Supreme Being, it means accepting its own creation which has no refuge except for him. And from the perspective of a wise man it means that he accepts all the good virtues present in all its various forms in this world of exceptional diversity, while rejecting the bad.

A wise and Brahm-realised man accepts things of value from this world and rejects what is worthless. But in order this to happen he would have to first accept the world before separating the grain from the chaff. He would have to 'eat' the food to gain nutrition from it. Merely looking at the food would not help him extract nutrition. So, a wise man needs to plunge into this ocean-like world to actually witness the magic of Brahm revealed in the form of the world and put on vivid display!

The assertion made in this verse that 'Brahm continues to devour this world formed in his own image' explains why the physical world continues to die in spite of the fact that it is said to be a visible revelation of the primarily invisible Brahm. 'Devouring' or 'eating' are symbolic terms and used in a metaphoric sense implying

accepting something in its gross form only to extract its essence before rejecting its grosser aspects.

The concept of 'Brahm eating his own self' is further explained in verse no. 43 below.] (41).

42. When one becomes enlightened in the aforesaid manner the whole world is acceptable to him just like a hungry man who gladly eats anything that is available to him without bothering about its external appearances, its freshness, its taste and aroma, or whether the food has been properly purified or sanctified by following elaborate purification rituals.

Such an enlightened man treats the world as personification of the Atma or Brahm, and hence acceptable by all means. Such a broad and holistic vision of the world makes it worthy to be accepted and enjoyed and benefited from just like one accepts and enjoys and benefits from the food eaten by him.

[A wise and enlightened man disregards the gross aspects of the world around him, but rather treats it as manifestation of Brahm, the divine, holy and the perfect One. He accepts the world with its extremes of goodness and badness as a manifestation of Brahm, because Brahm is a term that includes 'everything' in creation, and the word 'everything' means just that—nothing escapes the parameter of the definition of Brahm, nothing is beyond Brahm; Brahm is invisible as well as visible; Brahm is an ubiquitous entity that is all-inclusive, all-encompassing and all-pervading; Brahm is an entity that permeates uniformly and universally in the entire creation, from the miniscule to the most colossal.

Therefore, if Brahm is invisible, subtle and sublime, then it is also visible, gross and ordinary simultaneously.] (42).

43. 'Brahm devours his own self' in a symbolic way. The primary reason of this highly paradoxical situation that appears to be incongruous and ridiculous on the face is that nothing exists in this creation that does not have Brahm at its core, or that does not represent one or the other aspect or virtue of Brahm, or that does not reflect Brahm in some way. Everything in existence, including the 'eater' and the 'food eaten', is a manifestation of Brahm like the rest of the creation. There is, in fact, nothing in this creation that is not Brahm!

[That is, both the thing that is eaten as well as the person who eats it are manifestations of Brahm. This deduction is based on the tenet of non-duality or 'Advaitya' which says that there is only one truth in creation, and therefore there cannot be two types of truths. Falsehood can be many, but truth is always one. Since Brahm is the quintessential 'truth' of creation, it naturally follows that (i) what ever that exists, such as the food that is eaten and the eater, are the same Brahm existing in these two forms, and (ii) to understand this apparently ridiculous proposition one has to have a well developed intellectual stature and spiritual evolvment.

For instance, it is only when one sees the earth from high up in the sky that one can understand the truth of the statement that the earth is not flat, but is a round ball-like structure hanging without any support in the fathomless void of space. For otherwise, if viewed from the surface, the same earth appears to be flat, with extremely high mountains that rise up to almost touch the sky on the one hand, or with deep chasms or canyons or furrows that go down in its seemingly depth-less bowls on the other hand. In fact, all these three things are true depending upon the level from which one views the earth.

Likewise, only those who have had acquired the depth of spiritual vision, the broadness of spiritual wisdom and a high level of spiritual enlightenment that enables one to see or understand something that is beyond the gross, the ordinary and the mundane aspects of creation, something that is supernatural and transcendental, can understand the true meaning of the statements associated with Brahm and the Atma. For the rest of the creatures, all these observations seem to be absurd and imaginary.]

The very fact that something exists is a proof of the existence of Brahm. Hence, both the eater and the food eaten are not only proofs of the existence of Brahm but also establishes that Brahm is the ‘eater’ as well as the entity that is ‘eaten’ (43).

44. Any Authority is established by its inherent and intrinsic dynamic powers, strength and potentials. When things are subjected to certain laws and regulations it is a sign that there is some Authority to control and regulate them. In other words, since the creation has an in-built regulatory mechanism that controls each and every phase of existence, it is too obvious to doubt that there is an invisible Authority that gives effect to this control and regulation mechanism. This ‘Authority’ is Brahm. Brahm and Authority are not separable from one another; they are synonymous with each other (just like a king and his royal authority are inseparable from one another and synonymous with each other).

Brahm is the ‘Supreme Authority’ in creation inasmuch there is no Authority beyond Brahm. Brahm is the only Authoritative Being in creation. Brahm is the Authority that has the power and the authority which are inviolable and sacrosanct. The fact is that there is no ‘Authority’ other than Brahm in this creation—and that makes Brahm ‘supreme’.

It is also a fact that Maya (delusions) has no real existence. [Maya is an instrument in the hands of Brahm to exercise his authority over creation. It is Maya that helps Brahm to keep the wheel of creation rotating endlessly by keeping the creatures deluded and trapped. When the time comes for winding up the creation, Brahm exercises his ‘authority’ and removes the smokescreen of Maya. This smokescreen can also be voluntarily removed by Brahm-realised persons because they are themselves Brahm personified!] (44).

45. Wise ascetics realise that Maya is a voluntary creation of the Atma that resides in their inner-self.

[In other words, they realise that no one else is to blame for the web of delusions that they have created around themselves voluntarily. This is because their Atma is their truthful ‘self’, and it is this Atma that has created the Maya.]

However, this Maya and its negative and deluding effects are blocked by the knowledge of Brahm. It then appears only as a neutral entity that is as ineffective as an image or reflection seen in a mirror.

[In other words, those ascetics who are Brahm-realised are not affected by the negative influences of Maya. The latter seems to exist in this world because for the simple reason that the world exists, as without the Maya this world cannot exist. Maya and the artificial world go hand-in-hand; they co-exist. In other word, both the Maya and the world are imaginations of the mind; if the mind so decides, both would vanish. Maya has any relevance only till the time a man acknowledges the presence of the gross world—because the latter is a product of the former. But once he becomes enlightened enough to understand that the world is imaginary and therefore non-truth, it is a natural corollary that the relevance of the Maya is done away with. Instead of delusions, he begins to see the ‘truth’ everywhere. And this ‘truth’ is Brahm.

Therefore, for a Brahm-realised person Maya ceases to exist, and with its cessation the world also ceases to exist.

This is all there is to Maya's importance and influence; it does not go any further than this point. It does not affect the inner-self of the wise ascetic who is freed from its cunning tricks, who understands that if he so determines he can easily overcome both the delusions and artificiality created by his imaginative mind.

This is why Brahm-realised and self-realised ascetics become enlightened and empowered enough that they can see the secret 'truth' in the same world in which other ordinary men cannot!

The reflection of any object that is seen in a mirror appears to be as true and real as the object itself, leading to so perfect a delusion that a man who does not know the real situation would begin to believe, after sometime, that the reflection or the image seen in the mirror is the object itself. This man forgets that what he sees is simply a 'reflection or an image' for the simple reason that the medium of seeing the object under question is a 'mirror' that has the grand virtue of creating a perfect image of the real thing.

When a wise man sees an image of an object in a mirror he immediately knows that there surely must be the object somewhere in the vicinity. So he looks around to find it, and then he is able to have a sight of the real thing. Say, is it not foolish to run behind the water seen in a mirage during a hot summer afternoon in desert even if one comes across a real source of water close at hand?

Therefore, is it not foolish to run behind the mirage-like world seeking peace and happiness when one knows that it is imaginary and misleading, as well as transient and perishable, instead of attempting to realise the 'spiritual truth' that would bestow him with peace and happiness that are not only everlasting but have depth and profundity as well.

The 'image or the reflection' seen in a mirror is never the real thing though it appears to be so. Similarly, when the supreme Truth (the cosmic Consciousness revealed in the form of 'life' in this creation) is seen against the background of Maya, it appears in the form of the visible gross world. When the same Truth is seen with the eyes of wisdom and enlightenment, it appears in the form of Brahm. Again, while the term 'Brahm' refers to the Truth at the macro level of creation, the same Truth is referred to as the 'Atma' when considered at the micro level of existence.

Hence, to conclude, a Brahm realised man sees this world as a reflection or an image of Brahm. It is in the mirror of existence that he sees Brahm being reflected. Therefore, even if the world is removed Brahm would still be there—just like the case of an object remaining in place even if the mirror that reflects its image is removed from sight.] (45).

46. In this way, a wise, enlightened and Brahm-realised spiritual aspirant who has acquired a holistic and truthful knowledge of Brahm sees this world that physically appears to be separate and distinct from him. Internally, he never treats it as a separate entity. Rather, he treats this entire world as his own reflection.

[This is because the world is a visible manifestation of Brahm, and the viewer himself is Brahm personified. So in effect it means that the world is his personal image. Or, that there is no difference between his 'true self' and the 'truth of the world'. This implies that he is talking about the subtle aspects of the world rather than its gross aspects, for the subtle aspect is known as the Atma while the gross aspect is obviously caused by Maya, and therefore is not the reality. The subtle aspect of the viewer's own self and the rest of the creatures is the same divine entity known as the

Atma which is non-dual, and therefore they are the same, while the gross aspect is obviously different as each unit has its own gross features that are unique to it and different from the other unit.

For instance, if water is put into containers of different sizes, shapes and colours, none of them would ever change the basic nature, the basic qualities, the chemical formula etc. of water in the least. The water would always remain water irrespective of the vessel in which it is held.]

Verily, this is the great and the grand Truth that this great Upanishad proclaims. Amen! (46).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 20

Par-Brahm Upanishad/ Parbrahmo-panishad

This Upanishad is primarily classified as a Sanyas Upanishad as it emphasizes the role of Sanyas in Brahm-realisation, or spiritual enlightenment and awakening. It has twenty Mantras or verses.

It opens with sage Shaunak asking sage Pippalaad where the things of this creation were before the latter came into existence, and who is the Lord who created them. In his answer Pippalaad outlines the grand and magnificent virtues of the supreme transcendental Brahm. This Upanishad derives its name from this very fact.

The term 'Brahm' must be understood with a holistic perspective. It refers to the cosmic Consciousness that is responsible for this creation coming into being and acquiring life. From the cosmic perspective of creation, this Consciousness is called Brahm, and from the point of view of the individual unit of the same creation, i.e. at the microcosmic level, it is called the Atma. Consciousness is synonymous with life, and the term 'Pran' is also synonymous with life, though technically 'Pran' means the vital wind or air that is present inside the body of the individual creature. Hence, Brahm, Atma, Pran and Consciousness are synonymous with each other, and they all refer to the same divine entity that is at the core of creation and the quintessential truth of life in this creation.

Everything alive is therefore Brahm in that form. Indeed, all aspects of creation are representative of some aspect or facet of Brahm. The term 'Brahm' as envisioned in this Upanishad incorporates all the aspects of creation, and therefore Brahm is said to have various forms, known as the 'Paads' (limbs, aspects, facets, branches etc.) of Brahm much like we have branches of a tree or divisions and sections of a scripture. To understand the scripture fully we need to have a thorough knowledge of all its sections or divisions; to learn about the tree we must have a composite view of all its branches. Similarly, to learn about Brahm we must know all the Paads of Brahm.

In the first half, this Upanishad elucidates upon the various Paads (limbs, aspects, facets, views) of Brahm and their metaphysical significance. These Paads are

the following—the Tripaad Brahm, i.e. the three planes of existence in which Brahm exists, the Chatush Paad Brahm which corresponds to the four planes of existence, and the Panch Paad Brahm which pertains to the five divine aspects of Brahm. From the metaphysical angle they correspond to the various states of existence of consciousness, viz. the Jagrat state or the waking state, the Swapna state or the dreaming state, the Sushupta state or the deep sleep state, the Turiya state or the post-Sushupta state, and the Turiyateet state which is the super-conscious state of transcendental existence.

The ordinary living being known as the Jiva corresponds to the first three states of existence, and hence to the Tripaad Brahm. When the same Jiva becomes enlightened and self-realised he attains the Chatush Paad of Brahm, and finally when he becomes Brahm-realised he attains the Panch Paad of Brahm. To achieve these eclectic states of existence, the Jiva is advised to take recourse to the 8-fold path of Yoga (verse no. 2). In this context, one should refer to the Tripadvibhut Mahanarayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, which is included in this volume as Chapter no. 11.

Next comes the discussion about the importance and significance of the sacred thread (called the Yagyopavit or the Brahm Sutra) as well as the tuft of hair worn on the top of the head (called the Shikha) as symbols of Brahm. These concepts have been extensively dealt with in this Upanishad. They are of no real consequence if their true meaning is not understood and practiced in one's thoughts and actions (verse nos. 3, 6-11, 15-20). True sacred thread and tuft of hair is internal awakening and enlightenment about Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the inner-self as the pure Atma, and this Gyan (knowledge) itself is like the Agni (the sacred fire) as it burns all spiritual impurities of the aspirant, and renders him holy, divine and pure (verse nos. 12-14).

Finally, the Upanishad concludes that a wise spiritual aspirant should discard external paraphernalia of Sanyas (life of renunciation) such as the sacred thread and the tuft of hair on the head, and instead concentrate on meditating upon Brahm by employing the Mantra 'OM', which he should treat as a representative of his sacred thread as well as the tuft of hair, for attaining Mukti (liberation and deliverance)

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. Once, the learned sage Shaunak¹ approached the great sage Pippalaad² who was born in the line of sage Angiras, and sat down attentively before him. Then Shaunak asked—'Were all the things and objects that were created in this world present earlier in the subtle space of sky in the divine heaven known as Brahm-pur?'

[The term 'pur' means a place or dwelling. Hence, the 'Brahm-pur' refers to the subtle heart of the supreme creator known as Brahm, because it is from this heart of Brahm that the desire to create originated. Brahm, in the purest sense, has no form, and therefore no heart. Brahm is nothing but the formless cosmic Consciousness. But when the latter initiated the process of creation, it acquired a form, albeit a form that was extremely sublime and subtle as compared to the physical visible world that eventually came into existence. This most subtle form of Brahm is known as the 'Hiranyagarbha'—the self-illuminated and golden cosmic embryo that harboured the

entire creation in its 'garbh' or womb. It was the cosmic Consciousness that lent this egg its power to create something out of nothing. The Hiranyagarbha imagined the world and had a desire to give shape to this imagination. It had its heart focused on creation of this world. Hence it is said here that the things of creation had their origin in the Brahm-pur.]

How were they created by the supreme Creator? What are the renowned glories and divine virtues of the eternal Atma (the cosmic Consciousness known as the Parmatma, the Supreme Atma, the eternal cosmic Being known as Brahm) who created them? How did this Lord known as Vibhu (one who is almighty, eternal and all-pervading) create them, and then divided them or classified them into countless forms with myriad variations? In other words, who is this Great Lord who could do such stupendous things in a miraculous way?

Pippalaad replied—'The great knowledge of the supreme Brahm which I shall now narrate to you is indeed the truth. That 'truthful Being' empowers the different Gods and the vital winds known as Pran to perform their assigned functions (duties).

This Supreme Being lives in the 'Brahm-pur' (literally the city of Brahm), and he is honoured as being 'Viraj' (neutral or immune to the effects of Raja and other Gunas such as Sata and Tama; one who is immaculate and holy) and 'Nishkal' (one who has no taints, blemishes, blights, shortcomings and impurities; one who has no parts or divisions or fractions as he is immutable and an indivisible whole).

He is 'Shubhra' (one who is auspicious and holy) and 'Akshar' (imperishable and eternal). His glory, divinity and magnificence is supreme, unquestioned and beyond reproach.

He is called 'Nirmak' as he is the supreme controller and regulator of everything in creation; he is the one who had designed 'destiny' of all things in existence; he is the supreme cosmic astute architect of this creation.

He is like a Madhukar (the honey-bee) because he collects the best elements in creation, and gives the best to the world he creates and rears. [Like the honey-bee which collects nectar from an assortment of flowers, and then transforms it into honey for the benefit of the rest of the world, the supreme astute Creator known as Brahm collects numerous primary elements of creation which are useless in themselves, and then moulds them in accordance to his wishes to produce a lively and dynamic creation of an astounding variety that is so productive, magnificent and beautiful.]

He remains absolutely neutral and dispassionate in his divine abode, appearing to do nothing. [In other words, after he had finished completing the task of creation, he assumed the role of a neutral guardian and judge who would dispassionately control this creation from within. His neutrality and restraint were a necessity for impartial regulation of this creation, to reward those who were good and punish who were evil.]

[The following example—that only those who are fools get mentally and emotionally involved in doing deeds, then expecting results from them, and then either enjoying them or suffering from them—is cited to explain why the Supreme Being became neutral once he has finished the task of creation. In fact, even during the actual process of creation he was dispassionate. He created the world simply because the latter had to be created as it was the time for its coming into being. It was destined to be created because there were so many countless creatures who had not yet finished the cycle of birth and death depending upon the deeds that were done by them before the creation suddenly ended at the time of dooms-day. The various laws of Nature and metaphysics demanded that the creation be re-started because its sudden demise or end could not lead to a natural dissipation of energy and subsidence

of desires in a gradual manner. The abrupt end brought about a build-up of unspent energy and pent-up desires which would burst out nevertheless like the steam trapped inside the body of the pressure cooker would make the latter burst if it is not allowed to escape from the nozzle. Hence, the 'end' had to be reversed, and creation 'started afresh'. This translates into a new beginning, called the 'birth' of the creation.]

An ordinary Jiva (creature; living being) who is not wise and enlightened does so many deeds with the aim of attaining some goal in life in the world in which he currently lives, as well as in the world of after-life much like a farmer who toils in his field to get rewards that are commensurate with his efforts. [If he works hard and takes proper care of his field, he is rewarded with a good harvest; otherwise he is ruined.]

On the other hand, a wise man who is aware of the philosophy of 'Karma'³ (that the doing of deeds in the sense that one becomes mentally and emotionally involved in them, and expecting results from them, is the root cause for getting trapped in the cycle of birth and death, or for being re-born) does deeds, but he does them for his internal cleansing and as a means of his worship and service of the Lord.

[That is, a wise man does not hanker for material benefits from his efforts. He does everything like an ordinary man, but his approach to doing deeds is vastly different from the ordinary man who is ignorant of the philosophy of Karma. The theory of Karma and its consequences states that what a Jiva does is bound to have its effect on his destiny. The operating phrase is 'doing something', and if one does not get involved at the mental, intellectual, sentimental and emotional level in any deed done by the body, then this phrase does not apply to him. So no consequences accrue to a man who is not involved in doing deeds. But usually this is difficult to achieve. The general situation is that all the creatures are neck-deep involved in doing deeds and expecting some reward for their efforts. So, at the time of their death some residual deed is left to be done and some rewards are yet to be enjoyed. This in turn creates a situation when he wishes to take a new birth to fulfill his unaccomplished desires and enjoy the fruits of his efforts. In the new birth, the past cycle is repeated. In this way, the wheel of birth and death continues to rotate infinitely, and the Jiva remains trapped in it like the ox tied to the water-wheel. The only way to stop it is to stop doing deeds.]

But since the Jiva lives in a gross world that moves on the wheel of deeds and actions, it is not practically feasible for him not to do anything at all if he has to survive in this world. So the trick is not to get involved in the deeds done or actions taken by the body at the mental, intellectual, sentimental and emotional level. This absolves the creature from being accused of doing anything. So naturally he is freed from the cycle of deeds and their consequences. When the time comes for his shedding the gross body, his Atma, i.e. his true 'self' does not desire to come back again to do any left-over deeds or to enjoy any rewards; he does not even expect any rewards in the first place. This means that he is freed—i.e. he finds his Mukti.]

A wise man who understands the philosophy of Karma and wishes to get rid of all sorts of worldly delusions and temptations does deeds selflessly, and with a holistic approach towards doing them. Which wise and erudite man would be so foolish as to willingly allow himself to get entangled in the web of deeds and their ensnaring consequences if he is aware of the true way, the right and the auspicious of doing deeds (as outlined above)? In other words, no wise man would allow himself to be entangled in the snare of deeds and their consequences. He would choose to remain free from this grave spiritual fetter.

[This explains why the Supreme Being could remain dispassionate and maintain his neutrality inspite of not only creating this world himself but also actively participating in its upkeep.] (1).

[Note—¹Sage *Shaunak*—A detailed note on this sage is appended to Mundak Upanishad, Mundak 1, section 1, verse no. 3. This Upanishad is Chapter 2 of this volume.

²Sage *Pippalaad*—Similarly, a detailed note on this sage is appended to the Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1. This Upanishad is Chapter 1 of this volume.

³The *philosophy of Karma*—References of Upanishads dealing with the concept of deeds and actions:—

(i) Rig Veda's Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1.

(ii) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10; Canto 7, Section 21.

(iii) Shukla Yajur Veda = Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 49-60, 66; Niralambo-panishad, verse no. 11-12; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 4/3/33, 4/3/36, 4/4/1, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2, 14-16, etc.; Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 23-26; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4/2-3.

(iv) Krishna Yajur Veda = Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 13, 20-26; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12, Canto 2, verse no. 12, 48, Canto 4, verse no. 35; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 35; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 7, and Canto 6, verse no. 3; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 6; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20, and the whole of Canto 1, Valli 2 right up to Canto 2, Valli 3; Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 7; Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 67.

(v) Atharva Veda—Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 2, verse no. 12; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 2, verse no. 1; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 8, paragraph no. 14; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1.

The Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad describes the great spiritual rewards obtainine by an aspirant by doing selfless Karma or deed/service in its Mundak (Canto) 1, section 2, verse no. 12; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 2, verse no. 1.

The Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 67 describes succinctly how Karma or deeds and their consequences can be overcome.

The Varaaha Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48, and Canto 4, verse no. 35 describe the relationship between the deed, the doer and the cause.

The Adhyatma Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition describes the concept of doing deeds and its effect on the spiritual liberation or bondage of the creature in fine detail in its verse nos. 49-60.

The Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 13 asserts that the supreme transcendental Brahm or the quintessential spiritual Truth of creation as well as Mukti or liberation and deliverance is not possible by doing various deeds in this mortal world. This same idea is endorsed in Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 35 which asserts that deeds or Karma do not provide the Atma of the creature with liberation and deliverance from this world but it is Gyan (truthful knowledge of the spiritual truths) that do.

The 'Karma Chakra' or the giant wheel of deeds and their consequences has been described in the Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 6, verse no. 3. The three Paths followed by a creature according to the deeds done by him are referred to in Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 4/7. The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 48 describes how one can become free from the fetters created by 'deeds'. The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 11-12 describes the concept of Karma. The Sarwasaar Upanishad of

Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 6 describes the concept of how and why the creature becomes the doer of deeds

What happens to ignorant people after death is explained in Brihad Aranyak 4/4/1. The Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse nos. 23-26 defines what constitutes of true 'Karma Yoga'. The Mandal Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, 2/4/2-3 describes the philosophy of Deeds.

The Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 8, paragraph no. 14, states that there cannot be any Kaarya without a Kaaran.]

2. [The sage now narrates how the Pran, literally meaning vital factor of life that is a synonym of the consciousness present inside the body of all living beings, and which represents the supreme cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, moves inside the body of the creature to keep the latter alive and active. Intertwined in this discussion are the various states of existence of the consciousness. It is then outlined how the Jiva, the living being who personifies Brahm, is able to attain Brahm-hood by following the 8-fold path of Yoga.]

The Pran, the life-bearing vital wind or air that sustains life in the body of the living being known as the Jiva, is regarded as being synonymous with 'consciousness'. This 'consciousness' is a universal constant factor of the living creation, an entity or factor without which there would be no existence of life.

This Pran moves in the body of the creature through the four chief Naadis (literally tubular ducts in the body through which life or consciousness flows inside the body of the creature). These Naadis are four in number and have the following names—Rama, Arama, Ichha, and Purnarbhava.

When the Pran gets tired or weary of wandering between the Rama and Arama Naadis during the two states of existence of the creature, such as the Jagrat or the waking state and the Swpana or the dreaming state respectively, tired like a kite or an eagle flying high in the sky, it (the Pran, the consciousness) wants to take rest. For this, the Pran enters the Sushupta or deep sleep state (which comes after the dreaming state is crossed, and is the state of existence when the Pran need not bother about moving anywhere, but rest blissfully).

The Pran, which is a personified form of the divine Lord (because it infuses life and consciousness into the otherwise lifeless, inert and inane gross body) moves unhindered in the body of the living being through the medium (channel; route) of the three Naadis representing the three states of existence of consciousness. [These three states are Jagrat or waking, Swapna or dreaming, and Sushupta or deep sleep states respectively.]

The Pran or life consciousness moves (pervades; pulsates) throughout the brightly illuminated sky ('Hiranya-maye Para-kash') represented by the inner-self of the creature like the eagle or kite flying in the sky that is brightly lit during the daytime.

[The creature is compared to the kite that leaves its perch on the ground and flies high in the sky brightly lit during the daytime. By evening or sunset it gets tired and comes back to its nest to rest. The Pran or the consciousness remains active in the world during the waking state which is the gross level of existence and corresponds to the kite remaining close to the ground. Then the Pran begins to imagine things just like a man sees dreams. Even during dreams the Pran or the consciousness cannot find rest because it is as active as it was during the actual involvement in the world during the waking state. The only difference is that now, during the dreaming state, this involvement is at the subtle level of existence. This second state of dreams is

compared to the kite flying high in the sky, because now the kite has left the gross physical surface of the earth and reached the subtle world of the sky, the sky which is illuminated by the rays of the sun. Obviously, the vision the kite gets from a high level in the sky would be broader and vast as compared to the limited area it could see when nearer to the surface of the earth. So, when the consciousness begins to dream, it conjures up a vastly fascinating world which is widely different from the reality of existence.

But none of these two states give the Jiva, the living being represented by the Pran or the consciousness present inside his body, the rest and peace that he desires to have. Therefore he moves to the third state of existence called the deep sleep state or the Sushupta state.

[Previously only two Naadis, i.e. the Rama and the Arama, were mentioned through which the Pran moved in the body. Now, the third Naadi named 'Iccha' is cited. It is through this Naadi that the Pran moves to the third state of Sushupta which is the state of deep sleep. The word 'Iccha' literally means to have a wish or desire. Hence, when the Pran 'wishes or desires' to rest, it moves through this Iccha Naadi.]

When the Pran (consciousness; the subtle 'living' dimension of the creature) enters this third state of existence known as the Sushupta, it finds rest and peace, which incidentally is its natural state. Hence, it is deemed to have attained its primary form—of being at complete rest, peace, serenity and tranquility; of being fully blissful.

These three stages of the Pran (life and consciousness) are representative of the three aspects of Brahm, called the 'Tripaad Brahm'. [This is because of two reasons—(i) all living beings pass through these three stages in life, i.e. they wake up, they dream, and they sleep soundly, and (ii) the fact that all living beings are visible images of the invisible Brahm. So the three stages of the living world are three dimensions of existence of Brahm for all practical purposes.]

In spite of flying high in the illuminated sky, the creature continues to fall and get trapped in the valley represented by these three stages. [The word 'creature' here refers to the Atma because it represents the living being's true self, and the 'illuminated sky' refers to the inherent wisdom that the Atma possesses. The 'falling from the sky' is a figure of speech to indicate demotion of the Atma from its exalted stature to that of creature ensnared in the affairs of the world and tied in fetters to the shackles of the mundane world consisting of a cycle of birth and death. It refers to the instance of the high-flying bird who can easily avoid getting trapped by a bird-catcher's net if it is not tempted by greed and overcome by ignorance, for then it voluntarily gets ensnared. The bird is greedy to eat the bait, and it is unaware that this bait is laid out to catch it rather than to feed it. Say then, who is to blame for the bird's ill-fate and precarious condition except the bird itself? Similarly, who is to be blamed for the creature getting trapped in the world other than the creature himself?]

Just like a man named Devdutta who is beaten by a stick and wounded while he was asleep gets so terrified at the prospect of going back to sleep again after he wakes up, a wise man who is 'awakened' or enlightened about the truth of existence, about the truth of the world (that it is false and ensnaring for the soul), and the truth about his own self (that it is eternally free and the quintessential consciousness known as the Atma which trapped in the gross body and unnecessarily suffering due to its ignorance) by means of studying of the scriptures or when taught by the Guru (spiritual advisor), he too would shun falling in the trap of this gross world and its equally gross mundane life characterized by the three states of existence in which the Pran (consciousness) oscillates as narrated above.

[Devdutta is an imaginary man who is beaten while asleep. The pain is so great that when he wakes up he becomes paranoid of sleep, and would be terrified at the prospect of falling asleep lest he would be subjected to more beating by his enemies. Similarly, a wise man who comes to realise that all the sufferings he is being subjected to in this world are his own making, and the cause is that he has forgotten about the exalted nature of his 'self' known as the Atma which is nothing but pure consciousness and eternally free and blissful, and has instead treated the gross body as his identity. Once he has become enlightened about the reality of his Atma and the falsehood of the world, he would certainly not do anything that would result in the Atma getting trapped in the snare of delusions that are so characteristic of this world. He would be terrified by the thought of taking birth in this world again because he has closely experienced the horrors of this world during his current life. So he would endeavour to do anything he can to ensure that he would not have to come back again. In other words, he would strive to obtain his final Mukti or Moksha, meaning attaining spiritual liberation and deliverance or spiritual emancipation and salvation. Like the man called Devdutta, he would be paranoid of this world and terrified of the prospects of getting involved in its affairs.]

Therefore, such an awakened and enlightened man would not allow himself to get trapped in the cycle of deeds and their consequences. He would shun doing either auspicious deeds or inauspicious deeds; he would keep a safe distance from both doing good deeds or bad deeds in order to achieve any worldly objectives because he knows that each deed would produce its own effects, and once he allows himself to fall prey to the temptation of doing certain deed to obtain certain objective he would be sucked in the vortex of deeds and consequences from which it would be almost impossible to extricate later on.

He knows that doing deeds with emotional involvement in them and with expectation of results from these deeds would be a sufficient ground to automatically trap him in the world from where it would be difficult for him to retrieve himself later on. So he maintains his dispassionate and detached attitude even if he is bound to do anything in this world due to exigencies of life. In other words, he does not allow his Atma to get involved in the deeds done by his body. This is practically possible if he does not allow his mind and heart to be involved in the deeds done by the body—i.e. if he does deeds dispassionately, with total detachment, and without expecting any rewards or results from doing deeds. He does them as and when they come along.

[Earlier in this verse, the example of the bird flying high is cited. This bird either gets tired by continuous flying during the day in search of prey, swooping down on it when sighted, and running away from its enemies in hot pursuit, or it gets trapped by the bird-catcher's net in its greed for the bait laid by the cunning bird-catcher. On the other hand, had the bird not wished to catch a prey, or had it remained contented with whatever it had, it would have remained calmly gliding in the sky and returned to its nest at the end of the day instead of getting tired by endlessly pursuing its prey or dodging its enemies, or getting trapped by the bird-catcher's snare. Likewise, a wise man who remains contented and fulfilled is always at peace with himself. He accepts whatever comes his way; he does deeds according to the necessities and exigencies of circumstances without getting unduly perturbed or agitated about the deed and its result.]

Such a wise and enlightened man finds comfort, happiness, peace and contentedness in any situation he lives in just like an innocent child who feels comfortable and happy in any toy it finds to play with without having preference for any particular thing.

[He is not perturbed and affected at all by the troubles and tribulations of the physical world which he faces and interacts with during his waking state. He is not at all concerned with what he imagines in his dreams; he does not wish that what he sees in his dreams impact his waking life. And of course he remains peaceful like one sleeping soundly during the deep sleep state. In other words, his composure and poise is perpetual and steady.]

A wise, enlightened and self-realised spiritual aspirant realises the divine nature of his truthful 'self' known as the Atma—that it is a fount and an embodiment of spiritual illumination and bliss, that it is as radiant and splendid as the brilliant rays of the bright sun shining in the otherwise dark sky—when he is enlightened about it by the teaching of his moral preceptor and teacher (known as the Guru) as well as by the study of the scriptures. With this knowledge, he is able to attain the citadel of bliss, felicity and beatitude. In other words, he becomes aware of the exalted stature of his 'true self' known as the Atma; he realises that his Atma is a personification of the supreme Atma known as Brahm, the Atma that is as brilliant and splendid as the celestial sun; he realises that this Atma is free from the countless blights and blemishes that are hallmarks of everything else in this gross creation. He discovers to his extreme delight that the genes of divinity and holiness are running through his system, and that he is no ordinary mortal creature squirming in misery and filth, but is an exalted being who is eternal, graceful and divine. He therefore has nothing more to achieve or claim.

He thus exults at this grand discovery of his own 'self', and with it he begins to radiate a divine spiritual halo that resembles the shine of the sun in the sky. He is so exhilarated and ecstatic that he indeed becomes a personification of eternal bliss that characterizes the Atma. Such a person is deemed to have realised the Parmatma, the supreme Atma known as Brahm, and he feels ever contented in the supreme bliss that this realisation brings to him as he understands that his own Atma is the supreme transcendental Brahm present in his inner-being as his 'true self'.

Auspiciousness and divinity are the characteristic virtues of Ishwar, the Supreme Being, and when this Ishwar is revealed inside one's own being, his own inner-self, it is obvious and natural that corresponding virtues of greatness, grandness, divinity, holiness and sublimity sprout in the inner-self of the realised person. This makes his Chitta (mind and sub-conscious) extremely happy and ever contented. When this state of enlightenment is experienced by him, he relishes it, he enjoys it, he exults in it, and he remains steady in it. He literally wishes to remain cocooned in the shell of bliss and contentedness that comes with self-realisation (much like an oyster that lives peacefully within its shell).

It is like the case of a man tired of the toil and torments of this physical world of his waking state going to sleep and seeing a pleasant dream where he lives a life of happiness and bliss. He would prefer to remain dreaming rather than waking up to the harsh realities of a world ridden with uncountable miseries and grief. So, when a person realises the truth of his 'self' which is blissful and contented, and which is equivalent to the state in which Brahm exists, he experiences the bliss that comes with knowing the Atma. He then realises the futility of his engagement in the world, doing various deeds and pursuing their results which snatch him of his peace, serenity and tranquility.

Even as a caterpillar easily migrates from one twig to another, a wise man easily transmits his inner-self from the symbolic physical state of existence in this gross material world where he is surrounded and tormented by its inherent miseries and problems to the symbolic world of dreams which give him peace and rest. That is,

though outwardly he may be living in the world and going about his routine life in an ordinary way, internally he remains aloof and distanced from everything surrounding him in this physical world. Thus he gets internal peace and stability inspite of being surrounded by tribulations and upheaval of the world that are marked by miseries and instability.

He acquires the ability to live in any state he wishes, whether it is the Jagrat, the Swapana or the Sushupta state. In other words, he can live in this world, he can dream and still remain wise, enlightened and fully self-realised. He is deemed to have mastered the art of Samadhi in a holistic manner. During this state of Samadhi, a man may be physically wide awake but he is as good as sleeping soundly in as much as he registers nothing of the gross and physical world in which he lives.

[Samadhi is a spiritual state of transcendental bliss obtained when one has accessed the super-consciousness. It is a trance-like state when the person is unaware of the surrounding world. He might be wide awake in the physical world at the physical plane of existence, but internally he is lost in deep meditation and contemplation. He might go about his daily routine but remains lost in his thoughts. It is not a mental disorder but a state of transcendental existence of consciousness.]

In this way, his own 'self' becomes one with the supreme 'Self'; his Atma becomes one with the Parmatma or Brahm. Or it can be said that his Atma becomes a personification of Brahm. Such a wise and enlightened man does not have to abandon his body to realise Brahm—Brahm rather lives in him; he becomes an image of the blissful and peaceful transcendental Brahm.

Now, if one is not able to attain this eclectic state of existence that makes him self and Brahm realised, that makes him experience the Atma and Brahm and their attendant bliss and peace first hand by listening to and studying of the scriptures alone, and is unable to find his final Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance), then he should take the help of Yoga with its eight branches or limbs. This is known as 'Kapaal-ashtak' process because it involves practicing all the eight steps of Yoga (meditation) in order to make his Pran (vital wind or air) rise up to his skull where he experiences extreme thrill and ecstasy, and finally escaping of this Pran through the Brahm-Randhra, which is the hair-like slit in the cranium, into the outer atmosphere to provide the practitioner of Yoga his final Mukti from the bondage of the physical gross body.

[The eight-fold path of Yoga, or the eight steps of doing Yoga comprehensively are the following—Yam, Niyam, Aasan, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharna, Dhyan and Samadhi².]

They should be employed to wash off all the taints and impurities of the inner-self and attain the knowledge of Brahm. The Atma lives in a docile, humble, inactive, un-awakened and un-aroused form in the subtle heart of the creature like an undeveloped, flacid or withered breast, and it is rejuvenated and awakened during the practice of the Kapaal-ashtak Yoga like a fully developed, fleshy, rounded and robust breast. It then rises up and blooms like the flower of the plantain tree. It is the path that leads to the auspicious Ishwar or the Lord known as Brahm. That is, it is the path that leads to self-realisation and experiencing of the cosmic Consciousness with its magnificent glories and extreme bliss in the inner-self of the aspirant. It is also called Indra Yoni or Veda Yoni.

[The Atma is called 'Indra Yoni' because it is the Atma that inspires and motivates the organs of the body of the creature to act and do things in this world. It is the Atma that harbours the desire to do deeds and then get involved doing them and enjoying their results. This is why it is called the 'yoni' or the womb. Should the

Atma decide that it does not want to get involved in the world, it would not inspire the organs of the body, called the 'Indris', to get involved in the world and its activities.

It is also called the 'Veda Yoni' as it is the Atma that inspires one to follow the path laid down by the scriptures known as the Vedas.]

In the aforesaid manner, one who contemplates and meditates upon the Ishwar in his lotus-like heart rises above the mundane considerations of one thing being auspicious, righteous, noble and good, and the other not being so. He never gets entangled in any kind of deeds, whether they are auspicious, noble and holy, or are not so.

[A spiritually enlightened and wise person remains dispassionate towards all kinds of deeds and their results. He becomes an epitome of the virtues of equanimity, neutrality and detachment. Even while he appears to be doing some deed in the physical world, his internal 'self' known as the Atma is absolutely unconcerned by what the gross body of his does.]

Who is that Ishwar who lives in the lotus-like heart? Well, he is the one who bestows all the other Gods with their happiness and joys. He lives in the inner-self of all living beings, and therefore knows everything, including the hidden thoughts, emotions, ideas and intentions of all. He is all alone; he is serene; he does not have company; he does not take sides; he is unpartisan and aloof. He is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness. He is the primal Purush, the Viraat Purush who is the all-pervading and invisible almighty macrocosmic Lord from whom the creation is revealed.

He is the supreme transcendental Brahm that is known as 'Pranav Hans'—i.e. he is represented by the cosmic ethereal Consciousness known as Pranav, as well as by the divine bird Swan which is regarded as an epitome of purity and wisdom. But he is not the 'Pran Hans'—i.e. he is not the divine Swan that is used as a metaphor for the Prans known as the vital winds or airs present in their physical dimension inside the body of the creature in the form of breath and other winds that flow inside the physical gross body and keep it alive. [In other words, Brahm is the pure cosmic Consciousness that is much higher in stature than the vital airs known as Pran which infuse and sustain life in this creation, though this Consciousness is also responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the creation. The vital winds would not be able to do anything if there is no consciousness in the body of the creature. This is proved when a man becomes paralyzed in a single organ—the Pran present in the body is unable to keep the concerned organ active when the 'consciousness' decides to leave it.]

The Pranav or Brahm is also known as the Jiva, the individual living being. That is, there is no difference between the supreme transcendental Brahm representing the cosmic Consciousness and the truthful identity of the living being which is his Atma, his soul and true 'self'.

[In other words, Brahm is the cosmic, subtle and sublime Divinity that is represented by the cosmic Consciousness known as Pranav. This Pranav produces the cosmic sound called Naad, which in turn is represented by the monosyllabic word OM. The same Brahm is revealed as the Jiva, the living being, in the form of his truthful identity known as the Atma. This Atma is also known as Hans, the pure and immaculate soul of the creature.

This Brahm is not the physical air which is broadly known as Pran, but is the 'consciousness' known as the Atma that is at the core of everything in this living world. Brahm is the enigmatic and esoteric divine entity that is synonymous with life and consciousness in this creation, and therefore all entities that have life are

synonyms of Brahm. But it must be remembered that Brahm is a term applied to that aspect of 'consciousness' that has a cosmic, subtle, sublime and ethereal dimension, rather than a gross and physical one that is confined to this physical gross world.]

Brahm is 'Pranav' because it is the cosmic Consciousness that uniformly permeates each corner of creation, and this Consciousness generates the cosmic sound known as Naad which is recognized and accessed by the means of the word 'OM', which is itself a sound. In other words, Brahm has its manifested sound form as OM. Therefore we deduce that OM, being a word, is a representative of Brahm or Pranav. It is a name assigned to the formless and invisible entity known as the cosmic Consciousness represented by the terms Brahm as well as Pranav. Just like the Jiva (living being) having a particular name assigned to him, OM is a specific term assigned to Pranav and Brahm.

Brahm, who is the eternal and primary Lord, is also manifested as the Jiva, the living being. How a person who knows this esoteric secret can ever agree to accept that there is difference or some degree of distinction or separation between Brahm and the Jiva because he is convinced that they are one and the same?

He never imagines that there is a difference between Brahm and the Jiva³; he is convinced that both the Jiva and Brahm are in reality the same Consciousness existing in two different planes—with the Jiva symbolizing the grosser aspect of creation and Brahm standing for the subtler aspect of creation (2).

[Note—¹The various states of existence of consciousness have been referred to in verse no. 5 of the present Upanishad, and they have been called the four and five Paads of Brahm.

These states have also been explained in the following two Upanishads of this volume—(i) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 1-2 which is Chapter no. 13, and (ii) Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, paragraph no. 6 which is Chapter no. 15.

The various aspects of Pran, the vital wind, have been elucidated upon in Chapter 16 which is the Annapurna Upanishad, in a note appended to its Canto 3, verse no. 10.

²The concept of Yoga : For the study of this Upanishad, the terms mentioned in the eight steps of Yoga are briefly describes as follows—

(i) Yam*—broadly meaning self restraint and it covers such virtues as non-violence (Ahinsa), honesty and truthfulness (Stya), abhorring theft (Asteya), abstinence, celibacy and detachment from passions (Brahmacharya), and non-accumulation and non-possession (Aparigraha).

(ii) Niyam*—or observance of principles or codes of conduct in a religious pursuit. Such as having good habits and contentment, observing austerities and penances, self-study of scriptures, following a righteous, virtuous and noble way of life etc.

According to Skanda Puran, the 'Yam and Niyam' mentioned above are ten, and they have been described in Skanda Puran in these words:-

सत्यं क्षमाऽऽर्जवं ध्यानमांशं स्वमहिंसनम् ॥ दमः प्रसादो माधुर्यं मृदुतेति यमा दश ।
शौचं स्नानं तपो दानं मौने ज्याध्ययनं व्रतम् ॥ उपोषणो पस्थदण्डौ दशौ ते नियमाः स्मृताः ॥
(स्कन्दपु०, ब्रा० ध० मा० ५/१९-२१)

The ten 'Yams' are—truthfulness, forgiveness, simplicity, Dhyan (meditation, concentration of the mind), lack of cruelty (or presence of compassion and mercy), forsaking violence, restraint of mind and sense organs, pleasant demeanors and sweet towards all).

The ten 'Niyams' are—cleanliness/ablution, bath (purification of body), Tapa (austerities, penances, sufferings), alms and charities, keeping silence, Yagya (sacrifices, religious rituals), self study, observance of vows, keeping fasts, celibacy. (Skanda Puran, Bra. Dha. Ma. 5/19-21).

*The 10 Yams and 10 Niyams—These have been described in (i) the Varaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 5, verse nos 11-14; and (ii) the Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, sections 1-2.

(iii) Aasan—the various postures of the body adopted while doing Yoga or meditation. This is the physical aspect of Yoga. The various postures are designed to free the body from toxins, and they calm down the body as well as the mind which is trained to focus on Brahm or Atma, which is pure and infinite consciousness and a fount of light and enlightenment, instead of wandering aimlessly and getting entangled in a web of miseries and confusions represented by this world. Some of the Upanishads that describe the various Aasans are the following—(i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 35-52 describes seventeen Aasans; Mandal Brahmin, Brahman 1, section 1, verse no. 5. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Varaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 15-17; Yog Kundali, Canto 1, verse nos. 5-6; Yog Tattva, verse no. 29; Yog Shikha, Canto 1, verse no. 84. (iii) Sam Veda = Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-13. (iv) Atharva Veda = Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 3; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 87.

(iv) Pranayam—the control of the life-giving fresh breath or the vital wind force of life called Pran. It helps remove distractions and agitations of the mind, removes the various toxins present in the blood, opens up clogged veins and arteries, relaxes the nerves, and ultimately helps to elevate both the body and the mind. It activates and re-energies the battery of the body. The importance of Pranayam in Yoga can never be fully emphasised because it is the main tool of Yoga. Some of the Upanishads describing the process of Pranayam are the following—(i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, 2/53, 2/92-120. (ii) Sam Veda = The entire Canto 5-6 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad; Yoga Chudamani. (iii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya, verse nos. 21-22, 66-76, Dhyana Bindu, Yoga Kundali, Canto 1, verse nos. 19-62, Yoga Tattva, Yogshikha. (iv) Atharva Veda = Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 5, verse nos. 2-4; Canto 1, section 6, verse nos. 1-5; and Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 1-13; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 87.

(v) Pratyahar—this is the state of withdrawal of the mind from agitations caused by the stimuli-inputs reaching it from the five sensory organs of perception of the body, which act like radars collecting various information from the outside world. With the lack of inputs, i.e. the radar going blank, the mind does not have to bother itself about the output, which is the control of the organs of action. Hence, it finds time and energy to relax and contemplate and ponder upon other more important matters of life such as the spiritual and ethereal rather than spending its energy in the humdrum, routine work of the world. The entire Canto 7 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme. Refer also to Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 8 which describes five types of Pratyahars.

(vi) Dharna—it means training of the mind to focus on one point; it is concentration of the mind as opposed to its constant state of being in a flux, always volatile and restless. It helps sharpen the intellect and empowers it with tremendous potentials like the rays of laser —precise, incisive, sharp, powerful, effective and surgical in nature. It also refers to firm conviction, belief and faith in the chosen path. The entire Canto 8 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme. Refer also to Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 9 which describes three types of Dharnas.

(vii) Dhyana—uninterrupted contemplation and meditation without an object used as a medium to concentrate the mind. The intention here is to heighten awareness of the pure-self and to establish oneness with the macro-soul of the cosmos. It results in the achievement of calmness, peace and tranquility. The practical benefit in life is the calmness and serenity achieved by a seeker/aspirant during the process of Dhyana, and this calmness and tranquility spills over into all other aspects of life, thereby strengthening the emotional, intellectual and spiritual fabric of the creature. The entire Canto 9 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme.

Refer also to Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 10 which describes two types of Dhyanas.

(viii) Samadhi—it is the final step and final stage of meditation, and it is a trance-like state of existence wherein the creature remains virtually awake in this world, but on a subtle plane he remains totally oblivious of the existence of the surrounding gross world. This Samadhi leads to bliss and happiness. In this state, the seeker/aspirant merges himself with the supreme Self, which is the real Truth and absolute Reality. Such people become truly enlightened souls who have developed union with their parent, the Brahm. The entire Canto 10 of Jabal Darshan Upanishad of Sam Veda is devoted to this theme. Refer also to Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 11 which describes Samadhi in a succinct way.

All these limbs of Yoga work together in unison. The 1st five steps are mainly concerned with tuning the body and mind leading to its focus on the truth in the 6th and the 7th steps. The integration of the body, mind and soul into one spiritual whole, and removing of the barrier between the microcosmic Atma/soul of the individual and the macrocosmic Atma/soul of the cosmos is achieved, resulting in ultimate felicity and beatitude of the 8th step.

³The concept of non-duality between Brahm and Jiva has been established in a number of Upanishads, viz. Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 5; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 70, 73; Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 56-58; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 76-80.]

3. For a truly Brahm and self realised person, the external symbols of Brahm such as the Yagyopavit (the sacred thread) and the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the head) are represented by and replaced by his internal awareness of the 'truth' as well as the purity and holiness of his inner-self.

A Brahmin (i.e. a learned person) who is desirous of Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation) should wear the internal form of the sacred thread and the tuft of hair rather than their external variety.

The householder is expected to wear the external forms of the sacred thread and the tuft of hair.

[These two statements clearly imply that the internal form of sacred thread and tuft of hair is prescribed for Sanyasis or those who have entered the last stage of life and have renounced all attachments with the world (household). The wearing of the sacred thread is important only as long as a person is not enlightened enough to remain focused on the truth of Brahm and his pure self. It merely serves to remind him that the Lord resides in his own being as the Atma, and that by accepting to wear the thread he has consented to follow the path of righteousness and auspiciousness, and therefore he should not do anything to the contrary. But this thread become redundant and superficial once enlightenment dawns upon the wearer and he remains focused on the thoughts that are truthful and holy. It is just like the case of a student needing to revise a subject till the time he has not mastered it, and after that he no longer needs any revision. It is also like the case of person needing to use soap and water only till the time his hands are unclean, for he does not need them if the hands are absolutely clean.

A householder is constantly engaged in the daily grind of life and the wearing of the sacred thread reminds him to be careful in his deeds and actions. For a Sanyasi this is not applicable as he has matured enough to be careful in a natural way.]

The internal form of the sacred thread and tuft of hair are not visible like their external counterparts. They are the ones which can help the spiritual aspirant attain Brahm which is also invisible. [External symbols of Brahm are gross, while internal

symbols are subtle. The latter are the nearest analogue of Brahm, and therefore it is easier to access Brahm with their help.] (3).

[Note—Refer *Pahupata Brahm Upanishad*, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 16-17.

Yagyopavit—References—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda = *Brahmo-panishad*, verse no. 4-15. (ii) Atharva Veda = *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 14-19, 27; *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse nos. 3-20; *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse nos. 17, 79, 80-82, 84-85, 88-89. The Mantra dedicated to the Yagyopavit is narrated in *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse no. 37.

The *Yagyopavit* or the 'sacred thread' is given to a Hindu child as part of his baptism rituals. It is a constant reminder to him as he grows up into an adult that he has certain moral obligations to live up to and certain basic standards that he must observe at all costs. He must be constantly on the vigil not to do anything that would undermine the authority and sanctity of this thread which acts as virtual string binding him to the vows of righteousness, auspiciousness and nobility in thought and action. It is his 'sacred' duty to uphold this path as laid down in the scriptures to which he had promised to adhere to at the time of his initiation or baptism. If he does not obey these rules and violates them in his life then what is the use of his wearing the Yagyopavit in the first place? It would be deceitful and cheating one's self. This is precisely the point here. The sacred thread is only an external sign indicating that the wearer occupies a noble stature amongst men, but if he does not live up to the expectations from a man who wears this insignia of holiness and purity then he is only committing a grave sin as he is defiling the very principles upon which the institution of the sacred thread is based.

From the metaphysical and spiritual point of view, the Yagyopavit represents the supreme Brahm. When it is worn by a wise person it serves as a constant reminder to him that he is a personification of Brahm, and therefore he must never do anything that demeans this holy and divine institution. This philosophical interpretation of the sacred thread is the central theme in the present *Par Brahm Upanishad* which asserts unequivocally that the sacred thread is a symbol of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the universal Truth of creation.

The Yagyopavit consists of three interwoven threads, and it is therefore known as the *Trisutra*. It is worn around the neck or slung diagonally across the chest, from the left shoulder to the right side of the hip bone. The word *Sutra* in this term has great metaphysical meaning which has been described in the Atharva Veda's *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse nos. 83-85.

The sacred thread is a symbol that stands at once for (i) Brahm represented by Pranav, the cosmic vibration or ethereal sound encapsulated in the word OM, (ii) for the Atma that is also known as Hans, the divine Swan, (iii) for the Fire, and (iv) for Gyan or truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment about the Truth of the self and Brahm. Refer: Atharva Veda = *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 14-19, 27; *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse nos. 3-14, 16-17.

The sacred thread symbolizes all the subtle aspects of creation, called the Tattwas. These Tattwas are variously said to number ninety-six, twenty-seven, nine etc., and the sacred thread encompasses all of them. It is, in fact, a representative of Brahm in entirety. These facts are explained in detail in the Atharva Veda's *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 5, and *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 14-15.

Great stress is laid in the Upanishads in getting deep into the hidden meaning of all things visible and understanding their essence and truth rather than being deluded by their external features. This is very evident in the case of the sacred thread where the Upanishad emphasizes that merely wearing the physical kind of the thread to get respect and material benefits in this world by being called a Brahmin (as they are the ones who wear it and are respected in society for their wisdom and high birth) is equivalent to cheating one's own self, and it would only lead to hell and give no real benefits. All external signs or symbols of Brahm-hood can hoodwink the world, but

not the inner-self which does not benefit by external show of religiosity and holiness if its profound principles are not imbodyed by the spiritual aspirant. Thus, it is better to discard the external sacred thread and wear it symbolically in the inner-self by understanding who or what is Brahman and Atma. These facts are expressly asserted in *Par Brahman Upanishad*, verse nos. 3-4, 6-20; *Pashupat Brahman Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 14-21, 26-27.

The *Shikha* is a tuft of hair on the top of the head. The metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of the *Shikha* has been explained along with that of the sacred thread called the *Yagyopavit* in the present *Par Brahman Upanishad*, in its verse nos. 3, 5-20.

Its verse no. 13 says that the *Shikha* is as powerful and potent as the fire element. Verse no. 12 says that it is a symbol of Gyan or truthful knowledge. Verse no. 5 asserts that the *Shikha* stands for Karma (rituals, because it was an integral part for the performance of various sacred rites) as well as the knowledge of Brahman, and it also represents *Hans* (Brahman). This is because the area of the body where the *Shikha* is sported, viz. the top of the head, is also the site of Brahman as the latter had entered the body of the newly formed living being through the *Brahman-Randhra*, the hair-like slit on the top of the cranium, at the time of creation. Refer *Aiteryio Upanishad* of *Rig Veda*.]

4. The real form of Brahman is not ascertainable. It neither can be defined with the term 'Satya' (truth) or with the term 'Asatya' (non-truth). It is neither different from either the Satya or the Asatya, nor is it a combination of both. [This idea is expressed by the Vedas when they proclaim that Brahman is 'Neti-Neti'—i.e. it is neither this nor that; it is not this, it is definitely not what it is being defined as. Therefore, Brahman is a term which incorporates all that exists in creation, the Satya as well as the Asatya, for the simple reason that nothing exists that is not Brahman.]

Brahman is such a unique entity that it cannot be said to have any parts or fractions or separable units, nor can it be said that it does not have units or parts because it is one indivisible whole. Similarly, it is neither something in between¹.

Hence, only till the time one does not become aware of the truthful meaning and nature of Brahman that it is indefinable and incomprehensible, and that it is revealed in the form of the sublime and subtle Atma (i.e. the pure consciousness that resides invisibly in every living being or all the living aspects of creation) does one remain mired in ignorance and delusions about the truth of Brahman.

When one becomes enlightened about the truth and essence of Brahman, he discards all attempts to ascertain and know Brahman by its external and visible forms. Everything except the 'Truth' is false and impersonation. [This is why the external sacred thread and tuft of hair is to be abandoned by a self-realised Brahmin as asserted in verse no. 3.]

Since the real Truth that is 'absolute' can only be one and not more than one, it follows that Brahman, being the 'Absolute Truth' is always one and not more than one—i.e. Brahman is non-dual. Conversely, since Brahman is non-dual and universal in this creation, it follows that Brahman is also the 'Absolute Truth'. Either way, Brahman is not falsehood! (4).

[Note—¹The great paradoxes of Brahman have been outlined in the following Upanishads of the Atharva Veda: *Pashupat Brahman Upanishad*, Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse no. 43; *Atma Upanishad*, verse no. 31.]

5. Brahman having five Paads or aspects, known as the 'Panch Paad Brahman', is the one that is all-encompassing and all-including. Nothing escapes Brahman or falls outside its jurisdiction or purview. [The five aspects of Brahman are represented by the five states

of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or the deep sleep state, the Turiya state or the earlier state of transcendental existence that comes beyond the Sushupta, and the Turiya-teet or the higher echelons of transcendental existence which is the climax of one's spiritual achievement.]

Brahm is present both at the macrocosmic level of existence as well as the microcosmic level. It is therefore all-pervading, omnipresent, all-incorporating and all-encompassing. It is present uniformly in the entire creation, revealing itself in the body of the individual creature known as the Jiva as the latter's Atma, the 'pure conscious soul' (refer the last stanzas of verse no. 2).

In the form of the Jiva, Brahm lives at four symbolic places—viz. the navel, the heart, the throat and the head. These are called the 'four Paads of Brahm' or the four seats where Brahm has revealed its 'self'. This Brahm is known as the 'Chatush Paad Brahm'¹. [Refer verse no. 15.]

[In the navel region, Brahm reveals itself as the network of Naadis that have their origin here and are responsible for carrying sense perceptions throughout the body of the Jiva. In the heart, Brahm is revealed in the form of the Atma or pure consciousness that is said to reside in its subtle space called the Hridaya Akash. The heart is the only pumping station of the body which helps in circulation of the life-infusing blood throughout the body. The third spot, the throat, is where Brahm lives in the form of Pran or breath. It is the breath that keeps the body alive, and it is the throat by which a man speaks and eats. Speech is a sound manifestation of the Brahm, and of course without eating no Jiva can survive as this aspect of Brahm is sustainer of creation by ingesting food and imbibing liquids for life. Finally, the head is the location of Brahm as it is here that the brain is located; it is the site of wisdom, erudition, intelligence, knowledge and sub-conscious and all other aspects associated with the mind that is the deemed revelation of Brahm's great ability to think and analyse.]

Brahm is attained in any of the four states of existence. That is, during the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or the deep sleep state, the Turiya state or the earlier state of transcendental existence that comes beyond the Sushupta. A spiritual aspirant who has understood and become enlightened about Brahm in a holistic manner becomes aware of the truth that every single phase of existence, whether it is gross or subtle, is a manifestation or a revelation of Brahm. If this is true then all the four states of existence of consciousness are also one or the other forms of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. It is true because in all these phases or aspects of creation, it is the same 'consciousness' that pervades and plays the pivotal role. If there is no consciousness, there is no life, and therefore the question of 'existence' of any sort of world, whether it is of the gross type or of the subtle type, does not arise. A dead entity is not affected by whether the world is real or it is imaginary in one's dream. Therefore, a truly self and Brahm realised man sees the same Brahm as prevailing in the Jagrat state, in the Swapna state, in the Sushupta state, and the Turiya state. For him, each and every phase or aspect of existence is Brahm in that form; it is Brahm that manifests in that form.

Brahm is also revealed in the form of the Fire having four aspects, viz. the Ahawaniya, Garhapatya, Dakshina, and Sabhya². Therefore, a wise man should develop the metaphysical wisdom whereby he sees these fires as manifestations of the Atma in the sense that just like the Atma, which is the pure consciousness which infuses life in this otherwise lifeless and gross world, these fires too inject life in this creation in the form of energy, heat, light and dynamism. Obviously, no life is

imaginable and tenable without the 'fire'. The fire, in its different forms, is a manifestation of the dynamism, energy, heat, light, vitality and other vital ingredients of the life-infusing and life-sustaining abilities of Brahm. The fire embodies the eclectic virtues of purity and the ability of Brahm to burn all impurities in this creation, to purify the world by purging all the impure, and to eliminate darkness by its self-effusing illumination. The fire, in effect, is a personified form of these grand virtues that mark the eclectic glory and characteristic divine qualities of Brahm.

The supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm is represented by Brahma the creator during the Jagrat state, by Vishnu during the Swapna state, by Rudra during the Sushupta state, and by the primary form of eternal Consciousness during the Turiya state.

[During the waking state known as the Jagrat state, the creature is aware of the physical world and is engaged in its activities just like the creator Brahma who is perpetually engaged in the process of creation, evolution and growth of this physical world. In iconography, Brahma the creator is depicted as having four heads facing the four directions of the compass. It is a symbolic way of saying that Brahma is alert and receptive to all that is happening in all the four corners of this creation; he remains wide awake to learn about the developments in all spheres of life in this creation. This state of existence of Brahma corresponds well to the Jagrat state when the organs of the creature who is awake remain ever vigilant towards their respective objects in this world—e.g. the eye is ready to see things, the ear is ready to hear, the tongue is ready to taste and speak, the skin is ready to feel, and the nose is ready to smell.]

Vishnu, on the other hand, is depicted in the scriptures as lying in a reclining state of Yog-Nidra, which is a state of virtual sleep as is observed by ascetics during meditation, to indicate Vishnu's deep concentration and his remaining submerged in the thoughts of finding means and ways to keep the creation sustained and happy. He remains aloof from the physical activities of the gross world unless he is required to actually intervene in the form of various incarnations. But this visibly sleeping mode of Vishnu doesn't mean that he is not involved in the affairs of the world—for the Lord is engaged in the thoughts of the world at the subtle level of existence, and constantly devising methods to deal with the ever-changing requirements of the equally ever-changing world. Vishnu is said to represent the dreaming state of consciousness, called the Swapna state, when the consciousness remains very much active, but this activity is of a subtle nature rather than of the gross sort as represented by the Jagrat state that Brahma, the creator, stands for. While Brahma is depicted with eyes fully open symbolizing the waking state of consciousness, Vishnu is depicted with eyes shut close like when a man sleeps to symbolize the dreaming state of consciousness.

[Vishnu is not actually sleeping, but he is 'dreaming' of the imaginary world that he himself has created in his more sublime and subtle form as the Viraat Purush. The Viraat Purush is the all-encompassing and all-pervading cosmic gross body of Brahm, and it is from this Viraat that the rest of the creation, including Brahma, has come into being.]

Dream is a state of the mind when it can achieve stupendous and most astounding things that are not possible for it to achieve in the waking state of reality. Dream lends wings to the imaginative mind to create things out of nothing, something that is not feasible in the background of the harsh realities of the waking state. Since this creation is imagined by the Viraat Purush, since this world is a 'creation' of the Viraat Purush, it is said that the latter's other form known as Vishnu rests in the

dreaming state of consciousness because it is in one's dreams that one can imagine of things that do not actually exist.]

Rudra refers to Lord Shiva who remains perpetually blissful and in a state of deep meditation. He is the patron God of ascetics. This is why he is represented by the deep sleep state known as Sushupta. [Like the ascetics, Rudra too remains in a perpetual state of meditation which results in his remaining in a state of blissfulness.]

Finally, there is the Turiya state which goes beyond the Sushupta state when the sleeping creature experiences utmost bliss which is perpetual and not interrupted by coming back to the waking state once again. It is sort of permanent Sushupta. During this state, the truthful character of the Atma is revealed, i.e. one feels bliss and ecstasy. It is a transcendental state of existence that is equivalent to the state of Samadhi, a spiritual state when the person is not aware of the surrounding world inspite of his being awake in it and going about his duties in a normal way externally, but remaining aloof from everything internally.]

Now, the symbolism of the sacred thread is being discussed because a true Sanyasi (a renunciate ascetic) is expected to wear this thread as a symbol of his attaining Brahm-hood.

The four states of existence as well as the four Paads of Brahm are represented by the four fingers that are used to weave the sacred thread as well as to sling the physical thread across the shoulder of the wearer.

All the ninety-six elements of creation³ are equally divided into three divisions and metaphorically incorporated in the three strands that are intertwined to constitute the sacred thread. Therefore, each strand symbolically stands for thirty-two elements. [96 / 3 = 32.]

Similarly, these three strands symbolize the three basic Gunas that determine the fundamental character of all units of creation (i.e. Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna), the three invisible forms of Brahm known as the Trinity Gods at the macrocosmic level (i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva which have these three Gunas as their dominant characteristics—refer Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 10), and the three visible forms of Brahm at the celestial level such as the sun, the moon and the fire. These three aspects of Brahm are intertwined with one another; they cannot be separated one from the other in order to maintain the texture of the fabric of creation intact. Hence, these represent the twenty-seven elements or Tattwas of creation that the sacred thread represents. [3 x 3 x 3 = 27.]

So, though the sacred thread actually consists of three individual strands, but they are so much an indivisible and inseparable part of it that when one talks of the sacred thread, all the strands and the entities that they represent are deemed to be included in the meaning.

Therefore, when the sacred thread is worn on the body with the aforesaid wisdom, slung across the chest from the left shoulder to the right side of the hip joint, the wearer is able to cleanse his mind of all delusions and ignorance regarding the metaphysical importance and spiritual benefits of wearing it. He begins to assign deep meaning to the sacred thread instead of it being just worn as matter of routine or because it is traditionally regarded as the proper thing to wear it. Wearing it without understanding the hidden metaphysical significance and spiritual importance of the sacred thread would be an exercise in futility as far as Brahm realisation is concerned. [Refer also to Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 25.]

It must be clearly understood that inspite of the sacred thread representing so many various aspects of Tattwas (elements of creation), the basic Tattwa (essence; element) is only 'one', and this Tattwa is nothing but 'Brahm' for the simple reason

that all the Tattwas are one or the other aspect of the cosmic divine entity that is unquestionably single, immutable and non-dual—though of course it has taken so many varied forms and shapes that they defy comprehension. This can be explained with the instance of the pots and pans made of clay. Just like the case of these pots and pans made of clay having ‘clay’ as their fundamental element inspite of the diversity of their shapes, colours and sizes, whatever that exists in this creation is Brahm, and nothing but Brahm. [Here, the ‘clay’ is the fundamental element known as the Tattwa, while the various forms that it takes is equivalent to the various forms that the elements have taken, numbering ninety-six, thirty-two, twenty-seven etc., or as the various Gunas, Gods and celestial bodies that exist in this vast and colourful creation of astounding diversity and variety, whether in a visible form or in the invisible form.]

Hence, the true wearing of the sacred thread is when the spiritual aspirant is enlightened about the fact that he is a personification of the supreme Brahm represented by the Hans (the divine Swan) present in his inner-self as the Atma, the pure consciousness. This enlightenment is the symbolic wearing of the sacred thread internally. This eclectic thought helps one to attain the exalted stature of Brahm-realisation. The real sacred thread and the tuft of hair on the head of such enlightened and realised spiritual aspirants are not physically visible on their bodies (because they discard external signs of Brahm, and convert them into symbols of internal wisdom and enlightenment). These two signs of Brahm (i.e. the sacred thread and the tuft of hair) become an integral part of their inner-self, their personality.

The outer sign of the Shikha (tuft of hair) which represents Karma (rituals, because it was an integral part for the performance of various sacred rites) and the Yagyopavit (sacred thread) which represents Gyan (knowledge, as it was worn at the time of the initiation ceremony of a disciple who resided with his teacher to learn the scriptures) are to be worn by householders only. The tuft of hairs and the sacred thread made of yarn are only signs that a particular person is eligible to perform religious duties and sacred rites (such as the fire sacrifices). That is all. Actually, the sacred thread symbolizes Brahm in its entirety, including the ninety-six Tattwas or fundamental elements in which this Brahm has revealed itself³.

Some sacred threads constitute of nine strands. [Refer Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 27.] They also stand for the nine Tattwas or revelations of Brahm⁴.

[The sacred thread has three main strands, and each of these further has other finer sub-strands. All of them are intricately intertwined with each other so much so that it is impossible to separate one from the other. This means that the elements created by Brahm do not have any independent value or existence in the context of creation; once they are integrated in the fabric of creation they all lose their individuality and become an integral part of creation. So, when a wise and erudite person attempts to understand the secrets of Brahm and this creation, he cannot compartmentalize them or segregate them into different sections. If he is to be truly Brahm-realised then he must have a holistic view of creation to understand the concept of Brahm.]

Brahm is only one, but many people devise many paths for attaining this Brahm. For all wise ones, whether they are learned Brahmins, great Brahm-rishis (sages and seers who have become Brahm-realised) or other men of wisdom and enlightenment known as Gyanis, the concepts of Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation), Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness, the existential Truth, the Supreme Being) and Brahmin-hood or Brahm-realisation are one

and the same. They are like the three intertwined strands making up the sacred thread. That is, these three things mean the same thing.

[In other words, when one becomes Brahm-realised he is deemed to have obtained Mukti and known the Truth. If one knows the Truth, it is deemed that he is Brahm-realised and has attained Mukti. Similarly, when one attains Mukti, it is deemed that he is Brahm-realised and known the Truth. When applied to the sacred thread which is regarded as a symbol of Brahm, the analogy means that the three strands which constitute this thread correspond to Mukti, Truth and Brahm-realisation.

In other words, when one has achieved success in attaining these three aspects of spiritualism, he is deemed to be a personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being himself. Again, it means that these three aspects of metaphysics go hand-in-hand and cannot be divorced from one another if one is to attain the exalted stature that is as divine and holy as Brahm.]

The various Varnas and Ashrams are independent of each other. Their laws and doctrines are separate from one another. But the philosophy of the tuft of hair and the sacred thread applies uniformly to them as it is a universal truth applicable across the spectrum of creation.

[The Varnas are the four segments of society, such as the Brahmins or the learned class, the Kshatriyas or the warrior class, the Vaishyas or the trading class, and the Shudras or the serving class, each having its own codes of conduct that regulate life in each of these classes in society. Similarly, there are four Ashrams in the society in which the life of a man is divided, each having its own laws and codes of conduct—viz. the Brahmcharya Ashram when a person studies, the Grihastha Ashram which is the householder phase when he marries, raises a family and attends to his worldly duties, the Vaanprastha Ashram when he hands over the responsibilities of his worldly affairs to his heirs and retires from active participation in the affairs of the mundane world, and the Sanyas Ashram when he totally renounces the world and spends the rest of life and time as a hermit or recluse, striving to attain final liberation and deliverance for his soul.]

For an ascetic who seeks Mukti, the tuft of hair and the sacred thread are represented by the ‘Pranav’ and the Mantra ‘OM’ respectively. For them, the true knowledge of the Hans (Brahm) is the symbolic way of sporting the physical tuft of hair on the top of the head, and the Mantra OM representing the Pranav (Brahm) is the symbolic way of wearing the sacred thread.

[Refer also to Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 12-22; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3, 5-7 in this context.

The Pranav is the cosmic Consciousness that generates vibrations in ether, which in turn creates the cosmic sound known as Naad. Hence, Pranav and Brahm are synonymous with one another. OM is the word equivalent of Pranav; it is the name given to the Supreme Being known as Brahm like any name consisting of letters that is given to any particular person in order to distinguish him from all others.

Hans is a personified form of Brahm or Pranav. Brahm is the Supreme Being, so he occupies the highest seat in creation. In the context of the body of a creature, the highest point is the head; it is here that Brahm has his seat and abode. The term ‘Hans’ when used for Brahm implies that the latter is most holy, pure and wise because this bird is employed universally in the scriptures to denote these grand and eclectic virtues in any creature. Further, wisdom, discrimination, erudition, sagacity and intelligence are virtues of the brain (mind), and the brain is located in the head.

So, in brief, the tuft of hair that is also located on the top of the head is deemed to be a symbol of Pranav or Brahm.

Now we come to OM as a representative of the sacred thread. The word OM has three letters—‘A’, ‘U’ and ‘M’. These three letters stand for the three strands of the sacred thread. Even as none of these individual letters have any relevance if taken independently but assume a divine connotation when taken together as OM, the three strands of the sacred thread have no significance if taken individually but assume a holy meaning when taken together.

From the view-point of the teaching of this great Upanishad it means that in order to have a comprehensive knowledge of Brahm one should not attempt to understand something as esoteric and enigmatic as Brahm by adopting a biased or lop-sided view of creation. One should not attempt to understand Brahm by limiting one’s study to any one facet or angle of creation vis-à-vis Brahm, but one must realise that Brahm can only be attained, accessed, understood, witnessed or realised if a comprehensive, a holistic and an all-inclusive approach is adopted. Otherwise, it would be like observing an object by the medium of a viewing mirror that is either unclean or splintery and fractured.

The gross body of the ascetic who wears the sacred thread becomes as holy and pure as the gross body of the bird Swan (Hans). But his ‘true self’ is not this gross body but the divine Atma, the pure consciousness that is equivalent to Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. Brahm is also said to be a Hans because of its purity, wisdom, immaculacy and holiness.]

The Naad (which is the cosmic sound that is generated in ether by the vibrations caused by the cosmic Consciousness known as Pranav) helps to establish a union between the ascetic and the supreme Brahm during Yoga.

[This is because the cosmic sound that is heard by the ascetic in the higher stages of meditation when his repetition of OM reaches a crescendo and culminates in his nerves and veins resonating with this sound, he experiences extreme thrill and ecstasy. All impulses originating from the external world cease to be registered by his brain (mind and sub-conscious) so much so that he would remain in a state of suspended animation vis-à-vis this material world of sense objects. This translates into his being in a transcendental state of existence that is obtained during the Turiya state. Hence, OM leads one to the Turiya state of transcendental existence when there is no difference between the Hans represented by the Atma or the individual ‘self’ of the ascetic, and the Hans represented by the supreme Brahm. They become one and the same.

When the ascetic meditates using the OM Mantra, the vibrations generated inside his body by constant repetition of OM coincide with the vibration generated in the ether by the cosmic Consciousness outside his body. When the two vibrations overlap with each other or coalesce with each other, the ascetic is able to experience oneness between the two types of vibrations—which means he begins to experience oneness between his own Atma and Brahm known as the supreme transcendental cosmic Atma.]

Now, the concept of the OM and Hans is applied to the sacred thread. The wearer of the sacred thread is the Hans or the truthful ‘self’ of the creature known as the Atma. The three letters of OM (i.e. A, U and M) represent the three strands of the sacred thread. Since OM represents Pranav or Brahm, it follows that the true wearer of this symbolic sacred thread lives in the heart because the Atma, represented by the metaphoric Hans, lives in the subtle heart of the creature. This Atma is pure consciousness.

Hence, Brahm has two manifestations—viz. one is the all-pervading cosmic form known as Pranav, and the other is the one that lives inside the individual as his Atma.

When one has become wise and enlightened enough to see nothing but the all-pervading ‘consciousness’ known as the Atma everywhere, he should discard the external forms of the sacred thread and the tuft of hair (5).

[Note—¹These four points in the body are also mentioned in the Brahm Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 1.

These are the four sites are also where the four important *Chakras*, or the whirling circles of cosmic energy inside the body of the creature, are located. It is believed that these Chakras have trapped divine mystical energy which can be unleashed by means of Yoga, and once released they enable the aspirant acquire mystical powers that are rare and very potential. These four Chakras are called respectively the Nabhi Chakra, the Hridaya Chakra, the Kanth Chakra and the Brahm Randhra Chakra.

The *four Paads of Brahm* are narrated in the following Upanishads also—(i) Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda’s Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 1-3, 6; Canto 8, paragraph no. 8; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8.

The *difference* between the three Paads of Brahm (known as the Tripadvibhut Brahm) and its fourth Paad is explained in form of an inverted pyramid in the *Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 4.

²The four holy fires are ‘Garhyapatya’ which is the fire of the household hearth; the main fire of the formal fire sacrifice; the fire that every householder is supposed to keep alive and worship regularly and from which the first spark is taken for the rituals associated with religious ceremonies), (b) ‘Dakshinagni’ which is the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity; the fire lit at the site of a sacrificial fire ritual, near its south end), (c) ‘Ahawaniya’ is the fire lit to invoke the Gods, to invite them to participate and accept the offerings made to them during a ritualistic fire sacrifice), and (d) ‘Sabhya’ refers to the fire of the Vedic period which was continuously lit).

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 2 says that there are the following four sacred fires and they have their origin from the four aspects or syllables or letters of the divine Mantra OM as follows—the Garhyapatya fire has its origin in the first letter ‘A’, Dakshinagni has its origin in the second letter ‘U’, Ahawaniya fire has its origin in the third letter ‘M’, and Samvartak fire has its origing in the last part of OM which is a half-syllable called the Ardhha Matra.

³The ninety six elements have been narrated in great detail in the Krishna Yajur Veda’s Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 2-14. Refer also to the Atharva Veda’s Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 14.

⁴The Pashupata Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 14 says that there are nine Tattvas which are actually subtle revelations of the supreme Brahm. They are the following—The three fundamental Gunas, i.e. the Sata, the Raja and the Tama, the three basic characters of the Atma known as Sat-Chit-Anand, i.e. Sat (truth), Chitta (consciousness) and Anand (bliss), and the three forms of divinity represented by the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder of creation, represent the nine Tattwas of creation.]

6. Those who are wise and enlightened should cut off their Shikha (tuft of hair on the top of the head) and discard the external form of the Sutra (the sacred thread). Instead, they should accept the imperishable and eternal Brahm in place of the Sutra (6).

7. In order to find freedom from the thread (fetter) of bondage that forces a creature to take birth again, a wise man should take the aid of the thread represented by Brahm. In other words, he should take the recourse of truthful knowledge and spiritual enlightenment in order to break free from the cycle of re-birth and death.

Since the thread is an indication of both the worldly fetters as well as Brahm, it is wise for a man to interpret its meaning correctly and use it correctly in order to achieve success in Brahm-realisation and attaining Mukti or spiritual freedom and deliverance (7).

8. A person who has understood the real and true import of the term 'Sutra' (literally the sacred thread as well as the formula that unfolds the path of Brahm-realisation) is the one who is eligible to attain Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation), is a true Bhikshuk (a monk, a mendicant or a friar), is truly a Vedagya (one who is an expert in the Vedas and their tenets), is Sadachari (one who follows the path of truth and auspiciousness), and is a Vipra (a Brahmin; a learned and elderly man).

Such a man is not only holy himself but also makes those with whom he comes in contact holy and pure (8).

9. The supreme transcendental Brahm who is the thread that has knitted together all the units of creation and holds them in place like beads in a rosary or a garland, the ascetic who wears this sacred thread (i.e. who accepts Brahm as the basic essence of creation and honours Brahm exclusively) is indeed said to be an expert ascetic who is well-versed in the philosophy of Yoga (9).

10. A Brahmin (a learned man), an expert ascetic who is well-versed in Yoga, and a person who is a Gyani (a person who is wise, learned and enlightened) should abandon the external sacred thread, because the real thread that bestows spiritual liberation and deliverance is not the external thread made of a gross material (e.g. cotton thread or silk thread) but the symbolic sacred thread representing Brahm that is worn (accepted) internally.

When the sacred thread representing Brahm is symbolically worn internally, there is no fear of it ever getting defiled or polluted; it would be permanently holy and pure (10).

11. Those who wear the sacred thread after fully understanding its metaphysical importance and spiritual significance, those who have realised that this sacred thread represents Brahm in its entirety are the ones who wear it in the true sense, and therefore are eligible for the benefits that accrue by wearing it. [For the rest, it is merely a formality that can fool the world into believing that the wearer is a holy man, and nothing more. It would not serve them any real purpose, except worldly praise.] (11).

12. Those who wear the Shikha and the Sutra as symbols of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment which kindles spiritual awakening and truth-

realisation) regard Gyan as the best thing in this world to acquire and aim for. This is because Gyan is the holiest and the purest thing in this world. [It shows the correct path to the aspirant, and never misleads him for some vested self-interest.] (12).

13. Those who are wise and enlightened assert that those persons who understand that the Shikha (tuft of hair on the head) is as powerful and potent as the fire element itself are the ones who are true wearers of it. For the rest, they are merely sporting a crop of hair on the head, and nothing more (13).

14. Those Brahmins who are engrossed merely in performing rituals and observing sacraments, or who are engaged in the mundane affairs of the world are Brahmins only for name's sake (and not true Brahmins), because they live only to fill their stomachs and enjoy the fame, comforts and pleasures that come with worldly respect. Such people go to hell at the end of their lives.

[That is, they continue to take birth and die again, and during each life they undergo sufferings and miseries that are part and parcel of gross mundane existence. They do not find Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance, nor do they find peace and bliss that comes with self and Brahm realisation. They do not have true Gyan, and are only pretending to have it by studying the scriptures in order to fulfill their worldly desires and gain fame and pecuniary benefits. In short, they are not true Brahmins, they are imposters, and they do not do justice to the institution of Brahmhood. They give the holy stature of being a Brahmin a bad name.

The question arises, who then is a true Brahmin?¹ The answer is self-evident in the foregoing as well as the following verses. That is, only those who have true knowledge of Brahm, and the depth of wisdom and enlightenment to understand what the term 'Brahm' is all about, who do not hanker after external purity and formalities but lay stress on inner cleansing and sincerity of purpose are true Brahmins. Such people would not be much bothered about sporting a tuft on the head or wearing the sacred thread to prove that they are Brahmins, but would instead strive to inculcate the glorious virtues that are so typical of those who have become self and Brahm realised, who have really understood the truth and reality of things.] (14).

[Note—¹The salient features of Brahmins are the following—they should possess these noble qualities—(1) 'Riju'-be expert in the Rig and the Yajur Vedas, (2) 'Tapa'-should be involved in doing penances, observing austerities and enduring sufferings for the welfare of the soul and the society, (3) 'Santosh'-be contented and satisfied, (4) 'Kshamaa'-to be forgiving and tolerant, (5) 'Sheel'-to have such virtues as good character, dignity, decorum and virtuousness, (6) 'Jitendriya'-to have self control over the sense organs, (7) 'Data'-to be a giver, one who sacrifices his own interests for the benefit of others, (8) 'Gyani'-one who is well learned, wise, enlightened and erudite, (9) 'Dayaalu'-to be merciful and compassionate. [Shatpath Brahman.]

An entire Upanishad called Vajra-shuchiko-panishad, belonging to the Sam Veda tradition is devoted to the subject. The eclectic virtues of Brahmins have been expounded in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 5 as well as in Canto 3, Brahman 8, verse no. 10.

The Pashupata Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse no. 19 describes who a true Brahmin.]

15. It is advisable for a learned person to wear the Brahm Sutra (the sacred thread symbolizing Brahm) slung across the chest from the left shoulder to the right side of the hip joint. This is how it should be worn physically on the gross body.

Internally, a wise man must realise that the Sutra (the basic essence; the elementary truth) of the sacred thread is 'Brahm' which is the supreme transcendental Consciousness and the only Truth of creation. He should accept this Brahm and symbolically wear the Brahm Sutra internally from the region of the navel to the top of the head where the Brahm-Randhra is situated.

[Refer verse no. 5. The reason for selecting this region of the body is that Brahm, in the form of the life-infusing consciousness, is present at four locations in the body—viz. the navel, the heart, the throat and the head.

Besides this, the central part of the body is where all the major functional organs are located—viz. the liver, the kidney, the heart, the intestines, the pancreas, the gall bladder, the reproductive organs etc. Each has its specific function and represents one or the other aspect of Brahm who has literally assumed the form of these organs to carry out the designated duty or function in creation. In the cosmic scale Brahm carries out his duties and functions in the form of the different Gods and elements of Nature, and in the microcosmic plane of creation when the same Brahm took up residence in the creature's body as his Atma, his pure conscious soul, Brahm created these organs to help the Atma carry on with its desired objectives in this world.

If Brahm can create the sun and the earth, if Brahm can create the sky, the air, the fire and the water, then there is no surprise in Brahm creating the various organs of the body in which he (Brahm) can live as the Atma. It is the same Consciousness that empowers the elements to carry on their functions at the cosmic level of creation that also empowers these organs to carry on with their functions in the body of the individual creature who is, in effect, the creation in a miniature form.] (15).

16. In this way, a wise man should wear the Brahm Sutra composed of the supreme essence of creation as well as of all spiritual endeavours known as Brahm.

A person for whom the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the head) and the Upvit (the sacred thread) are symbols of Gyan (true knowledge, high wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation), everything is a personification or an embodiment of Brahm, and nothing else (16).

17. A person who knows the esoteric secrets, spiritual importance and metaphysical significance of the Yagyopavit (sacred thread) is the one who can be said to truly wearing it, and therefore is entitled to the benefits that accrue by wearing it. For instance, he is entitled to Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance (17).

18. A Vipra (Brahmin) who wears both the external as well as the internal forms of the sacred thread is actually eligible to take the vows of Sanyas (a life of total renunciation).

[By wearing the external thread he would be spending his routine life in an auspicious and righteous manner because he would be obliged to follow the dignified way of life expected of him by the virtue of his wearing the thread. He cannot do anything unrighteous because that would immediately invite scorn and ridicule from the society and make him outcaste. He would fulfill all his worldly obligations and responsibilities in a proper manner. All this while, he would be internally detached and dispassionate from what his external gross body is doing because he has become fully wise and enlightened about the true meaning of the sacred thread and its spiritual import. So, as a consequence, he would be internally self and Brahm realised at the same time of his doing external duties ordained by his destiny.]

Only a person in whom sincere renunciation and detachment has been kindled as a result of becoming enlightened and self-realised is entitled to take the vows and enter the life of Sanyas. By merely wearing the sacred thread one does not automatically become eligible for Sanyas (18).

19. Therefore, it is expected of an ascetic desirous of attaining liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation, to abandon the external form of the sacred thread, and instead wear it internally. [That is, instead of merely observing the formality of wearing it, he should understand its profound symbolism, and inculcate spiritual wisdom and enlightenment.] (19).

20. At the end of this discourse, sage Shaunak realised that it is imperative for him to discard the gross symbols of Brahm, i.e. the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the head) and the Yagyopavit (the sacred thread) worn externally on the body, and instead accept the true sublime form of Brahm represented by the 'Pranav Hans' (OM and the Atma respectively) as being true representative forms of the Shikha and the Yagyopavit in his efforts to attain Moksha (emancipation and salvation; spiritual liberation and deliverance).

[That is, instead of wasting time and energy on being obsessed about the physical Shikha and Yagyopavit, he should rather focus his energy and attention on their spiritually important subtle aspect that would actually be of any benefit for him. So he decided to discard both the Shikha and the Yagyopavit, and instead remain immersed in the thoughts of Brahm and his true self, the Atma. This way, he became a true ascetic and a Brahm-realised soul.]

This is the esoteric knowledge of immense spiritual import that is imparted by this Upanishad. Amen! (20).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 21

Tripura Tapini Upanishad

This Upanishad belongs to the Tapini category of Upanishads which narrate the dynamic Shakti (the all-powerful dynamism representing the cosmic energy) aspect of the Supreme Being. This Shakti is visualized in a female form as a divine Goddess. It employs numerous symbols and esoteric formulas to invoke this Shakti. In the present case, this Shakti is represented by Goddess 'Tripura'.

The word 'Tripura' has many connotations—viz. it refers to the Goddess who lives uniformly throughout the known three worlds in a subtle form, providing them with their inherent energy and vitality; it means the Goddess who has three divine forms as the Bindu (drop of energy and knowledge), the Bija (the seed from which the entire creation emerged) and the Naad (the primeval sound vibrations in the cosmic ether which was the primary source of creation); it means also the Trinity Gods (Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva or Rudra the concluder)

personified; it implies the three Gunas (the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna); she represents the three divine dynamic aspects of the Trinity Gods, i.e. Saraswati (the power of knowledge and speech), Laxmi (the power of wealth and fame), and Parvati (the cosmic Mother). The Goddess Tripura is therefore a personified form of the dynamism of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation, in entirety.

This Upanishad was revealed by Lord Shiva, the wisest and the most enlightened amongst the pantheon of Gods, as repeatedly mentioned in Canto 1, verse no. 17, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2, Canto 3, verse no. 1, Canto 4, verse no. 1, and Canto 5, verse no. 1. Therefore we see that the Upanishad has five elaborate Cantos. While Cantos 1-4 are composed in the form of paragraphs, the last Canto 5 is in the form of verses. Canto 1 is primarily dedicated to espousing the divinity and supremacy of the Goddess, and explains how she is Brahm personified. Since the Tapini category of Upanishads describe esoteric forms of occult worship along with the secret formulas invoked for such worship, an instrument or a geometrical figure is needed for the purpose, and in the present case it is the Sri Chakra. This is elaborately described in Canto 2. The various Mudras (postures of the body during such worship) are described in Canto 3. The next Canto 4 is dedicated to the theme of Mukti or liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of the soul, the various Mantra that aid the process, and how the worshipper can have a divine glimpse of the Goddess. Finally, Canto 5 is totally dedicated to elucidating upon the doctrines pertaining to Brahm-realisation and outlines the philosophy related to Brahm.

Three other Upanishads have special relevance here, one is the Tripura Upanishad, which is the 8th Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition, the second is the Bhavricho-panishad which is the 10th Upanishad of the Rig Veda, and the third is the other is the Devi Upanishad, which is the 22nd Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition and hence appears as Chapter no. 22 of the current volume.

The charm instrument used in occult or mystical forms of worship is known as the ‘Sri Chakra’. A diagrammatic representation of it is included at the end of this Chapter.

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----Shanti Paath----

Please refer to appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Canto 1

1. [The true form of Goddess Tripura:--]

OM Salutations! Salutations to Lord Hari, the Supreme Being (Brahm)¹! He has taken the form of Goddess Tripura, literally meaning the one with three forms. These three forms are those of the creator Prajapati (Brahma), the sustainer Vishnu, and the concluder (Rudra; Shiva).

It is this dynamic cosmic force of Brahm revealed as Tripura which is the creator of the three worlds represented by the words Bhu (standing for the terrestrial world; mortal world; earth), Bhuvaha (the sky; the celestial world), and Swaha (the heavens). [It also implies the three worlds as follows—the earth, the nether world, and the heaven respectively.]

The Beej Mantra for this divine Shakti (dynamic energy and power of Brahm) is represented by the word ‘Hrim/Hrin(g)’.

She lives in the middle of the three mountains. [This is a symbolic representation of the spot of the forehead between the eyebrows and the root of the nose.]

She is an embodiment of the three Gunas. [That is, she represents all the three Gunas. These are the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna.]

She is the point where all the three worlds (the past, the present and the future; the mortal, the heavenly and the nether) finally collapse and merge into.

Such a Goddess is known as Tripura. I offer my obeisance and worship to Lord Tripura² who lives subtly everywhere in creation. [1].

[Note—¹Hari—The term 'Hari' is applied to Lord Vishnu who is the sustainer and protector of this creation. The word Hari literally means one who steals or takes away or eliminates. Vishnu removes all the miseries of the world and provides his devotees with solace and succour. He literally steals their pain and sufferings, hence is called Hari.

Lord Vishnu is that aspect of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, which is responsible for the upkeep of this creation. In fact, Brahm revealed his own self as the three Gods of the Trinity with the express purpose of carrying the three main functions of creation—viz. to create he became Brahma, to sustain and protect he became Vishnu, and to conclude he became Shiva.

Hari is one of the thousand names of Vishnu; it is a metaphoric way of saying that Brahm, the Supreme Being, has assumed countless forms having as many names and characteristic and virtues with the aim of carrying on with his divine intention of creating a world and then sustaining it. With his assuming the form and name of Hari, Brahm intended to give the signal that he would ensure that his off springs in the form of the creatures who would inhabit this creation would be offered protection against evil and sins; he also intended to tell all that he would remove any evil and sins if they raise their venomous hood to put to danger the Lord's creation.

Now, as we have seen in a number of Upanishads, the word OM is a monosyllabic Mantra especial for Brahm. Therefore the opening lines of this verse explicitly establish that the divine Being who is addressed in this whole Upanishad is Brahm and not any particular god or goddess. The fact of the matter is that all the gods and goddesses are revelations of one Supreme Being who has assumed their forms to carry out many and varied functions of creation. It is like the king or the emperor delegating his supreme authority to his juniors who act on his behalf and are deemed to have the same authority and powers as the sovereign.

Hence, obeisance is being paid to Brahm in the form of Hari in this verse. Lord Vishnu is also known as the Viraat Purush, the all-encompassing and all-pervading macrocosmic gross but invisible body of Brahm from whom even the creator Brahma emerged. The difference between Viraat and Vishnu is in the degree of subtlety, and nothing more. Whereas the 'Viraat', as the name itself suggest, is the all-inclusive and all-pervading colossus macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being in its more subtle form, Vishnu is the same Lord in a less subtle form as he performs the specific task of sustenance and protection of creation, and hence limited to the Trinity of Gods consisting of the other two aspects of creation—i.e. birth and death regulated by Brahma and Rudra (or Shiva) respectively.

Again, as has been repeatedly emphasized in the Upanishads, Brahm is a neutral cosmic entity that is nothing but pure Consciousness. Being 'neutral' does not mean that it is impotent and unable. The dynamism and vigour of Brahm is revealed in the form of Shakti, literally meaning energy, strength and authority. So, whenever Brahm wishes to do anything he does so through the medium of Shakti. This Shakti takes many forms just like the case of the emperor's authority and powers take many forms—such as the many branches of the administrative and military establishment. Thus, Shakti becomes Maya (the power to create delusions), the Gunas (inherent qualities in all creatures that control their behaviour and personality), the Trinity

Gods (Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder), the various Goddesses such as the goddess Tripura to whom this Upanishad is dedicated. All of these entities are fundamentally revelations of the Shakti aspect of the Supreme Being. Hence, Goddess Tripura embodies the dynamism and authority of Brahm known as the latter's Shakti.

The word 'Tripura' literally means one who dwells at three places. Therefore, obviously, Goddess Tripura embodies the glories and virtues, the authorities and powers, the dynamism and strength of all the Trinity Gods in her divine form at one place. From this perspective, the Mantra OM is applicable to her as much as it is applicable for Brahm for the simple reason that these three Trinity Gods represent the three aspects of creation in which Brahm has revealed himself. The word OM has three letters—viz. A, U and M—standing for the birth or origin of creation, its expansion and development, and its conclusion respectively.

So while the three Gods of the Trinity have a limited scope and authority, Goddess Tripura has a wide scale of powers and authority. While Vishnu, for instance, represents Brahm only as a merciful sustainer and a benevolent protector of creation, Goddess Tripura can create, sustain and conclude simultaneously. So in a sense, Tripura is more authoritative and powerful than any one of the Trinity Gods or any other Gods and Goddesses in creation.

Goddess Tripura is a complete and whole embodiment of the dynamism, authority and strength of Brahm; she is a personification of Brahm in its entirety. Tripura is the Shakti of Brahm revealed in her form. As the three Gunas she controls and devises the various habits and nature of all living beings in creation. The influence of the three Gunas, viz. the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna, and the Tama Guna has been explained in detail in a note of verse no. 1 of Brahman 3 of the Brihajjabal Upanishad which is Chapter no. 6 of this volume, as well as in the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 64 which is Chapter no. 13.

²This observation that 'Tripura' is both a female entity known as a Shakti or a Goddess, and a male entity known as the Lord (God) called 'Tripura' endorses the observations made in the note above. While the word 'Lord' refers to the Supreme Being known as Brahm, who is also called Hari (a male), the 'Goddess' refers to the dynamic aspect of the same Brahm that is known as Shakti.

For all practical purposes, both Brahm and his Shakti are inseparable and indivisible from one another just as the king and his royal authority are one and inseparable entities.]

2. [Now, the great Mantra of Tripura is being explained:--]

'Tatsaviturvarnyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi; Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat'¹—this is the great Mantra dedicated to the supreme Goddess who represents the Raja Guna of Brahm (i.e. Goddess Tripura who represents the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being by which he created this creation).

Now, we shall analyse this Mantra, which is called the Gayatri Mantra and is primarily dedicated to the supreme Brahm, and see how it applies to Tripura.

'We invoke the magnificent glories of the Creator. He is beyond all trace of darkness. Let that Lord illuminate our mind and intellect.

Let us prepare the sanctified liquid known as Soma to be offered to the sacred fire known as Jatveda (which is the all-pervading fire element said to be present in the sky, or the celestial fire) when we worship the Goddess.

Let the Goddess in her form of Durga (who rides a lion) vanquish our enemies and neutralize or overcome their strength (or literally 'burn them to ashes').

Let the Goddess help us overcome all difficulties just like one easily crosses an ocean aboard a boat (or a ship).

I pray to Lord known as Trayambak (i.e. Lord Shiva who has three eyes) who grants the gross world with beauty and charm. By his worship, the worshipper is able to obtain Mukti just like the water melon is freed from its stem.

The esoteric knowledge pertaining to Goddess Tripura, the supreme Goddess, has two esoteric forms—one having three aspects, dimensions or forms, and the other having one hundred eight Varnas (letters; dimensions; aspects).

The Goddess Tripura has three aspects or dimensions, called the Paads, as stated above. These are the following—(i) The first Paad represents the four subtle aspects of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Consciousness. [These four letters are OM, Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha. The four aspects or dimensions of Brahm are creation, birth or emergence, growth and development, and death or conclusion. Brahm has four Paads or states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or deep sleep state, and the Turiya or the transcendental state.]

(ii) The second Paad symbolizes the dynamism of Brahm by which the entire visible creation came into existence. This is called the ‘Shakti Paad’.

(iii) And the third Paad refers to Shiva, the power of Brahm to bring this creation to conclusion. This aspect of the Goddess is known as ‘Shivaani’, literally the divine female consort of Shiva. [2].

[Note—¹This is the great Gayatri Mantra of the Vedas. References: (i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14. (ii) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/1-9; Savitri Upanishad, which is entirely dedicated to it; Maitrayanyu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7. (iii) Atharva Veda = Surya Upanishad, verse no. 2; Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 3, verse no. 6; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1-15; Narsingh Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto/Upanishad 1, verse nos. 5-9; Gayatri Upanishad; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 40.

Other references: Rig Veda (3/62/10), the Sam Veda (1462), and Yajur Veda (3/35, 22/9, 30/2, 36/6).]

3. The entire creation, including the various Lokas (worlds), the Vedas, the Shastras (ancient scriptures), the Purans (mythological histories), the Dharma Shastras (codes of conduct; jurisprudence), the Chikitsa Shastra (the science of herbal medicine) and Jyotish (astrology), has come into being as a union of Shiva and Shakti (Brahm and his dynamic powers of creation). [3].

4. Now we shall describe the esoteric meaning of the various aspects or dimensions of the great Mantra of the Goddess (as narrated in paragraph no. 2).

The *first Paad* (aspect, dimension or part) of the divine Mantra pertaining to Goddess Tripura as Brahm personified is ‘Tat’—literally implying ‘that’. This term refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm or the Absolute Truth.

This Brahm is eternal, infinite, imperishable and immutable. Brahm is supreme and transcendental. Brahm is without attributes, forms and characteristics. Brahm is without any taints, faults and blemishes. Brahm is without any epithets, titles, qualifications and honours. Brahm is without any kind of prop to support it as it is self-supporting and self-sustaining. Brahm is the Lord who is benevolent and gracious towards all the creatures or living beings known as the Jiva, as well as the rest of the creation.

It is Brahm that¹ brings to the conclusion this creation; it is Brahm that thinks, sees, develops, gives consciousness, inspires everything and every action and deed in this creation, and it is Brahm that creates desires of all kinds in the creature. This is

why Brahm is also known as Kaam personified. [Kaam refers to doing of deeds and taking of actions to fulfill one's desires, wishes, passions, aspirations, yearnings and hopes.]

It is this single Brahm that creates, develops and concludes this visible world in the form of Shiva. [And that is why Shiva is called 'Maheshwar'—the Great Ishwar, the Great Lord.]

Brahm is the one that inspires ascetics and hermits to do religious sacrifices, and he is the one who fulfills what is inspired.

This Brahm however is inherently faultless and without any desires though it is the one who creates all the delusions and desires in this world. Brahm does not do anything or acts in anyway, though he is the one who inspires all actions and makes the creature do all deeds.

It is this Brahm that created the various categories of alphabets of the Sanskrit language—viz. the group of letters headed by A, Ka, Cha, Tta, Ta, Pa, Ya and Sha.

This is why Brahm is known as the Ishwar as he is the one who creates everything, including Kaam—meaning desires and commensurate actions. [Brahm represents all the desires of a creature as it is the supreme inspirer of creation. It is Brahm who desired that the languages be created so that the creature could communicate with each other and their thoughts can be transmitted. The alphabets are the building blocks of language just like the three Gunas such as Sata, Raja and Tama, as well as the three words Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha were the precursors of the known world with its unique character.]

Since the first letter of the word Kaam is 'Ka' (as in *kerb*), it follows that the Beej (seed; root) word for Kaam is also 'Ka'. Again, since Kaam is synonymous with Brahm in as much as all desires are inspired by Brahm, and the fact that this desire of Brahm to create is at the root of this creation coming into being in the first place, the first word of the Mantra, i.e. 'Tat', also refers to 'Kaam' (desires) and the letter 'Ka'. A wise person who understands the esoteric secret of this first Paad ('Tat') of the Mantra becomes one like the Brahm himself. [4].

[Note—¹It is to be noted that the pronoun 'that' or 'it' have been used to refer to Brahm for the simple reason that Brahm is the pure cosmic Consciousness, and the latter entity is neither a male nor a female gender—i.e. it is neutral. At the same time, the male pronoun 'he' is also employed to mean Brahm, but the context here is that the other aspect of Brahm is Shakti which is a feminine gender for which the pronoun 'she' is appropriate.

The esteemed reader is requested not to bother much about these technicalities of which pronoun is used and which should be used, but rather focus his attention in enjoying the spiritual nectar dripping from the texts of the Upanishads.]

5. The *second Paad* of the Mantra is 'Savitu-rvare-nya'. It represents the second Paad of Brahm. [Since this Upanishad is dedicated to Goddess Tripura, this second Paad, as well as all other Paads, represent the manifested form of Brahm as Goddess Tripura.]

The 'Shu' (pronounced as in shoe) element of the spoken word stands giving birth to living beings. The 'Savitu' part of the above word refers to the Sun that is a metaphor for all forms of life in this creation, representing the living beings as well as the energy, strength and vitality that they possess.

When it is applied to Goddess Tripura, it means she is the primary cosmic energy and dynamism that gave rise to the living beings and provided them with their natural energy, strength and vitality. Tripura is thus the supreme Goddess (representing Brahm).

It is this Goddess Tripura who is subtly present in the form of the dynamic subtle energy of the Kundalini (the coiled energy center at the base of the spine) representing the Jatveda fire (the universal fire element). A person who has this esoteric knowledge is able to access the divine energy and vitality that are unique virtues of the Jatveda fire. [That is, an ascetic, who is able to kindle the latent fire and unleash its dynamic energy that is centered around the Kundalini, is able to access stupendous source of divine energy that bestows upon him remarkable abilities and mystical powers.]

This energy takes the shape of a symbolic triangle in the body. Only those who are greatly fortunate are able to arouse or kindle it, and then harness this energy and its dynamism for their spiritual progress. [Reference: (i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 56-64. (ii) Atharva Veda = Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 4.]

The energy trapped in the symbolic triangle located in the body (i.e. the region of the lower abdomen, from the navel to the groins, where the Kundalini is located at the base of the spine) is aroused or kindled with the help of the vowel sound 'Ae' (as in may, or ray).

The word 'Vare-nyam' means the best, the most eclectic and exalted; one that is worth honouring, showing respect to, acknowledging, welcoming, accepting and worshipping. Hence, that entity which is honoured and accepted by the term 'Vare-nyam' is also referred to by the letter 'Ae'. [In other words, the divine energy of creation that is present in the fire element as well as in the Kundalini symbolizes Goddess Tripura, and it is she who should be worshipped in these forms as a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm complete with its cosmic authority and powers.] [5].

6. Now we shall discuss the esoteric meaning of the phrase 'Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi'.

This represents the *third Paad* of Brahm. [This is one of the many manifested Paads of Goddess Tripura.]

The first letter of the third word is 'Dha' (as in *breathe*), and it means Dharna. [Dharna roughly means to bear; to accept; to have belief, conviction and faith; to imagine; to think, to ponder, and to contemplate deeply.] It is with this element that one accepts the supreme Brahm. [That is, one accepts Brahm only when one is firmly convinced of his superiority, truth, authority and existence. One becomes 'realised and enlightened' on the strength of his spiritual beliefs and being steady in them. One contemplates upon Brahm, believes in Brahm and its supreme authority and divinity, has faith in Brahm, has no doubts about the truthfulness of Brahm, and always remains submerged in the thoughts of Brahm. Total commitment to Brahm in all spheres of life is to have unwavering Dharna of Brahm.]

'Bharga' refers to the illuminated and bright aspect of the Deva (Lord). [That is, it refers to that aspect of Brahm which is the opposite of darkness. Hence, Bharga refers to the light and illumination of eclectic dimensions that come with knowledge, wisdom, expertise, erudition, enlightenment and self-realisation. It is these eclectic virtues personified.]

Bharga refers to the central Authority. It represents the fourth aspect of the Deva known as Brahm that is also known as Turiya (i.e. the transcendental Brahm). This Deva (Brahm) is present in the inner-self of all mortal living beings called the Bhuts (as their Atma, their true 'self', their pure consciousness). [That is, it is the Atma or pure consciousness that is at the center of life and creation. It is the Atma that

resides in the inner-self of all the creatures. It is the Atma as an image of Brahm that possesses the characteristic virtues that are referred to as the ‘fourth aspect of consciousness’—i.e. the Turiya state of existence which is the transcendental state.]

The fourth aspect of the Deva (known as Brahm, and in the present context revealed in the form of the great Goddess Tripura) is represented by the vowel sound of ‘Ee’ (as in *eel*). [This refers to the letter ‘Dhi’ of the third word Dhimahi.]

‘Ee’ is the Beej Mantra of the Deva (who is being contemplated upon and invoked in this Mantra). It also refers to the letter ‘M’ (of the word OM). [OM has four letters or syllables—viz. A, O, U and M. Here, ‘M’ stands for the fourth state of consciousness that is known as the transcendental state.]

A wise man must understand the esoteric meaning of the words ‘Bhargo Devasya Dh’ in the above described manner.

[As has been said above, the letter ‘Dha’ refers to the ‘Deva’ who is being contemplated upon and firmly believed in by the worshipper. Hence, Dha + Ee completes the meaning. It means ‘I worship Brahm with firm conviction and belief; I know that he is the transcendental Authority of creation who lives in the inner-self of all living beings as their Atma and the truthful ‘self’, and that this Deva is none other than cosmic Consciousness that has revealed itself with all its dynamism in the form of Goddess Tripura.]

Now, we shall see what the word ‘Mahi’ means. It refers to an entity that is characterized by the presence of three elements—viz. Mahatwa (greatness, grandeur, stateliness, gravity, weight, magnificence, distinction, importance significance), Jadatwa (grossness) and Kathinya (hard, difficult, impregnable). This word refers to the ‘mother earth’ which possesses all these three characteristics. It is hard and difficult; it is full of oceans and mountains; it has seven continents or islands floating on the oceans; it is well endowed with forests; and it is bright and illuminated.

The letter ‘La’ (as in *luck*) stands for an entity that possesses all the grand and magnificent attributes of earth. [Since the supreme Creator has the life creating and sustaining powers as that possessed by earth, the letter ‘La’ applies to both Brahm as well as to earth. The importance of the earth vis-à-vis life in this creation is too obvious to need any explanation. Its grandeur and magnificence is show-cased by the beauty of its colourful and vibrant Nature. It is gross, heavy and dense to the core. It is hard to penetrate. But at the same time the earth harbours the most delicate and fragile forms of life and ecosystem, along with the hardest and the sternest forms.] [6].

7. Now, we shall discuss the next part of the Mantra, i.e. ‘Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayaat’.

This is the *fourth Paad* of Brahm¹. [As in the case of all the rest of Paads, this also represents the manifested form of Goddess Tripura as this Upanishad is dedicated to her.]

It refers to the Parmatma, the eternal Shiva, the one who is the most primary Bhut or element in creation, and who is supreme and transcendental.

‘Let this Lord live in us or amongst us, and inspire and direct our mind and the illuminated (pure conscious) Atma to have no desires for gross things, and instead think of and focus the attention on things that are sublime and divine by nature, things that are of unique holy dimension.’ One must silently contemplate in this manner.

It is this supreme transcendental cosmic entity (known as Parmatma; Brahm) that is self-illuminated, pure consciousness, ethereal, and without any form and body. This divine and eclectic entity lives in the subtle space of the heart of all creatures (as

their Atma). It is this entity that is revealed as the dynamic Shakti or energy and vitality of creation represented by the Beej Mantra ‘Hrim/Hrin(g)’.

This is how the attribute-less Divinity manifests as the Panch-Akshar, Panch-Bhuts, and Panchak. [The word ‘Panchak’ means ‘five’. Hence, (i) ‘Panch-Akshar’ are the five esoteric letter mentioned in this Canto—viz. Tat, Ae, Ee, La and Hrim/Hrin(g). (ii) The Panch-Bhuts are the five elements such as sky, air, fire, water and earth. And (iii) the Panchak are the five unique qualities such as it being self-illuminated, pure consciousness, ethereal, and without any form and body which lives in the subtle space of the heart of all creatures (as their Atma).]

A person who knows this esoteric secret gets corresponding rewards. [7].

[Note—¹The The 4 ‘Paads’, or limbs, legs, aspects, facets or pedestals of Brahm—The four ‘Paads’ of Brahm are the four legs upon which Brahm stands. These four Paads symbolically establish the greatness and supremacy of Brahm as the all-powerful and all-controlling Authority in this creation. Since Brahm is the supreme Divinity that has revealed itself in the from of this creation, since each and every unit of creation is a manifestation of Brahm and without Brahm nothing exists, nothing has any relevance and truth (refer *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 1), it follows that the entire creation represents Brahm’s four cosmic forms or aspects or facets—which are called the four legs or Paads of Brahm. This is a metaphoric way of saying that the supreme Brahm has manifested himself and is made known to this world by the means of these four mediums.

The four Paads of Brahm, literally meaning legs or pedestals or aspects of Brahm, stand, inter alia, for the four states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the Sushupta or deep sleep state, and the Turiya or transcendental state. This fact is affirmed in the Atharva Veda’s *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad*, Canto 1, paragraph 5; Canto 4, paragraphs 1-3.

These four Paads of Brahm have been explained elaborately in the following Upanishads—(i) Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 18, verse nos. 2-6, Canto 4, Section 5, verse no. 2, Canto 4, Section 6, verse no. 3, Canto 4, Section 7, verse no. 3, and Canto 4, Section 8, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1. (iii) Atharva Veda’s Mandukya Upanishad, verse nos. 3-7; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 4-7; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 5-8; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-19; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 5; Canto 4, paragraph nos. 2-3, 6; and Canto 8, paragraph no. 4; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse/paragraph nos. 2-14.

The Atharva Veda’s *Par Brahm Upanishad*, verse no. 5 describes the four places in the body of the Jiva, the living being and an embodiment of Brahm. These are the navel, the heart, the throat and the head. These are called the ‘four Paads of Brahm’ or the four seats where Brahm has revealed its ‘self’. This Brahm is known as the ‘Chatush Paad Brahm’.

In the navel region, Brahm reveals itself as the network of Naadis that have their origin here and are responsible for carrying sense perceptions throughout the body of the Jiva. In the heart, Brahm is revealed in the form of the Atma or pure consciousness that is said to reside in its subtle space called the Hridaya Akash. The heart is the only pumping station of the body which helps in circulation of the life-infusing blood throughout the body. The third spot, the throat, is where Brahm lives in the form of Pran or breath. It is the breath that keeps the body alive, and it is the throat by which a man speaks and eats. Speech is a sound manifestation of the Brahm, and of course without eating no Jiva can survive as this aspect of Brahm is sustainer of creation by ingesting food and imbibing liquids for life. Finally, the head is the location of Brahm as it is here that the brain is located; it is the site of wisdom, erudition, intelligence, knowledge and sub-conscious and all other aspects associated

with the mind that is the deemed revelation of Brahm's great ability to think and analyse.]

8. The wise ones call the supreme power of 'desires' as the 'Kaam-koot'. [Kaam means desires, and Koot means a mountain or treasury. That is, now we shall discuss the same Mantra with stress on its ability to fulfill all the desires of the worshipper.]

The first word 'Tat' in the thirty-two letters of the Mantra 'Tat Savitur-varenyam' etc. refers to divine entity known as the Parmatma (the supreme transcendental Atma, Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness), the eternal Shiva who is Akshar (one who is imperishable), who is Vimal (without faults and taints; one who is immaculate and perfect), and who is Nirupaadhi (one who has no specific honours, epithets or titles).

The letter 'Ha' (as in *hut*) has a close similarity with Shiva, and hence it is a personified form of the Lord. [It ought to be noted here that 'Ha' is the first letter of the word Hans meaning a divine Swan which is used as a metaphor for the Atma as well as Brahm. An ascetic who is highly enlightened is known as a Hans because he is pure, immaculate, uncorrupt and holy. Since Shiva is an epitome of self-realisation, holiness and purity as well as the patron god of ascetics, he is known as Hans. Hence the relevance of the letter 'Ha' in the context of Shiva is evident.]

Inspite of being an Akshar, it is still not so. [Here, there is play on the word 'Akshar'. It means a letter on the one hand, and an entity that is imperishable on the other hand. Therefore, 'Ha' is a letter that is not merely a letter of an alphabet, but has eclectic virtues of being imperishable. Therefore, Shiva and Brahm both are imperishable. They are the ones who inspire or create all desires on the one hand, and trounce the desires, crush the desires, and overcome them on the other hand.]

Therefore, inspite of being a mere letter, it (Ha) symbolizes Shakti (the power of sublimity, divinity and holiness). [A dead or powerless entity won't have any desire. Similarly, strength and power are needed to fulfill one's desires. Therefore, 'desires' are pivoted on Shakti. Shakti is needed to create desires, and then either to fulfill them or crush them.] [8].

9. In accordance to the explanation given above in the context of the Mantra 'Tat Savitur', the Moon (whose Beej or representative letter is 'Sa' as in son) should be placed after the Sun (whose Beej or representative letter is 'Ha' as in *hut*). [This is obvious when we examine the word 'Hans'. 'Ha' comes before 'Sa'. In the practical world also, the Sun has precedence over the Moon because the latter shines due to the light of the former, and also because the latter rises after the former has set.]

The light of the Sun lights up the region of the body between the Mooladhar Chakra and the Brahm Randhra. [The Sun is said to reside in the region of the navel, in the whirling energy center called the Nabhi Chakra. The Mooladhar Chakra is the lowest part of the abdomen in the region of the groins, and the Brahm Randhra is on the top of the head, in the cranium. Hence, the light of the Sun shining in this area is a metaphoric way of saying that this is the primary area of the body which is vital for its life and survival.]

'Sa' is known as one of its kind. [The letter 'Sa' also means 'it' or that'. Hence, here the letter refers to the Sun, instead of the Moon, and the ability of the Sun to infuse or inject life in this creation. The Sun is regarded as a visible manifestation of Brahm and embodies all the grand glories of Brahm.]

The Lord who is remembered as a unified form of Shiva (Hans; the Parmatma; the eternal Brahm) and Shakti (dynamic aspect of Shiva) is referred to by the terms

‘Tat’ and ‘Savita’. [‘Tat’ means ‘that’, and ‘Savita’ refers to the ‘Sun’. Hence, the word ‘Tat’ refers to the dynamic powers and energy of Brahm, the Supreme Being, revealed in the form of Savita, the Sun, and the representative word for which is ‘Ha’. It is a fact; it is ‘Sa’—i.e. it is ‘that’ Brahm who is being honoured and invoked when one prays to the Sun by employing the Savitri Mantra or the Gayatri Mantra.]

Shiva is the supreme Lord, and his Shakti (dynamism and energy) is manifested as the Jiva (the creature).

Therefore, Hans refers to the unified form of the Sun (Shiva) and the Moon (Shakti). [The Sun is the primary source that gives light which makes the Moon shine. Similarly, Shiva or Brahm is the primary source which empowers Shakti to drive the dynamo of life in this world. Just as the Moon derives its illumination from the Sun’s light falling upon it, Shakti derives its powers and abilities by the virtue of authority delegated to it by Brahm, the Principal Authority of creation.] [9].

10. The supreme Shiva who creates everything also creates Kaam (desires and passions).

Hence, whereas the letter ‘Ka’ (as in *kerb*) stands for Kaam, the word ‘Varenyam’ stands for light and illumination. [It is the desire in a man which inspires him to do something to fulfill his desires. ‘Desire’ to attain something literally ‘illuminates’ that thing for him, because only when he is aware of the presence of a certain thing would he have a desire to obtain it.] [10].

11. Now, we shall discuss another esoteric meaning of ‘Tat Saviturva-neyam Bhargo Devaha’.

The eternal nectar of creation (‘Kshir’) that irrigates (produces, nourishes, helps to create and develop, activates, sustains, fosters, fructifies) the rewards of all deeds, and provides the medium for obtaining these rewards by doing deeds is always acceptable. [The Kshir that is being referred to here is the pure consciousness that inspires all creatures to do deeds to fulfill their desires. It also enlightens them about the path to follow to reach their goals. Here, the term ‘deed’ does not mean worldly deeds, but refers to the creature’s spiritual endeavours. The reward is Mukti or liberation and deliverance, as well as enlightenment in the way of self and Brahm realisation. This fact is endorsed below.]

It is attainable by the union of the Parmatma and Jivatma. [This refers to success in Yoga when the individual creature, the Jiva, becomes self-realised and attains the fruit of enlightenment by being united with the Parmatma.]

This is represented by the third state of existence of consciousness (i.e. the Sushupta state of deep sleep) and the letter ‘Ha’.

It is the Lord Shiva who exists in this state. The Lord is without any blights, blemishes and taints, and is self-realised, wise and enlightened. [The Sushupta state is the third state of existence of consciousness of the creature when he crosses the first two stages of consciousness, i.e. the Jagrat or waking state, and Swapna or dreaming state. During the Sushupta state, the mind and sub-conscious become defunct and the creature enjoys complete bliss and peace. This is the state in which ascetics live; this is the state in which Shiva lives perpetually. This is the neutral state when the Atma is not influenced by the inputs of the external world which constantly bombard it in the other two states of its existence. Hence, it is untainted and uncorrupted during this third state of its existence.] [11].

12. That is why this state is known as supreme.

The letter 'Dhi' (of the word Dhimahi) signifies Dharna (belief and faith; thinking and remembrance). [Refer paragraph no. 6.]

Though the letter 'La' (as in *luck*) represents the gross element known as the earth, but when it comes after the letter 'Ha' (as in *hut*) that stands for illumination and Shiva it would obviously not be something gross and dark. Therefore, it represents the supreme element known as the pure Consciousness. [That is why the earth harbours such an astounding variety and vibrant forms of life, both as flora and fauna, inspite of it being made of the hardest and the grossest things in creation, such as rocks, mountains, metals and hardened crusts that form the core of earth's existence.]

Let me have this wisdom. Let the enlightened Shiva inspire my mind to abandon its grossness, and aim for sublimity and enlightenment instead. [Let me not think that I can't be wise and enlightened because my mind is always pulled towards the gross material things of the world. If I determine for myself, the same mind will be a springboard for my spiritual emancipation and salvation.]

It (the mind) is the abode of Kaam and its maverick tricks. [All desires and aspirations have their origin in the mind. The same mind can lead one to worldly entanglements on the one hand, and to spiritual upliftment and salvation on the other hand. It is how one uses the abilities of the mind that determines the results one gets from it. It is just like the case of modern science which has proved a boon for the human race when it is in the right hands, and a bane when it falls in pervert and demonic hands.]

Those who follow these six paths are able to attain the divine abode of Lord Vishnu. [That is, those who understand the hidden meaning of the full Mantra as described herein above are able to attain Brahm who is also known as Vishnu in his macrocosmic form as the Viraat Purush.]

The Lord asserts that there is no other way. [12].

13. Now, the Gayatri Mantra of thirty-two letters is being described from another angle as being equivalent to Shakti, the dynamic energy and power of Brahm.

'Tat Savitur-varenyam': The Atma (cosmic Consciousness) creates the sky, and from the sky is created the air. Whatever is under the jurisdiction of these entities is implied in the term 'Varenyam'. [That is, these are the most adorable and acceptable subtle aspects of creation. These entities are the primary elements in creation which are immaculate and uncorrupt for the simple reason that there is nothing yet to corrupt them as well as the fact that they are ethereal and most subtle aspects of creation. The rest of the elements have varying degrees of grossness in them; they have limited presence, reach and powers as opposed to these three primary elements. They are not as neutral and all-incorporating as the Atma, the sky and the air elements.]

The union of the Jivatma and the Parmatma is equivalent to the 'Savitru' part of the Mantra. ['Savitru' refers to the Sun which is the visible manifestation of the supreme Brahm and its dynamic energy that infuses and sustains life in this known world in the form of heat, light and energy that the Sun provides. Hence, the metaphor of the Sun is employed to imply that the Shakti of Brahm represented by the heat, energy and light of the Sun establishes a link between the creature known as the Jiva and the supreme Brahm known as the Parmatma.]

The word that represents Jiva (i.e. Hans) surely refers to the illumination and energy that is the hallmark of the Parmatma and manifested as the celestial Sun that embodies the glorious virtues of Brahm. [The word Hans, meaning the divine Swan,

has two letters—‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’. While ‘Ha’ is the Beej letter for Sun representing the fire element as well as Brahm, ‘Sa’ stands for the Moon and the grosser aspect of creation. Refer paragraph no. 9. The full word ‘Hans’ stands for the enlightened creature who has become self and Brahm realised, as well as has developed a high degree of wisdom and enlightenment. Hence, he is no less than a Sun in a metaphoric sense because his enlightenment and wisdom makes him shine in the world with the light of his knowledge, wisdom and erudition, and the rest of the society benefits from his wisdom much like the Moon benefiting from the light of the Sun by becoming illuminated itself.] [13].

14. ‘Bhargo Devasya Dhi’—this refers to Lord Shiva (or Brahm) who is remembered and invoked as the Lord who bears everything in this creation.

‘Mahi’ etc. refer to the earth which is blessed with the grand virtues of attraction, beauty and other visible charming aspects of creation.

This is how the Shakti Koot is explained (visualized; imagined). [That is, it is the way how the supreme Creator, who harbours everything in his bosom, and who has not only created everything but has also full provided for its growth and development, is compared to the earth which also harbours everything in its bowls in the sense that all forms of life and all things required to sustain and develop life are available in earth and provided by it just like the supreme Creator does in the context of the universe. The term ‘earth’ represents the cosmic Brahm at the microcosmic or the terrestrial level of creation just like the Sun represents Brahm at the celestial or macrocosmic level. Earth is only one of the many planets of the solar system of which the Sun is the pivot, just like the human being is one of the many forms that Brahm has taken in this world, the other obvious forms are the members of the plant kingdom, and other members of the animal kingdom.] [14].

[Note—It ought to be noted here that verse/paragraph nos. 2-14 of this Upanishad primarily deal with the famous Mantra known as the ‘Gayatri Mantra’.

The Gayatri Mantra—References: (i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14. (ii) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/1-9; Savitri Upanishad, which is entirely dedicated to it; Maitrayanyu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7. (iii) Atharva Veda = Surya Upanishad, verse no. 2; Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 3, verse no. 6; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1-15; Narsingh Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto/Upanishad 1, verse nos. 5-9; Gayatri Upanishad; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 40; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 4.

The *Gayatri Mantra* has *two versions* which are presented here. According to one version, it is based on the typical *Gayatri Chanda* which is a poetical composition consisting of three stanzas or lines each having eight letters or syllables. The total number of letters or syllables is thus twenty four. The Gayatri extolled by Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14 is the one strictly conforming to this rule. On the other hand, the usual and commonly known Gayatri Mantra has four steps or stanzas and is based on the composition style called the *Anushtup Chanda*.

The ‘Gayatri Chanda’ is used to compose the sacred hymns of the Vedas. Amongst the different composition styles, this is regarded as the best style of Chanda in which the Vedas were revealed (Jaimini Brahmin, 2/227) because it has the divine virtue and supernatural powers that provides protection to the Pran of the person who says the Gayatri Chanda and elevates his stature to that of the celestial Sun.

Let us first see the typical *Gayatri Chand pattern* of this divine Mantra. The Gayatri Mantra based on the style of this poetical composition is described in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad*, Canto 5, Brahman 14, of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. This Mantra having three steps is extolled as the one which is superior to other forms of

the Gayatri Mantra having four steps because this three-stepped Mantra is synonymous with Pran, i.e. it is the life or the essence of all that exists.

The Gayatri Mantra having three lines is the following—“Tatsaviturvarnyam Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat”. The fourth line honours and glorifies this Gayatri as a manifestation of the Sun God, and as brilliant and splendorous as it. It is—“Paro Rajase Savadoma”. Since the Sun is a visible manifestation of the supreme Brahm who is the Transcendental Consciousness of the entire creation at the macro level, having the Atma resident in the bosom of the individual creature as its micro level counterpart and Pran as its subtle manifestation, the Gayatri Mantra is in honour of the supreme Authority of creation, i.e. Brahm. The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph nos. 2-14 describes the Gayatri Mantra with these four lines in great detail in the context of Goddess Tripura who represents the dynamic cosmic power of creation that Brahm possesses.

Now the question arises that if the three lines are the complete Mantra, then what was the purpose of including the fourth line? It must be especially noted in this context here that this fourth step of leg of the Gayatri Mantra does not consist of any word which is a part of the main Mantra, but is only meant to establish its divine stature as the citadel for all spiritual Mantras; it is intended to give this Gayatri its place of honour in the pantheon of divine Mantras. Besides this, the fourth leg is visualised as a symbol of stability because anything that has four legs is more stable and steady as compared to one with only three.

Therefore, last stanza is like an epithet highlighting the magnificent divinity and spiritual value of the Gayatri Mantra. It is akin to the Sun shining in the sky, and all other planets and their satellites such as the moon shine because they reflect this light from their surface. The Sun is at the centre of the solar system even as the Gayatri is at the symbolic hub of all divinity and spiritually empowered Mantras. It is also akin to the Pran which supports life in a gross body of a creature and is an acronym for life as a whole. The Pran symbolically illuminates the dark realm of the body from the inside while the Sun does the same from the outside.

The actual Gayatri Mantra that should be preached to the spiritual aspirant consists of the first three steps as described in verse nos. 1-3 of Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14.

This famous Mantra is dedicated to the Sun God who is a manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm. It is this Mantra—which is a group of ethereal words having profound spiritual value and metaphysical importance. It is called Gayatri because it gave protection to the Pran—Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14, verse no. 4. It has been accepted as a manifestation of Pran in Shatpath Brahman, 1/3/5/15, while it is praised as having the potentials of Agni (fire) present in the faculty of speech known as Vak in Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/2/9/3, as Tej (energy) in Shatpath Brahman, 1/8/2/13, and as Brahm (the supreme transcendental consciousness) in Maitri Brahman, 4/3/1. According to the Purans (mythological histories of the Hindus), the Gayatri has been praised having manifested in the form of the Trinity Gods—Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder—Skanda Puran, Kashi Khand, Purva, 4/9/58. Whatever that exists is a revelation of Gayatri because it is a manifestation of Brahm—Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/1. In fact this whole earth that gives refuge to all the life forms in this world is a manifestation of Gayatri—Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/2. By worshipping it, a person is blessed with worldly assets such as abundant livestock and flourishing family, a long, healthy and active life, wealth and fortunes, good name and fame, as well as spiritual attainment in the form of Brahm realisation—Atharva Veda, 19/71/1.

Atharva Veda tradition's *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, in its Brahman 3, verse no. 6, and the *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, in its Canto 1, paragraph no. 4 describe that this Gayatri Mantra should be pronounced while one collects the urine of the cow as a necessary step in a ritualistic process of preparing the sacred Bhasma or the ash of the fire sacrifice that is to be worn by a spiritual aspirant.

The *Gayatri Mantra* is mentioned in its primary form in the *Surya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 2, which is exclusively dedicated to the Sun God. It has been expounded and elucidated upon also in *Brihad Aranyak Upanishad*, Canto 5, Brahman 14 and other Upanishads, such as the *Savitri Upanishad* which is entirely dedicated to it, the *Maitrayanyu Upanishad*, Canto 5, verse no. 7, the *Chandogya Upanishad*, Canto 3, Section 12, verse nos. 1-9 belonging to the Sam Veda tradition, and *Narsingh Purva Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto/Upanishad 1, verse nos. 5-9. Besides these, the *Gayatri Upanishad* appears as eight assorted verses or Kandikas numbering 31-38 of the Gopath Brahman belonging to the Atharva Veda.

It has been said in the scriptures that Brahmins, the highest class amongst the humans and who are regarded as the most learned and wise amongst them, were born from Gayatri, thereby drawing a parallel between the highest stature and exalted standing of Brahmins amongst the creatures and the Gayatri amongst the hymns. It is pertinent to note here by the way that Kshatriyas, the warrior class, were born from the Chanda known as Trishtup, and Vaishya, the trading class, from the Chanda known as Jagati. In other words, the divine and eclectic powers encrypted in the Trishtup Chanda revealed themselves as the Kshatriya, and those of the Jagati as the Vaishya. The Trishtup Chanda has four lines each having eleven letters or syllables, totaling forty four letters or syllables in all, while the Jagati Chanda has six lines with eight letters or syllables each, totaling to forty eight letters or syllables.]

15. Those who worship Goddess Tripura with the Mantra of fifteen letters¹ that is dedicated to her is able to fulfill all his desires, enjoy all that is worth enjoying, conquer the world (i.e. gain lordship and fame in the world; is able to command respect in the world so much so that his orders are honoured), becomes an expert in the spoken word (i.e. becomes an expert orator and a wise speaker), becomes one with Lord Rudra (i.e. becomes enlightened and wise like Shiva), and reaches the highest citadel of spiritual salvation and emancipation to attain Brahm by transcending the celestial heaven where Lord Vishnu resides.

[That is, he attains ‘true Mukti’ by reaching the Turiyateet state, which is the super-conscious state of existence. How the different steps or stages of Mukti vary from one another have been vividly depicted in the Tripadvibhuta Mahanarayan Upanishad which is Chapter 11 of this volume. It describes vividly the spiritual aspirant’s voyage through the different layers of heavens known as Vaikunths (abodes of Vishnu) before he reaches his final destination of Kaivalya Mukti when his Atma merges with the supreme Atma known as the Parmatma.] [15].

[Note—¹The fifteen letters are as follows—Ta + Tsa + Vi + Tu + Rva + Re + Nyam + Bha + Rgo + De + Va + Sya + Dhi + Ma + Hi = 15 letters of the Mantra ‘Tatsaviturvarenyam Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi’.]

16. Now, the esoteric knowledge pertaining to the combined worship of Lord Shiva and Shakti is being narrated. This Vidya (knowledge) is the most primary form of esoteric knowledge and has the following *twelve forms*. [This Vidya has many subdivisions named after the great sages and hermits who practiced its particular phase in order to harness the divine Shakti (dynamic mystical powers) of Shiva.]

The first is the ‘Shakti Koot’ Vidya symbolizing Shiva and Shakti, and should be regarded as occupying the *first place*. [The word ‘Shakti’ means power, energy, strength and authority. The word ‘Koot’ means a collection, a group, a mountain or hill, a fort or citadel. Hence, this Vidya lists the group of esoteric letters that provide the subtle energy to the worshipper which is an integral part of the Mantra dedicated to Goddess Tripura. It is used in occult form of Tantra worship. The esoteric letters

that represent this Vidya are ‘Sa’ for Shiva, ‘Ka’ for Kaam, ‘La’ for earth as well as the powers to create that the supreme Brahm possesses, and ‘Hrim’ representing the Shakti or dynamic aspect of Brahm that creates the world. These correspond to the Jagrat or waking state, which refers to the first place.]

The next Vidya is called the ‘Lopa Mudra’ Vidya. It should be regarded as occupying the *second place*. [The word ‘Lopa’ means hidden or vanished from sight. This is the subtle state of existence which corresponds to the Swapna or dreaming state when the visible world vanishes from sight. The group of esoteric letters that represent this state are ‘Ha’ standing for Hans which implies the Atma; ‘Sa’ for the Moon which shines in the night as this state refers to dreams which occur when a creature sleeps during the night; ‘Ka’ for Kaam or desires that are generated during the waking state but remain unrequited, and therefore reflected in the dreams; ‘Ha’ for the Sun; ‘La’ for the world that exists in dreams much like the visible earth during the waking state; and ‘Hrim’ representing the Shakti or dynamic aspect of Brahm that creates dreams and makes them so lively and surreal that a creature who dreams regards the world of dreams as the real thing, a world which he thinks to be as real as the world which exists during the waking state.]

The third Vidya is the one that precedes the Shakti without its Bindu, and the one that precedes the letter Hrim. It should be regarded as occupying the *third place*. [This Vidya and its group of esoteric letters was first used by sage Durbasa, who was an epitome of anger, to worship Goddess Tripura. The group of esoteric letters that correspond to this secret Vidya are ‘Ha’, ‘Sa’, ‘Ka’, ‘Ha’, ‘La’ and ‘Hirm’. It is called ‘Durbasa Vidya’ to honour this sage. It corresponds to the Sushupta or deep sleep state. This shows that though sage Durvasa appeared to be an epitome of anger and vehemence, getting annoyed and cursive at the slightest provocation, internally he was a detached and an enlightened soul of a high degree, being unconcerned about the affairs of the world and what his actions would mean for the rest of the people around him. He therefore exemplified the paradoxical nature of realised souls. This unique character of sage Durvasa has been explicitly brought out in Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, and is Chapter no. 27 of the present volume.]

The ‘Vagvakoot’ of this ancient Vidya is also called Maanvi, Chaandri and Kaubari. [The word ‘Vagbhava’ refers to speech and the power of words, the Goddess who is their patron, as well as the inherent power, energy, strength and authority that they possess.]

First is the Manu Vidya or the Manavi Vidya. It was first employed by Manu, the first male, and hence named after him. It should be regarded as occupying the *fourth place*. For its construction, the following sequence is visualized—first is the Madan (the Lord of passions called Kamdeo), then the auspicious Vagbhava (the Goddess of speech), then Kaam Koot (letters representing Kaam or desires and passions), followed by Shakti Koot (letters representing Shakti). [The esoteric Manu or Manavi Vidya consists of the following letters—‘Ha’, ‘Sa’, ‘Ka’, ‘Ha’, ‘La’, ‘Hrim’, ‘Ka’, ‘Ae’, ‘Ee’, ‘La’ and ‘Hrim’. It corresponds to the Sushupta state of consciousness.]

The next esoteric Vidya is called ‘Chandra Vidya’. It is the fifth Vidya. It consists of Shiva-Shakti, followed by Vagbhava, and once again by Shiva-Shakti. It should be regarded as occupying the *fifth place*. [The Chandri Vidya consists of the following letters—‘Ha’, ‘Sa’, ‘Ka’, ‘Ha’, ‘La’, ‘Hrim’, ‘Ka’, ‘Ae’, ‘Ee’, ‘La’, ‘Hrim’, ‘Ha’, ‘Sa’, ‘Ka’, ‘Ha’, ‘La’, ‘Hrim’, ‘Sa’, ‘Ka’, ‘La’ and ‘Hrim’. It corresponds to the Turiya or the post-Sushupta state of consciousness.]

When the 'Chandri Vidya' is added to other Vidyas such as 'Shiva Vidya' etc., it transforms into the 'Kaubari Vidya' (i.e. the knowledge that helps the worshipper invoke the blessings of Kuber, the treasurer of Gods). It should be regarded as occupying the *sixth place*. Those who are well-versed in this knowledge are able to access wealth equivalent to that possessed by Kuber. [The esoteric letters that are used in this worship are the following—'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'Ee', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim'. This corresponds to the Pragya state of consciousness.]

When the fourth letter of the alphabet (i.e. 'Ee' as in *feel*) is removed from the sequence, and when each esoteric group of letters is prefixed by the Sun-letter (i.e. 'Ha') and suffixed by the Moon-letter (i.e. 'Sa'), the secret Mantra takes a form which is known as 'Agastya Vidya' (as it was formulated and first used by this sage). This Vidya provides the benefits of Kaam (fulfillment of desires) and Aishwarya (fame, majesty and glories) that sage Agastya possessed. It should be regarded as the *seventh* Mantra which can rapidly show mystical results. [The word 'Dhaamini' has a female connotation and refers to the Mantra, dedicated to a Goddess, which can bear quick results. The sequence of esoteric letters of this Vidya is as follows—'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La' and 'Hrim'. This corresponds to the Viraj state of consciousness.]

For the next esoteric Mantra, the letter 'Ha' at the beginning of the Agastya Vidya should be repeated twice followed by the letters for Kaam, Madan, Shakti and the beginning of the consonant letters, i.e. the letter 'Ka'. In this Mantra, the vowel sound of the complete consonant letters 'Sa' and 'Ka' should be converted into half-syllables. This is called 'Nandi Vidya' (as it was pronounced by Nandi, the bull-mount of Lord Shiva). It is the *eighth* Vidya. It is also a quick provider of mystical results. [The 'Nandi Vidya' is the following esoteric sequence of letters—'Ha', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La' and 'Hrim'. This Vidya corresponds to the state when the consciousness exists in its primary state as the Sutraatma—the subtle Atma.]

The Agastya Vidya consisting of Vagbhava (speech and the power of words; the Goddess who is the patron of speech; the inherent power, energy, strength and authority of letters), words (formed by letters and expressed in speech) and their subtle meaning, followed by Maya Shakti (the esoteric letter symbolizing the power of Maya or delusions) are collectively called the 'Prabhaakari Vidya'. It is the *ninth* Vidya. [The esoteric group of letters of this Vidya are the following—'Ka', 'Ae', 'Ee', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La', 'Hrim'.]

The next esoteric Vidya is known as the 'Shanmukha Vidya' because it was first formulated and used by sage Shanmukha. It is the *tenth* Vidya. It comes after the Agastya Vidya and Vagbhava Vidya, and consists of various esoteric letters and Beej Mantras arranged as follows—Shakti Beej (Hrim), the Kaam Beej (Klim), the Shiva-Shakti Beej (Hans), the Kaam Beej (Klim), the Dharaa Beej (Lum; this stands for the earth), the Maya Beej (Hrim), the Mahima Beej (Sa), and then the three Beejs (Hans, So-a-Ham, Hans). [The esoteric group of letters of this tenth Vidya are the following—'Hrim', 'Klim', 'Hans-ha', 'Klim', 'Lum', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'So-a-ham', 'Klim', 'Hans-ha', 'Hrim', 'Hans-ha', 'So-a-ham' and 'Hans-ha'.]

The next esoteric Vidya is known as 'Param Shiva Vidya'—i.e. the esoteric Vidya dedicated to the supreme Lord Shiva. When the Agastya Vidya is placed after the Shanmukha Vidya, the worshipper attains the supreme Shiva. This Lord is the patron God of the last stage of one's spiritual endeavours. This Vidya is the *eleventh* form of esoteric Vidya. A person who invokes this Vidya with faith and devotion is able to attain the state when he becomes one with Shiva. [The esoteric group of letters of this eleventh Vidya, called the Param Shiva Vidya, are the following—'Hrim', 'Klim', 'Hans-ha', 'Klim', 'Lum', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'So-a-ham', 'Klim', 'Hans-ha', 'Hrim', 'Hans-ha', 'So-a-ham', 'Hans-ha', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La' and 'Hrim'.]

The final Vidya pertains to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of creation and the invisible, all-incorporating macrocosmic gross form of Brahm, the Supreme Being. This is the *twelfth* Vidya, and is known as 'Vishnu Vidya'. It should be faithfully and devotionally invoked in order to attain Lord Vishnu. It is composed by placing Vagbhava Vidya with the Agastya Vidya, Kaubari Vidya, Kaam-kala Vidya, and Shakti Koot which is inferior to the Lopa Mudra. [The esoteric group of letters of this twelfth Vidya, called the Vishnu Vidya, are the following—'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'Ee', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ka', 'Ae', 'Ee', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Ha', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La', 'Hrim', 'Sa', 'Ka', 'Ha', 'La' and 'Hrim'.] [16].

17. [Now, Lord Sada Shiva (the eternal Shiva) describes the magnificent glorious form of the divine Goddess known as Tripura as follows—]

The Lord (Shiva) said, 'When one hears this Vidya narrated by me and understands its profound metaphysical import, it is deemed that such a person becomes enlightened about the fact that everything is Brahm (the Supreme Being and the cosmic transcendental Consciousness personified). Whatever that appears to be different from Brahm is also Brahm. [In other words, all things, whether within grasp or not, whether visible or not, whether comprehensible or not, are nothing but Brahm. There is nothing in this creation, including the Goddess Tripura, that is not Brahm.]

One must accept this supreme transcendental Vidya and its patron Goddess (Tripura) with greatest of faith, reverence and devotion.

This great Goddess is known as Kamakhya (one who fulfills desires), Purva (the primary and most ancient), Turiya (the one who is liberated and without any limitations of the mortal world), Turiyateet (the one who is even beyond the Turiya; one who is eternally transcendental), Sarwotkata (the one who is the best and most exalted), and Sarwamantra-sanagata (the one who is worshipped by all the Mantras).

She is the deity established or consecrated on the major Peeths or sub-Peeths. [That is, she is the Goddess worshipped in the holy sites, whether major ones or minor ones, where the Goddesses are worshipped.]

She is surrounded on all the sides by Gods who pay their obeisance to her.

She has all the Kalaas (skill and expertise), and pervades uniformly in all the different Kalaas (units, divisions, fractions) of this creation.

She is delightful, happy, joyous and cheerful (Samoda).

She is as sweet as honey and nectar (Saparaga).

She has a most compassionate, accommodating and friendly heart (Sahridaya).

She is like an embodiment of Amrit, the invigorating elixir of life and eternity (Samrita).

She has all the skills and expertise that one can possess (Sakalam).

She is complete in all respects, having all the organs (that symbolize all the units of creation). That is, she is not handicapped in any manner whatsoever (Seindriyam).

She is always risen and shining (Sadoditam).

She is known as Trikuta and Tripura. [That is, she is the divine Goddess who lives on the three legendary mountains, and is the one who is the Goddess of the three worlds represented by the terms Bhu for the terrestrial world, Bhuvaha for the sky, and Swaha for the heavens. The term Tripura also refer to the divine consort of Shiva who is called Tripurari because he had killed the demon known as Tripurasur.]

She is a personification of the best aspects of Maya (the delusion-creating power of Brahm which is the primary force behind creation).

She is the supreme Goddess for the worshippers of Lord Vishnu (i.e. she is a personified form of Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu).

The worshipper should enshrine the Goddess, who is the supreme Bhagwati (one of the names of the cosmic Mother) as well as the eternal Maya (the delusion-creating power of Brahm which is the primary force behind creation) in the core of his lotus-like heart.

This Goddess is the one who controls and regulates all the organs of her devotees (i.e. she controls and regulates their deeds and actions), and provides their mind and heart with cheerfulness, delight, happiness and joys.

She holds a bow and arrow in her hands (as a sign of her eagerness to vanquish enemies and evil forces of creation).

She is the Goddess who is the patron deity of the tongue and the words it speaks.

She is the Goddess who is at the core (center) of the shining full moon. [That is, she forms the essence of the beauty, charm, grandeur, glory and magnificence of Nature that the full moon is a metaphor for.]

She is the moon with all its changing phases personified.

She has manifested herself as the seventeen subtle aspects of creation that form the Linga Deha of the living being. [These seventeen elements that constitute the Linga Deha of the creature are the following—the five organs of perception (ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin) + the five organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, anus and genital) + the five Prans (the five subtle forms of the vital winds present inside the body—such as Pran, Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaana) + one Mana (mind) + one Buddhi (intellect) = 17. Refer Shaarirako-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 16.]

The great Goddess is ever-present. She holds a snare ('Paash') and a goad ('Ankush') in her attractive hands (to indicate that she can put under leash, vanquish and control all reckless, sinful and evil creatures of creation).

The Goddess with three eyes (Trineta) is as radiant and splendid as well as powerful and majestic as the fully shining sun that has risen high up in the sky.

The worshipper should enshrine this great Goddess who is also Laxmi personified. [By alluding to Laxmi it is implied here that she is a personified form of the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, and can grant the worshipper all worldly wealth and glories.]

This great Goddess is endowed with all the virtues and attributes that are metaphorically represented by Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth, opulence and majesty).

She has all the divine attributes and virtues imaginable.

She is a personified form of Chaitanya—i.e. she is spiritually enlightened, awakened and realised.

She is without any faults, blemishes, corruptions or darkness of any other kind (Niranjan).

She is a resident of the Trikut (the legendary three mountains).

Her face is sweet and charming. She has a beautiful countenance (Smit-mukhi).

She is known as Maha-Maya, i.e. the personified form of the great delusion-creating powers of Brahm.

She is fortunate and is most beautiful; she has all the auspicious and glories virtues in her; her divine consort is eternal—i.e. she is never widowed (Subhaga).

She is revealed in the form of the stupendous power and energy contained in the Kundalini (the serpent-like coiled energy center of the body located at the lower end of the spine).

She is the cosmic energy that lives subtly in the center of the symbolic triangle present in the lower end of the body. [This refers to the *Kaamroop Peeth* which is situated in the center of the triangle formed by the Muladhar Chakra located in the perineum, the Swadisthan Chakra located at the base of the genital organs, and the Manipur Chakra located in the navel region. Refer Krishna Yajur Veda's Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 44-45; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 170-171, Canto 5, verse no. 8.]

She is indescribable and incomprehensible.

She is the divine Goddess who lives in the Sripeeth (i.e. the *Kaamroop Peeth* mentioned above).

She is the supreme Goddess known as Bhairavi (the divine consort of Bhairav, one of the forms of Lord Shiva), Chitkalaa (the various aspects of consciousness), and Maha Tripura.

The worshipper should meditate upon this great Goddess with great attention.

Those who understand this Goddess in the way described above are indeed very fortunate. This is the teaching of this great Upanishad. [17].

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Canto 2

1. To read the great mantras of Goddess Tripura with the avowed aim of attaining the blessings of the Goddess, one should offer the Soma (the sanctified liquid) to the Jatveda fire.

The assembled sages requested Lord Shiva—‘Oh Lord! Please enumerate the various Beej Mantras that come before, during and at the end of the various Richas (hymns).’ [1].

2 The Lord replied—‘Incant the Richa (hymn) ‘Jatvedase Sunavam Somam’ (I respectfully offer the sanctified Soma to the Jatveda fire). Repeat the last Koot of the Adi Vidya in the reverse order. [The word ‘Koot’ refers to the sequence of esoteric letters of the Adi Vidya. The ‘Adi Vidya’ refers to the primary form of knowledge pertaining to the divinity. Hence, this Koot consists of the esoteric letters ‘Sa’, ‘Ka’, ‘La’ and ‘Hrim’]

Add the long vowel sound of the primary vowel (i.e. the sound of 'Aa' as in *master*; *rather*) to the first letters of the group of letters coming under the category of the first and second Koots. [Thus, the changed letters are: 'Ka' + Aa = Kaa; 'Ha' + Aa = Haa.]

It is said that the hymns such as 'Sunavam Somam' remove ignorance. These hymns destroy all kinds of ignorance and delusions that make one believe in anything other than Brahm; it eliminates all delusions about the fact that everything is Brahm and nothing but Brahm.

That is why it is called the best, the one that provides immense bliss and contentedness, and is most auspicious and holy. [2].

3. The first Koot (group of esoteric letters known as the Vagbhava Koot) is a treasury of all spiritual wealth and a provider of freedom from all sorts of entanglements.

The second Koot (called the Kaam Koot) is the one that is the cause of establishment; it establishes and fulfills desires for getting established.

The third Koot (known as the Shakti Koot) the cause for all other Koots. [This is because Shakti means energy and strength. These virtues are needed in success in any enterprise, temporal or spiritual.]

When one worships Goddess Tripura with her Mantra keeping this in mind or remembering these facts, it provides purity of Mana (mind, sub-conscious and heart).

When the Jatveda fire is worshipped by the hymn 'Jatvedas Sunavam Somam' keeping the above facts in mind, the great knowledge known as 'Maha Vidyeshwari' is accessed by the worshipper. [3].

4. Having faith in the Vidya pertaining to the Goddess Tripura, and repeating the hymn dedicated to the Jatveda fire along with the syllables of Pranav (i.e. of the Mantra 'OM', of which the three syllables are A, U and M) which stand as a symbol for the eternal cosmic Lord Shiva (Brahm), the worshipper is able to access the divine subtle energy that is represented by the auspicious Kundalini as well as by the symbolic triangle. [The Kundalini is the coiled energy center at the base of the spine which is aroused by Yoga or meditative exercises. The 'triangle' refers to the Kaamroop Peeth which is situated in the center of the triangle formed by the Muladhar Chakra located in the perineum, the Swadisthan Chakra located at the base of the genital organs, and the Manipur Chakra located in the navel region.] [4].

5. The patron deity of the first Koot (group of esoteric letters) of the Adi Vidya (primary knowledge) is Vagbhava. [The first Koot is the series of letters headed by 'Ka'.]

The patron deity of the second Koot of the Adi Vidya is Kaam-kalaalaya. [The second Koot is the series of letters headed by 'Ha'.]

[Now, first the importance of the Koot starting with the letter 'Ka' vis-à-vis the Supreme Being is being explained:—] The Parmatma (the Supreme Being) is evident in the pronunciation of the words 'Jat'. [The word 'Jatveda' refers to the cosmic and universal fire element. The latter has no form and specific attributes; it is invisible yet omnipresent; it is most powerful and potent element; it is pure itself and has the ability to purify. All these are the characteristic virtues of the Supreme Being.]

The word 'Jat' refers therefore to the eternal and supreme Lord Shiva.

A person begins to have desires as soon as he takes birth. When desires are abandoned, the man attains contentedness and fulfillment. Discarding of Kaam (desires) gives him a sense of completeness—this is what those who are Brahm-

realised ('Brahm Gyanis') say. I also reaffirm this fact. [In this context, the word 'Jat' implies 'birth'. It also means one's family lineage. Here, the lineage is from Brahm or Lord Shiva. Hence, when one overcomes desires, he is one like Shiva.]

The Beej letter of the earth is 'La'. It is also symbolic of the three eclectic states of the creature. Hence, 'La' assumes three forms called 'La-traya'. ['Traya' means three. These three states refer to 'Sat-Chit-Anand'. 'Sat' means 'truth', 'Chit' means 'consciousness', and 'Anand' means 'bliss'.]

So when one gets true bliss and realises the truth of the consciousness with the aid of Mantras, he is certainly the one who attains the same stature as that of Shiva who is an embodiment of the virtues of Sat, Chit and Anand. In other words, a wise worshipper sees these virtues in the letters of the Mantra. [He literally 'reads between the lines' in the sense that he sees more to the Mantra than their being merely a jumble of senseless alphabets.]

This is how the Gotra (lineage; inheritance) of the Mantras are explained. [That is, this is how the importance of the Mantras is explained. In other words, the real benefit from any given set of Mantra is derived when the worshipper contemplates upon Brahm and remembers the divine glories of Brahm while offering worship with any Mantra. He then gets the truthful spiritual reward in the form of attaining self and Brahm realisation which is marked by Sat-Chit-Anand.]

[Now, the importance of the second Koot starting with the letter 'Ha' is being explained:—] After this comes the Kaam-kalaa-laya Koot (that starts with the letter 'Ha'). The explanation given for the Vagbhava Koot (as described above) is also applicable here.

This eclectic and holistic knowledge of Mantras is applicable to all of them as all Mantras are always made up of letters. [5].

6. After having explained the worship of Goddess Tripura in the context of the worship of the Jatveda fire, what remains to be explained is its relevance to the Parmeshwar, the Supreme Being (Brahm) who is also known as 'Param Jyoti' as he is brilliantly self-illuminated.

The fourth state of consciousness known as the Turiya (transcendental state of consciousness) is equivalent to the complete light of enlightenment that is obtained when the worshipper experiences the glorious state of complete self-realisation. This is like the complete Mantra for Pranav having the Bindu. [This refers to the sign of OM which has a concave dish with a dot on its top placed above it. This sign in Yoga refers to complete enlightenment, and is a symbol of Shiva with Shakti, or a union of the individual creature with Brahm.]

One must understand that all the three states of existence, viz. the first state known as Jagrat, the second state known as Swapna, and the third state known as Sushupta, are incorporated in the fourth state of Turiya. [When the worshipper attains the Turiya state he becomes all-knowing.] Therefore, he is deemed to be aware of what is experienced during all these pervious states. In other words, the 'light' of knowledge that shines in the fourth state is comprehensive. It is equivalent to Shiva and his supreme enlightenment metaphorically depicted as 'light'.*

The notion 'I am' should also be understood in this context. That is, 'I' (the Atma) am the Shiva who is fully enlightened and stays in the Turiya state of transcendental existence.

The Sarwakaari Vidya should also be understood in a comprehensive manner in the sense that all the various Vidyas refer to the same universal essence known as the Atma that is a personification of the supreme Brahm.

This explains the esoteric meaning of the hymn ‘Jatvedas Sunavam Somam’ etc. that is read with other Mantras of the Sarwakari Vidya. They all refer to the Shiva and Shakti who are one unified form of Divinity, and not separate from one another.

A wise person who knows this Adi Vidya gets all protection from delusions, and is able to attain the abode of Lord Shiva. Such a person is most fortunate and auspicious [6].

[Note—*This part of the paragraph can be interpreted as follows also—All the three primary esoteric Vidyas, such as Vagbhava which is the first Vidya, the Kaam-koot Vidya which is the second one, and the Shakti-koot Vidya which is the third, are deemed to be incorporated in the Sarwa-rakshakari Vidya. When one understands the underlying philosophy of these independent Vidyas that each of them describes no one else but the supreme transcendental Brahm in its different aspects, such a wise person becomes all-knowing because there is nothing left to be known. This knowledge is ‘Sarwa-rakshakari’ because it protects against all delusions and ignorance; it protects the worshipper from getting entangled in countless doctrines that are more often than not contradictory to each other and cancel each other out. This is because they do not speak the ‘truth’, as ‘truth’ can never be two; ‘truth’ can never be more than one.]

7. Now we shall narrate the Vidya (esoteric knowledge) that pertains to Goddess Tripura as she is worshipped by the means of a ‘Chakra’ (a wheel for doing worship) which is built around various Beej Mantras (seed or root letters related to the various aspects of the dynamic powers of Brahm revealed as Goddess Tripura).

The Mantra ‘Jatvedas Sunavam Somam’ (that is said at the time of offering oblations of Soma to the sacred fire known as Jatvada) should be incanted alongside invoking Goddess Tripura who is an eternal manifestation of the combined virtues, glories, potentials and powers of Shiva and Shakti. [Here, Shiva stands for Brahm, the Supreme Being, and Shakti for the dynamic powers and authority of Brahm.]

‘Jatveda’ stands for Shiva, and the letter ‘Sa’ stands for Shakti.

The Goddess stands for Shiva (Brahm) and Adi-Shakti (i.e. the primordial energy), as well as for the Bhuts (elements; the creatures that came into existence as result of the union of Shiva and Shakti).

She resides in and moves around the Trikut (the legendary mountains having three peaks; here symbolizing the three worlds—the past, the present and the future, as well as the terrestrial, the celestial and the nether worlds).

She is manifested in the form of the Sun and the Moon.

She is obtainable or attainable by the medium of Mantras (divine formulas); she lives in a secret form in the Mantras, and lends them their powers and potentials.

She is Maha-Laxmi, the great Goddess of wealth and prosperity, as well as the divine consort of Lord Vishnu.

Goddess Tripura is always arisen and enlightened; she is always evident in her manifested forms.

The worshipper should say the Mantra ‘Jatvedas Sunavam Somam’ while remembering (keeping in mind) the knowledge preached above.

The word ‘Veda’ (Jat + ‘Vedas’) represent the consciousness that is eternal and truthful. [It also means the consciousness that has manifested itself as the Hans, the divine Swan which is employed to symbolize the Atma that is eternal and truthful.]

By placing a Bindu (a dot) on this word Veda (i.e. when it is pronounced as ‘Vedam’) and the worshipper sitting in the posture known as Siddhasan¹, he is able to properly worship Goddess Tripura. This is called ‘Tripura Malini Vidya’. [The Bindu

represents the 'Shakti' aspect of Brahm. Hence, the placing of the Bindu or the dot on the word Veda has two connotations—one, it helps the worshipper to invoke and activate the dynamic powers that are inherent in the Mantras or hymns of the Vedas, and two, it invokes the dynamic cosmic powers of the Supreme Being manifested in the form of Goddess Tripura by offering oblations to the Lord by the use of these hymns of the Vedas.]

The worshipper should say the Mantra 'Jatvedas Sunavam Somam' while remembering Goddess Tripura and deeply think that she (i.e. her dynamic powers) are present in a subtle form in the esoteric letters 'Ka' and 'La'. [It ought to be noted here that these two letters form the word 'Kalaa = Ka + Laa'. This word means aspect or facet. Hence, the worshipper is basically honouring the ability of the supreme Brahm to infuse the letters of the alphabet with their astounding powers which enable the words formed by their combination to express great things, and reveal the magnificence and glory of Brahm through the Vedas because the latter are also basically a combination of letters that form words of the hymns which constitute the text of the Vedas.]

Then, the worshipper should offer prayer to the image of Goddess Tripura who is the Goddess of the entire world. [That is, after having worshipped the Goddess in her manifestation as the Vedas, the fire known as Jatvedas, the letters represented by Ka and La, one should visualize the invisible Goddess in the form of an iconic image, known as a 'Murti'.]

He should incant the Mantras 'Jatvedas Sunavam Somam' and invoke the Goddess Tripura-Laxmi while offering oblations to the sacred fire. The 'fire' of the sacrifice, or the Jatvedas fire to which the oblations are being offered by the worshipper, is the mouth of the supreme Goddess who is an embodiment of three lights, known as Tri-jyoti. [The three Jyotis or lights refer to the three grand virtues of the Spirit, viz. Sat or truthfulness, Chit or consciousness, and Anand or bliss. It also refers to the three Gunas that constitute the basic elements that mould all characters in the world—viz. Sata Guna, Raja Guna, and Tama Guna.]

This is the knowledge pertaining to the proper way of offering of oblations to and worship of the Mother Goddess Tripura ('Tripur-amba' = 'Amba' means 'mother'). [7].

[Note—¹The Siddhasan:-This Aasan or sitting posture of Yoga has been described in Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 2, verse no. 49 ½ as follows—"A Siddhasan or Siddha Aasan (literally, a posture that bestows mystical powers, or a posture that only accomplished experts can do) is when the ankle of the left foot is tucked under the suture (which is a fold of skin between the anus and the testicles) and the right foot is placed on the top of the genitals. The body is kept erect in this posture. To sit in this posture, the two legs are first stretched out. The left leg is then bent at the knee and folded in so that the heel touches the genitals and the sole lies flat against the inner thighs of the right leg. Then the right leg is folded in and the heel is placed in front of the pubic bone right above the testicles, and the sole touches the inner thigh of the previously folded left leg. The two hands are stretched out and the outer side of the wrist of each hand is placed on the bent knee joint of the respective side. The palm is opened and the thumb is touched by the bent first finger to form a virtual ring, with the remaining three fingers held out straight. The practitioner sits perfectly in a ram-rod straight position, with the spine, the neck and the head in a straight line. The mental sight is fixed on a spot in front of the nose, and this state of intense concentration is maintained as long as is feasible for the practitioner. Then the legs are gradually unfolded, and after some period of relaxation the process is repeated with the opposite leg being folded in first and placed below the other leg. [It is believed that this posture is one of the best postures

to be adopted for Yoga amongst the eighty four lakh (84×10^5) postures of meditation. The fact that there are as many numbers of Aasans as there are species of living beings is endorsed by Dyanbindu Upanishad, verse no. 42 of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. This Siddha Aasan is capable of cleansing all the seventy two thousand Naadis (ducts in the body), and is so-called because it is possible to access the divine source of cosmic energy trapped inside the body as well as experience the cosmic power of the kindled Spirit by employing this Aasan. The word 'Siddha' implies one who has acquired stupendous mystical and supernatural powers that are beyond the parameters of the physical and mundane world.] (49 ½).”]

8. The worshipper should remember and invoke the Goddess with the Mantra ‘Sa Naha Parshadati Durgaani Vishwaa’—i.e. the Goddess known as Durga is the one who lights up the whole creation, and is manifested in the form of the Bhuts, meaning the elements as well as the creatures.

She (Durga) should be regarded as the one Goddess who bears the whole world, sustains it and controls it. The esoteric Vidya (knowledge) related to her worship should be employed to successfully accomplish various Karmas or deeds. [8].

9. In this way we have outlined the eight esoteric Vidyas related to the great Goddess Tripura. [These eight Vidyas are the following—Tripura Vidya = the Vidya related to Goddess Tripura; Maha-Vishweshwari Vidya = the Vidya related to the Goddess of the creation; Sarwa-rakshaakari Vidya = the Vidya that provides all-round protection; Tripureshi Vidya = the Vidya related to the Ish or Goddess of the three worlds; Atma-san-rupini Vidya = the Vidya that establishes the uniformity between Brahm and the Atma; Shiva-Shakti-rupini Vidya = the Vidya that relates to the joint forces of creation represented by Shiva and his dynamic powers revealed as Shakti; Tripura-vasini Vidya = the Vidya related to the divine Goddess who lives in a subtle form in the three worlds and all its three aspects, such as the three phases of time (past, present and future), the three states of consciousness (Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta), the three chief directions (zenith, center and nadir), the three bodies (gross, subtle and causal) etc.; and Tripur-amba Vidya = the Vidya related to the cosmic Mother known as Tripura.] [9].

10. [Now, the actual discussion of the Chakra begins.]

The Gods asked the Lord (Shiva), ‘Oh Lord! Please tell us about that chief and most powerful ‘Chakra’ that can fulfill all desires and wishes, that is available to all and can be employed easily, that encompasses in its form all forms of worship and stands as a single source for invoking divine powers (i.e. it is like a single-window solution for all worship needs of the aspirant), that is a symbolic face of the whole world (i.e. any offerings made to it would be deemed to be made to all the numerous patron deities who rule over the world), and that is the door or medium of attaining Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation).

By worshipping this Chakra, Yogis (ascetics) are able to break all the formidable spiritual knots that exist in the form of doubts and confusions about the Truth and Reality, and attain the supreme transcendental Brahm who is beyond reproach and doubts.’ [10].

[Note—The Chakra is a wheel used in formal forms of ritualistic worship. It is geometric diagram having various sections marked by lines. In this sections or chambers the various Beej Mantras of different Gods and Goddess, symbolizing various aspects of divinity and powers of Brahm, are enshrined, thereby empowering the Chakra with stupendous occult powers. The Chakra is employed especially in

occult forms of worship of Goddesses, and form an integral part of Tantra worship. The word 'Tantra' itself implies an instrument, an instrument that can be used to harness cosmic powers, energy and dynamism of Nature to attain mystical abilities that are normally beyond reach of a creature.]

11. The Lord replied, 'I shall describe the 'Sri Chakra'.

[The Sanskrit text for the construction or drawing of the Sri Chakra is very complicated; hence a simplified version is narrated here.]

An equilateral triangle is first drawn. With this triangle as a measuring standard, four more consecutive triangles are drawn outside it in a proportionate way so that their lines are parallel to each other, the distance between any given two such triangles is constant, and their areas increase in a fixed ratio. Thus we have five such triangles.

Now, an inverted series of five equilateral triangles are drawn over this earlier set of triangles in a similar way such that they form mirror image of the first set. Thus, now there are a total of $5 + 5 = 10$ triangles. Out of these, five are erect triangles, and five are inverted triangles. That is, we have complex structure of crisscrossing and overlapping triangles which present a visual picture of triangles within triangles.

However, this pattern produces primarily two big outer triangles—one with the apex pointing up, and the other with its apex pointing down. Since each outer triangle has three points, there are a total of six outer points around which the first circle is drawn in such a manner that the six points of the outer two triangles touch this ring at six points.

Outside this first circle, called the 'Chakra' because it is circular in shape, a layer of eight petals of equal sizes is drawn. These petals encircle this first ring. [This is the first Chakra with petals.]

Outside this layer of petals, another ring (Chakra) is drawn with sixteen petals of equal sizes, encircling it. [This is the second Chakra with petals.]

Outside this layer of sixteen petals is drawn another ring in double layer. [This is the third Chakra with double layer.]

Out side of this last ring are drawn four doors or gateways on the four sides (i.e. north, east, south and west). These are linked with each other by a periphery wall of three parallel lines that surrounds the ring and encloses the complex of triangles [This is called the 'Bhupur'.]

The above narration briefly describes how the Sri Chakra (with the Bhupur) is made. It is a diagrammatic representation of the wheel of creation. It outlines the mystical creation which is the divine abode of the Goddess. [11].

[Note—It should be noted that a triangle has three cardinal points, and that any triangle resembles a hill or mountain because they are pyramidal in shape. The Goddess is known as 'Tripura'—the Goddess of the three Purs or cities, who lives in the 'Trikoot'—the three mountains. The analogy with the triangle is very obvious here. Then it is said that she surrounds the world from all sides, and that nothing exists beyond her. This is indicated by the Chakra or ring which symbolizes an entity that encircles everything, and nothing is outside of it.]

12. Now we shall narrate the nine divisions of this Chakra in the reverse order—i.e. we shall start from the outer periphery and move to its center.

The first Chakra (counting from the periphery) is endowed with the following mystical virtues—(i) it enchants and captivates the three worlds, the terrestrial, the heavenly and the nether world ('Trilokya-mohan'); (ii) it is empowered by the eight Siddhis¹; (iii) it has the eight Matrikaas² established in it; (iv) it can eliminate all the

ten kinds of agitations, restlessness, negative excitement, anguish, grief, distress, dismay and regrets ('Kshobh')³. Goddess Tripura is honourably enshrined in this Chakra in a 'Sarwa-sanksho-bhini Mudra', literally the posture of the hand that grants the boon of freedom from all kinds of worries to her worshippers and devotees. [12].

[Note—¹The *eight Siddhis* are the various supernatural mystical powers that a person can possess. (i) 'Anima' means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) 'Mahima' is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; (iii) 'Garima' is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) 'Laghima' is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) 'Praapti' is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya' is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa' is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; and (viii) 'Vashitwa' is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient.

References—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 151-155, Canto 5, verse nos. 46-55; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 56-102; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 23-24. (b) Atharva Veda—Annupurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 5-8 (which says that a wise aspirant should not be deluded by Siddhis)

²The eight Maatrikaas—The *Maatrikaa* of a Mantra are the various Sanskrit letters or alphabets that collectively form the text of the Mantra. The word Maatrikaa literally means 'a little mother'. Since the Mantra represents the cosmic divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm in its numerous manifestations known as various Gods, the letters are called the Maatrikaas because they empower this Mantra with the stupendous mystical powers that this Mantra possesses much like Brahm employing his cosmic dynamic energy to enable him to initiate and then sustain and develop this creation, and even bring about its conclusion.

So, if the given Mantra is regarded as a personification of the given deity, then the Maatrikaa would be its energy and dynamism that is latent and inherent in it. The Mantra would lose its powers and potentials in the absence of the Maatrikaa just like the Supreme Being needed the power of the Shakti to create the world.

The word Maatrikaa literally means a 'little mother'. So it is given the same reverence that one would give to a mother because it is the mother that gives shape to the body of the offspring—in this case the main body of the Mantra. Shorn of the Maatrikaa, the Mantra would be meaningless and powerless.

The Beejnighantu text (Beej = seed Mantra; Nighantu = dictionary) written by Bharirava lists 50 such Beej Mantras and describes what they stand for. Another text known as Beej-vidhaan has 75 lines in the poetical style called the Anushtup Chanda describing the Beej Mantras like Hrim, Strim, Aim, Krim etc. representing different deities such as Aindri, Vaamekshana, Saraswati, Kali etc. respectively.

Similarly, the Ekakchar-kosha of Purshottamadeva lists the Beej Mantras of various Gods and Goddesses, such as 'A' for Vasudeo, 'Aa' for Pitaamaha (Brahma the creator of the visible world), 'Pa' for the Wind God called Pawan, 'Saa' for Laxmi the goddess of wealth as well as for Shiva the third God of the Trinity.

Another text called Mantraartha-bidhan by Varadaatantra also lists the Beej Mantra such as 'Haum' for Shiva, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, 'Hrim' for Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, 'Klim' for Kaamdeo-cupid, the patron god of love and passion, 'Gam' for Ganesh, 'Kshraum' for Narshingh, the half-lion and half-man incarnation of Vishnu, etc.

According to Maatrikaanighantu by Mahidasa, the Beej Mantras and even the word Mantras of certain chief deities are as follows—'A' stands for Shrikantha (Shiva, the one with a blue-tinged throat), 'Keshava' for Krishna, 'Vaata' for the

Wind God of Pawan, 'Ka' for Maya, 'Ma' stands both for Vaikuntha, the abode for Lord Vishnu who is the second of the Trinity Gods and is responsible for sustenance of creation, as well as for Mahaakaal, one of the names of Shiva, 'Ya' stands for Yamuna etc.

In the context of our present Upanishad, the *eight Maatrikas* (or Beej Mantras) *pertaining to Goddess Tripura* are the esoteric letters that symbolize the eight forms of Goddesses that the cosmic Mother has taken. They are the following—'Hrim' for Aindri and Bhuvaneshwari, 'Strim' for Vaamekshana, 'Aim' for Saraswati, 'Krim' for Kali, 'Saa' for Laxmi, 'Dum' for Goddess Durga, 'Krim' for Goddess Kalikaa, and 'Klim' for Kaam.

References for Maatrikaa—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 62-63; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22. (ii) Atharva Veda = Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3.

³The various 'Kshobhs' are the numerous problems that a creature faces in this world which cause a continuous chain of restlessness and perplexities for him. He is bewildered and confused. Some of them relate to his body which is subjected to numerous problems right from birth, such as various diseases, hunger, thirst, the pains of growing up and getting old, and finally dying. Similarly, the world creates its own hoard of problems for the creature once it jumps into its ocean of uncertainties—such as endless desires and ambitions, greed and lust, hopes and expectations, and such other things that never seem to come to an end. Then there are fears from enemies and thieves, grief of separation from one's dear ones, never ending chain of material needs and the necessity of protecting them once they are successfully attained, the desire to excel and achieve success, the strivings and their accompanying blues of frustrations and depressions at failures or highs of exultations and joys at success etc.

The concept of 'Kshobh/Kshov' is closely linked to another concept called 'Vikshep'. This term means 'deflection, dissipation, confusion, perplexity, obstruction, disturbance, scattering or tossing about in uncertainty and disarray, agitation of mind and spirit, fickleness, fragmentation, fission and disharmony etc.' Obviously, the two terms 'Kshobh' and 'Vikshep' are intertwined, and together they corrupt a man's thinking abilities and create delusions for him.

The concept of Vikshep has been described in Paingal Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 5.]

13. The second Chakra (counting from the periphery) can fulfill all the desires and aspirations of the worshipper and the devotee. It is endowed with sixteen powerful mystical powers or forces called 'Aakarshini Shaktis'¹—literally meaning the powers to attract, pull, charm and captivate others. It has secret esoteric powers. Goddess Tripura is enshrined and established in it in the Mudra (posture) called 'Sarwa-vidraa-vini'. [It is her presence that is manifested in the form of the various mystical powers that this ring has.] [13].

[Note—¹The *sixteen Aakarshini Shaktis* or the mystical powers to pull and attract others are the following—(i) the power possessed by Pran, the vital life-sustaining winds or airs which maintain the vibrations, the rhythm and the essential functions of life in this creation; (ii) the power that comes with having Shraddha, i.e. having the eclectic virtues of faith, believe, conviction, reverence, respect and devotion that one has for his chosen deity, for the Supreme Being, and for the aim of life one has set for himself; (iii) the power to be as vast, all-pervading and all-encompassing as the Sky element known as 'Akash'; (iv) the power that is equivalent to that possessed by the Wind or Air element known as 'Vayu' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of air; (v) the power that is known as 'Tej', literally meaning vigour, vitality, energy, dynamism etc. that are depicted by the Fire element known as 'Agni' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of heat and warmth; (vi) the powers

equivalent to those possessed by the Water element known as 'Apaha' that is so essential for life and its sustenance, and its proof lies in the fact one would die for want of water; (vii) the powers that are equivalent to the earth element known as 'Prithivi' which is the base or foundation for all mortal creation, the power that helps one to sustain others and therefore it makes a person much sought after; (viii) the powers displayed by the various sense organs of the body, called the 'Indriya', because it is these organs that enable the creature to achieve stupendous and most astounding tasks that are even beyond imagination; (ix) the immense and most lauded power of the mind and sub-conscious known as the 'Mana' which has formidable potentials and reach, keeping the creature firmly held in its grip, and without which power nothing can be done or any success achieved in any field whatsoever; (x) the power equivalent to that possessed by food or 'Anna' which is absolutely essential for survival and has such powerful force of attraction that people go long distances in search of food, even kill each other over it; (xi) the magnificent power to create and generate that is shown by the semen known as the 'Virya' which stands for courage, valour, potency, vitality and strength, vigour, dynamism etc., and anyone who possesses these glorious powers or virtues is surely much attractive and useful for others; (xii) the power that comes with doing 'Tapa', meaning austerity and penance, tolerance of hardship as a means of penitence, forbearance, carrying out strict religious vows in order to purify one's self, sufferance for some auspicious and noble cause, etc., virtues that make the person who possesses them have a magnetic appeal for others; (xiii) the powers inherent in the various mystical 'Mantras' which are great spiritual formulas with astounding potentials to fulfill all desires of the user; they are like keys to achieve success in any enterprise; it also refers to the ability to give good advice; the power to contemplate and think, concentrate and focus, and then logically arrive at a conclusion; the mystical powers that are an integral part of the Mantra and represent the various dynamic forces of Nature which could be invoked and harnessed by the creature and help him to utilise the latent cosmic energy, the strength, the dynamism and other magnificent powers incorporated in these Mantras for the benefit of creation at large; (xiv) the power to do various deeds and take actions, the strength, energy and stamina to perform even difficult tasks, the powers that are an integral part of the theory of doing Karma; (xv) the powers that makes a man so powerful that he can have control over the various worlds called the three Lokas, i.e. the mortal world where the creatures live on earth, the lower heaven called the Antariksha where the junior Gods and the Spirits of dead ancestors live, and the upper heaven or Brahm Loka where the senior Gods live; it also refers to the terrestrial world, the heavens and the nether world, as well as the different worlds as experienced during the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep states of existence of the consciousness; and finally (xvi) the inherent power in one's good name, the power of 'Naam'; this gives the person fame, acclaim, authority and respect in society; it bestows reputation, honour and glory that a person so much seeks in this world. This power of good name and its value in terms of making the man famous and eternal in the memory of others is so attractive that everyone wishes to gain some good name for himself in this world. A person with good name attracts others towards himself.]

14. The third ring or Chakra (counting from the periphery) is able to eliminate all distresses and miseries, is most mysterious in the sense that the Goddess known as Tripur-Sundari (literally the one who is the most beautiful and charming in the three worlds), the Goddess who has no form or a physical gross body ('A-nang'), is enshrined here secretly. [14].

15. The fourth ring or Chakra (counting from the periphery) corresponds to the Turiya state of existence, and like the latter it is able to bestow all auspiciousness. It provides

freedom from all the fourteen kinds of agitations, restlessness, miseries, grief, distresses and perplexities ('Kshobh'). [Refer note no. 3 of paragraph 12 above.]

It is powerful and bestows all kinds of wealth (spiritual, temporal, mystical—'Sampradaayam').

Goddess Tripura is honourably enshrined or established here in the 'Sarwa-shankarini Mudra'. [15].

16. The fifth ring or Chakra (counting from the periphery) corresponds to the Turiya-teet (i.e. post Turiya) state of existence. It helps one to attain everything he aspires for or desires. It bestows all the Siddhis (mystical powers)¹ and has all the ten Shaktis (dynamic powers)² inherently present in it. It is absolutely certain that this Chakra grants the Siddhis and Shaktis that are in-built in it because Goddess Tripura-Maha-Laxmi (one of the forms of Tripura) is honourably enshrined or established in it. She sits with a 'Mahon-unmaadini Mudra'. [The word 'Maho' means 'great', and 'Unmaad' means 'excitement'. Here it means that the Goddess is extremely cheerful and ever eager to provide her devotees with the various Siddhis and Shaktis mentioned and promised in this Upanishad.] [16].

[Note—¹The *Siddhis*—refer paragraph no. 12 of this Canto 2 which deals with the first Chakra.

²The *ten Shaktis* are the following—First let us see what are the *nine Shaktis*, and then we shall see which is the *tenth Shakti*. are the various forms of the divine dynamic power, potential, authority and energy of the Supreme Being that has taken the form of nine Goddesses. These Goddesses are worshipped as Mothers of creation and they complement the Supreme Being. The nine divine Goddesses, also known as the patron Goddesses in Tantra literature dealing with occult forms of divine worship, are the following—'Maha Tripur Sundari', 'Tripur Amba', 'Tripur Siddhi', 'Tripur Malini', 'Tripura Sri', 'Tripur Vasini', 'Tripur Sundari', 'Tripur Reshi', and 'Tripura'. All these forms of the Goddess are deemed to be incorporated in one name *Maha-Laxmi* according to the present paragraph of this Upanishad.

According to another version, the nine divine Goddesses are the following—Vaamaa (the divine consort of Lord Vamdeo, one of the forms of Lord Shiva), Durga (the Goddess who rides a lion and is considered a manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, and who had slayed the demon named Durg), Gauri (the divine consort of Lord Shiva; another name of Parvati), Bhagwati (another name of Parvati; the divine Mother Nature personified and from whose womb the entire creation has emerged), Parvati (the consort of Shiva; had derived her name because she is said to be the daughter of the king of mountains, called 'Parvat' in Sanskrit), Laxmi (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and the patron Goddess of good fortune, prosperity and wealth), Saraswati (the divine consort of Brahma, the creator, and the patron Goddess of knowledge), and Aditi (the mother of all the Gods).

The system of worshipping of the divine Goddess envisages that she is a personification of all the dynamic powers and essential energy of all the Gods rolled into one. The chief Goddess is known as Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva who is regarded as the greatest and most senior amongst the pantheon of Gods, and hence honoured by the epithet 'Maheshwar'. Parvati is also known as Durga who is worshipped in nine different forms. These nine forms of Durga are called 'Nav Durgas' or nine Durgas. They are also called 'Nav-Shaktis' or the nine personified forms of the divine dynamic power and energy of the Supreme Being.

Thus, according to the Kavach Stotra of Devi-mahatamya, the nine Shaktis are the following—Shailputri (literally, the daughter of the Lord of Mountains), Brahmchaarini (one who is perpetually a celibate and self-restrained), Chandraghantaa (one who is as beautiful as the moon), Khushmaandaa (one who is

always cheerful), Skandamaata (the mother of Skanda, also known as Lord Kartikeya, the son of Shiva and Parvati and a commander of the army of Gods), Kaatyaani (the Goddess who personifies the holy consort of the great ancient sage of the Vedic period, named Var-ruchi Kaatyaan), Kaalraatri (a personification of the night of the doomsday), Mahagauri (the great Goddess known as Gauri, another name of Parvati, the divine consort of Maheshwar or Lord Shiva), and Siddhidaatri (one who gives mystical powers and bestows her devotees or worshipper with success in everything).

According to Brahmaand Puran, the names are the following—Neelkanthi (one whose throat is blue-tinged), Kshemankari (one who takes care of her dependents), Harasiddhi (one who gives all Siddhis—mystical powers), Vanadurga (the patron Goddess of the forest), Rudradurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Lord Rudra), Agnidurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Agni, the Fire God), Jayadurga (the Goddess who gives victory), Vindhyavaasini (the Goddess who lives in the Vindhya mountain ranges), and Ripumaaridurga (the Goddess who vanquishes enemies).

Besides the nine Shaktis listed above, the Chitta Shakti, or the stupendous powers of the cosmic Consciousness, is the *tenth Shakti*. It is the most powerful of the various Shaktis because it is the ‘consciousness’ that drives the entire system of creation as well as the fact that it refers directly to the supreme transcendental Brahm who is at the center of the entire creation.]

17. The sixth ring or Chakra (counting from the periphery) grants all-round protection to the worshipper (‘Sarwa-rakshaakar’). It has all the ten Shaktis which make the worshipper all-knowing and omniscient. It has a sanctum sanctorum (‘Sanigarbha’) where the Goddess Tirupra-Malini is enshrined or consecrated. She is sitting in the ‘Maha-Ankusha Mudra’. [That is, she has a goad in her hands because the word ‘Ankush’ means ‘a goad’.] [17].

18. The seventh ring or Chakra (counting from the periphery) is mystically empowered to eliminate all the different ailments of the worshipper and devotee of the Goddess. It is empowered with the eight mystical Shaktis¹ that destroys all the diseases or torments of the worshipper and devotee. Here, Goddess Tripura-Siddhya is present in a most secret form. She is present in the ‘Khechari Mudra’². [18].

[Note—¹The *eight Shaktis* are the various divine cosmic dynamic powers of the Supreme Being that have revealed themselves in the form of various Goddesses who are actually personifications of the various forces of Nature. These Goddesses are the following—Vimlaa, Utkarshini, Gyaanaa, Kriyaa, Yogaa, Prahavi, Satyaa, Ishaanaa and Anugrahaa. They are present in the tendril of the lotus having eight petals that is worshipped in the Yantra. They are established in a posture of granting various boons and bestowing fearlessness to the devotee who worships them.

In the present context, they are all embodied in the form of Goddess Tripura-siddhya.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 5, verse no. 5 mentions eight Shaktis that are to be invoked, honoured worshipped while offering formal form of ritualistic worship to Lord Ram using the Talisman or Charm instrument called the Pooja Yantra or the Bhupur Yantra.

²The *Khechari Mudra*—The word Khechari is derived from the root ‘Khe’ which stands for the sky, and ‘Chari’ means to move, to wonder or to roam. Therefore, the combined word ‘Khechari’ means one who can move in the sky.

This Mudra has been graphically described in Gherand Sanhita, Chapter 3, verse no. 25-28, besides the Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 40-42, the entire Canto 2 of the Yog Kundalini Upanishad; and Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 81-93 of Krishna Yajur Veda; as well as in Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 52-64 of the Sam Veda tradition, in Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, verse no. 2/1/8 of

Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, and in Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 14-17, 39-42/2.

The Khechari Mudra is amongst the best and toughest body postures that can be adopted by any ascetic, but at the same time it can empower the practitioner with stupendous mystical and occult powers and potentials. It involves elongation of the tongue by constantly pulling it out and making it flexible by constant flexing, rolling and shaking from side to side. The nerves and veins at the lower end of the tongue, i.e. in its tendon, are cut so as to make them senseless. To obtain success in this, the tongue is smeared with butter and stretched by holding it with an iron tong. This results in the tongue getting sufficiently elongated as to reach the inner opening of the mouth by inverting it backwards, and then it is tucked at the base of the upper palate to close the opening of the nostrils at the roof of the mouth cavity. When the elongated and backwards bent tongue is stuffed here, these openings of the nostrils are closed by it, thereby blocking the flow of air (breath). Meanwhile, the sight is fixed unwaveringly at a point midway between the two eyebrows.

It is believed that the Khechari Mudra, along with the Vajroli Mudra, was made popular by sage Matyseyanandranath (10th century CE), the great ascetic of medieval times and the moral preceptor of the famed ascetic Guru Gorakhnath.

The Khechari Mudra is also called Vaishnavi Mudra according to Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 14-17½.]

19. The eighth ring or Chakra (counting from the periphery) bestows all the Siddhis (mystical powers) to the worshipper and devotee. [Refer paragraph no. 12.]

It has four weapons of the Goddess marked on it. [These four weapons are a goad, a snare, a bow and an arrow. Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 17.]

It is very secret and enigmatic by nature. The Goddess Tripuramba (the Mother Goddess Tripura) is honourably enshrined or established in this Chakra in a 'Beej Mudra'. [The word 'Beej' means a 'seed'. Here it means that the Goddess is present in her most primary form as the 'Mother' of all creation. The cosmic 'Mother' provides the 'seed' or the egg from which the entire creation has evolved. This fact is alluded to in this paragraph because this Chakra lies next to the very core of the worship instrument. It will be noted that the inner-most ring described in the next paragraph no. 20 refers to the 'Yoni Mudra' which means the Mother's womb where the creation is conceived.] [19].

20. The ninth ring or Chakra (counting from the periphery) is the inner-most ring. It is the chief Chakra around which the entire figure revolves; hence it is called 'Chakra Nayak'—literally the 'chief Chakra'. [It refers to the supreme Brahman around which the entire creation revolves.

It possesses the eclectic virtues of all-round and complete bliss ('Sarwanandmaye'). It is fulfiller of all the three types of Kaams (desires and aspirations)¹ as well as a bestower of all Aishwarya (fame, majesty, magnificence, glory, powers and authority).

This ninth Chakra possesses secret and esoteric powers. The great Goddess known as 'Maha-Tripura-Sundari' is honourably enshrined and established here. She is in a 'Yoni Mudra'. [The word 'Yoni' refers to the womb of a mother. Here it implies that the cosmic Mother lives in her primary form as Mother Nature in whose womb the entire creation was conceived and developed.] [20].

[Note—¹The three Kaams relate to the fulfillment of spiritual desires, worldly desires for obtaining the numerous material objects that give pleasure and comfort, and the desire to gratification of the sense organs.]

21. All the ‘Chandas’ (the various modes or styles in which the hymns of the Vedas and other scriptures are composed) are symbolically present in the form of the various spokes of this Sri Chakra or the divine wheel dedicated to the Goddess.

This is known as the ‘Sri Chakra’. [21].

[Note—There are a number of Upanishads that describe the ‘Chakra’ or wheel in different contexts. References: (a) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no. 3-4, 6; Tripdvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph 3-14 (which describes the ‘Sudarshan Chakra’ of Vishnu); Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 6-7 (which describes the wheel or Chakra that is present in the navel and how it keeps the creature trapped in it). (b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, 6; Canto 5, verse no. 12; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.]

22. In the ‘Nabhi’ (literally the navel, implying the center) of the Sri Chakra is established the ‘fire’, and it is here that the Sun and Moon are also present. This is also called the ‘Omkar Peeth’, the worship altar where the divine Brahm represented by the word OM is worshipped. [The Sun and the Moon are visible manifestations of Brahm and Shakti respectively. The word OM is the monosyllable Mantra dedicated to Brahm, hence it is used to worship Brahm and his dynamic powers and energy in their most primary form.]

Here, the primary sound of the cosmos represented by the ‘Akshar’ (a letter) known as the ‘Bindu’ (which is actually a half-syllable sound made by placing ‘dot’ on a letter of the Sanskrit language to give it the sound of ‘M’ as in *mum*) is located.

The ‘navel’ of this Sri Chakra represents the ‘Vyom’—the fathomless and infinite sky (because it was in the ether of the sky that the first sound of creation was heard).

This is known as the ‘Param Vyom Vidya’. [This Vidya is the esoteric knowledge that envisions the origin of creation in the subtle infinite sky element that was uniformly pervaded by the cosmic Consciousness that is the primary and only source or factor responsible for creation coming into being. This Consciousness made its presence felt by way of vibrations or movements in the otherwise calm and static ether. This movement produced waves of energy, which in turn powered the chain reaction that set off the process of creation in motion.]

The worshipper and devotee should invoke and worship Goddess Maha-Tripur-Sundari with the Mantra ‘Kshirena....Sharanum Gataha’, and employ this Maya-Laxmi Yantra for her worship. [It should be noted that the Sri Chakra is given another name here—‘the Maya-Laxmi Yantra’. This is primarily because the word ‘Maya’ refers to the dynamic powers of Brahm which was employed by the latter to create this world, and Goddess Tripura is a personified form of this dynamism of Brahm. The word ‘Laxmi’ refers to the Goddess who takes care of all the worldly needs of the creatures who were created by the Supreme Being, and it is therefore one of her several names—refer paragraph nos. 7 and 16 of the present Canto 2 as well as paragraph no. 17 of Canto 1 in this context.]

This is what the Lord (Shiva) said (in his reply to the Gods—refer paragraph no. 10). [22].

[Note—The Sri Chakra is envisioned as a miniature form of the cosmos. Its central point called its ‘navel’ is therefore the center from where the first ripples of sound waves were generated in the cosmic ether prior to the origin of the visible creation.

The factor that created these ripples that eventually produced strong vibratory sound waves, which in turn provided the first bundle of energy that was needed to kick-start the process of creation, must have had its center in a single unknown point somewhere in the depth of the infinite ether that filled the equally infinite space of the sky. The waves spread from this single point in all the directions, thereby scattering the energy so produced uniformly in every direction of the cosmic globe. This is like the modern 'Big Bang Theory' of the origin of cosmos. Since this primordial explosion occurred deep in the cosmic ether it was like a distant rumbling of the rain-bearing cloud, a sound that reverberated in ether and very closely resembled the sound of the letter 'M' as in 'mum'.

Sound is regarded as the first manifestation of Brahm, the cosmic 'consciousness', because only an entity that is 'conscious' can create or produce anything whatsoever, which in this case was the primary source of energy that created the first ripples in the cosmic ether. The rest was a chain reaction which once set in motion took care of its own course.

The *Nabhi* or a navel here is the core from where the creation originated; the *Bindu* is the point from where the ripples of sound waves emerged and gathered energy as they traveled forward; the *Akshar* or letters of the alphabet are the numerous hues of notes and meters that this primary sound assumed in due course of its spread and evolution; since the sound needs a open medium to travel it did so in the sky known as *Vyom*.]

23. By worshipping and offering prayers to the divine Goddess with the Mantras narrated above, she is pleased and gives her divine vision (or sight) to the worshipper or devotee. Hence, a person who worships her with these Mantras is able to acquire a divine sight which would enable him to have a vision of the supreme Brahm. Not only this, this would also entitle him to see everything that is beyond the sight of normal view—i.e. he acquires a transcendental vision and becomes all-knowing and omniscient.

He who knows this is able to acquire eternity and imperishability. This is what this great Upanishad says. [23].

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Canto 3

1. The Gods said to the Lord (Shiva) that they wished to create (or start, initiate) the process of doing various Mudras (i.e. the various ways in which the fingers are held while doing Yoga or meditation).

The Lord told them to initiate the system of doing various Mudras by first touching the knee to the ground (i.e. by kneeling down before the supreme Goddess to invoke her blessing before they do anything) and then do the primary posture known as 'Padmasan' (the 'Lotus posture'). [1].

2. [Now, the triangular Mudra known as the 'Yoni Mudra' is being narrated.]

A person who knows the esoteric and highly secret 'Yoni Mudra' acquires such mystical powers that he is able to attract everyone and enthrall them, he becomes all-knowing, he gets all the rewards or fruits that all creatures so much long for, he is able to vanquish all opposition and trounce his enemies. [2].

3. The *first Mudra* (here meaning the way the fingers are held) is made in the following way—The second finger (middle finger) is placed above the third finger

(ring finger), the tip of the thumb touches the tip of the fourth finger (the little finger) so as to form a rough ring, and the first finger (index finger) is unfolded and held in a straight line that is pointing ahead and in front at an angle that is roughly 45° below the horizontal. [3].

4. When the two second fingers (middle fingers) of both the hands are joined together while adopting the Mudra described above (as the first Mudra—in paragraph no. 3), then we get the *second Mudra*. [4].

5. The *third Mudra* is in the shape of an Ankush (a goad). [Obviously, this Mudra is made by holding all the fingers close to each other so that their tips touch. This would give a rough shape of a goad.] [5].

6. The *fourth Mudra* is done by rubbing the palms of the two hands against each other while they face in the opposite direction (i.e. if one of the palms has its fingers facing east, the other should have its fingers facing west). While rubbing them, the first finger of each hand should be folded-in tightly, and over it is placed the thumb to virtually clasp the first finger. The rest of the fingers are held straight out to facilitate the rubbing of the palms. [6].

7. The *fifth Mudra* is done as follows—The thumb is made to touch the nails of the second finger (middle finger), the first finger (index finger) is placed on top of the fourth finger (little finger), and the third finger (ring finger) is kept unfolded (i.e. straight) and held parallel to the second finger but slanting downwards at an angle from the horizontal. [7].

8. The *sixth Mudra* is done by repeating the fifth Mudra but making the tips of all the fingers and the thumb touch each other at a point. This would resemble a Ankush or a goad which has a pointed tip. [8].

9. The *seventh Mudra* is done as follows—The left hand is placed on the right hand. The third finger (ring finger) is bent and placed in the middle of the upper part of the fourth finger (little finger), the second finger (middle finger) is placed on the top of the first finger (index finger), and the thumb is held straight out. This is known as the Khechari Mudra. [9].

10. The *eighth Mudra* is done as follows—The best and most effective Aasan (sitting posture) envisages that the following Mudra is adopted. The fourth finger (little finger) of each hand is bent slightly up and placed between the second and third fingers, the first finger (index finger) is made to bend slightly down and touch the tip of the second and third fingers (so as to make a point like the end of a goad), and the straightened thumbs of both the hands touch each other. The outer flat ends of the two palms also touch each other. This results in the formation of a shape that resembles an oblong cup with a snout that is almost like a conch shell. [10].

11. The *ninth Mudra* is done as follows—The third finger (ring finger) is placed on the top of the second finger (middle finger), the fourth finger (little finger) is pressed by the thumb, and the first finger (index finger) is placed on the top of the pile. [11].

12. The *tenth Mudra* is done as follows—The fourth finger (little finger) is held close to the thumb, almost touching each other and ensuring that their tips are close to each other. Since the remaining fingers numbering three would be free to stand erect, it is known as the ‘Tri-khand Mudra’. [The word ‘Tri’ means ‘three’, and ‘Khand’ means ‘part, division, separation or unit’. During this Mudra, the first finger, the second finger and the third finger are slightly apart from each other instead of touching each other as was the case in all the previous Mudras. Hence the term ‘Tri-Khand’ is applied to this Mudra.]

The above discussion describes the various forms of ‘Panch Baan’ and ‘Panchaadi’ Mudras. [12].

13. [This paragraph lists the ten Beej (seed) Mantras.]

The Beej for the Ankush (goad) is ‘Kro’ (as in *crow*). The Beej for Khechhari (a type of Mudra) are ‘Ha’ (as in *hunt*), ‘Sa’ (as in *son*), ‘Kha’ (as in *blockhead*), and ‘Prem/Pren(g)’. The Beej of the Sun is ‘Ha’. The Beej for Kaam (passions, lust and desires) is ‘Strom’. The Beej for ‘Vaghava’ (speech) is ‘Ka’ (as in *kerb*); this is the ninth Beej. The Beej for ‘Kaam-koot’ is ‘Ha’; it is the tenth Beej.

He who knows this is said to be an expert in the Mantras. [13].

14. Now we shall narrate the Kaam-Kala Chakra—i.e. the formal forms of worship which helps the worshipper fulfill all his worldly or temporal desires.

The esoteric Beej Mantras ‘Hrim’, ‘Klim’, ‘Aim’, ‘Blum’ and ‘Strom’ pervade throughout the Kaam-Kala Chakra.

The Mantra used for worship in occult practices is formed from the above Beej Mantras as follows—the Beej ‘Strom’ is prefixed and suffixed by the Beej ‘Aim’. [Thus, we have ‘Aim Strom Aim’.]

To this is added the Beej ‘Blum’ as a prefix and suffix. [We now have ‘Blum Aim Strom Aim Blum’.]

The two Beejs ‘Aim’ should be attached to or tied to the objective or aim for the fulfillment of which this Mantra is being invoked. This Mantra is to be used for offering sacrifices to the deity on the leaf of the birch tree.

[That is, these Beej Mantras are to be written on the leaf of the birch tree in a ring, a ‘Chakra’, with the work to be accomplished written around the Beej Mantra ‘Aim’. Then offerings are to be made on this leaf.]

A person who knows this knows everything. He acquires the mystical power to attract the whole world and vanquish it, or hold it spell-bound and stunned.

When the Beej ‘Blum’ is added to the above Chakra (ring of Beej Mantras), it is empowered to vanquish and kill all the enemies of the worshipper; it creates a formidable block in their activities and hinders their progress. [In short, it protects the worshipper from his enemies.]

When it is multiplied by one lakh times [1 lakh = 1,00,000], i.e. when the worshipper repeats this Mantra a hundred thousand times, it empowers him to hold the entire world under his sway and command.

When he repeats this Mantra for nine hundred thousand times, he is able to attain access to the divine abode of Lord Shiva.

When it is especially empowered with the various Maatrikaas (the Beej Mantras for various Goddesses), one is able to attain victory.

If a man offers sacrifices and oblations in a fire pit shaped like a woman’s genital organs, he is able to attract and control women of his choice.

By doing sacrifices and offering oblations in a fire pit shaped like a circle, one is able to acquire immense and incomparable wealth and prosperity, fame and majesty, pomp and pageant.

By doing sacrifices and offering oblations in a fire pit shaped like a square or a rectangle, there is abundant rainfall.

By doing sacrifices and offering oblations in a fire pit shaped like a triangle, one's enemies are killed and their movement is blocked or hindered.

By doing sacrifices and offering oblations in a fire pit with flowers one gets victory.

By doing sacrifices and offering oblations in a fire pit with great juices (such as the juice of the Soma plant), one gets immense Anand or happiness and bliss. [14].

15. [Worship of Lord Ganesh is now narrated.]

Lord Ganesh, who is the head of Lord Shiva's attendants as well as the senior-most God, is worshipped by offering prayers to him. For this purpose, the Beej Mantra 'Gam/Gan(g)' dedicated to him is used. The following hymn is said while the worshipper touches his own body (to indicate that he is invoking Ganesh to give him protection). [This is called 'Anga-Nyas'.]

The Mantra is 'Ganaanam Twa Ganpatim Havaamahe Kavim Kavinaamupasra-vastabham; Jyestha Rajam Brahanam Brahmnapata Aa Naha Srinva-nnutubhiha Seed Saadanam'. [Briefly it means—'I pay my obeisance and respect to Lord Ganesh who is the most senior amongst all the attendants of the Lord and even the Gods. He is most exalted, wise and learned. He is like the biggest king or emperor amongst those who are enlightened about Brahm, and is Brahm himself personified. There is no one better or senior than you. Be gracious upon me; be pleased with me. I bow before you most humbly and submit myself before you.']

When this hymn is being said, the worshipper should prefix and suffix it with the Beej Mantra of Ganesh, which is the Sanskrit letter 'Ga' (as in gum) with a Bindu (dot) on top, and pronounced as 'Gam/Gan(g)' (pronounced as *gum* or *gun(g)*). [15].

[Note—Refer also to Canto 4, paragraph no. 12.]

16. Next, the worshipper should offer prayers to the 'Kshetra-dhakshya' (the custodian God of the realm) by the following hymn—'OM Namō Bhagwate Bhasmaanga-raagaayogratejase Han Han Daha Daha Pach Pach Math Math Vidhwansaya Vidhwansaya Hal-bhanjan Shul-mule Vyanjan-siddhi Kuru Kuru Samudram Pruva-pretisthitam Shoshya Shoshya Sthambhaya Sthambhaya Par-mantra Par-yantra Par-tantra Par-doot Par-katak Par-chhedhan Kar Vidaarayā Chhindhi Chhindhi Him Phat Swaha'. [This is a long esoteric Mantra used in occult worship of the custodian God, which in this case is Lord Shiva. Briefly it means 'OM salutations! I bow reverentially ('Namō') before the Lord God ('Bhagwate')! He has the ash of the sacrificial fire smeared all over his body ('Bhasmang-raagya'), and is endowed with the 'Tej' (energy, dynamism, radiance and splendour) derived from his doing Yoga (meditation) ('Yogra-tejase'). Trounce, vanquish, burn to ashes, scorch, crush, smash, squeeze, wring, rub underfoot, break apart, ruin and demolish ('Han, Daha, Pach, Math, Vindhvansaya, Bhanjan') all oppositions, enemies, torments and tribulations of mine. Make me an expert in the languages ('Vyanjan-siddhi'; Vyanjan literally means consonants of a language); please do it, do it. You are well established and fulfilled like an ocean since time immemorial; make me similarly well established ('Samudram Pruva-pretisthitam'). Make my enemies stunned ('Sthambha') and oppressed ('Shoshaya'). You are powerful and strong enough to rupture or pierce

through ('Chhedhan'—i.e. overcome, neutralize, subdue, trounce) all spells case by great magical Mantras ('Par-mantra'), great magical Yantras or instruments ('Par-yantra'), great magical charms ('Par-tantra'), great messenger of distress and troubles ('Par-doot'), and great armies and multitudes of wild elephants ('Par-katak'). Tear them apart; split them, spear them, pierce them, stab them, kill them, severe them, render them ineffective ('Bidaaraya'; 'Chhindhi'). For this objective, I am offering this oblation and worship to you. Him, Phat (be quick, split them apart). Swaha (I hereby offer this oblation to you).' [16].

17. [Now, the 'Kumari', the Virgin Goddess, is being worshipped.]

The Virgin Goddess is to be worshipped with the following hymn—'Kul Kumari Vidyamahe Mantrakoati-sudhimihi Tannha Kaulihi Prachodayat'. [Briefly it means—'I offer my worship and respect to the Virgin Goddess of our clan/family. Please inspire me towards great and auspicious things. Please make me an expert in all the great and esoteric Mantras and their usage, as well as able to benefit from them.'

An aspirant who meditates in the above described manner finds eternity, great fame and acclaim, and attains the exalted stature of being established in the (knowledge of the) supreme Brahm. [That is, he becomes Brahm-realised, wise and enlightened.]

A person who knows this secret is eligible to obtain the fruit or reward of this knowledge.

This is the great esoteric knowledge expounded by this Upanishad. [17].

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Canto 4

1. [Now, we shall discuss how one can obtain victory over death.]

The Gods asked the Lord (Shiva), 'Oh Lord! You have expounded for us the best Gayatri Mantra dedicated to the Goddess Tripura. The hymn 'Jatvedas' etc. incorporates in it the eight esoteric knowledge of Tripura. Ascetics find liberation and deliverance from the shackle of death by honouring the Goddess with this Gayatri Mantra along with these eight forms of esoteric knowledge pertaining to her.

Now, please preach us the knowledge called 'Mrityun-jay'—literally the knowledge which helps one to conquer death itself.'

Hearing this combined request of all the Gods, the Lord (Shiva) revealed the most potential and acclaimed 'Mritunjay' knowledge of Lord 'Trayambak'¹ (the three-eyed God of the three worlds) that was encrypted in the form of 'Anushtup Chanda'². [1].

[Note—¹Trayambak—Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 2.

²The Anushtup Chanda— The *Anushtup Chanda* is a verse with 4 lines, each line having 8 letters = total 32 letters. It was first conceived by an ancient sage named Anustuv, hence it bears his name.]

2. What is etymology of the term 'Trayambak'? The Lord is called 'Trayambak' because he is the Lord of the three worlds. [These are the terrestrial, the heavenly and nether worlds. It also means the past world, the present world and the future world.]

Why is he 'Yajaamahe'? It is because the word 'Yajan' means worship and honour. So, with the combined word 'Yajan' and 'Mahe' we invoke the essential

Tattwa or the basic Truth that forms the fundamental element in creation. [By extension, Lord Trayambak refers to the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm.]

The Beej Mantra ‘Kum/Kam’ that follows the word ‘Trayamb’ indicates victory over death.

Hence, the phrase ‘Trayambakam Yajaamahe’ is used to offer worship and honour the Lord of the three worlds. [2].

3. Why is the word ‘Sugandhim’ used to worship him? The Lord is famous in all the directions, his auspicious glories and magnificent virtues are known everywhere, and they have a divine halo around them which is as invigorating and spiritually rejuvenating as the fragrance or aroma of a divine flower. Hence, the term is used for him. [The word ‘Sugandha’ means pleasant fragrance, sweet and attractive aroma, an enchanting scent.] [3].

4. Why is the term ‘Pushti-varadhan’ used to honour him? It is because he creates all the worlds, sustains them, protects them, nourishes them, makes them healthy, helps in their growth and development, and enhances their glories and importance by living in all of them uniformly as he is all-pervading, all-including and all-encompassing. Hence, he is honoured by the epithet ‘Pushti-varadhan’. [4].

5. Why is he called ‘Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti’. Just like the musk-melon is firmly attached to its stalk, a creature is also sternly clasped in the shackle of death. When he breaks free from this vicious grip of the cycle of birth and death, he finds Mukti or final liberation and deliverance. [Lord Shiva is the most enlightened of the Gods in the pantheon. This is why he is the patron deity of ascetics and hermits. He can liberate the creature from the cycle of birth and death. He is depicted in the Purans as having his terrestrial abode in the holy city of Kashi where he gives Mukti to the dying man who is brought for cremation on the banks of the holy river Ganges.] [5].

6. Why is the word ‘Mamritaam’ used during his worship? It is because the worshipper attains the elixir of life that gives him eternity and imperishability. He becomes one like Lord Rudra himself. [6].

[Note—The full Mantra for Lord Trayambak becomes—‘Trayambakam Yajaamahe Sugandhim Pushti-varadhan Urwaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamritaam’.]

7. The Gods asked the Lord (Shiva), ‘Oh Lord! You have answered all our questions. Now please tell us the divine Mantras of Lords Shiva, Vishnu, Surya (Sun God), and Ganesh by employing which one can sufficiently please Goddess Bhagwati (the Mother Goddess) so much so that she willingly gives her divine vision to the worshipper.’ [7].

8. [This paragraph describes the Mantra of Lord Shiva.]

The Lord (Shiva) replied, ‘You must worship the God who vanquishes death with the help of the Anushtup Chanda ‘Trayambak’ etc. (narrated above).

It has been said from the beginning that the monosyllabic word OM is a representative of the Lord (the supreme transcendental Brahm) who is universal and uniformly all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing.

Hence, those who worship the Lord with Mantra ‘OM Namaha Shivaaye’ of the Yajur Veda are able to attain the exalted stature equivalent to Lord Rudra. He is rewarded with auspiciousness. [This Mantra briefly means ‘Salutations to the Lord represented by the word OM! I bow before Lord Shiva who is this particular supreme transcendental Lord’.]

You must be fully enlightened about it. [That is, a spiritual aspirant who knows the profound import of this great Mantra uses it for offering worship to the Lord in order to attain the supreme state of enlightenment that gives him salvation and emancipation.] [8].

9. [Paragraph nos. 9-10 describe the divine abode and the Mantra of Lord Vishnu respectively.]

Those who are wise, learned and erudite see the divine abode of Lord Vishnu as stretching in the clean space of the sky as far as the eyes can see. It stretches across the sky from one end to the other. [Therefore, the abode of Lord Vishnu is the ‘sky’ itself. On the one hand it is as vast, fathomless, indescribable, remote and inaccessible as the bottomless reaches of the infinite sky element, and on the other hand it is easily reached, viewed, touched and accessed as the sky that is seen with the naked eyes, that surrounds everything at close quarters, and that touches each and every creature directly.]

Lord Vishnu is many-faced (i.e. he has uncountable forms and shapes; all the creatures and all the aspects of creation are some or the other form of Vishnu). He uniformly pervades everywhere in this creation; whatever that exists is completely soaked in and surrounded by Vishnu. There is nowhere where he is not present. His divine abode is the sky with a high summit. The Gods headed by Brahma the creator and the Sun God always look up to this divine abode of the Lord in the heaven to have his divine glimpse. They bear the Lord in their hearts.

Lord Vishnu lives in a subtle form in all the creatures of this creation. That is why is known as ‘Vasudeo’—one who lives in all.

[There is another connotation of the term ‘Vasudeo’. It means the Lord of the eight Vasus. These Vasus are the primary assets created by the supreme Creator, the Brahm, to provide for the welfare of the creation that he created. Thus, the Vasus include such elementary needs of creation as water and fire etc.

Lord Vishnu is also known as the Viraat Purush, the infinite, invisible macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Consciousness from which the entire creation evolved or emerged. The Viraat Purush was the first gross form of Brahm. It was ‘gross’ only in a relative term vis-à-vis the Brahm himself, but when compared to all the other units of the forthcoming creation, this Viraat Purush was almost as subtle as Brahm himself. The difference between Brahm and the Viraat Purush was only of a measurement of a millionth of a million degree in subtlety. Now, it was from this Viraat Purush that the rest of creation evolved. Even the creator of the visible world, Brahma, emerged atop a divine lotus that rose from the navel of the Viraat Purush. Once the creation took shape, the Viraat Purush assumed for himself the role of its keeper and sustainer. Hence, Brahm assumed the role of the Viraat Purush to create the primary forces of creation, including the Gods of the Trinity, i.e. Brahm, Vishnu and Shiva, and once it was done, he assumed the role of the overall commander and controller of creation in the form of Lord Vishnu. This is why Vishnu is primarily regarded as being synonymous with Brahm, and treated as the Supreme Being.

Besides this, the virtues of Vishnu that he is all-pervading and all-encompassing are also applicable to Brahm, making him synonymous with the latter.] [9].

[Note—The word ‘Vishnu’ consists of two components—‘Vishwa’ meaning the world or the entire creation, and ‘Anu’ meaning an atom. Hence, this is made up of atoms called Vishnu, and therefore the latter pervades throughout this creation. The whole creation is a manifestation of Vishnu. The divine glories of Lord Vishnu have been extolled in the Tripadvibhuti Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph 5-6; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 17, as well as in Vishnu Puran, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70.

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/32 says that the Vasus are none but manifestations of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm himself.

The Vasus are the Nature’s gift to creature. They were the natural assets formed by the supreme Brahm so as to make life feasible and convenient in creation. In other words, the supreme Brahm who is also known as Lord Ram not only created this world but ensured that it is well provided for and its basic needs are taken care of by manifesting himself in the form of these eight primary requirements of life. This is the reason why one of the names of Vishnu is ‘Vasudeo’—the Lord of Vasus. It ought to be noted here that Lord Ram is an incarnation of Vishnu or Vasudeo.]

10. ‘OM Namō’ has three letters. [OM + Na + Mo = 3. It means ‘I bow before the Lord represented by the word OM’. Or, ‘OM Salutations! I bow before the Lord.].

The next word ‘Bhagwate’ has four letters. [Bha + Ga + Wa + Te = 4. It refers to the Lord.]

The final word is ‘Vasudevaye’ which has five letters. [Va + Su + De + Va + Ye = 5. It means ‘who is the Lord of the Vasus’.]

This is the twelve-letter Mantra of Lord Vasudeo (Vishnu). He who knows it is able to cross over and overcome all debacles, obstacles and hindrances. He gets a full life (i.e. he lives long and does not die prematurely). He gets lordship over all other creatures. He acquires abundant livestock, especially cows, as well as immense wealth and prosperity.

The Lord is eternally blissful, the supreme Purush (the Viraat Purush), the supreme transcendental Brahm, and is in the form of Pranav (the cosmic sound element) that is represented by the three letters ‘A’, ‘U’ and ‘M’ of the ethereal word OM. [10].

[Note—The full Mantra is ‘OM Namō Bhagwate Vasudevaye’.]

11. [This paragraph is dedicated to the Sun as a visible manifestation of the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being which have revealed themselves as the divine Goddess. Just like the Goddess which has astounding powers which are benign when favourable but destructive when malignant, the Sun too plays a life infusing and sustaining role in its benign form, but scorches everything to ruin when it gets unfavourable. This is proved by the fact that the same Sun which gives the much needed heat, light and energy to this creation, which produces and regulates the seasons, the rainfall, and the cycle of day and night, also produces droughts and famines, and sucks out life from this world by its relentless heat and sunshine. It has been said elsewhere in the Upanishads that the Sun is visible manifestation of the supreme Brahm. The Sun is also regarded as a personified form of the Fire God as well as the ‘eye’ of the Supreme Being. see Note below.]

The three letters A, U and M combine together to form the word OM. [This word OM refers to Brahm.]

The 'Hans' (i.e. Brahm) that is virtuous, pure, holy and divine resides in the infinite sky. The 'Hota' (the priest who offers oblations to the sacred fire during the sacrifice) offers sacrifices to this Hans on the altar.

[This refers to the offering of oblations to the sacred fire that is meant to be accepted by the Supreme Being.]

This sacred fire is like an honoured guest, and lives in one's own household. [This statement has another connotation. It refers to the fact that the Fire God, in his elementary form as the fire element that provides energy, heat, warmth and light, resides in the creature's body in a subtle form. This Fire God would then be synonymous with the 'consciousness' living in the creature's body because the body is kept alive and energized by this conscious factor.]

Similarly, the seasons also live amongst the men and have their symbolic place in the sacrificial altar. They have been created from a combination of such factors of Nature as water, rays of the sun, truthfulness and mountains.

A wise man who offers worship to the Sun God—who is a fount of brilliance, radiance, splendour and light, who brings dusk in its wake (i.e. where there is no Sun there is darkness), and who symbolizes the stupendous potentials of Pragya (true and deep knowledge; the virtues of wisdom, erudition, sagacity, enlightenment, expertise)—is able to attain all the eclectic fruits or the best of rewards that one can expect in this world by doing auspicious deeds. This fact is evident in each word of the Mantra dedicated to the Sun God. [The Mantra is not mentioned here, but it is the Gayatri Mantra explained at length in Canto 1 of this Upanishad.]

The 'Adrija' is the divine Goddess who epitomizes the glorious virtues of Brahm in their dynamic manifestation. [The word 'Adrija' has two parts—'Adri' means a Mountain and 'Aja' means a daughter. Hence, the word refers to the 'daughter of the sacred Mountain'. This is a reference to Goddess Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, who is the daughter of the King of the Mountains.]

She lives in the sky high above. [This refers to the Sun which epitomizes the dynamic energy and potentials of the Supreme Being in its most brilliant, powerful and evident form.] [11].

[Note—The *Sun God* or Surya—The Sanskrit word for the Sun God or Aditya is *Surya*. This word has three connotations—viz. (i) Sarteha—one how moves. This refers to the Sun because it moves constantly across the sky. It also refers to the supreme cosmic Consciousness that makes all movement possible. (ii) Sviryate—this means one who receives and accepts. This virtue refers to the fact that all offerings offered to the fire sacrifice are done in the presence of the Sun, and since the latter is the celestial cauldron of fire all the offerings are deemed to be offered to it. In another plane, it refers to the Jiva, the living being, who receives stimuli from the world and then accepts them and deduces that the world from where they originate is real and true. (iii) Suvateha—meaning one who shines. This is very obvious in the case of the Sun. This virtue refers to the supreme Self or supreme Consciousness that is self-illuminated and self-effulgent.

Sun God or Surya appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the 'eye' of the Viraat Purush, and at the time of creation when this Viraat Purush revealed himself as the individual creature such as for example a cow, a horse and a man, the Sun God took up residence in the eye (refer Aitereyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4). He is also regarded as visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9. The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). The

Sun is like the Atma of all the creatures (Akchu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

The Sun is the brightest, the most splendourous, the brilliantly radiant, the most majestic and grandest entity in the entire firmament. The whole length and breadth of the sky is lit with its light; all the objects present in the sky, visible or invisible, are illuminated by its light. It is the eternal and infinite celestial source of light, heat and energy; it inspires, fosters, sustains and protects life in this world; it is synonymous with and a metaphor for life in all its dimensions. Its splendour and radiance makes it an apt metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment. As an embodiment of this virtue of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity he has been held in high esteem and as the great teacher and preacher of eclectic knowledge pertaining to the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. He had assumed the form of a horse and revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda to the great sage Yagyavalkya. He was also the teacher of Hanuman, said to be incarnate Wind God and Lord Shiva, and who was the great, most ardent and the wisest devotee of Lord Ram.

From the physical perspective also, the Sun is regarded as a fount of light, energy and heat which supports life in all forms in this physical world. No life is imaginable without the presence of the Sun.

According to mythological accounts, the Sun God was the son of sage Kashyap and his wife Aditi from whom all the Gods were born. He is said to be a revelation from the eye of the Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu who is the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing vast and invisible form of the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm. The physical Sun in the sky is the Viraat Purush's visible form. He was married to Sangya, the daughter of Vishwakarma who is regarded as the architect, builder and planner of the Gods. Sangya had two sons and one daughter from the Sun God—viz. the sons named Shraadhya-dev also called Vaivaswat Manu and Yam the god of death, and the daughter named Yamuna which is also the name of a famous river in India. Sangya could not bear the intensity of the Sun's heat and light, so she left her 'shadow' or image and herself went away disguised as a mare to do severe penance. From this 'shadow' were produced two sons and a daughter. The two sons were Shani God who is believed to be full of malice and evil forebodings reflecting the genes of his mother as a dark shadow, and Saarni Manu, and the daughter was Tapti literally meaning one who is fierce and hot. In due course of time, the Sun God found out that his real wife Sangya was involved in doing severe Tapa, so he was extremely pleased with her and brought her back. It was from her form as a mare that the Ashwini Kumars were born. They derived their name from the root 'Ashwa' meaning a horse. These twin sons of the Sun God are regarded as the medicine men of the Gods.

The Sun God revealed himself as Sugriv, the king of the monkey race, during Treta-Yug when Lord Ram incarnated, and as Karna during Dwapar when Lord Krishna came as an incarnation of Vishnu. Sun God rides a chariot driven by Arun who is the son of Vintaa (his mother) and the elder brother of Garud, the legendary heron or eagle who is the mount of Lord Vishnu. The seven horses of the chariot represent the seven colours of the Sun's light. He is constantly on the move and controls and regulates the seasons, months, solstice and year.

The Surya Mandal, i.e. the divine abode of the Sun God, has been narrated in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 10, verse nos. 1-23. It is also referred to in the Tripadvibhuti Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 as falling in the path of a spiritual aspirant who, upon leaving his gross body, is going astride the Garud (the divine vehicle of Vishnu which is represented by the OM Mantra here) through the path of the sky to the heaven where Lord Vishnu lives.

Atharva Veda's Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 28 describes why Aditya or the Sun God is worshipped by wise men.

According to Yoga Upanishads, the Sun God has his symbolic presence in the naval of the body in the Nabhi Chakra or the Manipur Chakra, and as the fire element

in the Mooladhar Chakra, the Swadhisthan Chakra and the Kundalini. The dynamic energy of the sun represented by its life-giving powers is revealed in the form of consciousness that flows in the Pingla Naadi, the nerve passing through the right nostril.

The Akchu Upanishad lists some of the virtues of the Sun God in its Canto 1, verse no. 1 which is exclusively dedicated to his grand virtues as follows—he provides the creature with the ability to see; he lights up the world for him; he provides the creation with its life and sustains it; he moves across the sky with his army of light rays to protect the world from darkness; he personifies the three basic Gunas of Sata, Raja and Tama much like Brahm; he takes the creature away from darkness representing delusions and ignorance towards light symbolising wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment; he is like the Swan—pure and immaculate; he is the bearer of life; he is the Jatveda (one having whatever is born or created as his property; the all-possessor; one who knows everything and is known by all creation; the word is usually applied as an epithet for the eternal fire element of which the sun is a visible manifestation and container); he is as intrinsically valuable as molten and purified gold; he is Tapa (austerity, penance, sufferance for a noble cause) personified; he is the emperor of creation and is crowned with a glittering crown and wears an equally glittering robe consisting of rays of the sunlight; he is the son of Aditi, the mother of Gods, and he lives as ‘sight’ in our eyes.

Aditya or the Sun God, or his visible form as the celestial Sun, has been repeatedly regarded by the Upanishads as a visible *manifestation of the Viraat Purush* who himself is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. For example, Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad—1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Shukla Yajur Veda’s Brihad Aranyak Upanishad—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15; Krishna Yajur Veda’s Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is the *eye* of the Supreme Being—refer Aiteriyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and finds his abode in the creature’s eye—refer Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6, 8 describes the Sun God as the Pran—the vital life giving factor in creation, the life consciousness, and in Canto 1, verse nos. 9, 12-15 as Prajapati—the creator, motivator, nourisher, sustainer, protector and caretaker of the subjects of this creation. He is called the Fire God or the Vaishwanar Agni, the Viraat Purush, the Pran or life consciousness that supports all life in this world—Canto 1, verse no. 7.

The Akchu Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is fully dedicated to the Sun God. It has two parts—in its Canto 1 sage Sankriti offers prayers to the Sun God, and Canto 2 contains the metaphysical and spiritual teachings of the Sun God for the benefit of the sage.

The Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1, says that the Sun God is known as ‘Mitra’, literally meaning a friend. This is because the Sun God’s benevolence and life-sustaining abilities make him a fast friend of every single living being in creation. He fosters life and is a friend of life rather than being its enemy by annihilating it. He helps the world to develop and grow as well as to acquire its stupendous magnificence and glory—refer Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is also known as ‘Savita’—refer Savitru-panishad of Sam Veda tradition, and Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

The Narayan Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in Brahmo-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are

synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/27 says that Surya or the Sun God is a manifestation of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified.

‘Aditya’ or the Sun God appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda-- 1/41/4-6; 2/27; 8/47/14-18; 10/185; Sam Veda—395; 397; Yajur Veda—23/5; 34/54; Atharva Veda—5/3/9-10; 16/3.

References of the Upanishads dealing with the Sun God—

(a) Rig Veda = Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

(b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Savitri Upanishad.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda = and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15.

(d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Akchu Upanishad, Cantos 1 and 2; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1; Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2; Naryan Upanishad, verse no. 1.

(e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1; Surya Upanishad; Gayatri Upanishad; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 24, 27-28 (says that the Sun is a metaphor for Brahm).]

12. [This paragraph describes the importance of the Mantra for Lord Ganesh.]

When the Lord is worshipped by prefixing the divine word OM (symbolizing Brahm) to the Mantra of Lord Ganesh composed in the style of a Trishtubh Chanda, i.e. the Mantra ‘Gannaanam Twam’ (as described in Canto 3, paragraph no. 15), one attains a stature that is equivalent to that possessed by Lord Ganesh. [12].

13. Now we shall narrate the Maatrikaa or the Mantra that is dedicated to Goddesses Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati. They are to be repeated silently three times a day—at dawn when it is meant for Gayatri (the rising Sun), at noon when it is meant for Savitri (the Sun in its full glory and splendour), and at dusk when it is meant for Saraswati (the Goddess of knowledge).

This Mantra is ‘Aim/Ain(g) Vaagishwari Vidmahe Klim/Klin(g) Kaameshwari Dhimahi’. [‘Vaageshwari’ means the Goddess of speech and knowledge; ‘Vidman’ means one who is intelligent and wise; ‘Kaameshwari’ is the Goddess who fulfils all wishes; ‘Dhimahi’ refers to the Goddess who is most wise, expert and erudite. ‘Aim/Ain(g)’ is the Beej for ‘Vak’ or speech, words; ‘Klim/Klin(g)’ is the Beej for Shakti or dynamism, energy, strength, vigour, vitality.]

In the meantime, such a wise man continues to silently do Japa (repetition of Mantra) with the ‘Hans’ Mantra¹. [This implies that each breath of his is a form of Japa; the inhaled air stands for the letter ‘Ha’, and the exhaled air for the letter ‘Sa’.]

The Beej Mantras of all the Goddesses (standing for the various facets of the Supreme Being’s divine glories, virtues, powers and authority), called the ‘Maatrikaas’, are represented by the fifty subtle sounds of all the alphabets of the Sanskrit language, right from the first vowel sound ‘A’ to the last letter ‘Ksha’ (a combined sound of the letter ‘Ka’ and ‘Chh’). These sounds form the basis of the language and its alphabets, hence the Maatrikaas (represented by the fifty basic sounds of the alphabets) pervade throughout the Vedas and other scriptures as they are all composed with letters.

In this way it can be rightly and affirmatively said that the Goddess is all-pervading and omnipresent. [Since the presence of Goddess is deemed in the sound of letters, all forms of spoken word, all languages and all expressions are empowered by the divine Goddess. They have the presence of the Goddess even without her being visible; they are all manifestations of the same Goddess. In other words, all forms of sound, whether intelligible as words and languages, or as merely a sound as in the case of music, they are all manifestations of the same dynamic power of the Supreme Being that had powered the initial cosmic rumbling heard in the form of Pranav, and said as OM, and which the modern-day science likes to call the ‘Big Bang’ that was heard at the beginning of creation.]

Hence, bow most reverentially before her. [That is, one should pay the greatest of respect to the supreme Goddess who powers the creation from within and lends it its dynamism, energy, vitality and strength. Since ‘consciousness’ is also the empowering factor of creation, hidden in the latter and pervading uniformly everywhere, without which no existence can be imagined, it follows that the Goddess is the dynamism of the cosmic Consciousness on ‘active duty’!] [13].’

[Note—¹There are a number of Upanishads that describe the *Hans Mantra*—viz. (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131, Canto 2, verse nos. 5, 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 52, 54-55. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93. (iv) Atharva Veda—Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15.

Refer especially to Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 16 which expressly states that the Hans Mantra should be repeated silently.]

14. The Lord (Shiva) said to the Gods, ‘He who offers worship to Goddess Bhagwati (the Mother Goddess) with the Mantras enumerated in this Upanishad is able to see everything. [That is, he acquires a transcendental vision.]

He who knows this (or who possesses the esoteric knowledge outlined in this Upanishad) finds the elixir of eternity, known as Amrit. This is what this great Upanishad says. [14].

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Canto 5

[This Canto is entirely dedicated to the eclectic concept of the supreme transcendental Brahm who has no attributes and who is almighty. It goes on to describe in detail the importance of controlling the Mana—the mind and its various components.]

1. The Gods said to the Lord (Shiva), ‘Lord, you have told us about Goddess Tripura in great detail. Now, please enlighten us about Brahm who is almighty and without any attributes.’

The Lord replied the Gods, ‘The word Turiya (transcendental state of existence) and Maya (the maverick power of delusions) are used to refer to the supreme Brahm who is personified as the ‘consciousness’ and the supreme ‘Purush’¹.

One must surely have knowledge of this divine and enigmatic Supreme Being that is the one who hears, sees, thinks, preaches, feels and touches, searches or enquires, is wise and erudite, is most highly enlightened, is the one who lives in the inner-self of all living beings as their true self as the Atma, the pure consciousness.

Brahm has no fixed Loka (abode), nor is without a Loka. [This is because Brahm lives in each single unit of creation which forms his Loka.]

He is neither a God nor is he a non-God. He is neither an animal nor a non-animal. He is neither someone who does Tapa and has become a hermit or ascetic, nor is he the opposite. He is neither a Brahmin nor a non-Brahmin. He is neither a Shudra nor a non-Shudra.

The supreme Brahm is completely calm, tranquil and serene. He is one of his kind. He is self-illuminated.

He is beyond the reach of Gods, sages and the Spirits of dead ancestors.

He is fully enlightened and an embodiment of all forms of knowledge.

There is a Sloka (verse or hymn) which describes the importance of the control of the Mana². It says that those who seek Mukti or Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) should make their Mana (mind and heart) free from having any kind of attractions for the sense objects of this material world as well as the desire for gratification of the sense organs, because this is the only way of finding true Mukti. [1].

[Note—¹The ‘consciousness’ refers to the Atma, the soul and the essence of creation. It is the Absolute Truth. The word ‘Purush’ refers to an entity that resides in a ‘Pur’, a city. The Atma lives in the body of the creature as his ‘true self’, and it gives the creature his life and identity. Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18. The individual creature is a single unit representative of the whole world. Hence, when this individual creature is regarded in his cosmic form he is called the Viraat Purush. The word ‘Viraat’ itself means an entity that is vast, colossus, huge, fathomless and measureless.

²The word *Mana* has a broad meaning, covering the combined apparatus of the subtle aspects of the creature’s body consisting of the subjective mind and the emotional heart. It brings in its ambit the thoughts of the mind and the emotional impulses of the sentimental heart. This is because they both work in conjunction to determine how and what a man thinks, believes, imagines and is attracted to, how he behaves and reacts to a given situation or circumstance. Therefore, the word ‘Mana’ refers to a complex structure consisting of the various emotions and thoughts, the dispositions and inclinations, the intentions, ideas and purpose of the mind as well as the wishes, attractions and desires of the heart, the attractions that tempt the mind, causing it to fix its attention on these attractions thereby also dragging the heart along which begins to love them and get attached to these attractions. All these factors have a composite effect on the sub-conscious. [Refer—Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39; the concept has been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 7, section 3.]

Heart is the center where all types of emotions and sentiments have their origin. On the other hand, the subjective mind and the objective intellect are the two components which are like the two limbs of the brain and they work in close cooperation with each other, being the controlling center where all sorts of thoughts and decisions are centered. The Mana plays a pivotal role in the creature falling into the trap of worldly delusions or being liberated and delivered from it. Further, all Mantras have had their origin in the mind and heart of ancient sages and seers when they contemplated upon any aspect of Divinity and arrived at some profound spiritual Truth in this creation. The great Maha Vakyas were then ‘revealed’ to them in their meditative trance. Hence the importance and primary source of everything in this creation as the Mana cannot be neglected or even over-emphasized.

The Mana is to be distinguished from Buddhi, for the former refers to the mind and the latter to the intellect. The most important component of a creature's body is his brain. It is the level of development of the brain that determines in which rung of evolutionary hierarchy the creature stands. The brain has two components—the grosser mind and the subtler intellect. The mind is always in a state of flux, remaining undecided and running hither and thither like a mischievous child let loose, while the intellect is marked by stability and is like an adult who knows what to do and what to choose. When the child, the mind, is put under the care of his parent, the adult intellect, it would have a proper upbringing and would not commit some grave error, while an uncared child would be a nuisance for the society. Likewise, the mind when it is under the supervision and guidance of the intellect is under leash and such a mind can be very productive for the man just like a properly raised child can give a lot to the world when he grows up.

The importance of Mana has been highlighted in Yogshika Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 5, verse no. 62, Canto 6, verse nos. 60-65; Yog Kundalini Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 3, verse no. 5.

How the Mana creates the world has been explained in Yogshika Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 6, verse nos. 58-61, 70.

How the Mana acts as a fetter has been elucidated in the (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshika Upanishad Canto 1, verse nos. 59-61. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Shatyayani Upanishad, verse nos. 1-3; Muktiko-panishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-39.

The Aeiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 3, section 1, verse no. 2 says that Mana and Hridaya (heart) are synonymous with each other.

How the Mana can be controlled or dissolved or disassociated from its involvement with the world has been explained in the following Upanishads—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kathrudra Upanishad, verse nos. 39-40; Yogshika Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 62-65, 69-71. (ii) Atharva Veda's Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 7, verse no. 23-25; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 20-27, 33-48, 56-57; Canto 2, verse nos. 12, 43; Canto 3, verse nos. 5-6; Canto 4, 12-16, 21.

How an ascetic can focus his attention on the 'self' during meditation by controlling the Mana is described in the Shandilya Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, section 7, verse no. 18.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 4, verse no. 4 says that the Mana is the patron of the fire sacrifice, especially the one done internally when the Pran or the vital winds are offered as offerings to worship the deity known as the Atma residing in the body.]

2. The Mana is said to be of two types, one classified as Shudha (pure, uncorrupt, holy and clean), and the other as A-shudha (the opposite of Shudha).

The A-shudha Mana is one which has desires and passions, while the Shudha Mana is one which has no such inclinations which act as blights on the Atma (the 'self') of a spiritual aspirant. [2].

3. The Mana is the causative factor that either shackles a man, or sets him free.

If a man has numerous desires, he is deemed to be tied in shackles. If he has no such desires, he is a free man. [3].

4. When the Mana is freed from being tied to various sense objects, when it is trained to be restrained and self-disciplined, and when it focused on the inner-self (i.e. remains under tight leash of the voice of the consciousness originating from one's heart where the Atma lives)—then the Mana is said to have attained the eclectic state of 'Unmani'. [The term 'Unmani' refers to the state when the Mana becomes

indifferent to the various temptations originating from the material world of sense objects.]

This if effect is the supreme state of existence, called the 'Param Pad'. [4].

[Note—The concept of Unmani state is explained elsewhere in the Upanishads also. The *Unmani* state is a higher and exalted state of existence of the consciousness when it rises above the mundane and the gross, and lives in a sublime state. The word itself has two connotations—one is to rise and lift up, and other is to become indifferent to things that are gross and unattractive. The ascetic who practices the form of Yoga outlined in this Upanishad is able to 'lift' his 'self' from the gross level of existence, 'rise up' and reach an exalted state of existence when he is able to 'see' the sublime Tattwa, or experience the presence in his own inner self the eclectic entity that is the essence of existence and which in common parlance of Vedanta and metaphysics is known as the 'conscious self' or the pure conscious Atma. This Atma is the essence or the Tattwa that is self-illuminated and that is witnessed in the higher stages of Yoga as described in this verse. It is the realisation of this Atma that is the aim of all spiritual pursuits, and it is this realisation of the Atma that is the cosmic Truth known as Brahm which gives the feeling of unmatched exhilaration and ecstasy to the ascetic. That is why he is stunned and his eyebrows are raised in a crooked stance. He had never ever experienced this scintillating source of light earlier in his life, and when he actually 'sees' it, he is taken by surprise and utterly stunned and dazzled by its mere presence.

The word also means total renunciation. It is in this context that the word is used elsewhere—such as for example in the *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 8, verse nos. 2-8 while describing the various Tattwas of existence that represent or symbolize the cosmic form of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Being known as Brahm.

The *Shandilya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition refers to the Unmani state in its Canto 1, section 7, verse no. 17 while describing the Khechhari Mudra.]

5. Oppose the wayward nature of the Mana till the time it is not fully controlled, and the heart is not at peace and rested. That is, till the time there is no agitations and restlessness.

This is the essential meaning of Gyan (true wisdom, enlightenment, knowledge, erudition) and Dhyān (concentration, contemplation, meditation, focus of the mind etc.). All else is simply elaboration of this basic fact and an expansion or an expansive playing around with a motley collection of words. [5].

6. Brahm is such an enigmatic entity that it cannot be said with certainty that it is a subject matter for thoughts of the mind, nor can it be said that it is not.

Think of Brahm subtly, even without not consciously thinking of this divine entity. When one becomes free from narrow-minded views of Brahm, it is only then that he is certainly able to have a divine view of Brahm; he is able to attain Brahm.

[That is, even when one thinks that he is not thinking of Brahm but of something else, he is actually thinking of Brahm in another form. This is because everything in this creation is one or the other form of Brahm; there is nothing that is not Brahm. Hence, whatever is being thought of is also a form of Brahm, though one erroneously thinks that he is not thinking of Brahm. For instance, one thinks that one is contemplating upon the Lord only while one is doing worship or meditating, but he forgets that even while doing his normal chores in this world when he has to voluntarily or involuntarily think of so many things he is still thinking of the same Brahm, albeit in a different form and role. This is how one can have a holistic view of

Brahm; this is how one can remain immersed in the thoughts of Brahm inspite of going about his normal affairs in this world.] [6].

7. Ascetics seek the Atma, the pure consciousness, in their own inner-self by meditating and contemplating. Thoughts of anything that is not Atma (i.e. anything that is not the 'truth') is not considered as thought in the real sense. [It is a waste of time and energy.] [7].

8. The Brahm which has no divisions, parts, forms and attributes is absolutely immaculate, faultless, uncorrupt and untainted, as well as non-dual, unique and unparalleled.

When the aspirant is fully convinced of the truth of the axiomatic maxim of the scriptures 'I am Brahm', he in fact becomes synonymous with Brahm; he becomes a personification of Brahm. [This will happen when he realises that the pronoun 'I' applies to his true self which is the pure conscious Atma and not the gross physical body.] [8].

9. By being acquainted with that divine entity (Brahm) that is 'Nirvikalp' (has no alternative, is non-dual, unique and unparalleled), that is 'Anant' (without an end, is eternal, imperishable and infinite), that is 'Hetu' (the cause of everything in this creation), that is 'Dristaanta Varjit' (cannot be seen or compared with anything, cannot be proved), that is 'Aprameya' (boundless, limitless, infinite, endless, immeasurable), and that is 'Anaadyantam' (without a beginning or end)—the wise and enlightened aspirant finds Mukti (i.e. he finds spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and deliverance; he gets freedom from the fetters of delusions and ignorance). [9].

10. Real spiritual knowledge and true enlightenment is when the person develops a holistic view of creation so much so that he thinks that there is no obstruction or hindrance of any kind (for 'him', for 'he' is not the gross body but the ethereal Spirit known as the pure consciousness Atma that cannot be obstructed or hindered), that there is no birth or origin (as the Atma is eternal and without a birth), that there is no bondage, fetter or shackle (because the Atma is eternally free and cannot be put under bonds), that there is no separate entity who is called a 'seeker' that is distinct from the sought (because the 'seeker' is himself Brahm, the object that is sought), that there is no one who is bound and no one who is free (simply because all are Brahm personified, and there is no thing known as a bond or tie because the Atma, the holy Spirit, is an ethereal entity that cannot be bound and shackled). [10].

11. It is the same Atma, the pure consciousness, that pervades uniformly in the three states of existence of a creature—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, and Sushupta or deep sleep state.

A wise person who crosses these three states and enters the fourth, called the Turiya (which is the 'transcendental state of consciousness') does not take a birth again. [11].

[Note—According to the metaphysical interpretation of a man's various states of existence, the consciousness continues to oscillate between the three states of Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta. A man is awake, he goes to sleep and dreams, then enters a phase of sleep known as deep sleep, then reverts back to the dreams, and then finally wakes up in the world. This is the routine of life. The 'transcendental' state is the one

when one crosses the threshold of Sushupta and enters the Turiya state. It is then that the oscillation stops.

The fact that the Atma continues to oscillate between the three states of Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupta has been elaborately explained in the (i) Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 4, Brahman 3, verse nos. 16-18, 34-35; and (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahm/Amrit Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 11; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse nos. 12-14; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 93/12-93/15; Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 20-21.]

12. It is the same Atma that is universally present in a uniform manner in all individual creatures. In spite of being one it therefore appears to be separate, distinct, varied and different just like one sees many images of the same moon when it is seen as a reflection in as many pots of water. [12].

13. Even as the sky does not move (i.e. changes its basic character) when one moves a pitcher, the Atma too does not move (i.e. changes its basic character) in spite of the creature moving (or changing his body from one birth to another).

[Here, the Atma that resides inside the individual creature is likened to the space inside the pitcher or the sky element present inside the body of the empty pitcher, the body of the pitcher is likened to the body of the creature, and the sky outside the pitcher is likened to the universal Atma that is present everywhere outside the limitations of the gross mortal body of a creature. When the pitcher is moved, it is only the body of the pitcher that changes location and not the sky which is a universal entity. The sky that was present in its previous position is the same as that which is present in its new location. It is only the physical gross form of the pitcher that has changed location. It is not that the air inside the pitcher in, say, position 'A' would be any different from that of position 'B', and neither would this affect the air outside the pitcher. Further, the air inside one pitcher would be exactly alike the air in another pitcher, small or big, coloured or not. See the next verse no. 13]

Similarly, when a creature dies and takes a new birth, the Atma only shifts from its previous body to its new body, but its fundamental nature and characters do not change.] [13].

14. The sky or air remains the same even when it changes its location from one pitcher to another.

Similarly, the Atma changes its body but remains universally the same. A wise person who knows this knows everything, and he always sees uniformity and non-duality in creation. [14].

15. Only as long as a man is surrounded by Maya (delusions) and entangled in the web of 'Shabda' (words) does he see two different situations, separations, varieties, differences and dichotomies in this world. When the delusions and confusions created by Maya and the web of words known as Shabda are removed, a wise man sees only non-duality and oneness in this whole creation. That is, when the darkness of delusions and spiritual ignorance that shroud the inherently enlightened Atma are removed by careful study, analysis and understanding of the scriptures and their doctrines in the correct perspective, instead of merely having their literal knowledge and getting misled by their uncountable interpretations which add to perplexities instead of discounting them, it is only then that an awakened man is able to know the truth about his own self and the world surrounding him, along with the relationship between the two. He becomes enlightened about the Atma and Brahm in their

entirety. It is in the light of truth, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment that he is fortunate to get this eclectic knowledge. [15].

16. The supreme Brahm is manifested in the form of 'Shabda' (word having meaning and which makes sense), and when the meaning is snatched away from the word it becomes a useless collection of nonsense letters.

[This is an excellent analogy to explain Brahm. Words are made of letters, but these letters have relevance only till they are incorporated in a particular word. The word has any relevance only till it makes some sense, otherwise it is as worthless as a letter having no independent meaning or when it is simply a hotchpotch jumble of sounds. In other words, it is Brahm that gives sense to this creation. If Brahm is removed from this creation, the latter would lose its meaning and relevance. Brahm is the 'word', while each unit of this creation is the 'letter'. Just as each letter is as important as the other to form a particular word, each unit of creation is as important as the other to give the entire edifice of creation its meaning, and, in the process, to fully reveal Brahm in its entirety. This is because Brahm uniformly pervades in the entire creation, and because whatever that exists is Brahm personified. In other words, to imagine Brahm only as a living being, and not, say, as the other elements of creation such as a tree or the river or the cloud would be not understanding the true nature and form of Brahm. Hence, it would be like not understanding the true meaning of a word, and misunderstanding its finer nuances.

There is another connotation to this analogy. The 'Brahm' when likened to the 'word' would imply the macrocosm, while 'Brahm' when likened to the 'letter' that forms the word would be the microcosm. The relativity between any two given aspects of Brahm is further elucidated below in verse no. 17.]

Therefore, a person desirous of peace and bliss of the mind and heart concentrates and contemplates upon this Brahm who is 'Akshar'.

[There is a play on the word 'Akshar' here. This word has two meanings—one is a 'letter', and the other is 'imperishable, one that does not decay or come to ruin'. Just like the letter is the basic unit of a word, Brahm is the basic element of creation. At the same time, Brahm is eternal, wholesome, imperishable and infinite.] [16].

17. Therefore, a wise man should ponder upon two aspects of Brahm. One is the 'Shabda' (word), and the other is the 'Param' (supreme, transcendental) aspect of Brahm.

When one is fully enlightened about the 'Shabda Brahm', he is able to attain the Param Brahm. The Shabda Brahm is a stepping-stone to the 'Param Brahm'.

[One comes to learn about anything by the medium of words. He hears about it, reads about it, enquires about it, investigates about it from all available data and texts, and then comes to know about it. The object of such investigation has a definite name and virtues, because it is absolutely impossible to learn about something that is completely meaningless, incomprehensible and indefinable. So, in his search for Brahm which is synonymous with the Absolute Truth of creation, the seeker starts with the help of that aspect of Brahm which has been narrated in the Holy Scriptures, that is preached by wise teachers, and which is heard of and described as the only Truth and Reality of creation. How can one search for anything that has no names and characteristics, virtues that need 'word' to make sense. Otherwise, it would be like browsing for nothing in the vacant space, leading to nowhere. The Shabda Brahm helps one to identify his spiritual objective or aim; it helps him to call out to the Lord in the form of Mantras, prayers and hymns that he sings in the Lord's honour. It helps

him to focus his mind and attention on the 'one' divine Being, instead of allowing his mind to wander in the endless forest of so many forms that Brahm has taken. So a wise man, for instance, uses the word OM in his spiritual pursuit as it provides direct access to Brahm.

No one has seen Brahm with his physical eyes, so one can know Brahm only by the means of the word, the 'Shabda', that is prescribed by the scriptures for Brahm. For instance, when one goes out in search of someone he has never met before, he enquires about for him by his name. Even when he meets the person he asks whether he is the same person who was being searched by repeating the name. This would help to explain the importance and significance of the Shabda (word) aspect of Brahm.

But this is just the primary stage; it is just the launching stage towards the ultimate. Shabda Brahm is not the goal, but a medium to reach the goal which is the Param (supreme) aspect of Brahm which is described by words. Hence, the main target for all spiritual aspirants should be the supreme transcendental Brahm, and not remain entangled in the words of the scriptures and repetition of Mantras in the hope that this would give them liberation and deliverance from this delusory world and its cycle of birth and death, that they can become Brahm realised and enlightened by merely learning by rote the words of the scripture and doing formal forms of worship or going to pilgrims or chanting Mantras in the misconceived hope of finding spiritual peace and bliss, or emancipation and salvation. They would be living in a fool's paradise. The next verse nos. 18-19 are very explicit on this.] [17].

18. [Verse nos. 18-19 explain very beautifully why one should first study the scriptures and then discard them as follows—

Those who are really wise, erudite and learned should discard all the scriptures after having studied them thoroughly just like a rich man does not pay attention to useless animals such as hares and mares. [A poor man would be happy to have a hare or a mare as a pet, but a rich man treats these animals as too humble a creature to be kept as pet and would rather prefer high pedigree dogs and horses. Similarly, when a wise man (who can be compared to a rich man in this example) has understood the real meaning and intent of the scriptures, he would be least bothered about their trifling details and pay attention only to their higher objectives. He would not be bogged down by their too literal a meaning but attempt to gather the essence of their message that can provide his soul the nectar of spiritualism that it deserves.] [18].

[Note—Refer also to References =(i) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse no. 23; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse no. 3. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-5; Akchu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 41-41 ½; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 33; Avadhut Upanishad, verse nos. 15 ½, 18; Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 6; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse nos. 28-30. (iii) Atharva Veda's Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 6, paragraph no. 1.]

19. Just like different samples of milk drawn from many cows would have the same chemicals in them, the essential knowledge of the basic Truth that is drawn from myriad sources would always remain the same. [So, even as one benefits from the nutrients present in the milk and not from which cow this milk has come, it is the understanding of the knowledge of garnered from all types of sources that actually helps the seeker of Truth, and not the source from which this knowledge has come.] (19).

20. Focus your attention on the 'Gyan Netra'.

[This refers to center of the forehead, between the two eyebrows. It is here that 'Agya Chakra', or the subtle energy center which control wisdom and learning, is located. Ascetics strive to focus their attention on this spot, and when successfully done it gives them stupendous mystical ability to see and know the unseen and the unknown. This spot and the process of focusing on it are extensively described in the Upanishads dealing with Yoga. Here it means that the preacher, Lord Shiva, teaches his disciples, the Gods, to see the reality with the eyes of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment. Spiritual truths and esoteric realities cannot be seen with the gross organ of sight of the equally gross body, the organ known as the eye. To see the truth that is as enigmatic, mysterious and esoteric as the Atma and Brahm, one need to have the 'Eye of Gyan', known as the 'Gyan (enlightenment and wisdom) Netra (eye)'.]

This will help you to realise the truth of the statement 'I am Brahm'. [This is because you would have become self-realised; you would have experienced the presence of the self-illuminated Atma, the pure consciousness that pervades in each pore of your existential body. Since this Atma is a personification of Brahm, it is obvious that you would be convinced that you are indeed Brahm personified.]

This Brahm is supreme, great and majestic; this Brahm is the ultimate abode or destination; this Brahm has no parts and is immutable; this Brahm is taintless and immaculate; this Brahm is steady, constant, universal and uniform; this Brahm is absolutely calm, tranquil, peaceful and serene. [20].

21. He who knows that Brahm is a universal entity that lives uniformly in all the creatures of this creation, he is the wise one who lives submerged in the thoughts of Brahm. He virtually assumes a form which is as limitless, infinite, imperishable and eternal as the great and majestic element known as the Param Vyom (the great and infinite sky, beyond which there is nothing).

[This is because Brahm has all the grand virtues possessed by the sky, and the latter is the nearest analogue of Brahm. In the Upanishads, Brahm is said to have a form and virtues as that possessed by the Vyom (sky). Brahm pervades the Vyom, and the Vyom is a manifestation of Brahm. Therefore, they are treated as being equivalent to each other. In the present context it means that when a man has become wise and enlightened enough to understand who he is and who is Brahm, he automatically assumes the virtues of Vyom, i.e. he becomes as open-minded, broad-viewed, large-hearted, welcoming, all-accepting but at the same time remaining neutral and indifferent to all things as the sky. He lacks nothing; he is fulfilled like the sky which harbours everything in this creation and therefore it (the sky) wants nothing.]

Think—'I accept this fourth state of existence (i.e. the Turiya state of transcendental existence) which is equivalent to the 'Brahm Yoni'—i.e. which can enlighten me about and make me acquainted with Brahm (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness) and the Truth of existence. I bow before such a great Brahm.' [21].

22. The sky is the ultimate source from which all the other elements of creation have emerged. All of them were conceived and developed in the cosmic crucible known as the 'Akash' (sky). All the Bhuts (elements; creatures) have emerged from the sky, and finally collapse and dissolve (vanish) into the sky. They take birth in the space provided by the sky and live in the space provided by the sky. [It is like the case of a servant serving the master. The master gives him his bread and butter, as well as provides him with living quarters.]

Hence, treat the 'sky' as the Beej (seed) of everything. [Since the sky and Brahm are one, it is a natural corollary that it is Brahm that is being indirectly called the 'Beej' or seed of everything in existence.]

Therefore, treat that 'one entity' (Brahm) as the Akash-peeth (sky), Vayu-peeth (air or wind), Tej-peeth (fire), Amrit-peeth (water) and Ratna-peeth (earth).

[The word 'Peeth' literally means a seat where a deity is consecrated. In the present context it implies that the supreme Deity known as Brahm is enshrined in all these five fundamental elements of creation. Since the rest of the creation is moulded out of these five primary elements that form the basic ingredients of creation, it follows that Brahm is subtly enshrined in each form that the elements took and in any ratio they combined. The earth is called the 'Ratna-peeth' to indicate that the earth is full of minerals and gems as well as with all the necessary things needed to sustain life. Water is called 'Amrit', meaning nectar and ambrosia of life, because it is the elixir without which no life is sustainable and imaginable in this world.]

He who knows this attains eternity. [That is, he becomes Brahm-realised.]

He who knows that this fourth dimension of knowledge, called the Turiya state of existence (i.e. the transcendental state of existence as emphasized in verse no. 11) which is related to the Lord Kaam-raj (i.e. the Lord who fulfills all desires and aspiration, here meaning spiritual aspirations of a seeker), actually pertains to the supreme transcendental Brahm who is honoured by the epithet of 'Akshar' (that which does not decay or perish)—only such a wise man is said to have truly understood the real meaning of the term Turiya, and what this state of existence is all about.

[In other words, he who knows the true meaning and essence of the fourth state of consciousness, known as the Turiya state of transcendental existence that provides fulfillment of all spiritual desires, it is he alone who is able to know the imperishable and eternal form of Brahm. Such a man finds Mukti or liberation and deliverance. Such a man is truly wise, erudite, learned and enlightened; he is truly self-realised and Brahm-realised. This fact has been emphatically stressed in this entire Canto 5.]

This is the profound teaching of this great Upanishad. Amen! [22].

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 22

Devi Upanishad

This Upanishad was revealed as a preaching made by the divine Mother Goddess for the benefit of Gods. It describes the primary esoteric form of the Mother Goddess as a personified form of the cosmic authority, powers and dynamism, known as 'Shakti', of the Supreme Being. It stresses that whatever that exists in this vast and multifarious creation is actually the same venerable Goddess revealed in all these individual forms. It goes on to explain the Adi-Vidya, the primary knowledge, followed by the monosyllabic Mantra of the Goddess which is her Beej Mantra, and the nine-lettered Mantra which is called the Maha-Chandi Vidya, along with the rewards associated with them.

Though this Upanishad is brief, but for those who follow the occult science of Tantra Vidya it is of utmost importance and significance. The greatness of the 'Devi' as a personified form of the Shakti of Brahm, the Shakti that is responsible for not only the coming into being of this creation but also of its sustenance, growth and nourishment, the powerful force of Nature that controls and regulates each aspect and phase of creation right from its initiation till its conclusion, has been beautifully brought out in the Bahvaricho-panishad of the Rig Veda tradition. Two other Upanishads have special relevance here, one is the Tripura Upanishad, which is the eighth Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition, and the other is the Tripura Tapini Upanishad, which is the twenty-first Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition. The latter Upanishad is included in the present volume.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. Once, all the Gods presented themselves before the Devi (Mother Goddess) and requested her—'Oh the great and venerable Mother Goddess! Who are you? Please tell us.' (1).

2. She replied—'Oh Gods! I am a personification of Brahm (the supreme transcendental Consciousness; the Supreme Being). It is from me that this creation having two facets, a male and a female represented by the Purush and the Prakriti are produced or created.

[The word 'Purush' refers to the all-inclusive macrocosmic form of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush, and the individual male at the microcosmic level of creation. Similarly, the word 'Prakriti' refers to the Mother Nature at the macrocosmic level, and the female at the microcosmic level. It is their union that produces this creation at both the levels.

The following points should be borne in mind while one endeavours to understand what is meant in the aforesaid stanza of this verse. The Viraat Purush and the Prakriti are representatives of the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. Their microcosmic counterparts are the male and the female forms of the Jiva, the living being who is regarded as an image or a personification of Brahm.

The cosmic Consciousness that has assumed these forms is, however, extremely subtle and sublime. The above gross forms are revelations of this subtle Consciousness. The term 'gross' is a relative term vis-à-vis the Consciousness, and must not be taken too literally. That is, the Viraat Purush or the Prakriti have no physical gross body like the male and the female creatures born on earth, but relative to the 'cosmic Consciousness' they are grosser and less subtle.

The element of uniformity and oneness in all aspects of creation, whether at the macro level or at the micro level, is represented by this cosmic Consciousness that is the subtle and the only empowering entity living inherently in all these forms as their 'Shakti'. Without the Shakti the creation would be a dead entity, and no one would be bothered about an entity that is lifeless and useless.

This Shakti is the virtue of Brahm that lends each and every unit of creation, whether as the Viraat Purush or as the male creature, whether as the Prakriti or its counterpart as the female creature, their inherent energy, strength and power to do what they do. At the cosmic level this Consciousness is known as the Parmatma, the supreme Atma or the Soul of creation, and at the microcosmic level it is known as the individual creature's Atma or his 'self'.

So it becomes clear that though the grosser form of Brahm might be known by different names, such as the Viraat or the Prakriti, the fundamental element known as the 'Shakti of Brahm' is a universal entity that is equally present in all the forms that Brahm has taken. This Shakti is the authority, the power, the strength and the dynamism of Brahm that actually does anything in this creation on the behalf of the latter. It is the Shakti that lends Brahm its stupendous cosmic authority and sway. The Viraat Purush would be powerless in creating anything without the Shakti in the form of the Prakriti that harbours this creation in its fathomless bowls, and what would the Prakriti do if the Viraat Purush did not or could not seed it with life?

What then is the difference between the 'Viraat Purush' and the 'Prakriti'? Well, the answer is simple—whereas the Viraat Purush represents Brahm in its entirety, the powers, dynamism, vigour, potent, energy and authority that the Viraat Purush possesses comes from the 'Shakti' that is an integral part of Brahm, and is implied when one thinks of Brahm in a holistic manner as the Supreme Being who is responsible for every dimension and aspect of this magnificent creation, the Supreme Being who has revealed himself not only as the Trinity Gods known as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder, but also as all other forces of Nature in this creation.

If Brahm is the Supreme Being of this creation, then his Prime Authority is represented by the Shakti. If Brahm is the Viraat Purush, the cosmic Male aspect of creation, then the Shakti of Brahm is manifested as the Goddess, known as 'Devi', who is the cosmic Female aspect of creation known as Mother Nature.

Brahm is the supreme Creator, and to 'create' he needs authority, energy, strength and powers. These come from Shakti. Without the Shakti, Brahm is as lusterless and insignificant as the Sun without its splendour and brilliance, the fire without its light, heat and energy, or the king without his royal authority, grandeur and powers. Brahm and Shakti cannot be divorced from one another even as the sun and the fire cannot be divested of their brilliant light, splendour, radiance and heat, or the king of his royal authority, majesty and powers.

The sun lives in the sky high above, but its light and energy fosters life on earth. The fire may not be visible everywhere, but its presence is evident when one imagines what would happen if there was no heat and warmth on earth—well, the life as we know it would simply freeze to extinction without the latent present of the fire

element everywhere. The king may be seated in his palace, but his authority and powers are used to run the far flung realms of the kingdom. Similarly, it is the Shakti of the Supreme Being that actually runs the affairs of this creation on his behalf.

As for the 'union' between the two creating and giving shape to this world, one can understand how it works with a simple illustration from the physical world. Even basic science teaches us that water consists of the formula H_2O . That means, if we are to have water as we know of this life-giving fluid to exist in this world then we have to take for granted that Hydrogen is irrevocably and inseparably married to or united with Oxygen. They must co-exist or tightly embrace each other if the molecule of water is to be as such. Thus, when we talk of water we think of Hydrogen and Oxygen as one single inseparable whole, and not as two distinct gases. Neither of these two gases have a physical gross form, but their union has produced 'water' as the off spring that is gross and visible.

Similarly, Brahm and Shakti unite to produce this visible and gross world. This world is the off spring resulting from the union of two subtle and sublime entities known as Brahm and Shakti. The Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 9-10 assert and affirm this fact by saying that Shiva is Brahm personified, and it is the union of Shiva and Shakti that is the cause of this creation.]

For those who are ignorant, this creation is independent of me; or I am not present in it. For those who are wise and erudite, this creation is completely soaked with my subtle and sublime form which pervades uniformly in each and every unit of creation.

[That is, those who are not wise think that the Mother Goddess is to be found somewhere high up in the heaven located in the sky, but those who are wise see the same Goddess in each unit of creation, right in their midst. Since the Goddess represents the dynamism, the energy, the authority and the power of Brahm, since Brahm had used this power inherent in him not only to kick-start the process of creation but also to sustain it till its final conclusion, and even to bring about the happening of the 'conclusion' itself, since it is Brahm that has actually revealed himself as this creation and therefore is omnipresent and all-pervading, it follows that Brahm's dynamism cannot be present elsewhere like the authority of an Emperor always stays with him and no where else. Hence, alongside Brahm, the Mother Goddess also manifests and pervades uniformly and universally in this creation.

If Brahm is omnipresent and all-pervading, his Shakti also accompanies him like the authority, the majesty and royal powers of a king always accompanies him. Shakti accompanies Brahm like a shadow accompanies a person.]

It is me (i.e. the Devi, the Goddess representing the Shakti of Brahm in a personified form) who is both a personification of Anand (bliss, happiness, cheerfulness and joys) as well as of miseries and grief. Similarly, I am both in the form of Vidya (knowledge) as well as A-Vidya (ignorance)

[There is no confusion in this statement. It is a common observation that happiness and miseries co-exist in this world, so do knowledge and ignorance.

One man is writhing in pain while the other is enjoying the music and dancing to its tune; one man is fighting his own brother in a court of law or slitting his throat for property while the other lays down his life for others to whom he is not even distantly related.

One man is so intelligent that he reaches the deep bowls of the universe aboard a space-ship or creates computers and solves complicated problems of mathematics and sciences, while the other barely scraps through primary school and is good for nothing.

Since this world is uniformly pervaded by the Mother Goddess, both these seemingly opposing situations must have the same Goddess in them. This is because the Goddess is non-dual and one of her kind just like Brahm, as she is only the dynamic facet of the Principal Authority known as Brahm. The logic behind this dilemma is that this world is a composite of all qualities, both good and bad. It is like a bar-magnet that has two opposing poles, the north and the south, incorporated in its own body and co-habiting. If it were not so, this world would not have acquired the unique colourful and astoundingly diverse nature that it possesses, and it would be no different from the one-sided world of righteous and auspicious virtues, a world of complete bliss, tranquility, peace and happiness that is known as the divine heaven, the abode known as Brahm-Loka where the Supreme Being lives.

Upanishads have described the great paradoxes pertaining to Brahm, making the latter as the most enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious entity in the entire creation. Even the Vedas which are regarded as the embodiment of knowledge itself fail to fully define or narrate Brahm, and they ultimately surrender by saying 'Neti-Neti'—i.e. not this, not this. Or, Brahm is neither this nor that; Brahm cannot be limited to this or that definition, nor can it be said that either of these definitions do not define Brahm. Therefore, Brahm is visible as well as invisible, Brahm is subtle as well as gross, Brahm is true as well as it cannot be denied that what is false is not Brahm!

These apparently contradictory situations exist, are true, and are equally applicable to Brahm because of the fact that 'everything' is Brahm, and the word 'everything' includes all imaginable hues and shades of existence, extending from the credulous to the extreme height of incredulous.

Further, since Brahm and Shakti are inseparable from one another, it follows that all the paradoxes applicable to Brahm are equally applicable to Shakti.]

Surely, I am known as 'Brahmani' who is nothing but the dynamism of the supreme transcendental Brahm revealed in the form of Brahma, the creator.

[The word 'Brahmani' refers to the female counterpart of Brahma the creator. In other word, while the subtle world is created by Brahm, the Supreme Being, using his own powers that are equally subtle and known as Shakti, the gross world is created by Brahm's gross revelation in the form of Brahma the creator. As such, the dynamism of this creator of the visible gross world, known as Brahma, is called 'Brahmani'. Thus, 'Brahmani' is the dynamism of Brahma, the creator of the gross visible world, and who himself is a grosser macrocosmic form of Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

This is the Mantra or the principle established by the Atharva Veda (2).

3. [The following verses emphasize the fact that everything and every phase of creation is a revelation of the same divine Mother Goddess who represents the dynamism of Brahm in a vivid form.]

I am the combined form of the five Bhuts as well as their independent forms. [The five Bhuts are sky, air, fire, water, and earth. The entire creation is constituted from them. They therefore have independent existence as well as a joint existence.]

I am the whole visible world. [The entire gross world that is visible is my revelation.]

Veda (knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and literally skills) as well as A-Veda (the opposite of Veda) are both my forms. [This is because 'everything', the high and the low, are a revelation of the dynamism of Brahm.]

Similarly, Gyan (knowledge, enlightenment) and A-Gyan (ignorance, stupidity) are also my forms.

‘Ajaa’ (that which is un-born; the invisible form of creation) and ‘Non-Ajaa’ (that which is born; the visible form of creation) are both my forms.

The high and the mighty (such as the Gods, the exalted sages and ascetics, the kings and wise men), as well as the lowly and humble, such as the beast and other lowly forms of life in this creation (known as the ‘Tiryak’), are my forms too (3).

4. It is me who moves and prevails everywhere in the form of the various Rudras¹ and Vasus².

It is me who moves unhindered everywhere in the form of the Adityas³ (the Sun God) and the various Vishwa-Devas⁴ (the custodians of the world).

It is me who sustains, nourishes and takes general care of the Gods known as Mitra (the friendly God)⁵ and Varun (the Water God)⁶, as well as of Indra⁷ (the king of Gods), Agni⁸ (Fire God) and the two Ashwini-kumars⁹ (the twin sons of the Sun God and the medicine men of the Gods) (4).

[Note—¹*Rudras*—Rudra is a Vedic deity and has been eulogized in three full Suktas (hymns) dedicated to him. These are Rig Veda’s 1/114/1-11; 2/33/1-15, and Yajur Veda’s 16/1-66. Besides these Suktas, Rudra is honoured as a deity at a number of places in the Vedas—viz. Rig Veda—1/43/1-4, 5/42/11, 7/46/1-4, 7/59/12; Atharva Veda—5/6/3-4, 6/55/2-3, 7/92/1, 11/2; and Yajur Veda—11/54.

The Rudra is regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). Rudra assumes many forms—usually it is eleven forms (Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/4/9/7), but sometimes they are also said to be thirty-three in number (Taittiriya Sanhita, 1/4/11/1). Rudra is regarded as having a close relationship with Agni, the Fire God (Shatapath Brahman, 5/2/4/13). The Padma Puran, Swargakhanda, Chapter 8 mentions only eight Rudras. These eight, eleven or thirty-three forms of Rudra might mean as many aspects of Shiva.

However, in terms of the Upanishads, the eleven Rudras stand for the ten vital winds called Prans + one Mana or mind. The ten Prans are five chief Prans such as Pran (breath), Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyana, and five subsidiary Prans such as Nag, Kurma, Krikara, Devdutta and Dhananjaya. [Refer—Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 77-87 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition; Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-57 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

Rudra is said to have created such mythological figures as Bhuts (ghosts), Pretas (disembodied spirits), Pishacha (goblins), Khusmaandas (malignant imps).

In iconography, he has been depicted as wearing long tresses coiled on the head, has strong powerful arms, has a body decorated variously with serpents or priceless ornaments, and holds a strong and invincible bow and arrow as well as a thunderbolt. When necessary, he becomes ferocious and charges at his enemies on a chariot or on foot, while at the other times he is full of mercy and compassion. He is closely associated with forests and mountains, and is also the patron deity of herbs and medicinal plants. Hence, he is the killer of diseases and a great healer. Here, ‘healing’ would mean spiritual healing rather than physical ailments afflicting a creature.

He destroys sins and evil tendencies in the world, and grants the boon of liberation and happiness.

According to the epic Mahabharata, Anushasanaparva, Chapter 14, it is Shiva in the form of Rudra who destroys this creation at the end of one cycle of creation.

The Sharav Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 6, describes Rudra as Sharav—the killer or destroyer. In this Upanishad, Lord Shiva had assumed this form to liberate Vishnu from the form of Nrisingh (a half man and half lion form) which the Lord had taken to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting the devotees of Vishnu to such an extent that he did not spare even his son Prahalada. There is another connotation of the word ‘Sharav’. Since the word literally means the killer or slayer, it is that form of the Supreme Being which instills fear in the heart of

evil and pervert creatures, and kills or eliminates their evil tendencies. The word also refers to 'the Lord who shines in the heart of his devotees' as their Atma or pure consciousness.

The eleven Rudras are the following Gods who are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva— (i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugrareta, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat.

The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparajaet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.

Lord Shiva has eleven forms, and one of them is 'Rudra', which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called 'Maheshwar'. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God.

The word 'Rudra' is literally used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness. But this is a very misleading title for Shiva because there are a number of great Upanishads which describe Rudra as none but the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged, who sustains it and in whom the creation would finally collapse. It is this Brahm in the form of Rudra who is treated as the supreme Lord God of creation, and hence is called Maheshwar. The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition and Atharvashir Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition are exclusively dedicated to this theme. The Dakshin Murti Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the esoteric significance of the Shiva Tattva or the essential knowledge of Shiva who is the greatest Guru or moral preceptor and teacher of the creatures.

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/33 says that the eleven Rudras are manifestations of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm. In other words, Lord Ram had assumed the form of Rudra or Shiva in order to bring this creation to conclusion.

The Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda is especially relevant here because it explains the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra himself, and upon close reading it would be very clear that Rudra is describing Brahm when he describes himself.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Rudras, along with the Vasus and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

²*Vasus*—There are said to be eight Vasus. These are the various patron Gods who preside over the essential elements of life. They are eight in number as follows— Vishnu who is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and 'Ray' representing glory and fame. The element 'Fire' is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze

to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The 'fire' element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolize those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv, Dhar, Som/Soma (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods; it is white in colour and is said to be stored in the moon), Aapha (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhaas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolize the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The Ekakchar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Kandika (Canto) 1 says that the Vasus were created in the beginning of creation from the first Matra 'A' of OM representing the first leg of the supreme Brahm along with Brahma the creator, the Rig Veda, the Gayatri Chand and the Grahapatya Agni.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Vasus, along with the Rudras and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

³Adityas—According to mythology, there are said to be twelve Adityas which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form

of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/34 says that the Adityas are none but manifestations of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following— Dhata, Arayama, Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta and Vishnu.

According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya.

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as Dhata during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as Aryama during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as Mitra during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as Varun during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as Indra during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as Vivaswan during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as Pusha during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as Kratu during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as Anshu during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as Bhag during the tenth Hindu month of Pausa also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as Twashta during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as Vishnu during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Adityas, along with the Vasus and Rudras etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

⁴*Vishwa-Devas*—The Vishwa-Devas are the different Gods who take care of this creation in various forms and in different capacities. They are called ‘Digpals’ and ‘Lokpals’. There are said to be eight Digpals and eight Lokpals.

The various Digpals are the great and senior custodians of creation, the word ‘Dig’ implying ‘great and senior’, while the Lokpals are the different caretakers of the various realms of the physical world and are junior to the Digpals.

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/31 says that it is Lord Ram, a personification of the supreme transcendental Brahm, who has revealed himself as the eight Lokpals in order to take care of the eight directions of this creation.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 36-37 mentions the name of eight Lokpals, and verse no. 38 mentions the names of eight Digpals. Verse no. 39 lists their weapons. Now let us see who they are—

(i) The eight Lokpals—The eight Lokpals are like the knights under a great King who in the present case is Lord Ram. They carry out the orders of the Lord in the physical world at a more mundane level of creation. These eight Lokpals are the following—Dhristi, Jayant, Vijai, Suraashtra, Raastravardhan, Akop, Dharmpaal and Sumantra. [Refer Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 36-37.]

(ii) The eight Diggals—Indra who is the king of Gods and who has a thousand eyes on his body, and is therefore called ‘Sahastraaksha’, Agni or the Fire God, Yam or the God of Dharma (i.e. the God responsible to ensure that the great tenets of righteousness and proper conduct are observed by the creatures, and to punish those who violate these laws), Nirritiya (also known as Nairitya), Varun or the Water God, Anil or the Wind God, Indu or the Moon God (often replaced by Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods), Ishan or Lord Shiva, Brahma the creator, and Anant who is Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation (or Lord Seshnath, the legendary serpent who holds the earth on its hoods in a symbolic gesture to indicate that Lord Vishnu is responsible for taking care of this creation).

The eight Diggals are the divine forces of creation in a personified form of various Gods who are assigned the task of taking care of the entire creation. They are the following—(i) Indra who is the king of Gods and responsible for production of rain as well as to control all other Gods who are said to be represented by the various independent forces of Nature; (ii) Agni is the personified form of the fire element responsible for providing heat, energy, light, vitality, strength, vigour and vibrancy to creation; (iii) Yam is the personified form of death as well as assigned the duty to uphold the laws of Dharma (or the auspicious virtues of righteousness, nobility, propriety, probity etc.), and to punish those who violate it; (iv) Nirriti or Nairitya who is the God responsible for the actual death and punishment of the sinful and unholy creatures in creation; (v) Varun is the personified form of the most essential ambrosia of life known as the water element that provides nourishment and lubrication to this creation, and is regarded as the basic element that harbours life in all its forms in its bosom; (vi) Anil is the personified form of the life-giving air or wind element which is also called Pran—literally meaning ‘life’ which is a proof of its importance and significance vis-à-vis this creation; (vii) Kuber is the treasurer of Gods and responsible to provide all the necessities of life to the inhabitants of this world; the Moon God is the custodian of the Amrit, the ambrosia of life and eternity which is a priceless asset for the creation; (viii) Ishan is Lord Shiva who is also known as Mahadev, the Great Lord, as well as the one who is responsible for maintain balance in this creation by controlling death, and hence is called the ‘concluder’; (ix) Brahma is the creator of the physical world as well as the body of knowledge known as the Vedas, and therefore assumes the role of a grand old patriarch of the family known as the world; and (x) Anant or Lord Vishnu who is so-called because he is eternal, infinite and endless, has infinite responsibilities, and is assigned the multi-prong duty of taking good care of the world in all respects. He is also called Anant as he is none but the eternal Brahm himself in the form of the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing and almighty Lord of creation. In fact, even Brahma and Shiva are said to be born from this Viraat Purush. [Refer Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 38.]

These Diggals are responsible for the eight directions where they are worshipped as follows—(1) Indra (the king of Gods) is the custodian or guardian of the east direction. (2) Agni (the fire-God) is the custodian or guardian of the south-east direction. (3) Yama (the death-God) is the custodian or guardian of the south direction. (4) Nirriti or Nairitya is the custodian or guardian of the south-west direction. (5) Varun (the Water God) is the custodian or guardian of the west direction. (6) Vayu (the Wind God) is the custodian or guardian of the north-west direction. (7) Kuber (the treasurer of Gods) is the custodian or guardian of the north direction. (8) Ish (Lord Shiva; the chief Lord) is the custodian or guardian of the north-east direction.

According to the Tripadvibhūta Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 7, paragraph no. 58, the eight Lokpals are the following—Indra, Agni or the Fire God, Yama or the God of death, Nriiti, Varun or the God of water, Vayu or the God of wind, Soma or the Moon God, and Isha or Lord Shiva.

Besides the above eight Lokpals or Digpals, there are said to be two more Lokpals or Digpals or Vishwa-Devas—viz. Brahma the creator for zenith or the upper reaches of the sky (heavens), and Prithivi (Earth) for nether world.

The Sun is also regarded as a Lokpal, and truly so because without the Sun life would be impossible in this world. Hence, if the Sun is to be regarded as the Lokpal, then Brahma is replaced by the Sun God.

According to another version, Brahma and Anant (Vishnu) are also considered as the guardians of the world and are listed as the last two amongst the 10 Lokpals. Since they are very senior Gods, these two are often referred to as 'Digpals'.

⁵*Mitra*—The word Mitra literally means 'a friend', and the eclectic virtue of friendship and friendliness. He is regarded as the patron God of peace, friendship and tranquility. Hence, all forms of Gods that are benevolent and benefactors of the creation are technically one or the other forms of the Mitra God.

The word usually refers to the Sun God because it is the Sun that supports and fosters life on this earth and is a partner in its wellbeing and development. It is the Sun that provides all energy, heat and light to the world. The Mitra God is one of the twelve Adityas (Suns) who are the Gods born from Aditi, the mother of Gods. In fact, Aditya or the Sun God is worshipped as Mitra during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June).

He is equivalent to Savita (Rig Veda, 5/82/9). He is the patron God of the day (Atharva Veda, 9/3/18). He is said to support the three worlds, viz. the terrestrial, the sky above the earth, and the heavens (Kath Sanhita, 23/12). The newly born fire is regarded as the Varun God while its lighted form is Mitra (Rig Veda, 5/3/1). Mitra God protects his devotees from the fear of old age, death and sins (Rig Veda, 3/59/2). Mitra is usually worshipped in the form of the Sun God. He is one of the principal deities of the Rig Veda. In association with the Varun God (Water God and patron deity of the clouds) he gives rain. This is obvious because without the heat of the sun, evaporation of water from the oceans would not take place and therefore the clouds would not form. The cycle of season is also governed by the Sun God.

'Pran', the vital wind which supports all life-forms in this creation, is also the best friend of a creature because it is the breath that not only injects life into the body but also supports it. Therefore, the Wind God is also a form of Mitra. Similarly, the Water God and the Fire God also come under the category of Mitra God.

The Mitra God resides in the heavens (sky) and impels the people of the world towards constructive activities.

In the Vedas, he appears in Rig Veda—1/151/1, 3/59; Atharva Veda—3/8, 19/19/1 amongst other places.

Mitra God is usually shown in the company of the Varun God, and the duo is known as *Mitra-Varun*. There are two connotations of this term—(i) Varun is the deity of water, i.e. the Water God. No life is imaginable without the elixir of life known as water. Hence, Varun is regarded as the Mitra God. (ii) The Mitra-Varun God represents the twin factors of creation that are opposite to each other and help to maintain a cosmic equilibrium, such as the appearance of day (Mitra) and night (Varun) together. It is obvious that the day and night cohabit and it is impossible to imagine life without any one of them. Similarly, it is impossible to imagine life without either fire or sun represented by the Mitra God, and water or moon represented by the Varun God. Mitra-Varun are depicted as eternally youthful (Rig Veda, 3/54/10). They appear together in Rig Veda—1/37, 1/152, 3/62/16-18, 7/501, 7/61, 10/132/2-7; in Atharva Veda—5/24/5; in Yajur Veda—7/9, 21/8.

⁶*Varun*—Varun is also known as the Water God as he is the patron deity who rules over the water element as well as its many manifestations such as the cloud, river and ocean (Gopath Brahman, 1/1/7). He is regarded as the king amongst the Gods (Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/1/2/7). He is regarded as the patron God of the night (Atharva Veda, 9/3/18). The Duloka (the heavens) and the Prithivi (earth) are under his control and command (Rig Veda, 6/70/1). He determines the path taken by the Sun God during his journey across the sky (Kapisthal Kath Sanhita, 3/4). Varun God is so-called because he surrounds or engulfs or encompasses the whole world and everything where he is present as is the case of the dark rain-bearing clouds that covers the sky (Nirukta, 10/3), and as the dark veil of night (Atharva Veda, Saayan Bhasya, 1/3/3). He is usually depicted in the company of the Mitra God, and as such the duo is called as 'Mitra-Varun', with Mitra being regarded as the senior amongst the two. While Mitra is the patron deity of the day, Varun is the patron deity of the night. He is the lord of all the Bhuvans or abodes, and as such is regarded as the king of creation (Rig Veda, 5/85/3). He has thousands of eyes, and his knowledge and powers are unlimited. He is regarded as the keeper of moral law like the Yam God. In association with the Wind God known as Vayu, he sustains life by giving rain and protecting crops.

He is the presiding deity of the western direction and of water in all its forms including all aquatic life forms.

Iconographically, he is shown as riding on a crocodile. He has four arms—one holds a serpent, the other holds a snare or noose. Sometimes he is depicted as riding a chariot of Swans, and holds a lotus in his right front hand, a noose or snare in the front back arm, a vessel of gems in the left front arm, and a conch in the left back arm. There is a ceremonial umbrella over his head.

This Varun God is offered prayers and honoured in the Vedas in numerous places, such as the following—Rig Veda—1/25; 2/28; 5/85; 7/86-89; 8/41; 10/124/5, 7, 8; Sam Veda—589; Yajur Veda—4/31; 10/7; Atharva Veda—5/1-2; 20/92.

The 'Aditya' or the Sun God is also worshipped as Varun during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July).

The 'Mitra-Varun' God represents the clubbing together of the twin factors of creation that are apparently opposite to each other but nevertheless help to maintain a cosmic equilibrium, such as the appearance of day (Mitra) and night (Varun) together. It is obvious that the day and night cohabit and it is impossible to imagine life without any one of them.

Varun is the deity of water, i.e. the Water God. No life is imaginable without the elixir of life known as water. Hence, Varun is regarded as the Mitra God.

Similarly, it is impossible to imagine life without either fire or sun represented by the Mitra God, and water or moon represented by the Varun God.

Mitra-Varun are depicted as eternally youthful (Rig Veda, 3/54/10). They appear together in Rig Veda—1/37, 1/152, 3/62/16-18, 7/501, 7/61, 10/132/2-7; in Atharva Veda—5/24/5; in Yajur Veda—7/9, 21/8.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Varun or the Water God is one of the ten Digpaals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the western direction and worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that his weapon is known as Paash or sling or snare.

⁷*Indra*—*Indra* is the king of Gods who can fulfill all the desires of the aspirant like any king when he is pleased by the person who prays to him for his gracious intervention. Indra represents the chief forces of life that controls the functioning of Nature. He derives his name from 'Indri' meaning the sense organs of the body—five organs of perception and five organs of action. The vital functions and the virtues of each of these organs are personified as a God, and the authority who controls them is

their Lord called Indra. Indra is a metaphor for, or a personification of the combined virtues and characteristics that define all these organs and their functioning. Being at the helm of affairs, Indra is like the King or Emperor of all the other personified forces and powers of creation.

At the macro level of creation he is like the supreme Brahman who is the Lord of all that exists, while at the micro level of the individual creature he is like the Atma (pure consciousness) and the Pran (the vital winds that sustain life inside the body).

The various functions that the organs perform inside the body of the creature are represented by their own set of patron Gods who personify these functions and the various qualities of these individual organs. Since Pran, the vital winds present in the body that govern its functioning, is at the core of life in a creature's body, it is like Indra at the micro level.

Since the heart is at the core of life of a man, the central authority that regulates all these Gods is also said to have its seat in the heart. That authority is the emperor of the body and its organs, and it is known as the Atma. Therefore, this Atma is also like Indra as far as the individual creature is concerned.

The Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 62 describes that the Atma, the pure consciousness has manifested itself as Indra as well as all other Gods including Rudra (an angry form of Shiva) and Brahma (the creator). This is because Indra is the Lord of all the Gods who are represented by the various forces of Nature and is also the Lord of the creature as he is the Lord of his organs. The word Indra is derived from the root 'Indri' meaning 'organs of the body' such as the five organs of perception and five organs of action. He is the Lord of rains indicating his prominence as the Lord of life, fertility and vibrancy because the rains and clouds bring life to this world. He has the vital wind force as his comrade-in-arm, indicating his control over all forms of activity and movement that characteristic life in this world. He enjoys the best things in heaven, being the king of Gods. He is very powerful and holds the thunderbolt in his hands to subdue his enemies. The Atma also exhibits these virtues.

According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, canto 2, Brahman 1, verse no. 6, this Indra is a synonym for *Brahman* both at the macro level because Brahman is the supreme Lord of the entire creation represented by the innumerable forces of Nature called the various Gods at the macro level (and that is why we have so many Gods), as well as at the micro level of the individual creature because the Pran is the vital life supporting entity present in the body without which none of the organs would have their relevance, as well as the Atma or pure consciousness without which even this Pran would lose its relevance.

The king is offered the best of foods and drinks that are available in his kingdom. So this Indra God is also offered the best food and drink in the form of the ambrosia called 'Som'. It is an invigorating drink that is extracted from a creeper by the same name. It is used during sacrificial rituals, and it is offered to Gods that is supposed to bestow them with an eternal life of bliss. It is said to be stored in the heavenly pitcher of the moon. From the metaphysical point of view, since Indra represents the superior authority that controls all the other Gods representing the various sense organs, it follows that whatever the organs acquire are first offered to Indra before the other Gods representing these organs partake of it. Amongst the organs, it is the hand that helps the body to acquire things from the outside world. Since the organs have an intrinsic tendency to move towards pleasing things in this world and move away from unpleasant things, it is deemed that their messenger, the hand, brings to them only selected and best of things available, which is like bringing Amrit or Som for them so that they can offer it to their king Indra.

In Taithiriyo-panishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli (Canto) 1, Anuvak (sub-canto) 4, Indra is the God who is offered worship through the fire sacrifice invoking his divine intercession and patronage so that the aspirant is blessed

with obtaining success in acquiring eclectic qualities and wisdom as well as material well being and worldly fame.

Indra is both the 'Atma' of the living being because the latter is the undisputed emperor of the body as its consciousness, as well as the 'Pran' or the various vital winds present in the body that control all its vital functions and sustain life.

Indra is also the Lord of rains and clouds, and since rain is a metaphor for life and fertility, and the clouds are the carriers of such life-bearing seeds, Indra too is regarded as the Lord of life and its protector, sustainer and developer. That is why Indra, in this role, is regarded as one of the eight Digpals.

Indra, who is the king of Gods and who has a thousand eyes on his body, is therefore called 'Sahastraaksha',

In Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, Valli 1, Anuvak 4, verse no. 1 (stanza 3), Indra is invoked by the wise teacher to bless him with the virtues of Medhaa (i.e. with the virtues of intelligence, wisdom, prudence, wit, understanding and comprehension).

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Indra is one of the ten Digpals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the eastern direction and worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that his weapon is Vajra. This weapon is made of the hardest material in existence and is said to be manifested in the form of the thunderbolt. This is because Indra is said to be the commander of the rains and rain-bearing clouds.

According to the Rig Veda, 1/ 4-5; 51-57, Indra represents the combined forces of Nature represented by the different Gods. He loves to drink Som, the elixir of bliss and eternity (Rig Veda, 3/ 36/ 8). He has the Wind God called Marut as his chief assistant.

Indra appears in the Vedas as follows-- Rig Veda—1/4-5, 51-57; 5/29; 7/19-32; 8/15-17; 10/111-113; Sam Veda—52/115-148 etc.; Yajur Veda—3/34; 7/5; 7/39; Atharva Veda—8/8; 20/1.

⁸Agni or the Fire God—The legendary 'fire element' has a very prominent place in the scriptures. The Fire God or Agni appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—1/1; 1/12; 4/5; 5/1; 6/7-9; 7/1, 3-6; 12-13; 8/1, 23, 39; 10/1-7; 12/1-122 etc.; in Sam Veda—1-51; 53-55 etc.; in Yajur Veda—1/5; 2/4; 7/24; 18/72 etc.; and in Atharva Veda—6/119; 8/3; 12/3.

Since it was the first born amongst the various Gods, it was called 'Agni' meaning the one who comes first, that which precedes others. It is the inherent 'fire' element present in all the living creatures that distinguish them from non-living creatures. It is all-pervading and omnipresent, and infuses life to all the creatures (Kaushitaki Brahmin, 4/3; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 9, verse no.1). This fire helps in digestion of food (Shatpath Brahman, 148/10/1).

He is the foremost amongst the Gods worshipped on earth (Shatpath Brahman, 6/1/1/11). He is compared to the Sun in the heavens. He has 7 tongues representing the 7 colours of the rays of the Sun or the colours of light (Rig Veda, 1/146/1; 3/6/2). Since he provides nourishment to the Gods by accepting the offerings made to the sacrificial fire at the time of fire sacrifices, he is deemed to be their sustainer and father (Rig Veda, 1/69/1). Other names of the Fire God called Agni or Agne are the following—Vishwavedus, Kavi, Kavikratu, Jaatvedas, Vaishwaanar, Tanunpat, Matrishwa and Naraashansa. It is believed that he was born from the mouth of the Virrat Purush (Rig Veda 10/90/13).

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Agni or the Fire God is one of the ten Digpals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the south-eastern direction and worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that his weapon is known as Shakti—i.e. dynamism, energy, vigour, vitality and strength.

The metaphysical importance and significance of Agni has been extensively discussed in numerous Upanishads as it is regarded as the most purifying and holy of all the elements. The knowledge is called 'Agni Vidya' and the Upanishads that describe it, inter alia, are the following—(a) 5 Holy Fires—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kathvalli or Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 13-18; Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse nos. 12, 19; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 29-32. (ii) Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 4, sections 10 to 13. (b) 4 Holy Fires—(i) Atharv Veda's Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 5. (c) 3 Holy Fires—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Garbha Upanishad, paragraph no. 5; Kath Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3; Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 7; Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 8.

The worship of the Fire has been described in Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 2, section 24, while Canto 5, sections 4-10, 19-24; Atharva Veda's Mundak Upanishad, Canto 1, section 2.

The relationship between the universality of the fire element and the pure conscious Atma has been described very beautifully in Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 9 of the Krishna Yajur Veda.

The relationship between the universality of the fire element and the pure conscious Atma has been described very beautifully in Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 9 of the Krishna Yajur Veda.

The Agni or the Fire God has two names—viz. Vaishwanar and Samvartak. The word *Vaishwanar Agni* refers to the eternal fire which burns in the cosmos in a subtle and imperceptible form to keep the flame of life inherently and constantly burning. It represents the 'consciousness' factor of the creation; the 'warmth' of fire is a sign of life whereas 'cold' is a harbinger of and synonym with death. Amongst the five elements created at the time of creation (earth, water, fire, air, space), it is the fire which is the only element which has energy, heat, light, splendour, dazzle and radiance. The water will be nothing else but ice and of no use to the creature without fire as far as its ability to harbour and sustain life is concerned. Similarly, the earth would freeze cold and covered with a thick sheet of ice were it not for the eternal fire burning inside it, even under the ocean bed covered to the brim with water which acts as an antidote to fire. This very fact shows that the Supreme Lord is active in the fire and prevents it from being doused by water because the Lord needs it to sustain life as much as he needs the water. Further, without heat there will be no seasons, no currents, no movements in the air. There will be no formation of clouds and there will be no rainfall in the absence of heat. In brief, the vital spark of life in this world is represented by the 'fire element', hence, it is called the 'Lord of the Vishwa', or Lord Vaishwanar. This fire element derives its vitality, stamina, energy and potentials from Brahm.

According to Maitrenyu Upanishad, canto 2, verse no.8 of the Sam Veda tradition, this Vaishwanar is the fire present in the living creature giving it the vital energy to digest the food eaten by it.

The *Samvartak Agni* refers to the fire that engulfs the earth at the time of dooms-day, or the fire that brings about the conclusion of creation and which represents that phase of the fire sacrifice when offering of oblations are complete and the sacred fire is let to burn out and calm down, because the word 'Samvartak' means the end of an era or a period of time, and Agni means fire.

It also has two other connotations—viz. (1) The dooms-day cloud, because at the time of conclusion of one cycle of creation and destruction there is torrential rain which causes a deluge that drown the entire habitation on the surface of the earth. In this scenario, only certain forms of aquatic life survive, and from it the seed of the next cycle of creation is sown. (2) The fire burning under the bed of the ocean and in the bowls of the earth which keeps the water of the ocean as well as the underground springs warm. This fire is called 'Barwaanal' or 'Badvaanal'. In the present verse, this fire has been personified as the sage who first conceptualised this Upanishad.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that the Samvartak Agni was created by the supreme Creator Brahm, the Supreme Being, at the beginning of creation along with the Moon God, the Mantras of the Atharva Veda, the Maruts (the Wind God), and the Viraat Chanda. It represents the fourth leg of Brahm and corresponds to the 'Ardha Matra' or the half syllable that follows the third letter 'M' of OM. This latter fact is also affirmed in the Nrsingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 2.

⁹Ashwini Kumars— These are the twin sons of the Sun God, and regarded as the physician of the Gods (Rig Veda, 8/88; Taittiriya Brahman, 3/1/2/11). They are first mentioned in the Rig Veda, 1/34; 1/46. According to Niruktaakar Yaska, 12/2, one is the son of the day and the other of the night.]

5. I am the one who bears or harbours or gives shelter to, as well as reveal myself in the forms of Soma¹, Pusha², Twasta³, and Bhag⁴. [That is, these entities are revelations or personified forms of the Shakti of Brahm. At the same time, it is the Brahm who supports them by employing his Shakti.]

In order to surround the entire creation and to pervade it uniformly, it is me who bears or supports or empowers (or manifests in the form of) Lord Vishnu whose foot is represented by this mortal world and who had measured the whole creation in his three steps⁵, and the Creator in his two forms—one at the macrocosmic level of creation which is invisible, in which case this Creator is called 'Brahma', and the other at the microcosmic level of the visible world, in which case the Creator is known as Prajapati⁶. [Refer verse no. 6 below.] (5).

[Note—¹Soma— Soma appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/43/7-9; 1/11. He is the third most important God. Som is the personification of those elements that give bliss and happiness as well as bestows eternal life marked by these virtues. It has its origin in the divine creeper called 'Som Lata'; the extract of it is used as a sanctified drink before and during a fire sacrifice. It is rejuvenating and bliss providing, and is known as Amrit. (Yajur Veda, 17/72). It gives eternity to the Gods and is the ambrosia for which the legendary churning of the ocean was done. It is stored in the moon; that is why the latter is also called 'Som'. It is the best extract or essence of life giving herbs, and is therefore called the 'king of the vegetable kingdom' (Rig Veda, 9/114/2). He is regarded as the patron God of directions.

Soma appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—1/43/7-9; 1/91; 3/62/13-15; 7/104/9, 12, 13; 8/48; 10/124/6; Sam Veda—422; Atharva Veda—6/2; 14/1/1-5.

Soma is stored in the moon which is often addressed as Indu, another name of Som—Rig Veda—1/129/6; Atharva Veda—18/3/54.

The word 'Soma' refers to the Moon God as well as the juice of the Soma plant which is used as sanctified liquid during fire sacrifices and an offering for the Gods. The Soma is borne by the Mother Goddess, and is also her manifestation. The 'Mother Goddess' is actually a revelation of the dynamic powers, authority, strength and potentials of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess represents the dynamism of Brahm that is employed by the latter to create, control, sustain and protect this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. The Soma is therefore the invigorating virtues of Brahm revealed in the form of the sanctified liquid of this name as well as the soothing celestial body known as the Moon.

Traditionally it is held that the moon is the pitcher that holds the ambrosia of eternity and bliss called Soma. It is the rejuvenating, invigorating, life-sustaining elixir drunk by Gods, and used as a sanctified drink during religious fire sacrifices. This offering in the fire sacrifice gives sustenance to the Gods. These Gods represent the different powerful forces and powers of Nature. They symbolic residence in the different organs of the body of the creature, controlling their functioning and thereby

regulating life in the creation at the micro level, and as the heavenly Gods they control the functioning of Nature at the macro level of creation. These Gods are eternal in the context of the individual creature because the creature has a limited life span which is miniscule in terms of the span of the creation during the currency of which these Gods would live. When these Gods are properly fed and nourished, it is a symbolic way of saying that the vital life-sustaining forces are working in their prime form and are robust and healthy.

Since the moon is considered a pitcher of Soma, the God's ambrosia, it is a metaphor for all fundamental qualities or essential elements that can sustain a healthy and vibrant life. Only Brahm has this qualification of being able to maintain a life in creation that is healthy and robust. Therefore the moon is a manifestation of Brahm in the form of Soma, the elixir of life; Brahm is indeed the elixir of life. Rather, being the supreme authority, Brahm is the 'king' of all the vital functions, all the powerful powers and forces of Nature; Brahm embodies these virtues. The Soma is a metaphor for these qualities of Brahm, and the moon is an image of that Brahm.

Another name of Soma is *Uksha* or *Rishabh* is a medicinal herb found in the Himalayan range of mountains in the north of India. It is said to so powerful that it makes a man as potent as a bull; it is said to improve fertility and manliness, virility and masculinity. It is also known as the legendary Som plant in ancient texts. It is especially lauded as a powerful stimulant in *Susrut Sanhita*, section 1, chapter 38 which mentions thirty seven such powerful and potent herbs. Its roots and leaves resemble garlic, and its cousin called the *Rishabh* plant is shaped like the horns of a bull—hence the name 'Rishabh', meaning a bull. It is also called *Jivak* or the 'life-giver'. These herbs enhance virility, masculinity, strength, stamina, vitality, vigour and life giving energy in the form of sperms disguised as a blob of mucous. They are sweet to taste and fragrance, and medically neutralize the bad effects of excessive bile and acidity in the body. They are used as antidotes for cough and rheumatism.

²*Pusha*—This God appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/23/13/5. He is the patron God of nourishment, supply of essential needs of life, as well as their fulfillment. He is considered equivalent to the Sun God (Rig Veda, 2/40/5). He gives protection against thieves and robbers and other obstacles in journey of travelers (Rig Veda, 1/42/2).

The present verse says that Pusha is borne by the Mother Goddess, and is also her manifestation. The 'Mother Goddess' is actually a revelation of the dynamic powers, authority, strength and potentials of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess represents the dynamism of Brahm that is employed by the latter to create, control, sustain and protect this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. The Pusha God is therefore this dynamic power of Brahm to give protection to the creation as revealed in the form of Mother Goddess.

³*Twashtha*—He is the builder for the Gods; he is their mason, sculptor, architect, smith and craftsman (*Taittiriya Brahman*, 2/7/2/1). He is mentioned first in the Rig Veda, 1/13/10; 15/3; and in Yajur Veda, 2/24; 20/44. He has created the weapons for the Gods as well as their utensils such as the ladle and spatula, the pots and pitchers used during fire sacrifices (Rig Veda, 1/20/6). He is deemed to be the patron God of art and craft which depend on the hands (Rig Veda, 3/54/12). His name appears 65 times in the Rig Veda. According to the Purans, this word is also used for Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva. He is regarded as the 11th Aditya (the Sun God). He is also synonymous with the Fire God because, as the Sun God he has tremendous heat. His son was Trishira, and the daughter was called Sangya. She was married to the Sun God, but she could not bear the latter's heat. So her father, Twashtha, put the disc of the Sun's blazing ring on his lathe and scrapped it to reduce its stinging ferocity and burning scorch. From the scrapings, he moulded Vishnu's discus, Shiva's trident, and all other weapons of the Gods.

The word 'Twashta' refers to Vishnu the sustainer, protector and nourisher of creation, Shiva the concluder, Prajapati Brahma the creator of the visible world and the creatures who populate it, Vishwakarma is the heavenly architect for the Gods who had given shape to the various abodes where the Gods would live as well as to the world where the creatures would live, and the eleventh Aditya or the Sun God who provides this creation with its heat, light, energy and dynamism. Without these Gods it is impossible for the Supreme Being, known as Brahm, to give shape to his notion of creation. Twashta therefore represents all these Gods at once. He is borne by the Mother Goddess, and is also her manifestation. The 'Mother Goddess' is actually a revelation of the dynamic powers, authority, strength and potentials of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess represents the dynamism of Brahm that is employed by the latter to create, develop, control, sustain and protect this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. The Twashta is therefore the various forms, such as Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, Vishwakarma and Aditya, that this dynamism of Brahm has taken to take care of the creation at different levels and at different phases of its conception, development, growth, expansion and final conclusion.

⁴*Bhug*—The word means the womb of a mother. In the context of the Upanishads dealing with the supreme Brahm as the Creator of this universe, the term 'Bhug' would mean the cosmic womb of Brahm who has manifested himself as the Mother Goddess expressly for this purpose. It was in this 'Bhug' that the entire creation was conceived. The 'Mother Goddess' is actually a revelation of the dynamic powers, authority, strength and potentials of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being, by which the latter gave shape to his desires and ideas. The Goddess represents the dynamism of Brahm that is employed by the latter to create, develop, control, sustain and protect this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. The term 'Bhug' therefore represents the macrocosmic 'womb' of the Supreme Being in which he conceived this creation, nourished it, protected it during its developmental steps, gave it its shape, and finally gave birth to it just like an ordinary mother conceives her child in her womb brings it forth in this world.

According to Vishnu Puran, one of the twelve Adityas is known as 'Bhug'. This is obvious allusion to the fact that the Sun is the provider of energy, heat, warmth and light to the creation as well as the controller of seasons and rainfall without anyone of them life would be not feasible at all.

From the perspective of Yoga Upanishads and the Tantra form of worship, the 'Bhug' corresponds to the 'Bhug Chakra' which is triangular in shape and represents the female genital organ. It is also called 'Kaam Roop Peeth' from where all passions and desires originate (refer Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 170-171). It also closely related to the 'Swadhisthan Chakra' which is located in the region of the groins of males and the Bhug (genital) area of females. It has a 5-headed male phallus like a sprouting seed, and its counterpart in the female is the clitoris.

⁵*Vishnu*—This verse effectively says that Vishnu is actually a manifestation of the Shakti, which is the cosmic dynamic powers and energy of Brahm, the Supreme Being, employed by the Lord to take care of this creation which the same Lord has created in his manifestation as Brahma the creator.

The word 'Vishnu' consists of two components—'Vishwa' meaning the world or the entire creation, and 'Anu' meaning an atom. Hence, this is made up of atoms called Vishnu, and therefore the latter pervades throughout this creation. The whole creation is a manifestation of Vishnu.

The divine glories of Lord Vishnu have been extolled in the Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph 5-6; Canto 2, paragraph 12. Refer also Vishnu Puran, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70.

Lord Vishnu is the sustainer, nourisher and the caretaker of the world. Therefore, he is regarded as one of the eight mighty Diggals/Digpaals (the main caretakers and superior custodian Gods) of creation. He is the most important of the Trinity Gods consisting of Brahma, the creator, and Shiva, the concluder. It's easy to produce and destroy, but a mammoth task to sustain and nourish what has been born.

Lord Vishnu is also depicted as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being, from whose body the rest of the creation is said to have been formed; the Viraat embodies the whole creation in his own self. The word 'Viraat' itself means measureless, infinite, colossus and vast.

According to Purans, even Brahma and Shiva have been created from Vishnu. Brahma emerged sitting atop a divine Lotus that sprouted from the Vishnu's navel in his subtler form as the Viraat Purush, a form that existed before the creation began to take shape in its grosser forms, as he lay reclined in the celestial ocean of milk, known as the Kshir-Sagar, on the bedstead of Sheshnath, the legendary serpent that floated on the surface of this ocean. On the other hand, Shiva is said to be born from his forehead when the Viraat Purush deeply meditated and a few drops of sweat emerged due to intense concentration and effort he was making.

His name first appears in the Rig Veda, 1/154-156. The Lord represents all that is virtuous, noble, righteous, auspicious, high and glorious in this creation. He is all pervading, all encompassing and omnipresent.

He is a personification of Yagya, or the various religious sacrifices (Shatpath Brahman, 1/1/2/13). The Lord has taken numerous forms and revealed himself on different occasions to uphold good and righteous, and trounce bad and evil. Lord Vishnu is also depicted as a synonymous deity for Brahm; he is Brahm personified.

Lord Narayan and Vishnu are synonymously treated in the scriptures. The etymology of the word 'Narayan' is—the primary one who has his abode in the primordial causal waters of the cosmos; one who is the abode of all living creatures; one who has his residence in the bosom of all living beings as their Atma or pure self or consciousness; one who is the final goal of all spiritual pursuits. When the transcendental Supreme Being decided to initiate creation, his first revelation was Hiranyagarbha which represented the macrocosmic subtle body of creation, and from it emerged the 'Viraat Purush' who is the macrocosmic gross body of creation. This 'Viraat' is literally the vast, infinite, measureless, fathomless and colossal form of the supreme Brahm, a form which is all-pervasive, all-encompassing, all-inclusive, immanent and omnipresent in creation. The 'Purush' is literally an entity that lives inside a dwelling, here referring to as the pure consciousness that lives as the Atma of all the living beings. (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/5/18-19). This Viraat Purush is therefore the vast and all-inclusive cosmic Consciousness that entered the gross body of the creature and found a comfortable abode in the heart as his Atma. This Viraat Purush at the macro level of creation is known as Vishnu, the one who lives immanently in this creation, inseparable from it and forming its integral part.

Since Narayan or Vishnu is the term used to imply the Viraat Purush who is Brahm personified at the macrocosmic level of creation, it follows that Narayan or Vishnu is the supreme Lord of creation. It is from him that the rest of the creation has emerged. All forces of creation, right from their origin till their conclusion, have this Narayan representing Brahm as their primary source. It is Narayan that is the eternal fountain from which they all the dynamic forces of creation derive their independent strengths, abilities, authorities, potentials and powers. The primary forces are represented by Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, protector and nourisher, and Shiva the concluder. The other elements of creation are the sky, air, fire, water and earth. Indra represents the chief force that controls all other unit forces of creation, and therefore he has been depicted as the 'king of Gods' because all the Gods are deemed to personify one or the other aspects of the divine forces of creation which are responsible for controlling the various facets of the multifarious and varied creation. For example, Aditya or the Sun gives light, heat and energy to the creation

in their twelve forms, including the visible Sun in the sky. The Vasus represent the essential assets that are needed to sustain all forms of life on this earth. Rudras represent the dynamic and forceful nature of a creature that helps it be pro-active and assertive in this world, to protect the assets generated by him and give protection to the society and his dependants by the use of force if necessary. And so on and so forth.

⁶Creator *Brahma* and *Prajapati*—(a) Prajapati (Brahma) is a manifestation of the supreme cosmic transcendental Creator known as Brahm, the Supreme Being. In his role as the creator of the visible creation, this Supreme Being came to be known as Brahma, the creator of the gross world.

Brahma, the patriarch of the creation, has certain characteristic qualities which are exclusive to him and which make him the nearest analogue to Brahm, the Supreme Being who is the Supreme Soul of the cosmos. Brahma has the power to create and control destiny—and therefore he virtually decides the time of annihilation or death of the world, though the actual task of annihilating or ending this world or causing death is delegated to Lord Shiva, but the mandate to do so comes from the supreme authority, who is not Brahma but Brahm, but the former has been delegated this authority by the latter. Brahma unfolded the world when he turned his head in the four directions and uttered the four basic words Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Maha (symbolising the creation of the earth, the sky, the heavens and the great creation having countless varieties and numbers of creatures, small and big, who would populate it) as well as the Vedas (Rig, Yajur, Sam and Atharva) and the profound body of wisdom and knowledge contained in them. (See Mahopanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9 of the Sam Veda tradition). Knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment are the chief characteristic of Brahm represented by the Atma/soul. Brahma also has these characteristic features because he is the one who has not only created the physical world but also the great body of knowledge in the form of the Vedas. Brahma is depicted as a white-bearded and learned grandfather of creation. This is a symbolic way of saying that he is the oldest and wisest one amongst all those who live. Even Vishnu and Shiva and all the other Gods are much younger to him. Both the two Gods (Vishnu and Shiva) are known to exhibit some elements of Rajoguna and Tamogunas, i.e. they have some sort of worldly characteristics such as showing anger, having passion etc., or assuming different forms as in the case of their various manifestations, but Brahma, the old bearded patriarch, remains one original without any manifestation, much like the supreme Brahm who remains detached from and dispassionate towards the creation, although he is the cause of it, is responsible for it and is the resting place for it.

The Maho-panishad of Sam Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 8 describes how Brahma came into existence. The sweat drops from the forehead of Viraat Purush formed the water element which coagulated into the primary cosmic gel that glowed with energy. It was called the cosmic egg or Hiranyagarbha. It was from the latter that Brahma emerged atop a lotus.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 1 says that the Sun God is the Prajapati because the Sun is responsible for life on earth.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Brahma the creator is one of the ten Digpaals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the zenith and his abode, the Brahma Loka, is situated at a point between the exact north and the north-eastern direction. He is worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that he holds a lotus.

The 'Mother Goddess' is actually a revelation of the dynamic powers, authority, strength and potentials of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess represents the dynamism of Brahm that is employed by the latter to create, develop, sustain, nourish, control and protect this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. Since Brahma is the God who carries out the

function of creation, it is absolutely apt to call him a personification of Mother Goddess, or the revelation of dynamism of Brahm that resulted in the creation of this visible world.

Brahma is called *Prajapati* because he is the God who is responsible for the welfare of all the subjects of this vast creation without having any distinction between them. Since Brahma is the creator, he is like the father, and since he has established the laws that are to be followed by the subjects of this creation he is also like the king who decides the laws that form the codes of conduct in his realm. But the question arises that if Brahm is supposed to look after his creation with equality, then why does one creature suffer while the other does not. The answer lies the fact that one creature suffers and the other does not is none of Brahma's faults but that of the creature itself because it goes berserk and does not follow the sanctioned paths as laid down in the different Upanishads, especially highlighted in this Valli in a very specific manner, and therefore has to undergo the consequences for its actions. The reason is that this world is characterized by the theory of action and reward, and what one does he is bound to enjoy or suffer from its results.]

6. It is me who takes the Havi to the Gods. [The Havi is the offerings made to the sacred fire during sacrifices which are meant for the Gods.]

It is me who bears all the wealth that is needed to produce and acquire these Havis along with the Soma (sanctified liquid procured from the plant of the same name that is used during sacrifices) used by the patron who carefully does the fire sacrifice called the Soma Yagya. [This is special fire sacrifice in which Soma juice is liberally used along with the chanting of the hymns of the Sam Veda.]

I am the supreme Goddess of the whole world. I provide my worshipper wealth and prosperity.

I am a personification of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, skills and expertise), and hence am known as 'Gyan-wati', literally meaning one who possesses the virtue of Gyan.

I am the one who produces the supreme Father of the world who supports the world from all sides. [The 'supreme Father' here refers to the Gods known as Vishnu and Brahma. Refer verse no. 5 above.] (6).

7. The cosmic ocean that is filled with ether symbolizing the water element in its most primary form, as well as the terrestrial ocean which is filled with the elixir of life known as water in its grosser form, is my womb, the former at the macrocosmic level and the latter at the microcosmic level. [The former aspect of the Shakti is known as Prakriti. Refer verse no. 8 below.]

A person who knows these facts is able to attain the glories associated with me and my divine forms (7).'

8. The Gods prayed once again—'Oh the great and venerable Mother Goddess! We bow before you. We pay our obeisance to the great, auspicious, divine and holy Goddess who inspires and helps even the highly acclaimed, the most learned and very wise men to follow the righteous and auspicious path. We reverentially bow before the Goddess who has manifested in the form of 'Prakriti' or Mother Nature, as well as 'Bhadra', literally meaning the most cultured, polite, civil, gracious, kind, lovable, adorable and amiable Goddess. We always pray to and bow before the great Goddess (8).

9. The divine Goddess has a complexion that is as glowing as the fire. She is radiant and splendorous with the energy generated by doing Tapa (austerity, penance, and sufferance of hardship for an auspicious and noble cause). And she effuses a divine light and brilliant radiance from her auspicious form.

We (the Gods) take the shelter of the holy feet of such a great and venerable Mother Goddess who is known as Durga, and we reverentially bow before her for the purpose of fulfillment of our wishes and realisation of our aims and objectives.

Please be benevolent upon us and completely remove the 'Tama' (darkness symbolizing ignorance and delusions) that surrounds us (9).

10. The Gods who are personifications of the various Prans (vital life infusing and life supporting winds; the life-factors present in the body) have produced the faculty of speech and sound which lets all creatures of this creation speak in their own unique tongue. The sound produced by the dynamic energy of Pran is a universal language, not restricted to any particular language, or the class and category of creatures. In other words, it is the great Goddess who has revealed herself as the Pran, which in turn produces sound that is the universal language of creation. In this form of 'sound', it is the great Goddess who is actually revealed. We bow before such a sublime and cosmic form of the divine Mother Goddess.

['Sound' is a revelation of the ability of Brahm to express himself, and this ability is represented by the Goddess because she symbolizes the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being in all spheres of creation.]

The venerable Mother Goddess is like the all wish-fulfilling cow (known as Kaam-dhenu), as well as the one who provides all food and strength that are needed for sustenance, nourishment, growth and development of creation. Let this great Mother be pleased with us when we pray to her so much so that she reveals her divine form before us (10).

11. We bow before the great and venerable Mother Goddess who is like the great night of the dooms-day (because she is the one who concludes the creation in the form of Rudra), who is honoured and praised by the Vedas as being Brahm personified, who is a personification of Lord Vishnu as well as his divine consort (Laxmi), who is the mother of Skanda (Kartikeya, the commander of the army of Gods, and hence is known as Parvati or Uma who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva), who is known as Saraswati (the Goddess of knowledge, learning, wisdom, speech and languages), who is the mother of Gods known as Aditi, and who is the daughter of Daksha (one of the Prajapatis; hence the divine consort of Lord Shiva known as Goddess Parvati).

The Goddess is most auspicious, holy, divine, truthful and enlightened. In fact, she is a divine personification of the virtues embodied by the word 'Shivam'. [The word 'Shivam' literally means one who is pure, holy, divine, pious, truthful, beautiful, enlightened, calm, serene and peaceful; one who is the best in creation.] (11).

12. We recognize her as the great and venerable Goddess known as Maha-Laxmi, the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and the patron Goddess who provides this creation with all its material needs. As such, we constantly enshrine in our heart that great Goddess who bestows upon her devotees all mystical powers and success in all endeavours they enter into.

Let that great Goddess inspire us towards auspicious and righteous path and deeds (12).

13. Oh Daksha (one of the Prajapatis and the father of Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva and regarded as the cosmic Mother)! Your daughter, who is known as Aditi (the mother of Gods), is most praise-worthy and honoured. It is she who has produced the holy Gods who possess auspicious virtues (13).

14. This Goddess has esoteric forms which are most mysterious.

She has revealed herself as Kaam (desires, passions, yearnings etc.), as Yoni (the female genitals; the womb representing the cosmic womb of Brahm known as the Prakriti in which the entire creation was conceived and nurtured), as Vajrapaani (one who holds the weapon known as Vajra, a reference to Indra, the king of Gods), as the cave-like secret realms (of the mind and heart) that hide various shades and hues of passions, lust and desires in a creature, as the letters 'Ha' and 'Sa' (indicating the word 'Hans' which is used in the Upanishads to indicate the Atma and Brahm), as the Maatarishwa (one of the names of the Fire God), as the Abhra ('Mica' which has a shining surface; here the word represents the priceless, glittering, glistening and shining minerals and other wealth found in earth, as well as all the auspicious—'white, shining, glorious'—virtues of creation), and as Indra (derived from the word 'Indri' meaning the sense organs of the body of the creature and implying the powers that are inherent in them which makes doing everything possible in this world).

She is very secret, enigmatic, esoteric and mysterious, and lives in a subtle and imperceptible form in the entire creation. She is revealed in the form of Maya (i.e. the powers of delusions), as well as in the form of the Purush (i.e. the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic Male from whom the entire creation has come into being, as well as the powers of Maya which this Purush employed to create this world).

[This statement itself goes to show irrefutably and incontrovertibly that 'Shakti' and 'Brahm' are one and the same. The cosmic powers that the Viraat Purush has are actually revelations of Shakti possessed by Brahm, the Supreme Being. It is like the case of the fire and its inherent virtue of giving light and heat, a virtue that cannot be separated from the fire. The Viraat Purush cannot be divested or divorced from his cosmic authority and powers manifested as the Shakti. Refer verse no. 15 below.]

She is the primary Mother of the entire creation or the whole universe. She is the most ancient and primordial divinity in creation, and therefore the knowledge that pertains to her is also known as 'Adi-Vidya'—literally, the most ancient and primary knowledge (14).

15. This universal and venerable Mother of the entire world is the supreme Shakti or the divine power of the Supreme Being (Brahm) that attracts and captivates everyone and everything. That is, it is she that holds the creation together.

She holds a snare, a goad, an arrow and a bow. [This is a visual depiction of the superseding authority and powers that the Goddess possesses as visualized in iconography.]

The esoteric knowledge that pertains to her secret form is known as 'Sri Maha Vidya' (15).

16. A person who knows the venerable Mother Goddess in her majestic form, and is acquainted with her esoteric form and divine glories, finds freedom from all misfortunes, grief, miseries, troubles and tribulations (16).

17. Oh Goddess Bhagwati! We bow before you. Oh Mother! Please protect us in all respects (17).

18. [In this verse, the Gods praise the great Mother Goddess once again, reiterating and reaffirming the fact that all the major or principal forms of creation that the venerable Goddess had earlier said she has taken in verse nos. 3-7 are indeed true.]

It is the same Mother Goddess who is revealed in the form of the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, and the twelve Adityas.

All the Vishwa-Devas who accept the offering known as Soma (derived from the juice of the Soma plant and offered during fire sacrifices) as well as those who do not are all a revelation of the same Mother Goddess.

It this Mother Goddess who has manifested herself in all forms of creatures, from the bad and evil ones such as the Yatudhaans (a form of non-gods), the Rakshas (the demons), the Asurs (the non-gods) and the Pishachas (devils, Satan, fiends and evil spirits) on the one hand, to the Yakshas (a sort of semi-gods in mythology who are employed by Kuber, the treasurer of the Gods, to guard his treasury and keep his gardens) and the Siddhas (those ascetics who have mystical powers; the acclaimed ones) on the other hand.

The three fundamental Gunas known as Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna¹ are also revelations of the mystical powers of Goddess to mould the character of each individual in creation and make him unique.

It is the same Mother Goddess who has manifested in the form of the Trinity Gods known as Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer and protector), and Rudra (the concluder).

It is the Mother Goddess who has revealed herself as Prajapati (the Lord of the subjects of creation), Indra (the king of Gods) and Manu (the first male human beings from whom the rest of the human race was born).

All the stars, constellations and planets are nothing but her manifestation.

And it is she who is in the form of various skills and crafts (called 'Kalaa'), all forms of plants represented by wood of a tree (called 'Kashta'), and the end of creation personified as 'death' (known as 'Kaal') (18).

[Note—¹The three Gunas are the basic determining factors that decide the character, nature, temperament, inclinations and personality of all creatures. They are the common denominators in all the creatures, but it is their ratio that differs and changes from one to another creature, thereby differentiating one creature from the other and making them all unique in themselves. The higher the quantum of the Sata Guna, the more would be the best virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety that dominate the horizon of the creature's personality, while a dominance of Raja Guna would make him prone to be attracted to the charms and temptations of the world and remain engrossed in its affairs, and predominance of the Tama Guna would incite all the vices that should be better avoided.

The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a

spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the Sata Guna or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The Raja Guna is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

The Tamsic Guna or quality is like the embryonic membrane that covers the foetus in the womb. They cannot be removed easily and require great diligence, effort, persistence, dedication and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, and the worst type to possess.

The Vasanas that have the Tama Guna in dominance are regarded as the 'bad Vasanas' or better still the 'worst type of Vasana' that any individual can have.

The varying quantity and intensity of these three in any given individual would decide his specific character and how he is inclined to deal with the world and a given circumstance. The various permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular nature of an individual, giving him his individuality and his special personality which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process, et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, temperaments, inclinations, behaviour, thinking, outlook, the way they act and do their deeds, the way they tackle the problems of life, the level of their wisdom and intelligence, their personality and their general way of living.]

19. The Mother Goddess is the destroyer of all 'Taaps' (miseries, pains, torments and tribulations) of the creature.

She is the one who bestows Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) as well as 'Bhog' (pleasures, comforts and enjoyments) to all.

She possesses infinite virtues, is the deity of victory, is faultless, without blemishes, pristine pure and uncorrupt, and is worthy of seeking refuge and shelter with.

She is the one who grants auspiciousness, and is herself auspicious, holy and divine.

We always bow with the greatest of respect before this divine and venerable Mother Goddess (19).

20. The Beej Mantra (the seed word, letter or syllable) especially dedicated to the Goddess is endowed with the virtues of the vastness, infinity and all-inclusive nature that is possessed by the sky, has the long sound of the Sanskrit vowel 'Ee' (as in *eel*) attached to it, has the fire element inherent in it, and is crowned or adorned by the crescent moon with the dot (i.e. the sign of the dot that is placed on the top of letters to give them the sound of 'Mm' as in *mum*). [The Beej Mantra is 'Hrim/Hrin(g)'.]

It is very potent and powerful enough to fulfill all the aspirations, wishes and desires of the worshipper (devotee) (20).

21. This monosyllable letter is a word manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (just like the word OM). [Whereas the word OM is synonymous with Pranav or the cosmic sound produced by the vibrations created in the all-pervading cosmic Consciousness, also known as Brahm, the word Hrim/Hrin(g) stands for the Goddess who is a personified form of the same Brahm's energy and dynamism. So, in effect, they are the two sides of the same coin.]

This Beej Mantra, Hrim/Hrin(g), is meditated and contemplated upon by sages, seers, ascetics and other pious people who have a pure and uncorrupt mind, who are full of spiritual bliss, and who are an ocean of profound wisdom, erudition, enlightenment and knowledge of the 'truth' (21).

22-23. The following nine-lettered Mantra of the Mother Goddess, and by extension of the supreme Brahm, are providers of Anand (bliss and happiness) as well as exalted stature of Brahm-realisation to the seekers.

The nine letters of the Mantra constitute of the following units—

(i) The Vaak Shakti, i.e. the powers and potentials of the faculty of speech and voice, represented by the Beej Mantra 'Aim/Ain(g)'.

(ii) The Maya Shakti, i.e. the stupendous powers and potentials of the power of delusions represented by the Beej Mantra 'Hrim/Hrin(g)'.

(iii) The Brahm, the Supreme Being, whose magnificent powers and potentials were revealed in the form of the various 'Bhuts' or elements in creation (such as the sky, air, fire, water, sky) as well as the mortal creatures who are also known as 'Bhuts'. This aspect of the Shakti (power, energy, authority and dynamism of Brahm manifested as the Goddess) which helps fulfill Brahm's desire to take care of this creation is known as the 'Kaam Shakti', and it is represented by the Beej Mantra 'Klim/Klin(g)'.

(iv) The sixth letter of the consonant (i.e. the letter 'Cha' pronounced as in *champion*) with the long vowel sound of 'A' (i.e. 'Aa' pronounced as in *calm*) added to it. The word is therefore 'Chaa' (pronounced as in *char*).

(v) The Surya or the Sun God, represented by the letter 'Ma' (pronounced as in *mother*).

(vi) The left ear represented by the letter 'U' or 'Oo' (pronounced as in *full*).

(vii) The letter 'M' (pronounced as in *mother*) with the sound of short 'U' appended to it and a dot placed on the top (making it sound as in *mundane*).

(viii) The third letter from the alphabet 'Ta', i.e. the letter 'Da' (pronounced as in *lord*), with the long sound of 'A' appended to it. This gives the letter 'Daa' (pronounced as in *dance*).

(ix) The letter that is common to both the words Narayan and Vayu, i.e. the letter 'Ya' (pronounced as in *yearn*; *year*; *young*) with the long vowel sound of 'Aye' (pronounced as in *dye*) put on its top. The resultant letter is 'Yeya' (pronounced as in *yeah*).

(x) And the final component of the Mantra is the word 'Viche' (pronounced as in *wicked* + *change*).

This word for Lord Narayan, i.e. the Mantra OM, is to be added to the resultant Mantra formed by the nine components as mentioned above.

[The composite nine letter Mantra thus becomes 'OM Aim/Ain(g) Hrim/Hrin(g) Klim/Klin(g) Chaamundaaye Vichee'.

It meaning in brief is as follows—'Salutations to Lord Narayan (Brahm) represented by the word OM. It is you who has revealed your divine Shakti (dynamic powers, potentials and authority) in the form of the faculty of speech and the power of the word (represented by the monosyllabic word 'Aim/Ain(g)'). It is you who has revealed your stunning ability to create delusions in the form of Maya Shakti (represented by the monosyllabic word 'Hrim/Hrin(g)'). It is you who has revealed yourself as the Kaam Shakti, the power of desires, passions and aspirations (represented by the monosyllabic word 'Klim/Klin(g)'). It is you who has revealed yourself as Goddess Chamundaa (the great Goddess of war and victory) who enables all the devotees or worshippers to overcome enemies represented by unrighteous, inauspicious, evil, sinful, corrupt, pervert and demeaning forces of creation. Rupture and crush, eliminate and demolish all obstacles and oppositions that come in the way of our spiritual endeavours. We pay our obeisance to you.'] (22-23).

24. The divine and venerable Goddess is enshrined in the center of the lotus-like heart of the devotees.

She is as glorious and influential as the sun rising in the morning.

She holds a snare and a goad.

She is most polite, composed, calm and amiable.

She holds her hands in postures known as 'Abhaya Mudra' and 'Var Mudra' indicating that she is ever eager to grant the boons of fearlessness and fulfillment of desires to her devotees and worshippers who seek these boons from her.

She has three eyes—two conventional eyes, the third eye of wisdom said to be located in the forehead between the two eyebrows. [Usually it is Lord Shiva who is depicted as having these three eyes, and this is why he is called 'Trineta'—the Lord with three eyes. To say that the Goddess also has three eyes is to establish oneness and inseparability between the two—i.e. between Shiva who is Brahm personified, and the Goddess who is the Shakti of this Brahm personified.]

She wears red clothes (which is the auspicious colour and represents the glowing radiance of the fire element).

She fulfills all the aspirations, desires, wishes, hopes and expectations of her devotees (24).

25. I bow most reverentially before the divine Mother Goddess who removes even the greatest of fears, is able to calm down the torments and agonies created by the greatest of miseries and misfortunes, and who is most compassionate, kind, gracious and benevolent (25).

26. The divine and venerable Mother Goddess is known as 'Agyea' (literally meaning one who is not known or who is inaccessible) because even the great Gods such as Brahma the creator are not able to know about her or her glories.

She is known as 'Anantaa' because she has no end, and is infinite and eternal.

She is known as 'Alakshyaa' because no one can see her in the conventional term, and neither can she be understood and comprehended. This is because she is most esoteric, mysterious and enigmatic, as well as subtle, sublime and invisible.

She is known as 'Ajaa' because no one knows anything about her birth; she is eternal and imperishable, hence without a birth and a beginning (like the principal Brahm whom she represents).

She is known as 'Ekaa' because she alone uniformly pervades in this creation and has a universal presence; she is one of her own kind, being supreme, transcendental, non-dual, unique and unparalleled in creation; she is alone, moves alone and stays alone; she keep no company and lives serenely all by herself. She has no double or duplicate like her own self.

She is known as 'Naikaa' because she is the only one that has revealed her single self in the form of the entire creation which is however astoundingly diverse and multifaceted. This makes her unique and most mystical. She is always fresh and rejuvenated.

This is why she is compositely honoured by the terms Ageya, Anantaa, Alakshyaa, Ajaa, Ekaa, and Naikaa (26).

27. The divine and venerable Mother Goddess is present inherently in all the Mantras as their 'Maatrikaas'¹ (seed letters, subtle sounds, hidden powers and secret meaning) as well as in all words as their meaning and usage.

She represents the state of extreme realisation, enlightenment and wisdom in the realm of Gyan (knowledge).

She is the only entity that remains in complete vacuum, as the witness to that vacuum. [This is a metaphoric way of saying that when the creation is exhausted and nothing remains, the Goddess as a synonym of Brahm is the only entity that lasts.] (27).

[Note--¹*Maatrikaa*—Other references (i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 62-63; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 21-22. (ii) Atharva Veda = Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12 (which says that the first outer ring, called the Chakra, of the worship instrument of Goddess Tripura has eight Matrikaas enshrined in it).

The *Maatrika Vidya* is the esoteric and secret knowledge of creation that deals with the Shakti or the dynamic powers of the Supreme Being known as Brahm that first stirs the neutral and calm primordial cosmic gel by injecting in it the first spark of life, which in turn sets off a chain reaction that culminates in the form of the creation as it is known now. The word 'Maatrika' literally means a small mother. Since the process of creation is so complex that it required a number of complicated processes taking place simultaneously, with each individual element and each single dynamic source of energy playing its crucial role in the composite phenomenon of

creation, these were called 'Maatrikas' because they were all like little mothers who had got together and used their combined energy, resources and abilities to create or conceive a cosmic embryo, nourish it, and allow it to develop to maturity so that the creation could be revealed in the way it finally did. They conceived and harboured this creation in their collective womb, and had nourished and sustained it till the time it was born in the matured form as we know it today.

The 'Maatrika Vidya' is the esoteric knowledge (science) which pertains to the individual letters or syllables of any given Mantra dedicated to any given deity who represents one or the other aspect or facet of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. The Maatrika Vidya deals with the mystical power, energy, authority and strength, i.e. the dynamism that is inherent in any given Mantra, but which is based on the individual units (i.e. the individual letters or syllables) of the Mantra. That is, if one knows what the individual units of a Mantra are, then he can correctly predict the power and abilities that not only this Mantra possesses but also of the deity that this Mantra represents.

For instance, it is well established that the Mantra 'OM' stands for Brahm. Therefore, the Maatrika Vidya of OM would be a comprehensive understanding of its finer sound components and their alphabetical counterparts, along with their spiritual significance and metaphysical import, as well as the combined astounding spiritual powers, dynamism and energy that they incorporate in themselves when they form the Mantra known as 'OM'.

In modern science we know that any finished product requires a chain of steps to be meticulously undertaken before it is finally produced. The science of organic chemistry teaches us that numerous chemical products are created by tweaking the basic molecular structure of various elements in association with the ubiquitous carbon atom that is at the central core of all organic formulas.

Similarly, the creation of this universe was not an isolated event, but it required countless subtler steps undertaken in a systematic form that worked together towards one goal, and that goal was the revelation of this creation. Many small steps and countless numbers of subtle factors that were insignificant in themselves, but assumed great importance as part of the cosmic mosaic of creation, contributed to the creation of this world. Each of these factors and elements are the Maatrikas of this creation. This world is a 'creation' precisely for this reason—it was moulded from primary ingredients that had no significant value of their own, but when they were subjected to many adjustments and experimentations they produced a 'world' that is rich in dynamism and energy, a world that has no resemblance to any of these primary ingredients. Each step was equally important and equally significant, because one miss-step would have caused the entire process to malfunction and come to a standstill.

Each of these 'steps' are metaphorically cited as the various 'Maatrikas' in the field of metaphysical interpretation of this celestial phenomenon. Here, the word Maatrika is related to the Mantras which are divine formulas used in meditation and contemplation, and hence implies the hidden energy and dynamism of the letters of the Mantra which give it its inherent stupendous powers, potentials and authority as well as its holiness, divinity and sanctity.

The process of creation involved cosmic efforts by the creator who is said to have performed a cosmic fire sacrifice in order to initiate this process, and had obviously employed certain Mantras, as any fire sacrifice needs the use of Mantras for its proper sanctified process. As would be seen in due course, the Mantra employed by Brahma was Hans that is a synonym Mantra for Pranav or OM. The inherent dynamism and energy of this Mantra is contained in its syllables or letters, and it is this dynamism and energy that not only initiated the process of creation but also sustained it during its period of development and growth that culminated in the birth of the visible creation.

The *Maatrika* of a Mantra are the various Sanskrit letters or alphabets that collectively form the text of the Mantra. The word Maatrikaa literally means ‘a little mother’. Since the Mantra represents the cosmic divinity known as the supreme transcendental Brahm in its numerous manifestations known as various Gods, the letters are called the Maatrikaas because they empower this Mantra with the stupendous mystical powers that this Mantra possesses much like Brahm employing his cosmic dynamic energy to enable him to initiate and then sustain and develop this creation, and even bring about its conclusion.

Brahm initiated this creation with the help of his cosmic dynamic powers and energy represented and encrypted in the Beej Mantra. But as it happened, the unfolded creation had numerous Gods and Goddesses. These Gods actually symbolise the various aspects of Brahm’s cosmic powers and authority, and the Goddesses represent their empowerment and strength to give effect to their mandate. This is a classic case of delegation of authority.

Mere letters and words or phrases of the Mantra would be neutral if not given their powers, or if they are not ‘empowered’ and ‘enabled’ much like Brahm which was a neutral entity until it empowered and armed itself with the cosmic dynamic energy, the necessary strength and authority to enable itself to initiate the process of creation. So, the Maatrikaa or Beej Mantras are the empowering aspect of the main body of the Mantra.

Each Mantra has two components—subtle and gross. The subtle part is its ‘Beej Mantra’ which is like the seed from where the huge tree grows. The gross part is the larger and extended part of the Mantra having a number of letters or words or phrases. The Beej Mantra consists of a consonant and the vowel sound attached to it with a dot on top to indicate its point-source of cosmic energy as well as to indicate its anointment as the chief component of the Mantra. The dot is called the Anuswar, and it produces the nasal sound in association with the vowel sign preceding it. For example, in the Mantra ‘Hans’ as described in the Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 62-63, the Beej Mantra is the Sanskrit consonant ‘Ha’ + the vowel sound of the letter ‘A’ with a dot on top—producing the sound equivalent of ‘*hunt + suns or sons*’ = ‘hans’. Since this word ‘Hans’ refers to the cosmic transcendental supreme Brahm and its counterpart as the Atma or pure consciousness present in the body of an individual creature, the letter ‘Ha’ represents Brahm, while the letter ‘Sa’, which is a sibilant sound following the main Beej Mantra, means ‘like that’ or ‘like it’ referring to the Atma because the Atma is ‘like that Brahm’.

The Beej Mantra is like the ‘seed or root’ from which the rest of the Mantra evolves and is said to derive its mystical and stupendous powers and potentials. This Beej Mantra is like the seed having the tree secretly present in it, and the Mantra would then be like the fully grown-up tree. Even when grown, the tree needs the root to anchor it and derive its nourishment from the ground. Hence the two epithets ‘seed’ and ‘root’ used to describe the Beej Mantra. Each deity has a specific Beej Mantra dedicated to it, and one Beej Mantra may apply to more than one deity.

In Hinduism, meditation and contemplation upon a chosen deity is done by the help of a Mantra as a specific formula dedicated to invoke its powers as well as to concentrate the mind and its various faculties on the deity along with aiding the process of meditation and contemplation. This is done by doing Japa which involves repetition of the given Mantra. In fact, Japa is an integral part of any religious exercise, even for success in Yoga because it helps to harness the latent and dormant energy in the body by focusing the mind on the purpose at hand. The Beej Mantra is used for its concentrated energy and strength alongside its ease of use and usefulness in offering oblations or doing Anga Nyas (which is establishing the divine powers of the deity on the different parts of the body to purify them, empower them and strengthen them with dynamic energy and holiness associated with the Mantra).

In metaphysics, the supreme Brahm is the deity worshipped, and his Manta is OM which is a monosyllabic word. The Brahm Vidya Upanishad however describes

the Mantra as 'Hans' because it refers to the pure consciousness called the Atma as a manifestation of Brahm in the body of the individual creature, and repetition of this Mantra is like establishing a union between the two of them and reminding the spiritual aspirant that his 'true self' is the Atma which is none other than the Supreme Being known as Brahm. That is why there are a number of Yoga Upanishads that extol the virtues of this Hans Mantra during the process of various meditation and contemplation exercises.

The single point source of everything in existence is indisputably Brahm represented by the Beej Mantra. If the letter of the Beej Mantra represents this Brahm, then the dot and the vowel sign of the Beej Mantra are like the dynamic powers, energy and authority of Brahm. The extended part of the Mantra would then be equivalent to the revelation of Brahm in the form of myriad Gods representing one or the other virtues and qualities of Brahm, and their divine counterparts called the various Goddesses would represent the powers and authority vested in these Gods by the supreme Authority so that they can carry out their assigned duties.

In Tantra form of occult worship, the Supreme Being is worshipped as a divine cosmic Shakti or cosmic Mother which is actually the cosmic powers and dynamic energy of the supreme Brahm that is responsible for the creation coming into being, its development, growth and sustenance, and is even responsible for its conclusion. If the Supreme Being is regarded as the cosmic Male, then the opposite force, the cosmic Female, is envisioned as the Shakti, or the dynamic energy and vital powers, potentials and authority of this Supreme Being. The cosmic Male provided the vital spark of life in the form of the cosmic Consciousness which is like the 'sperm', while the cosmic Shakti is the female counter-part, called the 'Prakriti' which received this 'sperm' and nourished it in its womb to produce the offspring in the form of this vast creation. It was in the Prakriti's womb that the creation was conceived, developed and grew to emerge as the mysterious creation which is as mystical and enigmatic as its father, the Supreme Being. Obviously, the cosmic sperm would have been wasted if it was not accepted by the cosmic Mother known as Prakriti.

In Tantra philosophy, the Supreme Being is known as Mahadeva or Shiva, and the female part or Shakti is known as Uma or Parvati. In the language of the Upanishads or Vedanta, the same Supreme Being is known as the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm from which the entire creation sprouted like the tree from a seed, and the cosmic Shakti is called Maya or Prakriti. The Maya is nothing but the Viraat Purush's dynamic powers that brought about the beginning of creation, sustains it and would finally conclude it; the Prakriti is the womb where the creation conceived and developed. The embryo is the Hiranyagarbha which is the subtle body of Brahm, and this embryo developed and revealed the Viraat Purush.

So if the given Mantra is regarded as a personification of the given deity, then the Maatrikaa would be its energy and dynamism that is latent and inherent in it. The Mantra would lose its powers and potentials in the absence of the Maatrikaa just like the Supreme Being needed the power of the Shakti to create the world.

The word Maatrikaa literally means a 'little mother'. So it is given the same reverence that one would give to a mother because it is the mother that gives shape to the body of the offspring—in this case the main body of the Mantra. Shorn of the Maatrikaa, the Mantra would be meaningless and powerless.

In Tantra form of worship, the term 'Maatrika' is used to indicate the following seven Goddesses—Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Vaaraahi, Indraani, and Chamunda.

The *Beejnighantu* text (Beej = seed Mantra; Nighantu = dictionary) written by Bharirava lists 50 such Beej Mantras and describes what they stand for. Another text known as Beej-vidhaan has 75 lines in the poetical style called the Anushtup Chanda describing the Beej Mantras like Hrim, Strim, Aim, Krim etc. representing different deities such as Aindri, Vaamekshana, Saraswati, Kali etc. respectively.

Similarly, the *Ekakchar-kosha of Purshottamadeva* lists the Beej Mantras of various Gods and Goddesses, such as ‘A’ for Vasudeo, ‘Aa’ for Pitaamaha (Brahma the creator of the visible world), ‘Pa’ for the Wind God called Pawan, ‘Saa’ for Laxmi the goddess of wealth as well as for Shiva the third God of the Trinity.

Another text called *Mantraartha-bidhan by Varadaatantra* also lists the Beej Mantra such as ‘Haum’ for Shiva, ‘Dum’ for Goddess Durga, ‘Krim’ for Goddess Kalikaa, ‘Hrim’ for Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, ‘Klim’ for Kaamdeo-cupid, the patron god of love and passion, ‘Gam’ for Ganesh, ‘Kshraum’ for Narshingh, the half-lion and half-man incarnation of Vishnu, etc.

According to *Maatrikaanighantu by Mahidasa*, the Beej Mantras and even the word Mantras of certain chief deities are as follows—‘A’ stands for Shrikantha (Shiva, the one with a blue-tinged throat), ‘Keshava’ for Krishna, ‘Vaata’ for the Wind God of Pawan, ‘Ka’ for Maya, ‘Ma’ stands both for Vaikuntha, the abode for Lord Vishnu who is the second of the Trinity Gods and is responsible for sustenance of creation, as well as for Mahaakaal, one of the names of Shiva, ‘Ya’ stands for Yamuna etc.

There are said to be *eight Maatrikas* or Beej Mantras pertaining to *Goddess Tripura*. These are the esoteric letters that symbolize the eight forms of Goddesses that the universal cosmic Mother has taken. They are the following—‘Hrim’ for Aindri and Bhuvaneshwari, ‘Strim’ for Vaamekshana, ‘Aim’ for Saraswati, ‘Krim’ for Kali, ‘Saa’ for Laxmi, ‘Dum’ for Goddess Durga, ‘Krim’ for Goddess Kalikaa, and ‘Klim’ for Kaam. These eight Maatrikaas of Goddess Tripura are enshrined in the outer first Chakra (ring) of the worship instrument employed to offer mystical worship to Goddess Tripura as described in *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 12.

The *Brahm Vidya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 63 asserts that no Mantra has any value if there is no Maatrikaa in it. To quote—“Nowhere is any Mantra (which is an esoteric and mystical group of letters or words or phrases used to worship or pay tributes to a deity) preached or nowhere does it have any meaning, value or even an existence if there is no Maatrikaa in it (63).”

This Upanishad has elaborately described the ‘Hans Mantra’ in its various verses, e.g. verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79. In the present case, the Mantra is ‘Hans’ referring to Brahm in the form of the Atma or pure consciousness present inside the body of the spiritual aspirant.

Similar idea is the basis of the *Pashupata Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition which is entirely dedicated to the philosophy that employs the metaphor of the Hans to refer to and describe the grand virtues of the supreme Brahm and the Atma.]

28. The Mother Goddess, from whom nothing is superior, more powerful and better, is famous as Durga.

I, who am terrified by the world, bow most reverentially before that Goddess Durga who overcomes all sins and perversions, is difficult to comprehend and grasp, and is the one who can take a creature across the formidable world which is as uncrossable and horrifying as the vast and infinite ocean (28).

29-30. [Verse nos. 29-31 outline the benefits or rewards derived by the study and proper understanding of the great tenets of the divine knowledge espoused in this holy Upanishad.]

A person who reads (diligently studies and repeats devotionally) the holy Mantras of this ‘Atharva-shirsha’ (literally, the best of the Mantras of the Atharva Veda) is able to get the fruit (reward, benefit) of having read all the five Atharva-shirshas.

[The word ‘Atharva-shir’ is also the name of fourth Upanishad of the Atharva Veda. It lists various divine names of Brahm, and is especially dedicated to Lord Shiva. The figure of ‘five’ Atharva-shirhas’ mentioned in the present verse probably refer to its first five Kandikas or Cantos which describe all the various Mantras dedicated to the supreme Brahm. Here it means that the Goddess represents all the very best of the qualities and virtues that exist in this creation. She also represents the five Paads or aspects of Brahm as symbolized by the five states of existence of consciousness—viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or the dreaming state, the Sushupta or the deep sleep state, and the Turiya or the post-Sushupta state.]

A person who does not understand the esoteric meaning, the spiritual significance and metaphysical import and gravity of this single Atharva-shirsha (the best and basic tenet of the Atharva Veda that describes the uniformity and universality of Brahm), and instead worships (Brahm) by doing formal forms of ritualistic worship known as ‘Archa’ (by establishing and consecrating altars and idols), does not find any gain or achieves any Siddhis (mystical powers and success in any endeavour, specially spiritual) by repeating the Atharva-shirshas even for seven hundred thousand times.

[That is, if one does not understand the meaning of worship and who is actually being worshipped, he would be wasting his time and effort by offering oblations to gross idols and altars made of brick and mortar, or mechanically repeating the words of the hymns like a parrot. This fact is repeatedly emphasized in the Upanishads, and herein lie their uniqueness. Whereas the Purans lay emphasis on rituals and formal worship of a plethora of Gods and Goddesses, and the Vedas themselves revolve around fire sacrifice offered to a wide variety of Gods representing various forces of creation, the Upanishads stress that all this is nuisance as the fundamental essence in all the forms to which worship is offered or for whom the hymns are made is only one and non-dual divine entity known as Brahm. This Brahm is revealed in all the forms of Gods and Goddesses, and the best thing is that this Brahm resides in the inner-self of the worshipper as his own Atma, the pure consciousness. Therefore, to search Brahm, the Supreme Being, outside rather than the inside of one’s own self is like a musk deer running around the forest in search of the fragrance that emerges from its own body.]¹

Normally, it is prescribed to repeat this hymn one hundred and eight times. [This figure of one hundred eight is regarded as an auspicious figure. The implication however is that the doctrine stressed in these verses would be firmly engrained in one’s mind when he repeats it for one hundred eight times with full faith, belief and conviction.] (29-30).

[Note—¹This prohibition of worship of idols made of material things such as wood, stone, metals etc. or other symbols of worship, or for that matter any kind of external worship is expressly mentioned in the following Upanishads—(i) Sam Veda tradition—Maitreyu-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 21, 26; Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 50-59; and Sanyaso-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 74-75, 97. (ii) Atharva Veda tradition—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 20.

External forms of worship have been prohibited in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s following Upanishads—Pran Agnihotra Upanishad; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 69, 74; Canto 3, verse no. 26, 29-30; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse nos. 21-24. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse nos. 5, 10, 13. (c) Atharva Veda’s Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 20, Canto 6, verse nos. 7, 37-38, Canto 7, verse no. 1.]

30. A person who reads (i.e. studies carefully) this Upanishad for even ten times is quickly able to cross over or overcome even the most formidable of troubles and tribulations, or other spiritual hurdles and oppositions, and obtains freedom from the evil effects of his sins and misdemeanors by the grace of the great Goddess (30).

31. By reading this Upanishad in the morning, the person is able to nullify or neutralize the bad effects of the sins and misdeeds of the previous night, and when read in the evening the same good benefit is got for the sins and misdemeanors of the day time. If it is read twice a day, at dawn and at dusk, the sinner is therefore freed from his sins and their evil consequences.

[It ought to be noted here that merely 'reading' would not help. This blanket pardon given by this Upanishad should not be construed as a license for doing wrong in the belief that any wrong-doings of the day would be forgiven when this holy Upanishad is read in the evening, and all evils of the night would be made null and void by reading it in the morning. Nothing would be more stupid than to think this way. The primary idea is that if a man has inadvertently or under the forces of circumstances done something wrong, then he has all the right to claim pardon and find a means for redemption. He may have erred, but he has the right for Mukti from sins, or freedom from the fetters that are created by committing sins. So if he reads this Upanishad sincerely and with commitment, he is bound to become wise and enlightened, he is bound to become spiritually inclined as opposed to indulgent men engrossed in self-gratification and an endless pursuit of the world and its material objects of pleasure and comfort. Such holy and pious men are indeed eligible for pardon and redemption. The unsaid condition is that the sin should not be repeated. If it is, then the purpose of reading this Upanishad is defeated and the reader is simply mouthing meaningless jumble of words in the guise of saying hymns or offering prayers. He has no fear of the Lord in him and neither has he understood the true meaning of the teachings of the Upanishad which repeatedly say that the Supreme Being resides in one's bosom as his Atma. Had a man properly read and understood what the Upanishads say, and had he known that the Lord resides in his own bosom, then say how can his evil deeds be hidden from the Supreme Being, and for that matter how dare he even think of committing sins when the Lord is enshrined in his own body which has now become holy and consecrated like a shrine? The very fact that he remains indulgent in the corrupts world and its equally corrupt affairs shows that he has not understood what he reads.]

When this Upanishad is repeated in the middle of the night when the spiritual aspirant is most peaceful and rested and undisturbed, the state of the mind which is equivalent to the Turiya state of consciousness, one is able to attain perfection of the faculty of speech, and his voice or words acquire mystical powers called Siddhi. [That is, whatever he speaks is the truth; he stops lying and deceiving. What he says becomes true.]

When these hymns are repeated in the front of one's chosen deity, he finds nearness to the deity; he comes closer to the deity.

[In other words, the worshipper develops enough wisdom and sagacity to understand the real essence of the deity and what it stands for. The worshipper becomes enlightened that the deity is no one else but Brahm in that form. Hence, in due course of time, the worshipper stops worshipping the physical form of the deity, but worships the inherent divinity and holiness present in that deity who represents Brahm. The worshipper begins to worship the supreme, sublime and transcendental 'Brahm' instead of the gross physical form of the deity. He has recognized the

underlying ‘truth’ in the gross form of the deity, and once thus realised, he abandons the gross form and pursues the sublime form of the deity, which however is the universal Brahm. If he has not understood this basic fact then he has not understood this Upanishad.]

When the hymns of this Upanishad dedicated to the great and powerful Mother Goddess are repeated in her front during the ‘Amrit Siddhi Yog’, i.e. a special combination of stars that occurs on the Tuesday of the Ashwini Nakshatra (asterism), the man who does so is able to conquer the great fear of death.

These are the doctrines of this Upanishad; this is what this Upanishad preaches. Amen! (32).

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----Shanti Paath----

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Chapter 23

Bhavana Upanishad

This Upanishad emphasizes the point that the body of the spiritual aspirant itself is the holy altar where a wise man visualizes the presence of the Divinity, the Supreme Being and his dynamic Shakti. A lot of symbolism is employed in this Upanishad to emphasize the great metaphysical truth that it is the same universal Brahm who is the supreme transcendental Authority and Lord of this creation, the cosmic Consciousness and the dynamic powerhouse that drives this creation from the inside as well as from the outside that has revealed itself in the form of the various units of the individual creature’s body which is like a microcosm, as well as the visible world on a large scale which is the macrocosm.

In this visualization, the Upanishad draws a parallel between the various units of the body of a living being at three level of its microcosmic existence, viz. the gross, the subtle and the causal, and the different units of this visible creation at the macrocosmic level. The supreme transcendental Brahm, i.e. the cosmic Consciousness, and its dynamism in the form of Shakti, i.e. the strength, the power, the energy, the vitality and the vigour that actually drives this whole creation on behalf of Brahm, is inherently present in all of these units, whether at the level of the body or the level of the creation. The dynamism of Brahm in the form of its Shakti is the underlying power that controls and operates this world from the inside as well as from the outside. This Shakti drives the world and empowers each unit of its various components to function smoothly according to the larger scheme of things.

Since a deity is worshipped on an altar, especially the Goddess whose place of worship is called a ‘Shakti Peeth’ which is literally a seat or center of energy, vitality, power and strength, the vital points of the body are also known as Peeths.

Another important point to note is that a wise spiritual aspirant is advised to understand the subtle philosophy and the metaphysical imports of the various steps involved in formal ritualistic forms of worship, and use these as symbolisms to offer his obeisance to the Supreme Being in the correct manner which would be a truthful form of worship and would actually be of any spiritual benefit to him. Mere

formalities would be of no real good to him if he has not grasped their essence. It is like eating food to fill the stomach or satisfy one's taste buds but not being able to digest the food that is eaten, for the body actually benefits when the nutrients of the food are absorbed by it and not merely by filling up the intestines with tasty food. The gross food would be expelled and the body would remain weak and under-nourished inspite of the man eating to his full. So is the case when the worship is done as ritual involving formalities, without actually understanding what it means and what its intention is.

The word 'Bhavana' has many shades of meaning. It means appearance, being, becoming, turning to or imagining to be, transition into, a condition or state believed to be the truth, any state of mind or body or heart, way of thinking or feeling, emotions or sentiments or feelings, opinion, disposition, conjecture, supposition, purported meaning and sense, a fundamental view about a certain thing or situation, visualization, imagery, reflection, belief, faith, conviction, an idea, thoughts.

All these meanings should be comprehensively applied when one reads this Upanishad to grasp the profundity of its teaching because it uses an array of metaphors, analogies and similes to explain profound metaphysical and spiritual truths and principles. This Upanishad has only four verses, out of which the first one is like a prologue and the fourth like an epilogue, while the two other verses form the main text.

The symbolisms used in this present Upanishad reminds one of the Shaarirak Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda to which it has an uncanny and striking resemblance.

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---Shanti Paath---

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. OM Salutations! Salutations to Lord Hari¹! The Atma is immutable, indivisible and one uniform whole. It is all-pervading and all-encompassing; it assumes the form of the body of creation in which it lives. The entire universe is its body. It is self-illuminated. One must focus one's attention on this eclectic Atma².

OM Salutations! The wise, learned and enlightened Guru (a moral preceptor, guide and teacher) is a true advisor and guide for a spiritual aspirant. He is the one who acts as the primary source of strength and support that empowers the person to move ahead on his spiritual path and ultimately attain success in his endeavours. He is the virtual 'Shakti' or source of energy, motivation, strength, power and authority that provides the necessary support, impetus and dynamism to all the efforts made by the aspirant to reach his goal in life successfully. But for this to materialize, the Guru himself should be an expert in his field, and inclined to helpful and supporting; he should be a teacher, a preceptor, a motivator, an advisor, a friend and a guide all rolled into one. He is the primary source of Shakti (strength, energy, vitality, vigour and authority) for the spiritual aspirant and is his primary advisor and moral support. The aspirant relies on the authority of the Guru and his knowledge to faithfully move ahead in a field which is still unknown to him and un-chartered by him, without the fear of going on the wrong path or falling prey to uncertainties.

[This verse is a sort of salutation to the teacher, and showing of honour and respect to him. He is the one who deftly guides the student of spiritualism, or for that

matter in any field of learning, on the correct path, warning him of the numerous pitfalls, and how to overcome them successfully. In this context, this verse can be read as follows also—A man who is wise, learned and enlightened is the one who is eligible to become a true teacher who guides and advises a spiritual aspirant. Such a teacher is the disciple's or a student's real friend and support; he provides his ward (the disciple or the student) the much-needed moral support, guidance, motivation and inspiration to move ahead even when the former appears to have lost hope and the drive to move ahead. It is the teacher or the Guru who removes all darkness symbolized by ignorance and delusions, and instead lights up the path to success for his ward. The Guru picks up the ward whenever he stumbles and falls, or is down in the docks; the Guru instills confidence and hope in him when he is dejected and hopeless. The Guru provides the necessary impetus to the disciple to move ahead and rise up against all odds and misfortunes. This is why the Guru is called the primary form of Shakti for the spiritual aspirant. Even as any endeavour needs 'Shakti' (dynamism, energy, vitality, strength, impetus, drive) to succeed, the Guru is the one who provides this much-needed Shakti to the spiritual aspirant.] (1).

[Note—¹The various Upanishads deal extensively and exhaustively on the concept of the *Atma*, the knowledge of which is central to the philosophy of spiritualism and metaphysics espoused in the Upanishads.

The *characteristics* and eclectic divine *virtues of the Atma* have been enumerated in the way of proclamations made by a self-realised person in (i) Shukla Yajur Veda's Subalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 1-2. (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 17, 81-110; Tejo Bindu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-43, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-51, 60-64, Canto 4, verse nos. 2-30, 69-79, Canto 5, verse nos. 1-75, 90-96, Canto 6, verse nos. 1-72; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 25. They have also been enumerated in Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 13, 18; Canto 3, verse nos. 2-3, 6, 8-10. (iii) Atharva Veda's Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 74-75; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 7, 10-15; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 8-9; Canto 4, verse no. 1; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Uttar Kanda/Canto 2, verse no. 26; Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 1.

Other references regarding the *Atma*—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 7-8; Skanda Upanishad, verse nos. 2-7; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 25; Kathwalli Upanishad.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda's Adhyatma Upanishad; Subalo-panishad, Canto 3, 5, 7 (verse no. 1), and 9 (verse no. 16); Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse no. 18; Niralamba.

(c) Rig Veda's Atma-poojo-panishad; Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 1.

(d) Atharva Veda's Atmo-panishad; Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3, 6; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 4-7; Canto 3, section 1, verse no. 5; Canto 3, section 2, verse no. 3-4; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 2; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1-4, 20-21, 34, 36, 38, 41; Canto 2, verse nos. 19-24; Canto 4, verse nos. 26, 37, 53, 60; Canto 5, verse nos. 75, 77 etc.

Now, what is the *Atma*? The word basically means something that is fundamental and essential for the existence of another thing; it means the soul of any given entity, its basic truth and reality. The *Atma*, in metaphysical terms, is the pure consciousness that lives inside the gross body of the creature and is his true self, his truthful identity. Sans the *Atma* the body has no value, life, importance and relevance.

The *Atma* has the same relation with the body as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, has with the creation. That is, the virtues of the *Atma* and Brahm are alike—i.e. the *Atma* is eternal, infinite, without a birth and an end, imperishable, formless, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and so on and so forth.

The Atma in fact is the cosmic Consciousness residing in the gross body of the individual who represents the cosmos in a miniature form.

It is the microcosmic form of the cosmic Soul which resides in the heart of an individual creature and which is an image of the macrocosmic supreme Soul of the cosmos; the pure conscious self; the pure consciousness; the true identity of the creature; that entity that is deemed to be truthful, immutable, eternal and infinite, that is pristine pure, that is a fount of wisdom and enlightenment, is immaculate and impeccable, and is all-pervading, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent and almighty like its principle called the supreme Brahm.

The Atma is a sublime and subtle entity that has no grossness and physical form. Hence, it is not visible just like the atom of any given element is not visible. But the fact is that the element, such as for instance gold or iron, exist in their physical form that is both visible and can be touched and felt only because of the atom—because the atom is its basic and only identity. Likewise, though the Atma is not visible in physical terms like the atom, the existence of the visible world and the life present in it is an ample and incontrovertible proof of the existence of the Atma just like the presence of gold and iron are proofs for the existence of their respective atoms. All things made of gold or iron would have the corresponding atom; all living beings and the existence itself are similarly uniformly pervaded by the Atma.

Non-duality or oneness or uniformity *between the Atma and the world*—This concept has been explained in *Mahopanishad* of Sam Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 7.

The *Chandogya Upanishad* of the Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 8, section 1, verse no. 1 declares that the supreme *Brahm resides in the lotus-like heart as the Atma* of the creature.

The *five aspects of the Atma* are described in *Kathrudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 41. These are Pratyagatma (verse no. 16), Anna Maye Atma (verse no. 21), Pran Maye Atma and Mano Maye Atma (verse no. 22), and Vigyan Maye Atma and Anand Maye Atma (verse no. 23).

The *four aspects of Paads of the Atma* have been described in Atharva Veda's *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 8, verse nos. 9-19 in the context of Brahm. This is because Atma and Brahm are the same thing, the only difference being that the term is used for the Consciousness when dealing with at the microcosmic level, and Brahm when dealing with it at the macrocosmic level of creation.

The *three aspects of the Atma* are described in *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 10-12, and in the *Atma Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, verse nos. 1-A to 1-E. These three aspects are Atma, Parmatma and Antaratma.

The question *why the eternal Atma becomes a Jiva* is explained in *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 12-13; *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 93/1-93/15; *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse no. 16, 21; *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 3-4.

The *relationship between the Atma and the body* has been elaborately explained in *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 24, and *Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 6, verse no. 4.

Atma lives in the (subtle) heart of the creature—Refer (i) *Shukla Yajur Veda's Subalo-panishad*, Canto 8, verse no. 1. (ii) *Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishd*, Canto 3, verse no. 6; *Mundak Upanishad*, Canto 2, section 2, verse no. 6-9; *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 3; *Sharav Upanishad*, verse no. 21.

The *Prashna Upanishad*, Canto 3, verse no. 3 also declares that the *Pran*, the vital winds that represent the life consciousness in the body, *has its origin in the Atma*.

Brahm and Atma are the same—The universal and unequivocal truth that Brahm and the Atma are synonymous with each other is a constant refrain of all the Upanishads. Refer especially to—*Kathrudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 41; *Mundak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, *Mundak* (Canto) 2, section 2, verse nos.

6-9; Mundak 3, section 1, verse no. 5; Mandukya Upanishad, verse no. 2; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4.

The *universality of the Atma* has been expressly described in the *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 5, verse nos. 12-14.

The concept of the 'Atma Tattwa', i.e. the essential meaning as well as the sublime and subtle aspects of the divine entity known as the pure consciousness that forms the 'true self' of all living beings and is also known as the 'soul', has been elaborately expounded upon in the Atharva Veda's *Annapurna Upanishad*, Canto 1.

The *Prashna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse no. 3 says that the Pran is like the shadow of the Atma.

Why the *Atma appears to have different aspects and nature*, why it appears to look different when viewed from different perspectives in different creatures inspite of it being essentially one, indivisible, immutable, uniform and universal entity is narrated in the following Upanishads—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's = *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 93/1-93/15. (ii) Atharva Veda's = Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 3.

Atma is a personification or revelation of the three sacred fires—reference Atharva Veda's Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse no. 20. These three fires are the Garhyapata fire, the Dakshinagni fire, and the Ahawaniya fire.

The universal question—*why is the Atma called the 'Jiva-Atma'*—has been explained in Atharva Veda's *Narad Parivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 3.

The *different names and subtle forms of the Atma*—(i) The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 10-12 describe the *three aspects* of the same consciousness called Atma; (ii) The Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 16, 21-24 describes the *five aspects* of the Atma; (iii) The Atma Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 1-A to 1-D says that the Atma has *three names or subtle forms*—viz. Atma, Antaratma and Parmatma.

The eternal question *why does the otherwise immaculate and perfect Atma appear to be tainted and become a Jiva* has been explained in a number of Upanishads, viz. Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 12-13; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 93/1-93/15; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 16, 21; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 3-4.

The Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 72 says that the transcendental Supreme Being or *Brahm resides in the heart* of the creature as his pure consciousness or Atma. The Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 8, section 1, verse no. 1 says the same thing and asserts that this heart is like a divine lotus.

The Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 17 proclaims that the *Pran and the Atma are synonymous* with each other.

²The importance of the *Guru* has been emphasized in a number of Upanishads, viz. The importance of a Guru has been emphasised in a number of Upanishads, viz.—

(a) Shukla Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 14-18; Shatyayani Upanishad, verse no. 39; Niralamba Upanishad, verse no. 30.

(b) Krishna Yajur Veda's following Upanishads—Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 35; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 44; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 56-59, and Canto 6, verse no. 79; Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 39; Shuk Rahasya Upanishad, in its verse no. 21; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 52-53; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4; and Canto 2, verse nos. 12-13; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 76; Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 (Lord Rudra is the universal Guru).

(c) Atharva Veda's following Upanishad—Manduka Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 2, verse nos. 12-13; Tripadvibhuta Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph nos. 10-11, and Canto 8, paragraph no. 17, 1st stanza; Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 1.

(d) A minor Upanishad named the 'Dwayo-panishad' is entirely dedicated to enumerating the chief characteristics of a Guru. It is not known to which Veda it precisely belongs.

The word *Guru* has two parts—viz. 'Gu' meaning darkness, and 'Ru' meaning light. Hence the word 'Guru' means a person who can remove the darkness symbolising ignorance and illusions that has engulfed the disciple from all sides and act as a hindrance or an obstacle in his emancipation and salvation by showing him the truthful path, or lighting his path with the light of knowledge and holding out his hands to support him when he falters. Therefore he is an exalted, revered and much sought after person who can remove the darkness of ignorance of his follower by showing him the light of knowledge and guides him whenever he finds himself in a moral dilemma and quandary. He is the person who is both the moral preceptor as well as the spiritual guide of his disciple. He is supposed to act as a neutral advisor to his ward in all matters temporal and spiritual. The disciple is expected to confide in him his greatest of secrets without the fear of betrayal or blackmail. He is the one who is expected to have risen above all kinds of vested interests and keeps the welfare of the disciple as his main objective. He is the one who has transcended the mundane and has acquired sublime awareness of the supreme Reality, because only those who are themselves aware of anything can hope to tell others about it. Therefore it is deemed that only a person of high mental, intellectual, spiritual and ethical calibre can become a true Guru.

A true Guru is treated as being equivalent to the 'Trinity Gods'—(1) Brahma, the creator, because he creates or helps to take birth good virtues and noble qualities in his disciple; (2) Vishnu, the sustainer, because he nourishes, sustains and helps to inculcate and develop wisdom and enlightenment in his disciple and leads him on the truthful path; and (3) Shiva, the concluder, because he helps to end, conclude and eliminate ignorance and negative traits in his disciple. He is 'God like' because he functions in all these capacities at the same time, besides being exalted in all knowledge, being virtuous, of high moral character and beyond reproach, being a source of unbound spiritual energy, being self realised and enlightened, and being eternal in the sense that what he advises to his disciple, the path he shows, the light that he lights in the dark heart of the creature, makes him immortal. The Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 explicitly asserts that Lord Shiva is the universal Guru of all, and that the Guru is Shiva personified in this form.

Therefore, a Guru is honoured for the divine virtues that he represents and embodies, that he teaches and implements in his life, for the divinity, for the Lord and for the personification of the great teachings of the scriptures that he exemplifies.

The Guru is regarded as a personification of the great knowledge of the scriptures (refer Tripadvibut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 10), as well as Lord Maha Vishnu himself (refer Tripadvibut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8, paragraph no. 17, 1st stanza). It is not his physical body that is of any value for veneration, for the eternal 'soul' and not the physical gross body is venerable.

There is a minor Upanishad called Dwayo-panishad which describes the chief characteristics of a true Guru. It has only seven Mantras. This Upanishad is being cited here verse by verse to clearly highlight the main features of a Guru:---

'(a) Verse nos.1-2= A person is called a Guru if he is endowed with enlightenment and wisdom making him well versed and skilled in the Vedas, both in their literal knowledge as well as in the profound wisdom and the ethereal and eclectic metaphysical and spiritual philosophy they contain, who is an ardent devotee and sincere follower of Lord Vishnu, who is free from such negative traits as jealousy, envy and malice, who is well versed and skilled in the various holy and divine Mantras, their usage, their ethereal importance and spiritual significance as well as all other matters related with them, who is sincerity devoted to those Mantras

and has firm belief, conviction and faith in them, who seeks the shelter and refuge of those Mantras, who is pure and immaculate, uncorrupt and unpolluted in any form, who is devoted and dedicated to his own Guru, and who is well versed and skilled not only in all the Purans but all other scriptures as well.

(b) Verse no.3= A person is called a Guru who has a comprehensive and holistic knowledge and understanding of all the scriptures, and who not only preaches righteousness, probity and propriety as well as nobility of thoughts and actions but also lives them and implements them in their letter and spirit in his personal life.

(c) Verse no. 4= The letter 'Gu' means darkness, while the letter 'Ru' means that which remove that darkness. Hence, Guru is one who removes the darkness representing ignorance and delusions that are so typically associated with this deluding world.

(d) Verse no.5= A true Guru is equivalent to the supreme and transcendental Brahm; he is the ultimate destination for a seeker; he is a fount of the supreme knowledge and the source of the best of such knowledge; he is deemed to be the best and the greatest asset for a man.

(e) Verse no.6= A Guru is the best thing a wise seeker seeks and searches for, he is the best and the supreme place for seeking refuge and shelter with, and he being a dispenser of the profoundest of wisdom and knowledge is deemed to be a person who is the most important, who has the highest standards of greatness and magnificence, who is most dignified and meritorious, who is most weighty and significant, and who is most distinct and outstanding in all aspects.

(f) Verse no.7= Pronouncing the word 'Guru' even once enables the aspirant to access liberation and deliverance from this entrapping and deluding world. All his efforts are deemed to have been successful by simply saying this powerful word sincerely. Such a man does never come back (enters the cycle of birth and death) in this world again—verily, this is the truth. Those who understand this fact correctly get the desired fruit'.]

2. [Since this verse is long in the form of a narrative paragraph, it is therefore hereby divided into smaller stanzas or units for the sake of convenience of narration.]

2/1-2. [The disciple asked the Guru—] 'The gross body (of the creature; a man; any living being called a Jiva) has nine apertures or outlets or openings¹. The Sri Chakra (the instrument designed like a wheel that is used to offer worship to the divine Goddess—refer Tripura Tapini Upanishad) also has nine cosmic Shaktis² (dynamic cosmic powers and energy of creation) enshrined in it or placed in its various vital or crucial or important points that are sensitive as well as significant. Now therefore, how do we draw a parallel between them? How do we link the nine apertures of the body to the nine centers of cosmic energy symbolically marked on the worship instrument that is used to offer worship to the cosmic manifestation of the dynamism and powers of Brahm, the Supreme Being? In other words, how does the body of the Jiva resemble the body of the creation, and by corollary would be equivalent to the worship instrument that is used to offer oblations to the cosmic Shakti of Brahm?' (2/1-2).

[Note—¹There are *nine* so-called Doors of the body, and they are two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, one mouth, one anus, and one urethra. Refer: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, 3/18; Yog Tattva Upanishad, verse no. 141; and Kshuriko-panishad, verse nos. 2-5. (ii) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 107.

²The *nine cosmic Shaktis* are personified as nine Goddesses. These nine Shaktis are the various forms of the divine dynamic power, potential, authority and energy of the Supreme Being that has taken the form of nine Goddesses. These Goddesses are

worshipped as Mothers of creation and they complement the Supreme Being. The nine divine Goddesses, also known as the patron Goddesses in Tantra literature dealing with occult forms of divine worship, are the following—‘Maha Tripur Sundari’ (महा त्रिपुर सुन्दरी), ‘Tripur Amba’ (त्रिपुर अम्बा), ‘Tripur Siddhi’ (त्रिपुर सिद्धि), ‘Tripur Malini’ (त्रिपुर मालिनी), ‘Tripura Sri’ (त्रिपुरा श्री), ‘Tripur Vasini’ (त्रिपुर वासिनी), ‘Tripur Sundari’ (त्रिपुर सुन्दरी), ‘Tripur Reshi’ (त्रिपुर रेशि), ‘Tripura’ (त्रिपुरा).

According to another version, the nine divine Goddesses are the following—Vaamaa (the divine consort of Lord Vamdeo, one of the forms of Lord Shiva), Durga (the Goddess who rides a lion and is considered a manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, and who had slayed the demon named Durg), Gauri (the divine consort of Lord Shiva; another name of Parvati), Bhagwati (another name of Parvati; the divine Mother Nature personified and from whose womb the entire creation has emerged), Parvati (the consort of Shiva; had derived her name because she is said to be the daughter of the king of mountains, called ‘Parvat’ in Sanskrit), Laxmi (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and the patron Goddess of good fortune, prosperity and wealth), Saraswati (the divine consort of Brahma, the creator, and the patron Goddess of knowledge), and Aditi (the mother of all the Gods).

The system of worshipping of the divine Goddess envisages that she is a personification of all the dynamic powers and essential energy of all the Gods rolled into one. The chief Goddess is known as Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva who is regarded as the greatest and most senior amongst the pantheon of Gods, and hence honoured by the epithet ‘Maheshwar’. Parvati is also known as Durga who is worshipped in nine different forms. These nine forms of Durga are called ‘Nav Durgas’ or nine Durgas. They are also called ‘Nav-Shaktis’ or the nine personified forms of the divine dynamic power and energy of the Supreme Being.

Thus, according to the Kavach Stotra of Devi-mahatmya, the nine Shaktis are the following—Shailputri (literally, the daughter of the Lord of Mountains), Brahmchaarini (one who is perpetually a celibate and self-restrained), Chandraghantaa (one who is as beautiful as the moon), Khushmaandaa (one who is always cheerful), Skandamaata (the mother of Skanda, also known as Lord Kartikeya, the son of Shiva and Parvati and a commander of the army of Gods), Kaatyaani (the Goddess who personifies the holy consort of the great ancient sage of the Vedic period, named Var-ruchi Kaatyaan), Kaalraatri (a personification of the night of the doomsday), Mahagauri (the great Goddess known as Gauri, another name of Parvati, the divine consort of Maheshwar or Lord Shiva), and Siddhidaatri (one who gives mystical powers and bestows her devotees or worshipper with success in everything).

According to Brahmaand Puran, the names are the following—Neelkanthi (one whose throat is blue-tinged), Kshemankari (one who takes care of her dependents), Harasiddhi (one who gives all Siddhis—mystical powers), Vanadurga (the patron Goddess of the forest), Rudradurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Lord Rudra), Agnidurga (the Goddess who is as fierce as Agni, the Fire God), Jayadurga (the Goddess who gives victory), Vindhyavaasini (the Goddess who lives in the Vindhya mountain ranges), and Ripumaaridurga (the Goddess who vanquishes enemies).]

2/3-4. [The Guru replied—] ‘The father of this body is known as ‘Vaaraahi¹, and its mother is known as ‘Kurukulla Devi². [Both are female forms of the cosmic Authority, the cosmic Father known as Brahm.] (2/3-4).

[Note—¹Vaaraahi is a female form of Lord Varaaha, the boar incarnation of Lord Vishnu who himself is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-incorporating gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being, from whose body the entire creation is said to have been formed. In other words, the creation is a revealed form of the Viraat Purush, albeit in his cosmic form of Vishnu.

When we take a close look at the word 'Viraat Purush' we find that it means a vast and colossus form ('Viraat') of the cosmic Male ('Purush') who not only created this world but took up residence in it as its sovereign.

He is called the 'Father' because Brahm, in his cosmic form of the Viraat Purush or Vishnu, is the primary Creator of creation. Even the creator of the physical world, i.e. Lord Brahma, also emerged from the navel of Vishnu as the latter reclined on the bedstead made of the coiled body of the legendary serpent known as the Seshnath who floated idly on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk known as Kshirsagar. So, in effect, it is Brahm creating this world in the form of Brahma the creator.

When the creation came into being, this Brahm, also known as the cosmic Consciousness, entered the body of the individual creature to become the Atma which is not only the 'true self' of the concerned individual but also the only factor that infuses life and vitality to the body. It is this subtle and sublime entity known as the 'consciousness' that injects the vital spark of life and vitality in the otherwise gross, inane and inert body of the individual creature just like the sperm that inject life into the egg to initiate the process of creation. Hence, the Atma and the consciousness at the micro level of creation, and Brahm and the cosmic Consciousness at the macro level of creation are the de-facto 'father' of creation.

To create something necessary dynamism, authority, energy and strength are needed. These virtues of Brahm manifested themselves as the 'Shakti'. So, if Brahm is the cosmic Father, his Shakti is the cosmic Mother. Again, if Brahm became the 'God', then obviously his divine authority and dynamism became 'Goddess'. Hence, Gods and Goddesses are nothing but personifications of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, and the latter's stupendous and profound cosmic powers and energy known as Shakti.

The gross body of all living beings is primarily made up of the earth element. Herein lies the relevance of Lord *Varaaha* vis-à-vis the creature. According to legends, this is the third incarnation of Vishnu in which he killed the demon Hiranyaaksha and lifted the earth from the flood water where it had vanished. According to some versions, this demon had hidden the earth in the bowls of the ocean. This extrication and resurrection of the earth is a symbolic way of saying that the Lord saves the creation from being submerged in the vast ocean of sins and evil. An Upanishad preached by Lord *Varaaha* appears in the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition as its 30th Upanishad.

From the perspective of the present verse, since the bodies of all living beings are made up of the 'earth element', the almighty power and strength of the Supreme Being which helps the body to be alive and active is therefore the 'Shakti' (the dynamism and energy) of the Lord known as *Varaaha* (Lord Vishnu or Lord Viraat Purush or Brahm, the Supreme Being). Now, once again, since Brahm lives in the body of the creature as his true self, i.e. as the Atma, it follows that this Shakti is actually the dynamism, the authority, the energy, the potent abilities and vigour of the Atma in action.

It is thus Lord *Varaaha* in his manifestation as the Atma that sustains and supports the body of the creature made up of the earth element. The personified form of the Shakti of *Varaaha* is known as *Vaaraahi*. Since the Atma is a personified form of the cosmic Shakti of Consciousness, it is logical to conclude that the dynamism and the divine powers possessed and displayed by the Atma is the *Vaaraahi* aspect of the cosmic Consciousness. The Atma, the pure self of the creature, employs the strength and vitality inherent in the consciousness to enable the creature's body to become alive, active and survive.

The Durga-shapta-sati, an ancient text of the Shakti cult, describes the seven divine forms of the cosmic Mother, the cosmic Shakti, known as the 'Sapta-Maatrikaas'. [Refer: 8/13-21 of Durga-shapta-sati.] These are the seven divine aspects of the divine Cosmic Mother. These Mothers are actually the female aspects of the seven divine aspects of the Cosmic Male, known as the Viraat Purush, who in

turn has manifested himself as the seven Gods, such as Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Indra etc. In this context, Goddess Vaaraahi is regarded as the female aspect of Lord Varaaha, the third incarnation of Vishnu which he took to resurrect the earth.

In iconography, Goddess Vaaraahi is depicted as a boar-faced goddess having a dark complexion and four or six arms. On the right side she shows the Vara-Mudra (a posture which indicates that she grants boons), and holds a Danda (a club or a stick) as well as an Asi (a sword). On the left side she shows the Abhaya-Mudra (a posture that grants fearlessness), and holds a Carma (shield) as well as a Paatra (a pot). Her mount is shown to be either an elephant or a buffalo.

²The Goddess known as *Kurukulla Devi* is a manifestation of the Shakti of Brahm which enables the body to do its deeds and perform actions. The word 'Kurukulla' consists of two parts—'kuru' meaning to do, and 'kulla' means activity, and the word 'Devi' of course means a goddess.]

2/5. The four great efforts that the body makes, called the 'Purushaartha' are like the four great oceans of this world (2/5).

[Note—The four efforts are 'Dharma' or making auspicious and righteous efforts, 'Artha' or making efforts to produce wealth and acquire prosperity, 'Kaam' or making efforts for the fulfillment of wishes and acquiring of pleasure, and 'Moksha' or making efforts to attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

It ought to be noted here that a lot of imagery is employed in this Upanishad.]

2/6. This body is like a continent of nine gems (2/6).

[Note—The 9 precious stones, gems and jewels are the following—pearl, emerald, quartz, zircon, diamond, coral, cat's eye, ruby and sapphire.]

2/7. The nine forms of Shaktis (subtle strength, power, energy) that support this continent (the body of the aspirant or any living being) are Maha-Tripura Sundari etc. (2/7)

[Note—These nine forms of Shaktis (subtle strength, power, energy) that support the body of the aspirant or any living being are the various forms of the divine dynamic power, potential, authority and energy of the Supreme Being that has taken the form of nine Goddesses. These Goddesses are worshipped as Mothers of creation and they complement the Supreme Being. The nine divine Goddesses, also known as the patron Goddesses in Tantra literature dealing with occult forms of divine worship, are the following—'Maha Tripur Sundari', 'Tripur Amba', 'Tripur Siddhi', 'Tripur Malini', 'Tripura Sri', 'Tripur Vasini', 'Tripur Sundari', 'Tripur Reshi', 'Tripura'. All these names of the Goddess are mentioned in the Tripura Tapini Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Canto nos. 1-2.

According to another version, the nine divine Goddesses are the following—Vaamaa (the divine consort of Lord Vamdeo, one of the forms of Lord Shiva), Durga (the Goddess who rides a lion and is considered a manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, and who had slayed the demon named Durg), Gauri (the divine consort of Lord Shiva; another name of Parvati), Bhagwati (another name of Parvati; the divine Mother Nature personified and from whose womb the entire creation has emerged), Parvati (the consort of Shiva; had derived her name because she is said to be the daughter of the king of mountains, called 'Parvat' in Sanskrit), Laxmi (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and the patron Goddess of good fortune, prosperity and wealth), Saraswati (the divine consort of Brahma, the creator, and the patron Goddess of knowledge), and Aditi (the mother of all the Gods).]

2/8. The 'Kalpa-Vriksha (or the Kalpa Tree)' (i.e. the evergreen tree which is said to be all wish-fulfilling) is represented by the body made up of the seven 'Dhaatus'

(elements) such as the skin etc., as well as the numerous internal and external ‘Sankalps’ (volitions, aspirations, ambitions, determinations, vows etc.) that this body makes.

[The body is like the aforesaid all wish-fulfilling tree that helps the Atma to accomplish what it desires. The Atma would not be able to do anything without the help of the body. In a sense, the body is an extended arm of the Atma which the latter employs for its wish fulfillment.

For instance, if the Atma—which incidentally is the truthful ‘self’ of the living being—wishes to eat something, then it uses the body to search for the food it wants to eat, go to fetch it, actually procure it, then cook it, eat it, then enjoy its taste and aroma, digest it and extract nourishment from that food, and finally eliminate waste that is not needed.

The Atma is an ‘ethereal spirit’, and as such it cannot physically do anything in this physical world. For this purpose it needs an instrument that is compatible with the world and its physical gross nature, and the body fits the bill perfectly.] (2/8).

[Note—The seven Dhaatus which make up the body are the following— The 7 Dhaatus—The structural features of the gross physical body consists of the so-called seven Dhaatus. These stand for the structural constituent of the body which supports and sustains its existence. According to ancient Indian system of medicine, they are the following—(1) Rasa (lymph and mucous; sap), (2) Rakta (blood), (3) Maansa (flesh), (4) Meda (fat and muscles), (5) Ashthi (bones and cartilage), (6) Meja (marrow), and (7) Shukra (semen).

According to other interpretations, these seven Dhaatus which form the structural features of the gross body and give it its shape and support it are the following—(1) all forms of fluid ingredients such as blood, urine, mucous, lymph etc, (2) bone and cartilage, (3) marrow, (4) flesh, fat and muscles, (5) abdominal organs such as stomach etc, (6) skin, and (7) Naadis (arteries, veins, capillaries and nerves).

The body of a creature as a Tree—Reference: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 41. (ii) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse no. 28.

The Kalpa Tree is cited here because it provides all desired fruits and fulfills all wishes of a seeker. Similarly, this body is used by the Atma, the true ‘self’ of the creature to fulfill all its wishes, and at the same time help it to acquire and enjoy all fruits of its endeavours.]

2/9. The ‘Tej’ (energy, warmth, heat, vitality, vigour, virility, strength, dynamism, radiance) that is inherently present in the body of all living beings is like the garden full of Kalpa Trees.

[The earlier stanza says that the body is like a Kalpa Tree, so since there are millions of creatures in this world, the latter is aptly compared to a dense forest or a large garden full of Kalpa Trees.] (2/9).

2/10. The six tastes that the tongue feels are like the six seasons in this world. These six tastes are sweet, acidic, bitter, pungent, sour and salty (2/10).

[Note—Refer Garbho-panishad, verse no. 1 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which also deals with the six tastes.

The six seasons are the following—early winter (Nov.-Dec.), late winter or the season of snowfall (Jan.-Feb.), spring (March-April), summer (May-June), rainy (July-August) and autumn or fall (Sept.-Oct.). The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 11 says that the Sun God is like a wheel having six spokes. These refer to the six seasons of the year.]

2/11. The symbolic ‘Peeth’ or seat where the consecrated deity is installed is represented by the virtue known as ‘Kriya’—literally the power of deeds and actions; the acclaim and the authority that comes to the Atma by doing deeds and taking actions. It is this deity and its divine Shakti (dynamism of Brahm revealed as the Atma—which is the pure cosmic Consciousness in a personified form that resides in the body of the creature) that empowers the creature and his body to do various deeds and take various actions, and to bring them to successful conclusion. Hence, it is called the ‘Kriya Shakti’.

[The dynamic powers of the supreme Brahm which enable all the creatures to do anything are established in the latter’s body as Shakti (personified dynamic energy and powers of Brahm). Since ‘Shakti’ is visualized as a Mother Goddess, the place where she is enshrined is known as a ‘Peeth’ or a holy seat. Hence, the body is the ‘Peeth’ where the deity known as the Shakti is established and which in turn controls and presides over all the ‘Kriyas’ (activities, the deeds and the actions) of the creature. Hence, the primary energy, ability and dynamism that empowers the body to do anything and fulfill the wishes of the creature’s true self, i.e. his Atma, is known as *Kriya Shakti*.] (2/11).

[Note—The *theory of Karma* or doing deeds correctly and with the correct perspective—Karma Yoga or the Yoga philosophy based on doing deeds and taking actions is intricately linked to the philosophy *Kriya Shakti*. Kriya Shakti refers to the power of the gross physical body to act as per wishes of the mind and intellect. It is the Kriya Shakti which enables the supreme Authority to carry out its wishes through the organs of the body by taking various actions and doing different deeds. It is the ability of the body to actually do the deeds or take the actions and bring them to fruition. It also represents the ability to enjoy the results of doing such deeds and actions taken by the creature. The word also refers to being active and enterprising and the opposite of being lethargic and indolent. It is the actual ability to carry out his plans to their successful completion, i.e. to do deeds, to take actions and enter into enterprise, because simply sitting and procrastinating endlessly wouldn’t give success unless there is assiduous activity and diligent effort, no matter how wise a man is and how determined he might be. The body is prompted into taking action by the desires and aspirations originating in the mind and intellect complex. If these desires are world-centric, then our actions and deeds would be also world-centric and so would be the result. This is because every activity gathers its quality from the texture of the desire that has prompted a particular action or deed. So, when the desire is to enjoy the outside world and its sense objects, the deeds and actions become entrapping and the cause of all world related miseries. On the other hand, if the desires are auspicious and noble, the same deed and action would become an instrument for spiritual upliftment as well as liberation and deliverance. In this context, the term Karma Yoga would be to coordinate the effort of the body and the mind not towards fulfilling worldly aspirations that would be ensnaring and enslaving in the long run but to divert them towards the divine goal of spiritual liberation and deliverance. And the tool in this endeavour would be to have auspicious, noble and righteous desires, aspirations and wishes, collectively called the different Vasanas or Ichaas inherent in a man, instead of the worldly ones. Once the desires are purified and chastened, the activities and deeds to fulfill or accomplish those Vasanas or Ichaas are purified and chastened proportionately. At its height, the total renunciation of desires for enjoying anything related to the external world of sense organs and their respective objects is called ‘Vairagya’. This Kriya Shakti is more developed in those people who have a predominance of the Raja Guna or the second category of three basic qualities that decide the habits, temperaments and nature of any man. The Raja Guna makes a man more inclined towards enjoying the sense objects of the world and remain engrossed in the activities related to the gross world.

Karma Yoga expounds on the importance of doing deeds and taking actions, but with a different attitude. It stresses that we must not get ‘involved or attached’ to those deeds or action in as much as we shouldn’t be bothered about the rewards or punishments incumbent on such deeds or actions. We must do them dispassionately and with detachment. The action or deed should be treated as one’s offering to the God as well as an offering to the sacred fire sacrifice. This will ensure that the actions or deeds are not unrighteousness, corrupt or evil. On the contrary, whatever is done in which a person’s subtle sub-conscious says is not the correct thing to do will be deemed to be unrighteous, unethical and unlawful, and therefore cannot be an offering to either the God or the sacred fire sacrifice.

References of Upanishads dealing with the concept of deeds and actions, or the eclectic concept of ‘Kriya’:—

- (i) Rig Veda’s Kaushitaki Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1.
- (ii) Sam Veda’s Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, Section 3-10; Canto 7, Section 21.
- (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda = Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 49-60, 66; Niralambo-panishad, verse no. 11-12; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, 3/1/3, 3/2/11-12, 3/9/28, 4/3/12, 4/3/33, 4/3/36, 4/4/1, 5/10-5/11, 6/1/1-6, 6/2/2, 14-16, etc.; Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 23-26; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, 2/4/2-3.
- (iv) Krishna Yajur Veda = Kathrudra Upanishad, verse no. 13, 20-26; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 12, Canto 2, verse no. 12, 48, Canto 4, verse no. 35; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 35; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 7, and Canto 6, verse no. 3; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 6; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 2, Anuvak 6; Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 1, verse no. 20, and the whole of Canto 1, Valli 2 right up to Canto 2, Valli 3; Skanda Upanishad, verse no. 7; Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 67.
- (v) Atharva Veda—Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 2, verse no. 12; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 2, verse no. 1; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 8, paragraph no. 14; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 1.]

2/12. The profoundly esoteric but highly eclectic knowledge that the astounding cosmic Shakti of Brahm (i.e. the cosmic energy, stupendous powers and the dynamism of Brahm) resides inside the aspirant’s own body in a subtle manner inside the coiled energy center called the Kundalini (which is a coiled energy center located at the base of the spine in the body) is known as ‘Gyan Shakti’.

[This is because it is not easy to come to know about it, and only self-realised and enlightened ascetics who have attained a high level of spiritual attainment are able to witness the Kundalini, and experience its exceptional power and energy. Further, unfolding the energy trapped in the Kundalini is a tedious process of Yoga, but once successfully done it opens the door for the ascetic to acquire immense mystical powers that are super-human. He can do many things which an ordinary man just cannot imagine even in his dreams. For a enlightened ascetic who has known the powers of the Kundalini and has harnessed it, there is no limitations to what he can do or achieve.] (2/12).

[Note—The concept of Kundalini, and the process of kindling its dormant energy and releasing it, has been described in a number of Upanishads dealing with Yoga or meditation.

The process of activating the Kundalini has been elaborately described in the book ‘The Serpent Power’ by Arthur Avalon & Sir John Woodroffe.

The Upanishads that deal with Kundalini and its activation are the following—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 7-8, 43-46, 65-74, 76, 82-84; Dhyandindu Upanishad, verse no. 66-69; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1,

verse nos. 82-139; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse nos. 81-84. (b) Sam Veda's Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 36-39. (c) Atharva Veda's Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse nos. 8; and Canto 1, section 7, verse nos. 36/1-4.

The positive effect of Kundalini activation on the body has been described in Krishna Yajur Veda's Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 65-66, 70-71, 77-78.]

2/13. The creature's power of making wishes and having aspirations or desires, and the ability to fulfill them are known as the 'Iccha Shakti'. It is a manifestation of the great Goddess known as Maha-Tripur Sundari. [That is, it is the great Goddess who represents the dynamic powers of Brahm that has revealed herself in the form of the Iccha Shakti.] (2/13).

[Note—When a creature wants something, when he desires something, when he aspires for something, it is only then he would make efforts to fulfill his desires, satisfy his wants and accomplish his aspirations. The 'Iccha' is the motivation that impels the creature to do something and make an all-out effort to succeed. In fact, it was the Iccha Shakti of the supreme Brahm that he wished to create something that was the inspiration for him which made him make necessary efforts and evolve the means and the wherewithal needed to accomplish the task of creation. Had he no desire to create, he would have made no efforts, he would not have got his act together and got on with the arduous task of creation, and the world would not have existed. Hence, it is the 'Iccha' that is the principal motivator for all creatures. Even the desire to obtain Mukti and Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) is a 'Iccha Shakti', because it is only then that the creature does realise his goal of final freedom from the world and its snares.

In brief, the world goes around because it is powered by the astounding energy and resources generated by the Iccha Shakti.]

2/14. The 'Gyata' (one who has Gyan; one who knows, is wise and enlightened) is the 'Hota' (the person who does the fire sacrifice).

The 'Gyan' (truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment) is the 'Agni' (the sacred fire).

And the 'Gyea' (the objective, the aim of the fire sacrifice; the entity wished to be known by spiritual endeavours; the target of all efforts) is the 'Havi' (offerings made to the sacred fire). (2/14).

[Note—The symbolism must be understood here. The body is a great sacrificial pit because it is made of the earth element. The eternal fire element resides and burns inside it as is proved by the fact that the body is always warm and energized. It is this fire that injects life and vitality to the body. The deity to whom the offerings are made in the sacred fire is Brahm, the Supreme Being, and it is the same Brahm who lives in the body as the Atma, the pure conscious soul. At the time of creation, all the Gods were created from the cosmic gross body of Brahm known as the Viraat Purush. When the human body was created in an image of the Viraat Purush, these Gods entered this body to take up their respective residences there. For instance, the Sun God entered the eye because he was created from the cosmic eye of the Viraat Purush. These mysterious facts are explained in the Aeiteriya Upanishad of the Rig Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, sections 1 and 2.

In the context of the body, the food that a man eats is meant to sustain the Atma that lives in it as the incarnate Lord. So, if the body is the fire pit, the fire element living in it is the sacred fire, and the Atma is the deity to whom the offering is made, then the food eaten is the Havi or the formal offerings made during formal forms of fire sacrifices.

The actual performer of a fire sacrifice is the Atma because it is the ‘true self’ of the concerned person. The Atma is inherently enlightened and wise, so the Hota is regarded as one who is wise and enlightened. In other words, when a person does a fire sacrifice with this knowledge, he is actually doing it in the proper way. In the context of the body it implies that a man should eat with proper wisdom that the basic intention of eating is to sustain and provide nourishment to the Atma so that it can carry on with its objectives in this creation. Food should not be eaten as a means to satisfy the urges of the organs of the body for self-gratification—such as for its taste, its smell, its texture and softness, or its physical features of charm and colour. One must not indulge in food and throw it to waste, but give it its due respect as an offering meant for the Viraat Purush residing in the body as the Atma.

Just like all sorts of offerings made to the sacred fire raging in the physical fire pit of a formal sacrifice are reduced to ash, all sorts of food eaten by a man are also reduced to excreta. Only the best is accepted by the Supreme Being, and this means that it is the nutritional content of the food that counts and not the external features or the taste and smell of the food.

From the perspective of ‘knowledge’ it means that the wise man is he who accepts all forms and sources of knowledge, but extracts the truth from them while discarding the rest as waste. He accepts Brahm and the Atma as the essence in this creation, the cosmic Consciousness as the actual ‘truth’ of creation, and rejects all other things as falsehood.]

2/15. To see no distinction between the above three units of the fire sacrifice, i.e. to treat the Gyata, the Gyan and the Gyea as a composite whole, as an integral and inseparable part of the fire sacrifice, is equivalent to the worship of the Sri Chakra in a holistic manner (2/15).

[Note—The Sri Chakra consists of various units—such as the geometrical diagram with its divisions and sub-divisions, the various Mantras and Beej Mantras written on it, the different Gods and Goddess that are invoked and enshrined in it, many systems prescribed for worship, and so forth. So, a comprehensive worship of this Chakra or wheel of worship entails seeing the entire structure as a composite symbol of Brahm who is an immutable and indivisible cosmic entity. Brahm cannot be portioned and fractured into units and divisions. Brahm is the one non-dual entity that has revealed itself as the performer of the fire sacrifice, as the offerings made to the fire, as the fire itself, as the deity worshipped, and as the objective of the fire sacrifice.

In other words, when one worships the Goddess by the medium of the Sri Chakra, he must understand, inter alia, that all the forms that the Goddess has taken, all the many Mantras and Beej Mantras used for worship, all the rituals and formalities, and all the rest of the things taken together have only one real meaning, and this essential meaning refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm. It is this Brahm that is the ‘Truth’ revealed as the many Goddesses, as many Mantras and Beej Mantras, in the different forms of worship prescribed for different Gods and Goddesses, etc. They all have one underlying essence or principle in them, and it is the ‘Truth’ known as Brahm that should be the aim of all spiritual endeavours.

A wise man knows that his Atma and the supreme transcendental Brahm are one and the same, the only difference being in the level or plane of their existence. While the Atma is a term used to imply the cosmic Consciousness at the micro level of creation, the term Brahm refers to the same entity at the cosmic level.

Again, since both the Atma and Brahm are manifestations of the cosmic Consciousness that is the only truth in creation, and since ‘truth’ can be only one and not more than one, it obviously follows that Atma and Brahm are one and not two.

Since ‘everything in existence that is truthful and holy is a manifestation of Brahm’, it follows that the Havi, the offering to the fire, is also a manifestation of Brahm as much as is the fire to which it is offered. In fact, it is the Brahm existing in

both these forms—one that accepts (i.e. the fire) and the one that is offered (the offering). Extended further it implies that the deity to whom all worship is made is also Brahm who may be worshipped in the form of various Gods and Goddesses.

This is what is meant and implied in these two stanza nos. 2/14-15.]

2/16. The nine Siddhis¹ (mystical powers) such as Anima etc. are related to the Niyati (destiny, fate and the basic nature of the creature) along with the nine Rasas² (sentimental and emotional quotient) that also determine the creature's natural inclinations and temperament (2/16).

[Note—¹The nine Siddhis are the following—(i) 'Anima' means the power to become microscopic or so minute that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) 'Mahima' is to have majesty, glory and fame; to be honoured and acknowledged for one's achievements, wisdom, erudition, knowledge and skills; (iii) 'Garima' is to have weight, stature, dignity, decorum, gravity and significance; (iv) 'Laghima' is the grand virtue of being simple and humble inspite of being great, powerful and authoritative; it is to have simplicity and humility despite possessing grandeur, majesty, power, authority and magnificence; (v) 'Praapti' is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired for; (vi) 'Praakramya' is to have valour, ardour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch leading to triumph, glory and majesty; (vii) 'Ishwatwa' is to be able to have lordship or sway over everything else; (viii) 'Vashitwa' is to be able to control and subdue others, and exert influence on them so much so that they become obedient; and (ix) 'Mukti', or to obtain liberation and deliverance from all sorts of bondages and fetters. It is closely related to Moksha meaning final spiritual emancipation and deliverance of the aspirant.

According to some accounts, 'Bhukti'—i.e. the ability to enjoy whatever one wishes to acquire and enjoy, is also one of the nine Siddhis.

²The term 'Rasa' stands for emotions and sentiments. It has nine kinds—the amorous, the heroic, the wondrous, the ridiculous, the compassionate, humourous, fearful, horrifying, and loathsome. The word 'Rasa' also means the sap of a plant, the juice of a fruit, a fluid or liquid, the taste and flavour of something eaten or drunk, to taste and enjoy something, the essence or extract of something, the enjoyment and pleasure one gets when one is in a favourable circumstance.]

2/17. The eight formidable Shaktis (forces) of creation created by Brahm, the supreme Creator, that are difficult to overcome and which shape all deeds and actions of the creature as well as their destiny and nature are the following—Kaam (worldly passions, lust, desires), Krodh (anger), Lobh (greed, yearning, rapacity), Moha (attachments, infatuations, attractions for the world and its material sense objects), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy), Matsarya (jealousy, ill-will, malice), Punya (auspicious deeds and their equally holy results) and Paap (inauspicious and unrighteous deeds and their equivalent results). [Refer verse no. 2/26.] (2/17).

2/18. The sixteen Shaktis (forces of Nature) are the following—Prithivi (earth), Apaha (water), Tej (fire), Vayu (air; wind), Akash (sky), Srotra (ears), Twak (skin), Chakshu (eyes), Jivhaha (tongue), Ghraana (ears), Vaani (speech), Paani (hand), Paad (leg), Upastha (excretory organs) and Mana (mind) and its various Vikaars (faults)¹ (2/18).

[Note—¹The sixteen types of Vikaars are mentioned in the Yogtattva Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 12-13. They are briefly the following—Kaam (worldly desires, passions and lust), Krodh (anger, indignation and wrath causing spite and ill-temper), Bhaya (fear and consternation), Moha (attractions, attachments, delusions, infatuations, longing), Mada (arrogance, haughtiness and intoxication), Raja (the second of the three qualities creating worldly tendencies and desires related

to this world), Janma-Mritu (the cycle of birth and death and its attendant horrors and agonies), Kaarpanya (being stringy and miserly, specially in the field of religious duties such as giving alms and making charities, or supporting such activities; the word would cover miserliness of thoughts in the sense that one does not give the correct knowledge to others out of jealousy), Shok (sorrows, grief and agonies), Tandra (being sleepy, indolent, lethargic, lazy, careless and showing lack of energy and alertness), Kshudha (hunger, both physical such as for food and the insatiable desire for sensual gratification, as well as emotional such as the insatiable longing for worldly things), Trisha (desires, wishes and yearnings pertaining to the world), Trishna (thirst, ambition, avarice and greed; the word is usually used in the negative sense; it pertains to a man's insatiable desire and greed for worldly things), Lajjaa (shame, dishonour, ignominy), the constant fear of Dukha and its attendant Vishaad (i.e. being constantly tormented by the fear of sufferance from sorrows and grief of all kinds and the attendant agonies and miseries, distresses and a sense of despair and hopelessness and haplessness), Harsha (to feel elated and happy, to be glad and joyous, to feel cheerful and exhilarated by certain situations which seem to be in favour, such as on receiving some good news), etc.]

2/19. The eight abilities and functions of the gross organs of the body are the eight Shaktis that the body displays on behalf of the creature. These are the following—to speak (through the mouth and tongue), to accept or take (with the hands), to go or move (with the legs), to eliminate (waste from the body through the organs of excretion), to enjoy and derive pleasure (through the genitals and other organs of perception such as the eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin), to give or eject (by the hand, the throat as in the case of cough, the genitals as in the case of sperms, the excretory as in the case of stool and urine), to be dispassionate, detached, indifferent and neutral both at the subtle level of the mind and intellect as well as the gross level of the body (2/19).

2/20. The following fourteen Naadis¹ (tubular ducts in the body; the nerves and veins) are like the fourteen Gods or Goddesses² such as Sarwa-shanksho-bhini etc.—Alumbusa, Kuhu, Vishwodar, Varuna, Hastijivha, Yashaswani, Ashwini, Gaandhaari, Pusha, Shankhini, Saraswati, Ida, Pingla, and Sushumna Naadis (2/20).

[Note—¹These Naadis and their location and functions have been elaborately described in Yoga Upanishads, viz. (i) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 5-22 ½, 35-42, 46-47, Canto 5; and Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 15-21.

(ii) Shukla Yajur Veda's Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 67-76, 88-89, 99; Subal Upanishad, Canto 9 (which elaborately describes the relationship between Naadi, the vital winds and the sense organs).

(iii) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kshuriko, verse nos. 8-20; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 61 (consciousness moves in Naadis during sleep), Canto 5, verse nos. 22-31, 54, 67; Yog Tattva Upanishad; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 50-60; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 17-27, Canto 6, verse nos. 4-19, 22, 41-47; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 10-18 in relation with the activation of the Kundalini (which is the spiral dynamic energy center at the base of the spine) and doing Pranayam (breath control).

(iv) Atharva Veda's Prashna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse nos. 1, 9-11.

²The patron Gods of the different Naadis are enumerated in Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 35-40.]

2/21. The ten vital winds known as Prans¹ (literally the life of all living beings, so called because the Pran injects life and consciousness in the otherwise lifeless body of the organism) having the ten Gods and Goddesses² known as Sarwa-siddhi-pradaa etc. are the following—Pran, Apaana, Udaana, Samaana, Vyaana, Naaga, Kurma, Krikar, Devdutta, and Dhananjaya³ (2/21).

[Note—¹The *ten Prans* have been described extensively in other Upanishads, viz. (a) Shukla Yajur Veda = Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, 1/5 and 2/77-87; Subala Upanishad, canto 9, verse no. 1-14; Paingalo-panishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 3. (b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 165 and Canto 5, verse no. 2; Dhyānbindu Upanishad, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-57. (c) Atharva Veda = Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 12-13.

²The *patron Gods* of the Prans (the vital winds)—References: Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 8; Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse nos. 8-9.

³The *functions* of the various vital winds or Prans—Reference = (i) Shukla Yajur Veda's Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9; Canto 2, verse nos. 77-87. (ii) Atharva Veda's Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 13.

According to the Shandilya Upanishad 1/4/13, the functions of the various vital Prans are the following—(i) The Pran wind is responsible for breath and expelling mucous in the form of cough. (ii) The Apaana wind is responsible for expelling stool and urine from the body. (iii) The Vyaana wind is responsible for accepting or giving away anything. (iv) The Udaana wind is responsible for lifting the body. (v) The Samaana wind is responsible for nourishing the body (as it takes the nutrients to all the parts of the body). (vi) The Naaga wind is responsible for belching and excreting of contaminated or polluted wind through the throat and mouth. (vii) The Kurma wind is responsible for closing and opening of the eyelids. (viii) The Krikar wind is responsible for hunger and appetite. (ix) The Devdutta wind is responsible for creating laziness, lethargy and inertia. (x) The Dhananjaya wind is responsible for creating cough and other types of mucous that help to expel infection from the body (in association with the Apaana, the Naaga and the Pran winds (13).”]

2/22. These vital winds called ‘Prans’ are grouped under five classes depending upon their role and interaction in the body of the creature, as well as their contribution in his meditative practices. Thus, we have five main categories of Prans—viz. Rechak (that which is exhaled or expelled, or helps in this process, say expelling of mucous, stool and urine), Purak (that which is inhaled or fills up the body, or helps in the process of filling up the body, say with nutrition etc.), Shoshak (that which helps in absorption, say of nutrition), Dhaahak (that which burns, keeps the internal fire ignited and helps in, say, digestion, burning waste in the body, keeping the body warm and energized), and Plaavak (that which floods or inundates; that which helps in circulation and movement) (2/22).

2/23. These vital winds serve the dual role of either concluding life by scalding it or burning it (‘Kshaarak’—to scald or corrode), or by holding the life together, nourish it like a son and take care of it like a child (‘Daar’—to hold together, to harbour; ‘Daarak’—to treat like a son or child).

Similarly, they either produce mental and emotional excitement, agitation and discomfort for the creature (‘Kshobhak’) or give him pleasure and comfort by being attractive and charming for him (‘Mohak’). [For instance, when the air accumulates inside the body, it produces a sense of great discomfort; the man feels bloated and develops a headache. On the other hand, a sweet and cool breeze is soothing for his

nerves; the breath is another example of the air's benevolent role as a sustainer of life.] (2/23).

2/24. These vital winds are absolutely necessary for all human beings; they help him to be attracted to food and helps him to digest all the four types of food—viz. that which is chewed, that which is licked, that which is sucked or sipped, and that which is drunk.

[The reason is that the vital winds regulate all the functions in the body. If the vital winds are working properly and in prime shape it translates into the body being healthy and robust, and such a body would like to eat and drink merrily as compared to a diseased body where the vital winds malfunction, resulting in the body abhorring food and drink.] (2/24).

2/25. These vital winds are a form of the fire element in as much as like the fire they are absolutely essential for life and its sustenance in this creation. In fact, both the fire and the air complement each other—as is evident from the fact that the fire needs air to remain burning, and the air which is warm is conducive to life as opposed to chilly air which freezes life instead of fostering it. Hence, the ten Prans (mentioned in 2/21) are the external form of the fire element and are deemed to be ten subtle Gods that sustain life in this creation.

[This verse highlights the paradoxical miracle of creation—the wind and the fire appear to be eternally inimical to each other, for the wind can blow out any raging fire, but, at the same time, the fire needs air to burn and keep burning. Similarly, the fire can force the wind to show movement inspite of its reluctance as is evident when air begins to blow around a lighted fire due to convection currents, and hot air can cause widespread havoc as observed during wild forest fires, but if the air lacks warmth and is freezing cold it would snuff life out of this earth and we protect ourselves against chilly winds instead of welcoming them. The vital winds inside the body help the creature only as long as the fire element present inside the body keeps the latter warm. Otherwise, the body would become cold and dead, and the same air which sustains life inside it would make it bloated.

So we see the symbiotic relationship between the air and the fire elements of creation. The air is needed by the fire to keep itself alive, and the fire is needed by the air if the latter is to foster life in this world.] (2/25).

2/26. The eight Shaktis (powers and forces of Nature) are the following—(i) winter or cold, (ii) summer or heat, (iii) happiness, comfort and pleasant circumstances, (iv) miseries, pain, agony, grief, discomfort and misfortunes, (v) Ichha (desires, wishes, aspirations, yearnings), (vi) the Sata Guna (goodness, truthfulness, auspiciousness, righteousness, nobility), (vi) the Raja Guna (the medium quality that inspires a man to be involved in the affairs of the world with a balance between the Sata Guna and the Tama Guna), and (vii) the Tama Guna (the third and meanest quality, leading to sins, perversions etc.).

These Shaktis are known as 'Vashini' etc. [Refer verse no. 2/17.] (2/26).

2/27. The subtle, sweet and soft 'arrow' of the body is like a 'flower'.

[The 'arrow' referred to here are the five sense perceptions of the body by which the creature aims at the material world and hunts for its charming sense objects that he seeks for self-gratification. They are compared to a 'flower' because they do

not hurt him, rather they are pleasant to deal with, and give the creature immense pleasure and comfort to his senses.]

This 'arrow' of the body takes the form of the following 'Tanmatras'¹ which are the five senses of perception of the body of the creature. They are the following— words and the faculty of speech which enables the creature to express himself (and is related to the mouth and tongue), the faculty of touch which enables him to feel things (and is related to the skin), the faculty of sight that enables him to see (and is related to the eyes), the faculty of taste which enables him to taste things (and is related to the tongue), and the faculty of smell which enables him to smell something (and is related to the nose).

The Mana (mind and heart)² is like the 'bow' made of bamboo. This is because it is the Mana which inspires the creature to aim his 'arrow' (senses) at the world and perceive it. The creature literally aims his sense perceptions at the world and gets hooked to its myriad charms only when the Mana wants him to do so (2/27).

[Note—¹According to the Sankhya school of Indian philosophy, the five subtle forms of matter are called Tanmatras. There are five basic elements in Nature or creation— viz. space or sky, air or wind, fire or energy, water and earth, in increasing order of grossness. These are also called the five 'Bhuts'. They have certain basic virtues which are specific to them, they are characterised by them, and they are recognised by them. These virtues are called their 'Gunas'.

The sky or space element has 'sound' as its basic quality and the relevant sense perception is 'hearing', to hear something, and its seat is the 'ear' in the body of the creature. Since sound makes sense only when one understands what he hears, 'words' or letters are regarded as the subtlest form of the five Tanmantras because sound is the subtlest form in which the supreme transcendental Brahm has revealed himself. Sound is the nearest analogue to Brahm.

The air or wind element has 'touch' as its basic quality and the relevant sense perception is 'feeling', and its seat is the 'skin' in the body of the creature. That is why we can 'feel' the touch of a cool breeze against our faces or are repulsed by a blast of hot air from an oven even though we cannot physically see the air or wind.

The fire element has 'heat, light and energy' as its basic quality. Its quality to give 'light' is manifested in the form of 'shapes and contours' seen and witnessed in this visible world, because we see anything only as long as there is light. The organ which perceives this character is the 'eye' because we see by our eyes. On the other hand, the 'energy and heat' of the fire element is depicted in the form of 'speech' and the astounding potentials it has. That is why we say 'a fiery speech'. The organ which relates to this particular aspect of fire is the throat and the mouth. That is also why the patron Goddess of speech and learning is said to reside in the mouth. Since the vocal cords are located in the throat, both the latter as well as the former (mouth) are regarded as the seats of the Tanmatra pertaining to the fire element.

The water element has 'taste' as its basic quality and the relevant sense perception called 'taste' has its seat in the 'tongue' of the creature. We taste anything only when the chemicals present in what we wish to eat or taste get dissolved in the water content of the saliva in the mouth. Had there been no fluidity in saliva, the taste buds would not have been able to taste anything.

The earth element has 'smell' as its basic quality and the relevant sense perception 'smell' has its seat in the 'nose' of the creature. That is why there is no smell in the higher reaches of the atmosphere or even in high altitudes in a mountain.

²If the Mana is not inclined to be interested in any given thing, the creature would not be interested in it either. For instance, when the mind is occupied with some thought, the body would not register some sight the eyes are focused on, no matter how pleasant it might be. Similarly, if one is hooked to a particular sight which his Mana finds attractive, then the creature would not be bothered about the presence of

other things which may give out a pleasant aroma or have a sweet taste. When one is in intense pain, nothing allures him with its sweet taste, even his favourite music would be a cause of annoyance to him, and the soft bed would not let him rest in peace as he tosses and turns continuously on it.]

2/28. To be under control is a metaphoric arrow, because it is just like the case when one's enemy is subdued when an arrow is pointed at him. [In the present context it means that when the Mana or the mind and heart are well-trained, the creature is able to control his sense organs by shooting down all temptations and worldly aspirations.]

The numerous attachments, infatuations and attractions that a creature has are like the snare that keeps him fettered, bound and trapped.

The tendency of having jealousy, malice, ill-will, enmity, spite, hatred and resentment are equivalent to a goad kept pointed at the creature that keeps him constantly on the edge, bewildered, ill-at-ease, restless, agitated and fearful. With a goad pointed at him, the creature is tormented and made perpetually miserable. [That is, no one can ever hope to find peace and happiness if he has these negative traits in him.] (2/28).

2/29. At the three cardinal points of the symbolic internal triangle are located the three qualities that are inherent to all the creatures, and they together form an integral part of his inner-self and its unique character. These three are—'Avyakta' (that which is not manifested; that which is hidden and secret; that which is not perceptible), 'Mahatattva' (the great factor that gives importance to anything), and 'Ahankar' (ego and pride).

[When a man is not enlightened about the nature of the body and the truthful 'self' known as the Atma which is pure consciousness, he has a sense of hidden and unrevealed ego and a sense of pride in the abilities of his body, the great successes attained by the body, the numerous acquisitions made by the body, and the acclaim and fame that the body has attained. This gives him a sense of importance and power, a sense of majesty, grandeur, pomp and pelf, the pride of achievement, and the attendant sense of ego, self importance, haughtiness and arrogance.]

These are symbolized in the form of three Goddesses who are invoked on the three corners of the worship instrument, known as the Yantra or Chakra, that is employed in ritualistic forms of formal worship. These three Goddesses are the following—Kaameshwari (one who fulfills all desires), Vajreshwari (one who holds the formidable weapon known as Vajra, and is as invincible as this weapon), and Bhagmalini (one who is the cosmic Mother who conceives and nourishes the entire creation in her womb). (2/29).

[Note—Put simply, this verse means that a person's hidden sense of ego and misplaced false self pride results in him becoming overly haughty and arrogant. These negative traits in his character are not visible in his physical body—the latter might look very handsome and attractive in the most haughty and arrogant a man. The charm and beauty of the body might hide a most pervert and stubborn character inside.

These negative traits motivate a man to do certain things or behave in a certain way which he wouldn't have done if these negative traits or qualities were not present in his inner-self. The negative traits or qualities present inside a creature create certain passions and desires (called 'Kaam') that are so formidable and strong (called 'Vajra') that they can't be so easily overcome.

Hence, the forces of Nature or the Shakti of Brahm which creates Kaam and makes it as strong as Vajra (which incidentally is the invincible weapon of the king of

Gods called Indra) are personified in the form of Goddesses called Kaameshwari and Vajreshwari respectively.

The mind and the heart (called the 'Mana') that harbours such things is the symbolic womb (called the 'Bhag'). In other words, the Shakti of Brahm which enables the Mana to harbour these traits is personified as a Goddess known as Bhageshwari.

The ability of the Atma (the pure consciousness and the 'self' of the concerned person) to weave a web of these negative traits around its self, inspite of the fact that the Atma is supposed to be inherently and eternally free from negativity, is a manifestation of the 'Shakti' of Brahm (the Supreme Being and the cosmic Consciousness) to generate Maya (delusions), Agyan (ignorance) and other worldly taints or blemishes (listed in 2/23, 26, 28 and 29). This is how the Tama Guna part of creation has come into being.]

2/30. There are fifteen junior Gods symbolizing the fifteen days of lunar month. These Gods represent the fact that the worshipper has constant and consistent devotion for the deity (Brahm, the Supreme Being) even while the world changes around him daily. (2/30).

[Note—This refers to the fact that during the fifteen days, the shape of the moon changes on a daily basis. But the process of worship remains the same—its time, the rituals, the hymns used, the offerings made, the Mantras and the Beej Mantras employed, the different Gods and Goddess invoked etc., all remain the same. The changing moon is likened to the changing world where nothing remains steady except the faith, belief and conviction of the devotee. Just like achieving success in formal forms of worship is independent of the shape of the moon but dependent upon the faith and devotion with which the worship is done, spiritual enlightenment and liberation should not at all be affected by the changing circumstances of the world but on one's steadfastness and commitment to his goal in life.]

2/31. Out of the various Gods and Goddesses worshipped and invoked during the worship (involving the Yantra represented by the triangle mentioned in verse no. 2/29), it is Kaameshwari who is an embodiment of eternal and profound bliss. She is a metaphor of oneness or union between the supreme Brahm which is the cosmic Consciousness, and the Atma of the individual creature which is the same Consciousness that resides in his body (2/31).

[Note—The word 'Kaameshwari' literally means the Goddess of fulfillment of wishes and desires. When one's desires are fully satisfied he is bound to be happy. In the present case, the worshipper's desire is to attain enlightenment and self-realisation as well as freedom from all fetters that shackle him to this gross body and the equally gross world. He does not wish any worldly glories and acquisitions as is evident from the reading of this full verse as well as the fact that only wise persons are expected to develop the all-inclusive view of worship and creation as consistently and persistently emphasized by all the Upanishads. They are expected to strive to bring about a union between their individual 'self' known as the Atma, which had inadvertently fallen into the trap laid by Maya and Agyan (delusions and ignorance respectively), and the principal known as the Brahm, the all-pervading cosmic Self. Both are the same 'consciousness' existing at different levels. When true realisation dawns upon the mental horizon of the worshipper, his individual 'self' becomes one with the cosmic Self. This is the aim of Yoga or meditation, for the word 'Yoga' itself means to bring about a union or to join together. The Yoga Upanishads prescribe many methods which describe in great detail how to bring about this union. When this does happen, the ascetic experiences titillation and an extreme sense of ecstasy and bliss. This experience is a sign that the union is established. Since this was the primary desire of

the aspirant, or his 'Kaam', the deity which presides over its successful culmination is known as Kaameshwari.]

3. [Like the previous verse, this verse no. 3 is also divided into sub-verses for the purpose of easy narration. The various steps in formal forms of worship have been cited as analogies to explain them in the context of the principles elucidated, espoused and affirmed by the Upanishads.]

3/1. Water in separate containers remains separate until it is mixed. Once this happens, the water becomes one single entity known as 'water' rather than be known by different names according to the container (3/1).

[Note—When water is kept in different containers, such as a cup, a tumbler, a pitcher, a bucket, a glass or a mug, it is recognized in relation to these entities. We say, the water in the cup, or the water of the bucket. But when all units of water are mixed together we simply say 'water'. The implication here in terms of what has been said in verse no.2/31 is that once a union is established between the Atma and Brahm, there is no difference between them because they are both the same 'consciousness' known by two names.

When extended to cover a wider canvas of creation this verse means that all the various Devas (Gods) and Shaktis (Goddesses) are the same Brahm, the Supreme Being, in all these forms, and one realises this Brahm when the external forms and features of the Gods and Goddesses are removed and only the 'Tattwa' or essential form remains. Similarly, all the Prans, all the Gunas, all the Jivas, and all the uncountable other forms in which this huge creation exists, both at the gross as well as the subtle level, and at the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic level—are nothing but the same Brahm manifested in all these myriads of forms to perform different roles just as it is the same molecule of water that is present in the ocean as it is in the river, the rain, the drain and the well.]

3/2. Thus, it is one's primary duty and responsibility to focus his attention on the principles of non-duality, uniformity, universality, indivisibility and immutability of the 'Absolute Truth'. Not doing so is failing in one's duty and responsibility that one has towards one's own 'self'.

To have a firm belief, conviction and faith that everything is one, and only one, universal Truth (known as Brahm) is to have real 'Bhavana'. [It means that to have real faith and sincere belief in Brahm is to treat the Atma and Brahm as one. With this realisation all other things fall automatically into place as explained in this Upanishad. It is the culmination of the aspirant's spiritual quest.] (3/2).

[Note—The word 'Bhavana' has many shades of meaning. It means appearance, being, becoming, turning to or imagining to be, transition into, a condition or state believed to be the truth, any state of mind or body or heart, way of thinking or feeling, emotions or sentiments or feelings, opinion, disposition, conjecture, supposition, purported meaning and sense, a fundamental view about a certain thing or situation, visualization, imagery, reflection, belief, faith, conviction, an idea, thoughts.

All these meanings should be comprehensively applied when one reads this Upanishad to grasp the profundity of its teaching.]

3/3. The remedy ('Upchaar') for all spiritual confusions and misinterpretation of the profound truths of metaphysics is to constantly analyse things with wisdom, erudition, sagacity and intelligence, and in the correct perspective, to deduce what their essence is on the one hand, and what is simply the exterior and the superficial on the other

hand. In other words, one should always contemplate and research upon the ‘truth’ and tell himself ‘this *is* the truth’ (‘Asti’) and ‘this is *not* the truth’ (‘Naasti’).

This is the duty and responsibility of all sincere spiritual aspirants (3/3).

3/4. True invitation or invocation of the deity, and true form of prayer offered to it (known as ‘Aavaahan’) is the ability to analyse and see the underlying cause that is the basis or the driving force that inspires everything in this creation—both as the exterior or obvious cause of anything happening in this world, as well as the interior or subtle or hidden or underlying cause of its happening.

[One would conclude, as a result of this analysis and research, that the basis of everything in this creation is only one, and it is Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that drives this creation, and is also its supreme inspirer. So when one invites certain God or Goddess, he is actually inviting Brahm in this form. All prayers are offered to this Brahm, and not to so many different Gods and Goddess. This wisdom and knowledge is true form of worship.] (3/4).

3/5. To be able to establish a uniformity and universality between the various sense objects of the world having different names and forms (i.e. to see non-duality in them, to see the same Brahm in all of them, and to be firmly convinced of this fact) is to give a seat to the invited deity during formal worship (a step of worship known as ‘Aasan’ or giving a seat).

[This also means that the worshipper himself is firmly seated or established in his views and convictions. He is not fickle and confused about his objective and the path that would lead to it. He is not worshipping a given deity because it is more powerful than the other, and if someone tells him that the other deity is more useful to him he would not think twice before switching sides and his allegiance.

Hence, this stanza stresses that a spiritual aspirant must be firm in his beliefs and convictions, for it is only then that he would be able to focus fully on the objective and successfully achieve it.] (3/5).

3/6. To remove distinction between the dark qualities represented by the colour of blood (‘Rakta’) and the good virtues represented by the colour white (‘Shukla’) is the symbolic washing of the feet of the invited deity (a ritual known as ‘Paadya’).

[There is another way this verse can be interpreted. The red colour stands of the bloody fluids present in the womb of the female, and the white colour stands for the male sperm. Hence, when a spiritual aspirant is able to remove distinction between a God and Goddess, and treat both of them alike as manifestations of Brahm, it is then that he actually washes the feet of the invited deity, which in this case would be Brahm, and neither a God nor a Goddess. He knows that it is Brahm who he is actually worshipping in any of the physical forms of deities to whom worship is offered.] (3/6).

3/7. To remain submerged in the eclectic thoughts of the pure and brilliant entity that is a treasury of immense bliss (i.e. to remain engrossed in the thoughts of Brahm) is equivalent to offering of oblations to the deity (3/7).

3/8. When one is internally pure, untainted and cleansed, it is equivalent to sipping of water by him as a token gesture for cleaning the mouth (a process called ‘Aachaman’) (3/8).

3/9. To feel that the pure consciousness pervades in all the organs of the body without exception, to be convinced that the gross body is not gross at all but is energized and lively with the presence of the pure consciousness that pulsates in each of its pore and tissues is the symbolic bathing of the body (a step of worship known as 'Snaan').

[Just like formal bathing removes all dirt and reinvigorates the body, to concentrate the mind on the fact that each unit of the body is full of consciousness would remove all lethargy and indolence in them; it would re-energize and invigorate the body. It would lose its grossness and become radiant with the energy of the consciousness.

This principle should also be applied to the deity worshipped.] (3/9).

3/10. The radiance and divine glow that comes with realisation of the self-illuminated Atma makes the aspirant effuse spiritual energy just like a fire that effuses light and radiance on its own. When the aspirant becomes aware that his whole body is uniformly soaked in consciousness, his body exudes a charm and pulsates with the ecstatic feeling of blissfulness and contentedness that comes naturally with self and Brahm realisation. It is equivalent to him wearing clean new clothes. [This step in formal worship is called 'Vastrum' when the worshipper dons new washed clothes.]

This notion should also be applied to the deity worshipped. It is more important to think that the deity is aglow with consciousness than to adorn it with bright clothes. [This process is called 'Vastrum' or offering of clothes to the deity.] (3/10).

3/11. The three Shaktis known as 'Ichha Shakti' (the power of desires), 'Gyan Shakti' (the power of knowledge), and 'Kriya Shakti' (the power of deeds and actions) have three sub-classes each. So, there are a total twenty-seven Shaktis or dynamic powers. These combine to form the 'Brahm Granthi'¹. [The word 'Granthi' means a knot.]

The Sushumna Naadi (which is the main nerve passing through the spinal cord) passes through this Brahm Granthi. Hence, it is like the sacred thread known as the 'Brahm Sutra'². [The sacred thread known as the Yagyopavit is called the 'Brahm Sutra' in this verse, and it used here in a metaphoric manner to describe how the Pran rises up the Sushumna Naadi to reach the top of the head to enable the ascetic practicing meditation and contemplation to experience the bliss of Brahm-realisation.] (3/11).

[Note—¹The word *Granthi* literally means node, a nodule or module or knot or a wart-like or a gland-like structure. It has various connotations depending upon the context in which the word is used. For instance, it might symbolically mean the different gates in a strong fort which must be overcome or broken before one enters the fort or overruns it as done during war times.

The numerous emotional, sentimental and spiritual hurdles that an aspirant faces are also referred to as the Granthi because they are like the hard shell of the nut which is difficult to crack. Only when this shell is cracked can one find the nut. Similarly, only when one overcomes the numerous obstacles and hurdles faced by him in his spiritual pursuit that it is possible for him to have access to the fount of eternal bliss and peace that comes with Brahm realisation which is being aware of the Absolute Truth of existence.

According to the metaphysical interpretation of the term Granthi, it is the various knots present in the heart that shackle the Atma and prevent its liberation and deliverance. These Granthis are called Hridaya Granthis because they stand in the way of a man obtaining freedom from his fetters and keep him tied to this world. Once he is able to rupture them, he finds liberation even while he is still alive in this world. This fact has been clearly emphasized in Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 3,

verse no. 15 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition. Refer also to Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 8.

From anatomical point of view, the Granthis refer to the ganglions that help to coordinate the different nerves just like major junction boxes in the network of electric wires in a building. The word Granthi also refers to the glands that control all the major functions of the body, including those of the nerves and veins. Just like a knot that helps to tie something, these Granthis of the body bind the subtle energy present inside the body and prevent it from being dissipated or going to waste; it helps to preserve energy and stops it from being released if not wanted. If we treat them as representing the ganglions then it means that by the process of Yoga in which the subtle energy of the Kundalini is released in the spinal cord, or the Sushumna Naadi to be precise, these hitherto clogged and inactive ganglions are reactivated and they begin to function in prime shape. If we consider them as glands then it would mean that the functioning of these glands is restored by the process of Yoga, and this in turn helps the body to work properly.

The Granthi symbolizes the center of power and authority because it is the nodal point from where all the authority needed for governance of the body spread out. It is also like the seat of power and authority of a king, much like the strong fortress from where he rules over the kingdom. They represent the nodal points in the body where the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva or Rudra the concluder, have their symbolic residence, and it is from here they control the functioning of the body of the individual as well as everything that he thinks and does. If the individual is regarded as the microcosm of the entire creation, then the Atma would be the supreme Brahm, and the various patron deities of the organs would be the different Gods of creation.

The Brahm Vidya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse nos. 70-71 describes the three main Granthis where these three Gods have their symbolic abodes in the body of the individual creature—viz. *Brahm Granthi*, Vishnu Granthi, and Rudra Granthi. They have also been described in (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 86-89; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 67-68, 85-86. (ii) Atharva Veda's Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 14 (which says that all the three Granthis are actually subtle form of the supreme Brahm as everything in existence is one or the other form of Brahm).

These Granthis can be also regarded as aphorisms for the numerous spiritual hurdles faced by a spiritual aspirant in his spiritual journey. The three Granthis are like the three forts that have to be overcome before the final victory over the citadel. If the body is considered as a metaphoric prison for the Atma of the aspirant, then rupturing of the various Granthis is like his breaking free from its walls and finally escaping to the world outside to gain freedom by rupturing the Brahm Randhra located on the top of the head in the final stages of Yoga.

The location of the Granthis is very significant in this context. Let us have a look at this aspect and see why these have been considered as formidable fortresses in this discussion.

The first Granthi, known as the *Brahm Granthi*, is located in the region of the Kundalini at the lower end of the abdomen. The very fact that Brahm in his manifestation as Brahma the creator is responsible for creating this world, the Granthi is so named after him because the sexual organs that are present in this region are responsible for creation. Overcoming this Granthi is tantamount to control over one's sexual urges which is a very formidable task under normal circumstances. Control of sexual instincts requires a lot of self-control, and once this is successfully achieved the person retains his internal energy that is otherwise wasted in sexual indulgences. The power to create new life by the sexual process makes a man equivalent to Brahma the cosmic creator and the first of the Trinity Gods.

There is another interpretation. The Brahm Granthi is the first hurdle the ascetic has to face in his endeavour of lifting up his Pran through the Sushumna Naadi and

reaching the Brahm-Randhra at the top of the head where he experiences Brahm-realisation. Its rupture is tantamount to overcoming the first big hurdle.

²The word 'Sutra' means a thread. Since the Sushumna Naadi is thread-like in appearance, it is called a Sutra. The idea is that the wearing of the sacred thread is merely a formality, and instead if one sincerely wishes to become Brahm-realised he should endeavour to activate the dormant Sushumna Naadi through which he diverts his vital winds towards the Brahm-Randhra situated on the top of the head. When this is successfully accomplished, the aspirant becomes Brahm-realised. The wearing of the sacred thread is necessary for formal forms of worship involving sacrifices and prayers. If its symbolism is understood then the worshipper would treat the activation of the Sushumna Naadi as the truthful wearing of the sacred thread. Otherwise, the physical sacred thread serves no purpose. This fact has also been emphatically stressed in the Brahm Upanishad of the Atharva Veda.

Other references: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 4-15. (ii) Atharva Veda = Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 14-19, 27; Par Brahm Upanishad, verse nos. 3, 5-20; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 17, 79, 80-82, 84-85, 88-89; Canto 4, verse no. 37 (mention the Mantra dedicated to the Yagyopavit).]

3/12. Not to remember anything else except one's own true 'self' (i.e. the Atma which is pure consciousness) is the ornamentation that is offered to the worshipped deity. [This is known as 'Vibhushan', or wearing of ornaments.] (3/12).

3/13. To remember that there is nothing except Brahm which is auspicious, divine and holy is the symbolic scent or perfume that is used during formal worship. [It is known as 'Gandha'—i.e. fragrance, scent or perfume which is usually a paste of sandalwood.] (3/13).

3/14. To analyse everything in this world, to carefully and patiently look at all the objects of the senses in this world intelligently, with a cool head and a steady and balanced mind so as to arrive at the truth and reality, is equivalent to the offering of flowers to the deity during a formal worship. [This is called offering of Pushpa (flower).] (3/14).

3/15. To accept anything after analyzing it thoroughly is equivalent to offering of lighted incense sticks. [This is known as offering of 'Dhup'.] (3/15).

3/16. During Yoga (meditation), the two primary vital winds known as Pran and Apan are mixed together, and this creates friction which produces a sparkle of brilliant light in the Sushumna Naadi through which these two winds rise up. This light and its illumination represent the astounding energy of 'consciousness' that pulsates through this Naadi. This is symbolic of the lighted lamp offered during worship. [This is known as 'Deep' or a lighted lamp.] (3/16).

3/17. The state of existence when the Mana (mind and heart) stops wandering in the external sense objects of the material world, and instead remain focused in the 'true self', i.e. remain engrossed in meditation and contemplation, is equivalent to the offering of sweets and fruits along with water to the deity during formal worship. [This is called offering of 'Naivedya'.] (3/17).

3/18. To remove distinction between the three states of existence, viz. the Jagrat or waking, the Swapna or dreaming, and Sushupta or deep sleep, and treating them as

one uniform state of existence is equivalent of offering of the betel leaves (as mouth fresheners after the offering of Naivedya). [This step is called ‘Tambul’.] (3/18).

3/19. The oscillation of the Pran (life-consciousness) between the Mooladhar and the Brahm-Randhra is equivalent to the circumambulation of the altar and the deity. [This is known as ‘Pradakshinaa’.] (3/19).

[Note—The Mooldhar is the lowest part of the abdomen which support the rest of the body. The word ‘Mool’ means the root, and ‘Adhar’ means the support. It is in the form of a ‘Chakra’, a whirling subtle energy center. Yoga Upanishads explain its importance while describing how the Prans are mixed, the Kundalini activated, and the released energy made to enter the Sushumna Naadi and go upwards to reach the forehead and finally the top of the head. From here, the Pran either travels back the same route as indicated in this verse, or goes out of the body by escaping through the Brahm-Randhra.

While the Pran of the ascetic is in the region of the forehead as well as tip of the cranium he experiences extreme bliss and ecstasy. This is equivalent to the Sushupta state of existence. When the Pran travels back, the ascetic virtually comes back to the dreaming state and finally to the waking state of existence. Should the Pran remain swirling in the area of the head in the region of the forehead on a perpetual basis, the ascetic is said to be in a Turiya state of existence which is the transcendental state in the sense that the ascetic has ‘transcended’ the normal states of existence in which an ordinary creature lives.

When the Pran finally prepares to reach higher and swirl around the Brahm-Randhra preparing to make its final exit from the body, the ascetic is said to be in a Truiya-teet state which is nothing but the higher state of Turiya. When the Pran finally leaves the body by escaping out from the slit of the Brahm-Randhra, the ascetic gets Mukti or liberation and deliverance. This Mukti is called ‘Kaivalaya’ or the only one of its kind because once the Pran leaves the body it would not re-enter it. Hence, the ascetic’s Mukti is once and for all; there is no reversal.

The ‘Brahm-Randhra’ is the hair-like slit on the top of the skull where the two halves have been soldered together by the creator. It is through this slit that Brahm had entered the body of the individual creature to take up residence in his brain (mind-intellect). This fact has been expressly said in the Aiteriya Upanishad, 1/3/12, of the Rig Veda.]

3/20. To remain perpetually in the fourth state of Turiya is equivalent to bowing before the deity during formal worship. [This is called ‘Namaskaar’.] (3/20).

3/21. To treat the body as gross and the Atma (the inner-self) as the conscious entity is equivalent to the offering of true sacrifice (which is equivalent to the animal sacrifice usually done in ancient times while performing elaborate fire sacrifice rituals). [This is called ‘Bali’.] (3/21).

[Note—It is very important to note that it is the gross body that is being killed during the offering of the animal sacrifice, because the Atma or the soul is the eternal and ethereal Spirit that cannot be killed or disembodied. Hence, when the enlightened aspirant becomes wizened to the fact that the body is gross, lifeless, inane and useless as compared to the Atma, he abandons all attachments for the former and instead focuses his attention on the latter. Once this comes about he automatically develops indifference towards the world, because the latter is directly related to the body and not to the Atma.]

3/22. To be firmly convinced that the Atma is the only irrefutable Truth and remain focused on it while remaining neutral and indifferent to all deeds—whether they are a

part of one's duty and one is obliged to do them irrespective of whether one likes them or not, or they are done out of choice and with some self-interest as the causative factor—is the symbolic way of doing the fire sacrifice and offering oblations to the sacred fire. [This is known as 'Homa'.] (3/22).

3/23. To offer oneself unconditionally, with total devotion and submission at the august, divine and holy feet of the Lord, and keep one's mind and attention focused on it, is equivalent to doing meditation in a comprehensive manner. [This is known as 'Dhyan'.] (3/23).

4. In this way, an enlightened man who remains submerged in offering worship (to the Lord, the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being) for three Muhurts (roughly for a period of 3 x 1 hour and forty-eight minutes = 4.44 hours) is able to become 'Jivan Mukta'. That is, he is deemed to be spiritually liberated and delivered ('Mukta') even while living in this world, doing his routine work, and having a gross physical body ('Jivan').

He is deemed to be one like Brahm himself; he becomes a personification of Brahm. All his desires and wishes are easily fulfilled even without his making effort to achieve his aim. [This is because he acquires great mystical powers called 'Siddhis'.]

Such an enlightened and realised spiritual aspirant is known as 'Shiva-Yogi' — i.e. an ascetic who is personification of Lord Shiva. [This epithet means that he becomes highly enlightened, wise, self-realised, dispassionate, renounced, detached, neutral, non-involved in the mundane affairs of the gross world inspite of living in it and participating in its affairs, holy, divine, immaculate, pure, and beautiful in the spirit.] (4).

Thus ends Bhavana Upanishad.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 24

Bhasma-Jabal Upanishad

As the name suggests, this Upanishad is dedicated to the theme that truthful knowledge and enlightenment is one that literally 'reduces to ashes' (Bhasma) all the spiritual delusions and misconceptions of the living being, called the Jiva, and establishes a seamless uniformity between the Jiva and Brahm, the Supreme Being.

It is in the form of a conversation between Lord Shiva, the most enlightened of the Gods and the patron Lord of all ascetics, and sage Bhusund, the disciple of the great sage Jabal. Since the disciple adopted the name of his Guru (moral preceptor) as his surname, Bhusund was known as 'Jabal'.

In Canto 1, this sage 'Jabal', alias Bhusund, requested Lord Shiva to enlighten him about the great spiritual and metaphysical importance and significance of

‘Bhasma’, the ash of the sacred fire sacrifice. The Lord not only explained the physical characteristics of this mystically empowered ash but also how to correctly wear it on the aspirant’s body along with its stupendous divine qualities which bestow the wearer with Mukti or Moksha (spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation). When properly worn on the body with full understanding of its significance and importance, this seemingly ordinary ash of the fire pit assumes astounding qualities and powers, enabling the wearer to become self-realised and Brahm-realised. The knowledge of Brahm and the truthful ‘self’ is like the great fire of the doomsday because it burns all sorts of delusions and ignorance that completely swamp the wisdom and intellect of the creature that has forced him to remain trapped in this world, and instead establishes oneness between his own individual ‘self’, which is a microcosm, with the cosmic ‘Self’ known as Brahm, which is the macrocosm of existence.

Canto 2 describes how the Rudraksha beads are worn on the body, as well as the detailed form of doing Dhyan, or meditation and contemplation, upon Lord Rudra or Shiva as he is the Supreme Being personified.

The Upanishad incorporates in its discussion two versions of the great *Rudra Suktas* which are hymns dedicated to Lord Shiva—the first appears in Canto 1, paragraph no. 1, and the second one appears in Canto 2, paragraph no. 3. Besides these Suktas, a number of other eclectic Mantras of Shiva, such as the single word Mantra ‘Shivam’, the six letter Mantra ‘OM Namaha Shivaaye’, and the eight letter Mantra ‘OM Namaha Mahadevaaye’ are also enumerated along with their great powers and usage. Refer Canto 2, paragraph no. 4.

This Upanishad is in the form of a long commentary divided into two Cantos. For the purposes of narration, each Canto has been divided into a series of paragraphs. Other Upanishads which are relevant in the context of this present Upanishad are Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Kalagni-rudra Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, and Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad of the Sam Veda traditions.

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-----Shanti Paath-----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Canto 1

1. Salutations to Lord Hari (the Supreme Being) represented by the Mantra OM! [Or, the ethereal word OM is an embodiment of Lord Hari; it represents the Supreme Being known by the name of Hari.]¹

Once, sage Jabal Bhusund² went to the summit of Mt. Kailash, the abode of Lord Maha-Dev (literally, the ‘great Lord’; the epithet refers to Lord Shiva).

The Lord known as Maha-Dev was an embodiment of OM (the ethereal sound manifestation of the supreme Brahm also known as Pranav). He was accompanied by his divine consort named Uma (the Mother Goddess).

He had a crown of matted hairs on his head. He had three eyes represented by the sun, the moon and the fire. He was wrapped in the hide of a tiger. He held his hands like a deer (i.e. his hands were resting on his folded-in legs as he sat in meditation posture). His body was adorned (smeared) by the ‘Bhasma’ (ash of the fire sacrifice).

On his forehead were marked the three lines of the Tripund (which is a sacred mark borne by ascetics on their bodies). There was a subtle sweet and pleasant smile on his face. His countenance was cheerful and he had a pleasant demeanour (i.e. he was rested and calm; he was not agitated, fidgety or upset).

He was like a lion who was sitting in the posture known as 'Viraasan'. [This is one of the many sitting postures of Yoga, and is usually adopted by brave warriors, hence the name 'Viraasan'. The word 'Vir' means one who is brave, valiant, gallant, bold, courageous, daring and mighty.]

He is extremely enigmatic, mystical and sublime so much so that he is beyond the purview of proofs and measurements.

He is 'Anaadi and Anant'—i.e. he is without an end or beginning as he is eternal, infinite and imperishable.

He is 'Niskal'—i.e. he is the one who has no taints, faults, blemishes and imperfections that can scar his immaculacy and purity. He is immaculate and without any faults or blemishes as he is from all the corrupting influences of Maya (delusions and deceit).

He is 'Nirguna'—i.e. he has no attributes or qualities or physical forms in the true sense (as the Lord is not an ordinary God with attributes, but the Supreme Being who has no known forms, specific attributes and describable qualities).

He is 'Shaanta'—i.e. he is calm, serene, peaceful and tranquil.

He is 'Niranjan'—i.e. he is faultless, flawless, uncorrupted, untainted and without any blemishes of any kind. [A Niranjan is an entity that has no defects, faults, taints, blemishes, shortcomings and scars of any kind; one who is absolutely immaculate and pristine pure. It is an epithet applied to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. one whose sublime, subtle, esoteric and mystical form is so microscopic and diffused that it cannot be seen by the naked eyes of the physical gross body, but which can only be perceived by the eye of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment.]

He is 'Niraamaye', i.e. he is healthy and without any moral or physical ailments or tainting affects that are like a disease that might afflict a person's spiritual well being. One who is free from any kind of diseases—spiritual, mental, physical, psychological, moral etc. that may taint one's character and personality.

He (Lord Maha-Dev) was pronouncing the Beej Mantra 'Hum', 'Phat' etc., and continuously repeating the holy name of the Supreme Being who is also known as 'Shiva'. That is, he was meditating upon his own pure and enlightened 'self' which is truly the Supreme Being known as Brahm manifested in the form of the Atma, the cosmic Consciousness. Hence, he was doing Japa with the Mantra 'Shiva-Shiva'.

His is a living embodiment of the virtues for which the word 'Hiranya' is an aphorism. That is, the Lord has a radiance that is like gold; his hands (limbs) have a golden radiance, his form is like gold, his countenance is golden, and he is a treasury of immaculate virtues which resemble gold in their purity. [Since gold is the most precious metal, all the Lord's virtues and characteristics are completely immaculate and of the highest quality like pure gold.]

The Lord is a personification of the grand philosophy of Advaitya, the philosophy of non-duality which says that there is only one Brahm or cosmic Truth in the form of Consciousness that is revealed in all the forms that this creation has taken, and therefore whatever that exists is nothing but one single Brahm in all these forms.

[In other words, Lord Maha-Dev is perfectly wise, enlightened and Brahm-realised in as much as he sees no difference between himself and the Supreme Being. This is the reason he is repeating the Mantra 'Shiva' while meditating upon Brahm.

Being highly enlightened, he is firmly established in the doctrine of non-duality, called the philosophy of Advaitya, which primarily states that the ultimate Truth is always one and not more than one, and that whatever that appears to be 'true' in this creation is actually one single 'Truth' that is viewed in myriad of forms from different angles. It is one, single, immutable and quintessential Truth that is a constant denominator in all that exists in all the forms that the creation takes, and it assumes all these forms for the purpose of existential contingencies.

In other words, Lord Shiva knows that his 'truthful self' is the cosmic Consciousness itself in a miniature form, and that this 'self' known as his Atma is none but the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, himself personified. This being the case, Lord Shiva needs not worship any other Lord than his own 'self' !]

Since he is extremely enlightened, self-realised and Brahm-realised, he stays in the fourth state of Turiya. [This is the transcendental state of existence in which the ascetic lives in a state of trance. He is so deeply submerged in meditation and contemplation that he is not even aware of his body and what it does, and therefore there is no question of his being aware of the surrounding material world and its temptations. Hence, he is free from all corruptions and delusions that mire an ordinary soul.]

This fourth state is a representative of the Supreme Being who is beyond the Trinity Gods known as Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder. Hence, the Lord who stays in this eclectic and sublime state of Consciousness is known as 'Maha-Dev', the great Lord. [This fact has been expressly emphasized in the Pashupat Upanishad, Purva Kand, verse no. 10, which is the nineteenth Upanishad of the Atharva Veda.]

Such a divine and majestic Lord is the fulfiller of all the desires of his devotees.

Sage Jabal Bhusund politely bowed before the Lord repeatedly, worshipped him and paid his obeisance to him, offered him fruits of the Bilva tree (*Aegle marmelos*) and Bhasma (ash of the fire sacrifice), bowed his head, and asked him with folded hands as a gesture of politeness and submission—'Oh Lord! You are well-versed in the essence of the Vedas and their profound teachings. Please tell me about the rules and tenets pertaining to the 'Tripundra'³ as described and prescribed in the Vedas, and by following which one is able to attain Moksha (final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation). One need not take the recourse of any other means if one fully understands this doctrine. [1]

[Note—¹*Hari*—There are other Upanishads of the Atharva Veda tradition that open with salutations to Lord Hari—e.g. the Tripura Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 21 of our current volume, and the Bhavana Upanishad which is Chapter 23. In all these cases, the epithet Hari is used to mean the Supreme Being whose nearest analogous form is either the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu.

The practical relevance of using the epithet 'Hari' while addressing the Supreme Being has been explained in a note of verse no. 1 of Canto 1 of the Tripura Tapini Upanishad.

²Sage Bhusund was a disciple of sage Jabal. He assumed the name of his Guru (moral preceptor and teacher) as his surname. Hence, he was called *Jabal Bhusund*.

³*Tripund*—References: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Kalgnirudra Upanishad. (ii) Atharva Veda's Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman (Canto) 4, verse nos. 9-36, Brahman 5, verse nos. 1-19, and Brahman 7; and Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 3.

The word *Tripundra* has two parts—‘tri’ and ‘pundra’. Tri means three while the word Pundra refers to the three horizontal lines marked on the body (the forehead, the chest and the shoulders) by Hindus. The Pundra can be horizontal or crosswise lines, in which case it is called the ‘Tiryak Pundra’, or it can be vertical or upright lines, in which case it is called ‘Urdhva Pundra’. The Tiryak Pundra or Tripundra is worn by devotees of Lord Shiva and initiated ascetics and is marked by the paste of the ash obtained from the pit of the fire sacrifice by mixing it with water.

The three lines of the Tripundra have great symbolic significance. They stand for the entire gamut of creation having three aspects or dimensions. It is like a sign depicting a three dimensional picture of this creation. The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 4-5 describes in great detail the spiritual importance of this Tripundra and how to wear it on the body. It represents the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Rudra the concluder (Brahman 4, verse no.10), the three Gunas such as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna, and the three sacred fires such as the Ahawaniya fire, the Grahapatya fire and the Dakshinagni fire (Brahman 4, verse no. 36).

The metaphysical and spiritual importance and significance of the Tripundra have been asked by sage Sanatkumar from Lord Kalagni Rudra and explained by the Lord in Kalagni Rudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

Other references: (i) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Kagnirudra Upanishad. (ii) Atharva Veda’s Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman (Canto) 4, verse nos. 9-36, Brahman 5, verse nos. 1-19, and Brahman 7, verse nos. 1-7; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 2, 10; and Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 14; Canto 7, verse no. 3.]

2. What are the ingredients needed for making the Bhasma¹? Where is the Bhasma found (or where are the ingredients found)? What are the Mantras used to prepare it and said while using it? In how many organs of the body is this Bhasma worn (or which are the organs or parts of the body where the Bhasma is applied)? Who is eligible to wear the Bhasma? What are the rules to be observed for wearing the Bhasma?

Please be kind enough to tell me all these things as I am eager for attaining Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation).’ [2]

[Note—¹*Bhasma*—The word ‘Bhasma’ means ash, and it refers to the sacred ash left in the pit after the fire sacrifice is completed. Besides the present Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, the concept of Bhasma has been explained in detail the *Brihajjabal* of the Atharva Veda describe the concept of Bhasma in great detail along with how to prepare it and its astounding mystical powers, metaphysical significance, spiritual authority and importance. Refer also—*Naradparivrajak Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Canto 7, verse no. 3; *Kalagni-rudra Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda; and *Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad* of the Sam Veda.

The *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, describes in detail the true meaning and significance of the term Bhasma in metaphysical terms in Brahman 2, verse nos. 10-16, how the sacred ash known as the Bhasma is to be produced in Brahman 3, how to apply it on the body and where, along with the relevant Mantras in Brahman 4, who should wear it and the benefits derived by wearing it in Brahman 5, the five astounding mystical powers of the Bhasma in Brahman 6, and the importance of the Bhasma in Brahman 7 (verse nos. 1-7),

According to the *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 4, verse no. 8, the sacred Bhasma is provided with the mystical power to enable a sinner to cummute his sins.]

3. Lord Parmeshwar (the supreme Ishwar, Lord Shiva) glanced cheerfully and benevolently at the Gods as well as at his attendants who are known as ‘Pramath’ as he began giving his answer to the questions asked by the sage (Jabal Bhusund).

The most compassionate Lord preached, 'In the morning when the sun rises, one should pick up some cow-dung and place it on a leaf to dry. The Mantra 'Trayambak Yjaamahe' should be said when this is done.

He should light the sacred fire according to the prescribed way for a householder, and place this dried up cow-dung in it.

The offerings to this fire should be made by mixing together sesame seeds, barley, rice and clarified butter so that they make a thick paste. This mixture should be offered to the fire either one hundred eight times or five hundred times in small amounts while saying the 'Somaye Swaha' with each offering. The spatula used for making the offering should be made of a leaf. This spatula is regarded as holy and clean (because it is a disposable and bio-decomposable spatula, for as soon as the offerings are completed it is put into the fire to burn itself out completely, leaving no dirty or polluted or soiled spatula for re-use).

The Mantra which is actually said while these offerings are being made is 'Trayambak Yjaamahe Somaye Swaha'. [It briefly means 'I offer my worship to Lord Trayambak or Lord Shiva by making this offering. He is the Lord who has three eyes and is adorned by the moon on his forehead.']

The sacred sacrifice is wound up by making the final offering called the 'Purnaa-huti'.

After this, symbolic sacrifice is offered to the presiding deities of all the eight directions¹ by saying the same Mantra. [3]

[Note—¹The eight directions and their patron Gods are (1) East (Purva)—Indra; (2) South East (Agneya)—Fire God; (3) South (Dakshin)—Yam God, the God of death and final judgment; (4) South West (Nairitya)—Nairiti; (5) West (Paschim)—Varun, the Water God; (6) North West (Vayabya)—Vayu, the Wind God; (7) North (Uttar)—Kuber, the God of treasure and wealth; (8) North East (Ishan)—Ishan, Lord Shiva.]

4. The coarse ash of the fire sacrifice is collected and shaken through a sieve to get a fine powder. While doing this, the Gayatri Mantra is said.

The filtered ash is kept either in a pot made of clay/mud, or of gold, silver or copper.

Some water is sprinkled on this dried ash by saying the Rudra Mantra². It is then kept aside at a clean spot.

After that, Brahmins should be fed.

In this way, the worshipper is himself cleansed of all his impurities and the evil affects of his sins and misdemeanors. [4]

[Note—¹The *Gayatri Mantra* is "Tatsaviturvarnyam Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat; Paro Rajase Savadoma". There is another version of the Gayatri Mantra, and it is "OM Bhurbhuvaha Swaha, Tatsaviurvarenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi, Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat". This is known as the full Brahm Gayatri as it is dedicated to OM, the word which is used as a synonym for Brahm.

The process of saying the Gayatri Mantra while cleaning the sacred Bhasma is also endorsed in the Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 3, verse no. 6.

The Tripura Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph no. 2-15 describes the Gayatri Mantra with four lines "Tatsaviturvarnyam Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat; Paro Rajase Savadoma" in great detail, and goes on to invoke Lord Trayambak during the process. Lord Trayambak is Lord Shiva, so-called as he has three eyes.

References: (i) Shukla Yajur Veda = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 5, Brahman 14. (ii) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 3/12/1-9; Savitri Upanishad,

which is entirely dedicated to it; Maitrayanyu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7. (iii) Atharva Veda = Surya Upanishad, verse no. 2; Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 3, verse no. 6; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1-15; Narsingh Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto/Upanishad 1, verse nos. 5-9; Gayatri Upanishad; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 40.

²The *Rudra Mantra*—The eclectic Mantra is given in this Upanishad in Canto 1, paragraph no. 1 above, and in Canto 2, paragraph no. 3 below.

The divine Mantra *Rudra-Rudra* is dedicated to Lord Rudra who is one of the eleven divine forms of Lord Shiva. It is described in Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 16. It is so powerful and grand that it is said to incorporate all the Mantras of the not only the other two Gods of the Trinity, viz. Vishnu and Brahma, but all other Gods combined.

Rudra is another name of Lord Shiva. This term has been defined in Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 4 as follows—“Why is he (Brahm) called ‘Rudra’? It is because the esoteric and secret form and nature of Brahm which is most enigmatic and difficult to understand is easily known by enlightened and self-realised Rishis who are exalted and wise sages, seers and ascetics; the knowledge of Brahm as Rudra is within their easy reach and grasp. On the other hand, this knowledge is very difficult for others to access. [It must be noted here that the difference between the two terms ‘Brahm’ and ‘Rudra’ lies in the degree of subtlety. While Brahm is the neutral divinity, its active and dynamic manifestation or its dynamic principle is known as Rudra. Brahm in itself does not do anything, and being a neutral entity is best addressed by the pronoun ‘it’ just as we would address light, sky, air, water, fire, earth etc. with the pronoun ‘it’. On the other hand, when this Brahm lost its neutrality and got engaged in activity of creating this world and regulating it, Rudra came into being. This Rudra is the dynamic form of Brahm. Rudra is less subtle as compared to Brahm, but otherwise they refer to the same divine Being who is supreme and transcendental in creation. Since Rudra is deemed to be ‘male’ aspect of creation—not because of any gender superiority or gender bias but because the initial ‘spark’ of life in the form of a ‘sperm’ can only be provided by a male—he is addressed as ‘he’ and not as ‘it’. Rudra is one of the names of Shiva, and this Lord is the patron God of Rishis who do meditation. Shiva is the greatest moral preacher, teacher and preceptor of spiritual knowledge⁴. Shiva is an exemplary renunciate and he himself remains eternally engrossed in meditation and contemplation. He teaches the Rishis who spend their time in meditation and contemplation about the Truth of Brahm. These Rishis repeat the Mantras of Brahm known as OM while meditating, and this brings them closer to the principal that this OM represents. They are totally immune to and free from all sorts of spiritual contaminations and hurdles that an ordinary man faces while remaining engrossed in the affairs of the material world and the temptations proffered by its sense objects which is hard to resist if not impossible. That is why the term ‘difficult’ is used for ordinary creatures when it comes to their realizing the truth of Brahm—i.e. though it is not impossible it is nevertheless hard and difficult.

Rudra is the angry form of Lord Shiva. The word means ‘the terrible one; the angry and ruthless one; one who roars and thunders; one who makes the enemy weep; one who destroys this trans-migratory world of birth and death; one who destroys ignorance and delusions; one who eliminates evil and perversions.’

Rudra is a Vedic deity and has been eulogized in three full Suktas (hymns) dedicated to him. These are Rig Veda’s 1/114/1-11; 2/33/1-15, and Yajur Veda’s 16/1-66. Besides these Suktas, Rudra is honoured as a deity at a number of places in the Vedas—viz. Rig Veda—1/43/1-4, 5/42/11, 7/46/1-4, 7/59/12; Atharva Veda—5/6/3-4, 6/55/2-3, 7/92/1, 11/2; and Yajur Veda—11/54.

Rudra is regarded as the father of Marut, the Wind God (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). Rudra assumes many forms—usually it is eleven forms (Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/4/9/7), but sometimes they are also said to be thirty-three in number (Taittiriya Sanhita,

1/4/11/1). Rudra is regarded as having a close relationship with Agni, the Fire God (Shatpath Brahman, 5/2/4/13). The Padma Puran, Swargakhanda, Chapter 8 mentions only eight Rudras. These eight, eleven or thirty-three forms of Rudra might mean as many aspects of Shiva.

However, in terms of the Upanishads, the eleven Rudras stand for the ten vital winds called Prans + one Mana or mind. The ten Prans are five chief Prans such as Pran (breath), Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyana, and five subsidiary Prans such as Nag, Kurma, Krikara, Devdutta and Dhananjaya. [Refer—Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 77-87 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition; Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-57 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

Rudra is said to have created such mythological figures as Bhuts (ghosts), Pretas (disembodied spirits), Pishacha (goblins), Khusmaandas (malignant imps).

In iconography, he has been depicted as wearing long tresses coiled on the head, has strong powerful arms, has a body decorated variously with serpents or priceless ornaments, and holds a strong and invincible bow and arrow as well as a thunderbolt. When necessary, he becomes ferocious and charges at his enemies on a chariot or on foot, while at the other times he is full of mercy and compassion. He is closely associated with forests and mountains, and is also the patron deity of herbs and medicinal plants. Hence, he is the killer of diseases and a great healer. Here, 'healing' would mean spiritual healing rather than physical ailments afflicting a creature.

He destroys sins and evil tendencies in the world, and grants the boon of liberation and happiness.

According to the epic Mahabharata, Anushasanaparva, Chapter 14, it is Shiva in the form of Rudra who destroys this creation at the end of one cycle of creation.

The *Sharav Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 6, describes Rudra as Sharav—the killer or destroyer. In this Upanishad, Lord Shiva had assumed this form to liberate Vishnu from the form of Nrisingh (a half man and half lion form) which the Lord had taken to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting the devotees of Vishnu to such an extent that he did not spare even his son Prahalada. After slaying this demon, Nrisingh roamed around in the forests striking terror in other creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of 'Mahadev' as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called 'Rudra', the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

There is another connotation of the word 'Sharav'. The word literally means the killer or slayer. In other words, Sharav is that form of the Supreme Being which instills fear in the heart of evil and pervert creatures, and kills or eliminates their evil tendencies. The word also refers to 'the Lord who shines in the heart of his devotees' as their Atma or pure consciousness.

The creature or the embodied soul is called 'Shar' or the form of the ethereal spirit that has assumed a gross physical body having a head. One who cuts off the head is known as 'Sharav'. The head is a metaphor for pride and ego and their accompanying traits of hypocrisy, haughtiness and arrogance. It is in the head that all evil planning is done, and it is the head that inspires the creature to indulge in all sorts of vices and inauspicious deeds. When this happens, the great God, the Parameshwar, makes it sure that the soul of such a creature is liberated from the sinful body in which it has been trapped by killing the gross body and liberating the soul.

So, while on the surface it appears to be a physical fight between two powerful creatures, one being the Shar and the other being the Sharav, here referring to Nrisingh and Rudra respectively, it is actually a system evolved by Nature whereby evil and perversions are kept under check. It is a system instituted by the Supreme

Being himself to regulate and maintain balance, order and law in his creation. Though Nrisingh was Lord Vishnu himself in that form, the latter forgot who he actually was once the Lord had assumed a physical form. This is the effect of Maya—the overwhelming power of delusions that automatically comes with having a gross body like that of ordinary creatures. This situation also highlights the reason why all the creatures are under the overpowering control of Maya—if Maya can delude Vishnu to forget about who he is and wander in the forests as some cruel creature in his form as Nrisingh then it is little wonder that ordinary creatures are held under the overpowering sway of Maya.

Now, who would liberate such primarily innocent souls trapped by Maya, and who would provide protection to other innocent creatures who are being subjected to torments by this single deluded and evil-possessed soul? Naturally it is their supreme Father who is very merciful and who is greatly pained at the predicament in which his off springs, the creatures, find themselves in. So this Father intervenes not only to free the trapped soul in the evil body, but also to provide succour and solace to other creatures who are being tormented by this single individual.

Thus, the Parameshwar assumed the form of Shrav or Rudra to liberate Vishnu from the evil body of Nrisingh.

The *Devi Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 4 says that the Rudras are manifestations of the Mother Goddess, who actually represents the dynamism of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess is the energy, authority and powers of Brahm that are employed by the latter to create and control this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level.

The Rudra is this dynamism of Brahm revealed at the macrocosmic level. Lord Shiva has eleven forms, and one of them is 'Rudra', which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called 'Maheshwar'. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God.

The word 'Rudra', which is literally used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness, is a very misleading title for Shiva because there are a number of great Upanishads which describe Rudra as none but the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged, who sustains it and in whom the creation would finally collapse. It is this Brahm in the form of Rudra who is treated at the supreme Lord God of creation, and hence is called Maheshwar. The *Rudra Hridaya Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition and *Atharvashir Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition are exclusively dedicated to this theme. The *Dakshin Murti Upanishad* of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the esoteric significance of the Shiva Tattva or the essential knowledge of Shiva who is the greatest Guru or moral preceptor and teacher of the creatures.

The *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/33 says that the eleven Rudras are manifestations of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm. In other words, Lord Ram had assumed the form of Rudra or Shiva in order to bring this creation to conclusion.

The *Atharvashir Upanishad* of Atharva Veda is especially relevant here because it explains the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme

transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra himself, and upon close reading it would be very clear that Rudra is describing Brahm when he describes himself.

The *Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Rudras, along with the Vasus and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.]

5. The Bhasma (the ash) should be accepted by saying the Mantra ‘Maanastok Sadyojaat’ etc. that is dedicated to the Panch Brahms (the five divine subtle forms of the supreme Brahm)¹.

The worshipper should pay his respects to the Bhasma and bow his head to it by saying the Mantra ‘Agniriti Bhasma; Vayuriti Bhasma; Jalmiti Bhasma; Sthalmi Bhasma; Vyomiti Bhasma; Deva Bhasma. Sarwa Ha Va Atadidum Bhasma Putam Pavanam Namaami’. [Briefly, this Mantra means that the sacred Bhasma is an embodiment of the supreme Brahm in the five subtle forms or elements of creation such as the fire, the air, the water, the earth and the sky. The Bhasma symbolizes all the divine Gods at once. It is as holy and divine as these Gods and the elements representing Brahm. The Bhasma represents the glories and divinity of all the forms of Brahm at once. I bow my head most reverentially before such a glorious and divine Bhasma’.]

This Bhasma is empowered with mystical and supernatural powers that fulfills all the desires of the worshipper and helps him to be successful in all his endeavours. [5]

[Note—¹The concept of *Panch Brahm* has been elaborately described in Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Panch Brahm Upanishad*, verse nos. 5-23; and Atharva Veda’s *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 1.]

6. The Bhasma should be placed on the left hand, which has already been cleaned, by saying the Mantra ‘Vamdevaye Namaha’. [The word ‘Vaam’ means ‘left’, and the term ‘Vamdeo’ is one of the eleven names of Rudra. Hence, it refers to the fact that the ash which is placed on the left hand symbolizes Lord Vamdeo.]

By sprinkling water while saying the Tryambak Mantra¹, the worshipper should apply this consecrated Bhasma on the body from the toe till the head. [6]

[Note—¹The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4 is entirely devoted to Lord Trayambak. It describes the meaning of this word and the Mantras dedicated to Lord Trayambak in great detail. This *Trayambak Mantra* is given in paragraph nos. 1-6, and it is ‘Trayambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushtivardhan Urvaaruk-miv Bandhanaan-mrityor-mukshi-yeti Mamritaam’.

The Lord with three eyes has an unconventional form and an equally odd behaviour, because once he is an incarnation of the eclectic virtues of peace and blissful, and at another moment he becomes personified anger and wrath. Hence, he is called *Tryambak*.

The significance of the *three eyes*—References: (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 21; Sharav Upanishad, verse nos. 10, 14; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4; (ii) Krishna Yajur Veda = Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 93.]

7. When the Bhasma is worn (smeared) on the body and one uses Mantras as prescribed in the Vedas, the process is known as ‘Viniyog’—literally invocation of the Mantras.

Now, the Mantras used for applying the Bhasma on different parts of the body are being enumerated.

‘Agner-bhasmaa-miti’—this Mantra is said when the Bhasma is lifted by pinching a little bit of it between the first, the second and the third fingers.

This Bhasma so lifted by the fingers should be first applied to the head by saying the Mantra ‘Murdhaanmiti’. [The word ‘Murdhaa’ refers to the cerebrum/ the head.]

Then it should be applied on the forehead by saying the Mantra dedicated to Lord Trayambak, i.e. ‘Trayambakmiti’ (as given earlier). [This Mantra refers to the fact that Lord Shiva has three eyes—two conventional eyes, and the third is the eye of wisdom and enlightenment that is located in the forehead between the two eyebrows. He is the only God who has this third eye, which metaphorically says that he is the most enlightened and wise God amongst all the Gods of creation. That is the reason he is honoured by the epithet ‘Maha-Dev’, the ‘Great God’.]

Next, the Bhasma is applied to the front of the neck while saying the Mantra ‘Neel-grivaayemiti’. [The word ‘Neel’ means blue. Hence, it refers to Lord Shiva who has a blue-tinged throat.]

The Bhasma is then applied on the right and the left sides of the neck by saying the Mantra ‘Traayushmiti’.

The Bhasma is then applied on the two cheeks by saying the Mantra ‘Kaalaayeti’.

The Bhasma is then applied on the two eyelids by saying the Mantra ‘Trilochanyaayeti’. [The word ‘Trilochan’ means one with three eyes.]

The Bhasma is then applied on the two ears by saying the Mantra ‘Srinavaamiti’. [The word ‘Srina’ refers to the organ of hearing.]

The Bhasma is then applied on the mouth (lips) by saying the Mantra ‘Prabra-vaa-miti’. [The word refers to the supreme Brahm who has revealed himself as Pranav, the cosmic sound. This name is cited because it is through the mouth that the worshipper speaks and expresses the intention of Brahm who resides in the body as the Atma.]

The Bhasma is then applied on the chest atop the region of the heart by saying the Mantra ‘Atmana’. [This is an obvious reference to the fact that the Atma resides in the subtle space of the worshipper’s heart. The Atma is the pure consciousness that resides in the worshipper’s body.]

The Bhasma is then applied on the navel by saying the Mantra ‘Nabhi-riti’. [The word ‘Nabhi’ means the navel.]

Then the Bhasma is applied on the shoulder-joint right hand by saying the Mantra ‘Bhavaayeti’.

The next spot of application of the Bhasma is in the middle of that hand (i.e. the bend of the elbow joint) by saying the Mantra ‘Rudraayeti’.

The Bhasma is then applied on the wrist of the right hand by saying the Mantra ‘Sharvaayeti’.

Then the Bhasma is applied on the back of the palm of the right hand by saying the Mantra ‘Pashupataya’.

The Bhasma is then applied on the shoulder-joint of the left hand by saying the Mantra ‘Ugraayeti’.

The Bhasma is then applied on the middle of the left hand (i.e. the bend of the elbow joint) by saying the Mantra ‘Agrevdhaayeti’.

Then the Bhasma is applied on the wrist of the left hand by saying the Mantra ‘Durevdhaayeti’.

The Bhasma is then applied on the back of the palm of the left hand by saying the Mantra 'Namo Hantra'.

Next, the Bhasma is applied on the top of the two shoulders by saying the Mantra 'Shankaraayeti'.

The above narrated sequence is to be followed by the worshipper while applying the sacred Bhasma (ash) on the various parts of his body.

After that, he should reverentially bow before Lord Shiva by saying the Mantra 'Somaayeti'.

The remaining Bhasma should be mixed in clear water and drunk by the worshipper by saying the Mantra 'Apaha Puna-ntwiti'. [7]

8. The remaining or residual part of the Bhasma is gulped down with water because one should not throw away even a tiny fraction of the consecrated Bhasma.

One should apply the Bhasma on the body in the way prescribed above even at noon and at dusk besides its application in the morning. Hence, the Bhasma is to be applied on the body three times a day without being careless or lazy about it.

If one shows laziness or carelessness or any kind of lack of interest in this matter, it proves to be his bane; it leads to his downfall and denigration.

It is prohibited to eat breakfast or other meals or having snacks prior to applying the Bhasma on the body.

If due to any reason whatsoever one does not apply the Bhasma on the body, or is unable to do so due to adverse circumstance, then he is barred from doing Japa (repetition) of the Gayatri Mantra, doing fire sacrifices, or offering oblations to the Gods and libations to the spirits of dead ancestors.

This is an ancient and traditional law of religious conduct ('Sanaatan Dharma') which is an eliminator of sins and their evil consequences, as well as a bestower of Moksha (liberation and deliverance) to the wearer.

This routine is prescribed for all people belonging to any of the four phases in the life of a man, i.e. it is applicable equally for the Brahmacharis, the Grihasthas, the Vaan-prasthas, and the Sanyasis¹.

If a Brahmin (the upper caste people) does not do so, i.e. if he forgets to apply the Bhasma or is lazy about its application, it is deemed to be an inauspicious act which casts its negative shadow on him; he is committing an error. He can get cleansed of his sins or get immunity from the evil affects of this negligence by doing Japa (repetition) of the Gayatri Mantra for one hundred eight times while standing in water (of a river or stream, for instance), as well as by fasting.

If the same error is committed by a Sanyasi, he can be absolved of the negative consequences of this negligence by fasting for one day and doing Japa with the Mantra 'OM' for twelve thousand times. Otherwise, cruel animals attack him on being inspired by Indra (the king of Gods).

[A Sanyasi is basically a wandering mendicant. So he is warned against doing anything that antagonizes the forces of Nature personified as various Gods because if they do not help him he would have to undergo unnecessary hardship. He should not annoy the Gods and keep them pleased so that they do not create hurdles in his spiritual path and make him suffer unduly. Wild and cruel animals may attack him as a token of punishment by the Gods if he does anything unreligious or unholy as a Sanyasi.] [8]

[Note—¹The life of a Hindu man is divided into four segments or sections of roughly twenty-five years each. These are called the 'Ashrams'. They are the following—(a)

Brahmacharya—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures

under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style of a boarding school. (b) Grihasta—when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the 2nd phase called Grihasta Ashram which is a householder's life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life alongside the dealings with this deceptive world with all its accompanying horrifying problems. (c) Vanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting-off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and meditation, living a life of total renunciation, and begging for food for survival while single mindedly endeavouring for emancipation and salvation. This phase of Sanyas also has many stages depending upon the spiritual elevation and accomplishments of the aspirant, viz. Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa, Paramhans, Turiyatit and Avadhut.

In brief, the 'Brahmacharis' are celibates students who must exercise the greatest self-restraint in order to concentrate their energy on their studies. It is the first phase of life. The 'Grihasta' is the householder. After study, the student marries to raise a family and contribute to the continuation of the cycle of creation. This marks the second phase of life. The 'Vaan-prastha' is a person who hands over the responsibilities of worldly affairs to his heir and prepares to lead a retired life, literally though the word means to 'retire to the forest'. This is the third phase of life. And finally, the 'Sanyasi' is a person who has renounced the world and spends his time in meditation and contemplation. This is the fourth and the final phase of life.

These four Ashrams, their characteristic features and virtues are described in detail in an Upanishad called Ashramo-panishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition. Refer also to Kathrudra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 3 in the context of one taking the vows of Sanyas, the renunciate way of life which is the fourth and the last phase in the life of a man which prepares him for his final liberation and deliverance from this world.

The Varaaha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 2, verse no. 6 says that true Moksha or Mukti for the creature is obtained when he rises above the limitations of these four Ashrams.]

9. In case the ingredients needed for preparing the Bhasma are not available (as prescribed in paragraph no. 2), then the worshipper can substitute them with clean clay or earth, and burn it (bake it and dry it) by offering it to the sacred fire (as prescribed in paragraph no. 2).

In this case, the Mantras and the method of application would be the same as those followed for the Bhasma made of prescribed ingredients. [9]

10. [Paragraph nos. 10-11 enumerate the benefits got by reading or reciting this Upanishad with faith and devotion.]

The reading or recitation of this Upanishad (along with the application of the sacred Bhasma) in the morning (dawn) frees the worshipper of the sins of the previous night. The sin of stealing gold (or for that matter, any kind of theft) is pardoned by such reading or recitation.

At noon time, after completing the religious duties such as saying ‘Sandhya prayers’ and observing other sacraments, as well as at dusk time, the worshipper should face the sun and read or recite this Upanishad (along with the application of the sacred Bhasma) with proper attention and devotion. This destroys or nullifies the evil effects of drinking intoxicating drinks and stealing gold (or any theft). It also provides forgiveness or pardon from the horrendous sin of killing of a Brahmin, a cow, a horse, a Guru (teacher), any of the parents (mother or father), and other horrible sins. [10]

[Note— Pardoning of sins—It would be observed that numerous Upanishads conclude by saying something to the effect that anyone who reads it would be pardoned of grave sins. But it must be understood in the correct context and with proper wisdom.

This pardoning should not be construed as a license for murder and committing other sins in the belief that mere repetition of the holy Mantras and living in Kashi would provide freedom from their horrific consequences. No, they wouldn’t. Unless the man is sincere about his repentance and regrets honestly, unless he sincerely wants to reform himself and turn a new leaf in his life, mere reading of any scripture or visiting a pilgrim site or repeating some Mantra would not serve any purpose. An honest man who has realised his mistakes and wishes to atone for his misdeeds would not shy away from accepting his misdeeds, which in itself requires a great deal of moral courage and strength of mind as accepting one’s crimes and confessing may be used against him. Such a man would also like to undo what mistakes he had done previously in his life as far as he can. Towards this end, he would willingly suffer, because this suffering is a form of ‘Tapasya’ or penance for him to wash away the soot that has clung to his pure self because of his past.

The very fact that the man is sincerely desirous of emancipation and salvation ensures that he has decided to reform himself and is very eager for repentance for his past misdeeds and sins that he might have committed out of ignorance or out of compulsions of circumstances. Every man has the right to reform himself, for to err is an ordinary part of human life. No one can claim that he has not committed any wrong any time in life. The very realisation that he has been erring, that he must redeem himself while there is still some time left, and the sincerity with which the aspirant seeks liberation from bondages that are consequent of his past evil deeds is a sign that he should be given a chance to reform himself.

The Upanishad gives the remedy and the means of his spiritual upliftment, redemption and rehabilitation. It essentially tells him that everything is not lost, and there is still a chance of finding Mukti from the evil consequences of his past deeds. The basic idea that is being stressed here is that every man or woman gets a chance for redemption in life, and it is another matter how he or she looks at it or even recognizes that opportunity. The chance is there, but that chance is not to be played fools around with; it has to be used judiciously. It should not be used to hoodwink the world and escape punishment, but for true repentance and mending of ways. A man should not revert back to his bad old habits once he is assured of pardon for his past mischief

This is essentially what the aim of this Upanishad is; this is the implied meaning when it says that even such horrible sins as murder would be excused. The subtle and implied intentions of the scriptures should be correctly interpreted to really benefit from them, and not to use them to justify reckless behaviour, as that would be tantamount to killing their spirit. That these wise principles enshrined in the scriptures would be twisted and turned on their heads by selfish men is not their fault. For instance, the Devi Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 32 says—“By reading this Upanishad in the morning, the person is able to nullify or neutralize the bad effects of the sins and misdeeds of the previous night, and when read in the evening the same good benefit is got for the sins and misdemeanors of the day time.

If it is read twice a day, at dawn and at dusk, the sinner is therefore freed from his sins and their evil consequences.

It ought to be noted here that merely ‘reading’ would not help. This blanket pardon given by this Upanishad should not be construed as a license for doing wrong in the belief that any wrong-doings of the day would be forgiven when it is read in the evening, and all evils of the night would be made null and void by reading it in the morning. Nothing would be more stupid than to think this way. The primary idea is if a man has inadvertently or under the forces of circumstances done something wrong, then he has all the right to claim pardon and find a means for redemption. He may have erred, but he has the right for Mukti from sins. So, if he reads this Upanishad sincerely and with commitment, he is bound to become wise and enlightened, he is bound to become spiritually inclined as opposed to indulgent men engrossed in self-gratifications. Such holy and pious men are indeed eligible for pardon and redemption. The unsaid condition is that the sin should not be repeated. If it is, then the purpose of reading this Upanishad is defeated and the reader is simply mouthing meaningless jumble of words in the guise of saying hymns or offering prayers. He has no fear of the Lord in him, for if he had it then he would know that the Lord resides in his own bosom, and then how can his evil deeds be hidden from the Supreme Being, or for that matter how dare he even think of committing sins when the Lord is enshrined in his own body which has now become holy and consecrated like a shrine?]

11. The immense value of reading or recitation of this Upanishad three times a day (dawn, noon and dusk) is equivalent to the reading or recitation of the Vedas.

The worshipper or devotee gets the benefit of going to all the holy pilgrim sites.

He becomes sinless, and lives a full life (i.e. he does not die pre-maturely).

He gets the reward of successfully doing the Prajaapatya Yagya (a kind of fire sacrifice).

He is rewarded with material prosperity and wealth, as well as an abundance of livestock such as cows. [In ancient times, the wealth of a person in the society, which was basically agrarian, was measured by the number of cows or other livestock that he possessed.]

This Upanishad should be regularly read and studied—this is the preaching of Lord Sada Shiva (i.e. the eternal Lord Shiva) who is accompanied by his divine consort Amba, the Mother Goddess (i.e. Parvati). [11]

[Note—It is to be noted here that this is a usual pattern adopted in ancient scriptures to emphasize the importance of the text being read by saying that it is self-sufficient and is equivalent to reading all other great scriptures taken together. The intention is not to demean the importance of any of the other scriptures but is simply done to highlight the significance of the concerned text so that the reader takes it seriously, reads it carefully, and pays due attention to its teaching instead of treating it callously.

All metaphysical and spiritual texts have their own importance, and they all lead to the same goal through different paths. A wise man is one who selects the path best suited to him in order to reach his spiritual goal with ease, and encountering the least of distraction and discomfort.]

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Canto 2

1. Sage Jabal Bhusund once again bowed before Lord Mahadeva (Shiva) and Amba (the Mother Goddess; the divine consort of Shiva, i.e. Parvati, also known as Uma),

and requested, ‘What are the duties of a Brahmin which he must diligently do, and failing to do which results in his falling from his exalted stature?’

Who is worthy of worship and adoration? On whom should one meditate and contemplate; who is worthy of such remembrance and meditation?

What is the proper way of doing Dhyan (meditation, contemplation, remembrance)? Where should one do Dhyan?

Please be kind to enlighten me on these subjects.’ [1]

2. Lord Mahadeva explained in brief, ‘He (Brahmin) should get up from his bed before sunrise. He should attend to the routine call of Nature and then clean himself by bathing.

He should symbolically clean his inner-self by praying, and for this purpose he should use the Rudra Sukta (or Mantra)¹. To keep his exterior clean, he should wear clothes that are clean and un-torn. He should have a firm conviction that observance of this routine helps him to get rid of his sins.

[The emphasis here is on internal as well as external cleanliness and purity. One is expected to purge all his impurities and focus his mind on Lord Rudra who is one of the divine forms of Lord Shiva. Since Rudra is the ‘concluder’ of creation, it implies that the worshipper eliminates or ‘concludes’ all his worldly taints and blemishes by invoking the Lord in his inner-self. The very fact that Rudra is invoked ensures that all his spiritual faults, shortcomings and corruptions are automatically eliminated or concluded. He thus becomes holy and pure like Lord Shiva himself. Once this happens, he becomes a personified form of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being.

Internal cleaning is done by invoking Lord Rudra with the aid of his Mantras, because these Mantras help in harnessing the cosmic energy specific to Rudra. External cleaning is done by wearing clean clothes that are not torn. Even in modern society a man is expected to turn up properly dressed and groomed if he expects respect by others. An unkempt man is looked down by all. It shows that he is lazy and not well educated and bred.

‘Sins’ are like dirt that clings to the inner-self of the spiritual aspirant so much so that they taint his Atma, the truthful ‘self’ which is otherwise pure, holy and immaculate. So, invocation of the Rudra Sukta helps the spiritual aspirant to clean his inner-self by getting rid of the sins and their accumulated thick layer of negativity.]

Facing the rising sun and meditating upon its splendorous form (as a personification of the Supreme Being), he should make the three lines of the Tripund at the appropriate spot on the body (which is the forehead) by using white Bhasma (ash of the fire sacrifice as prepared according to the prescribed way described in Canto 1 of this Upanishad).

After that, he should wear white Rudraksha beads² on various parts of the body as follows:—Forty such beads should be worn on the head in the form of a girdle. On the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the top of the skull), there should be one or three beads tied around it. Twelve beads are wrapped around the ears in the form a ring. Thirty-two beads are worn around the neck as a necklace. Sixteen beads are worn on the upper part (biceps) of each hand as arm-bands. Similarly, twelve beads are worn on each wrist as wrist-bands. Six beads are worn on the thumbs as rings. [2]

[Note—¹*Rudra Sukta or Mantra*—refer paragraph no. 4 of Canto 1 of this Upanishad.

²*Rudraksha bead*—The Rudraksha beads are the seeds of the tree *Eleocarpus ganitrus*. The beads with five faces or surfaces used in rosaries and necklaces are also

called Kalagni-rudra beads because these are very much liked by Lord Shiva. The reason is that Shiva, in his most ancient primary form, had five faces.

It is called Rudraksha because it emerged from the eyes of Rudra. Refer—*Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 7, verse no. 8.

The great spiritual importance and metaphysical significance of the Rudraksha beads have been explained in the *Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad* of the Sam Veda tradition, the *Kalagni Rudra Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, and the *Brihajjabal Upanishad*, Brahman 7, verse no. 8 of the Atharva Veda tradition.

Origin of Rudraksha—There are two versions regarding the origin of Rudraksha seeds. According to the *Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad* of Sam Veda, verse no. 2, they were produced as tear drops when Lord Rudra had closed his eyes to meditate before slaying the demon Tripurasur. According to another version given in the *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Brahman 7, verse no. 8, at the time of doomsday, Lord Rudra had closed his eyes after having annihilated this creation. This is also why it is called ‘Rudraksha’—something that makes one weep, something that has been born from the eyes of Rudra who had mercilessly concluded this creation. Perhaps he had closed his eyes to cool them down, or perhaps he was overwhelmed by the destruction and ruin that unfolded before his eyes that made him wince with regret. Tears must have rolled down from these eyes, and these formed the seeds called the Rudraksha beads. Shiva is an eternally merciful Lord so he must have invariably felt immense regret at having had to carry out this nasty job of burning down everything during the doomsday. But the Lord was duty-bound to do so as a part of the cosmic cycle of destruction and construction mandated by none other than the Supreme Being himself, and Shiva is none other than the latter. In other words, it is Shiva himself who had laid down the laws of creation and conclusion, and so he must adhere to these cosmic laws in order to maintain their sanctity. When the evil and vices in this world go beyond limits, the Lord assumes the ferocious form of Rudra to clean the slate and begin afresh so that those noble and auspicious souls who were about to be crushed by the ascendant evil could be given a chance for living a new life free from fear.

How to wear Rudraksha—This has been described in *Rudraksha Jabal Upanishad* of Sam Veda, in its verse nos. 17-23, and in *Brihajjabal Upanishad* of Atharva Veda, Brahman 7, verse no. 8.]

3. The oblations that are made during worship that is done three times a day should be done with the help of blades of the Kush grass which act as a small spoon or a spatula. [Kush grass is also known as Darbha or Durba. Its botanical name is *poa cynosuroides*, and it is a dark green reed used during religious ceremonies and observances.]

Offerings to the sacred fire are done by saying the Mantra ‘Agni-jyotiriti’ etc.

Lord Shiva’s symbol called the Shiva Lingam is formally worshipped three times a day (morning, noon and evening).

The worshipper should sit on a mat made of Kush grass and meditate upon Lord Shiva accompanied by the Amba, the Mother Goddess (i.e. Parvati or Uma) by employing the ‘Rudra Shukta’ as follows—‘The Lord is sitting on the Nandi (the bull). His arms are of a golden hue; his general countenance also has a golden hue; and his form appears to be cast in gold.

The Lord is the eliminator or destroyer of the snare represented by the continuous cycle of birth and death that has shackled all the living beings in its vicious grip. [That is, the Lord grants the boon of Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, to all the creatures.]

He is the primordial Purush personified. [That is, Lord Shiva is a personified form of the cosmic Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-

encompassing gross but invisible form of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

His neck is coloured dark with a tinge of yellow¹.

He is highly self-realised, enlightened and wise. He always thinks of higher things of life instead of worldly and lowly things. His inclinations are always holy, noble and auspicious; they have a spiritually elevating dimension in them. His mind and thoughts are set on higher goals in life, and he never allows himself to ever do or think of anything that may lead to his denigration or downfall from the exalted stature or position he holds. (That is, he is 'Urdhva-reta'.)

He has three eyes ('Trilochan'). [The Lord has two conventional eyes, and one eye on the middle of the forehead signifying the mystical powers of insight that comes with the highest form of wisdom, enlightenment, knowledge and self-realisation. He is also called Triyambak and Trinetra because of these three eyes.]

He has taken the form of this whole world ('Vishwa-roop'). This is because the entire creation is a revelation of Brahm, the Supreme Being, and Shiva is a personified form of Brahm².

That is why he is said to have thousands of eyes ('Sahastraaksham')³ symbolizing countless creatures and all forms of life in this creation. This is also a metaphor for the fact that nothing is hidden from the Lord, for he 'sees' everything everywhere, even the most secret and the esoteric is known to him.

Similarly, he has thousands of heads ('Sahastra-shirsha'), and thousands of legs ('Sahastra-charan'). In fact, the entire creation (world) is embraced in his arms; this whole creation represents his arms. [If he has 'thousands of eyes', then it is natural that he would also have equal number of heads. It also means that the Lord has equal number of mouths, tongues, ears, noses etc. Again, if he has thousands of legs it also implies that he must have equal number of hands. All this simply indicate that the entire creation is a majestic, a grand and a magnificent revelation of one single Divinity known as Shiva who exists in multifarious forms in which this creation is known to exist. All the forms are nothing but Shiva, the truthful One.]

Hence, Lord Shiva represents the Atma (soul) of the whole creation.

[This reflects upon the metaphysical doctrine that the word 'Atma' refers to the pure consciousness that resides inside the body of an individual creature as his 'true self', as his 'soul'. This Atma of the individual is the microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic Consciousness that is universal, and which uniformly pervades throughout this creation. This universal Atma at the macrocosmic level of creation is known as Brahm. This Brahm therefore is the subtlest and most sublime entity in existence. When this Brahm revealed itself in the form of this creation, it went through subtle steps in its transition from the subtlest to the grossest forms. The first step was the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing, all-inclusive invisible macrocosmic form of Brahm which was the latter's first gross form.]

The word 'gross' when applied to the Viraat Purush is only in terms of relativity, for both Brahm and Viraat are extremely sublime and subtle when compared to the rest of the creation for which the word 'gross' is applied. It is easy to understand this phenomenon. We have 'air' all around us, but do we ever feel it if it shows no movement? No, we can't know the presence of 'air' because we can't see it, hear it, touch it, taste it or smell it. But when the same air begins to move, as breeze or a storm, we can easily make out its presence when it rubs against our faces or skin of the hand.

Air is a subtle element whose existence cannot be denied because we can't see it. Similarly, the existence of Brahm cannot be denied because we can't see it. But

even as it is impossible to imagine life sans the air, it is also impossible to imagine existence and life without Brahm. Life means ‘consciousness’, and hence Brahm and consciousness are regarded as being synonyms of each other.

Again, as the atom is the basic and fundamental building block of all elements in existence though we can’t see it, the Atma (the soul) is also the quintessential basis unit of life without which the latter is not feasible.

In spite of being primarily subtle, the ‘air element’ begins to show varying degrees of grossness depending upon the level or plane in which it exists—e.g. the air near the surface of the earth is denser and grosser as compared to the air in the higher reaches of the atmosphere where it becomes lighter and less denser. The same air gently massages our faces when it blows as a soft breeze, and the same air causes havoc when it rages as a vicious storm.

The air lives inside the body as the ‘Pran’, the life-factor of the body. It has been said in the Upanishads that this Pran, also known as the ‘vital wind’ because without it no body would survive, has many forms, such as Pran (breath), Apaana, Samaana, Vyaana and Udaana etc. Each has a special function. But no man can feel them inside the body because they are extremely subtle. But not feeling them does not mean that one can deny their existence in the body for the simple reason that if the vital winds cease to exist or function, the body would stop functioning and fall dead. Similarly, no one has seen the Atma, the pure consciousness that resides inside the body, but it is undeniable that without the Atma the body would not ‘live’. We know of the presence of the Pran and the Atma in the body by deduction—for if the body is alive and active, these entities are deemed to be present in it.

Briefly, the idea is that though Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is itself an extremely subtle and sublime entity, but when it assumes the form of this creation it becomes gross in a relative term. The ‘grossness’ is relative to its primary subtle form which is ‘pure consciousness’ without a form, body and attributes. Since the creation has a definite form with certain attributes it is relatively gross as compared to its quintessential form known as Brahm that neither has a form nor any kind of attribute.

In other words, Brahm, when it is understood from the cosmic perspective, is subtle and sublime Consciousness that has no particular form and shape, and that is eternal, infinite and imperishable, but when the same Brahm is understood from the angle of this visible creation and its inhabitant individual creatures who are also manifestations of Brahm, the latter appears to be gross and least sublime because the creation and the creatures have a gross body and gross existence that is finite, is perishable and has a definite form.

The ‘Consciousness’ existing at the cosmic level is Brahm, and the same ‘Consciousness’ existing at the level of the individual creature is the Atma. The ‘Consciousness’, therefore, is the common denominator; it is the ‘Consciousness’ that pervades throughout the creation, as the Atma at the micro level, and as the Parmatma at the macro level. It is just like the ‘atom’ that is the basic and fundamental unit of all elements in the Periodic Table—right from the lightest element to the heaviest one.

Now, coming back to the example of the ‘air’ we see that when the same air has pollutants in it, like smoke or coloured gases, we can actually ‘see’ the air. The same thing applies to Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness.

In its primary form, Brahm is extremely subtle and sublime, but when it got involved in the process of creation which evolved in a step-by-step manner, each successive form of Brahm got one notch grosser than its previous form. That is, the very first form of Brahm as the Viraat Purush was less subtle than Brahm. The next form as Vishnu was less subtle than the Viraat Purush, and the progression went on

increasing in grossness and decreasing in subtlety. The grossest form of Brahm is this visible world, and the subtlest form is the Viraat Purush, and everything lies in between.]

Since Lord Shiva is Brahm personified, it is natural that all the honours, glories and epithets applied to Brahm would also apply to Shiva.

Hence, Shiva is 'Advaitya'—i.e. he is non-dual.

He is 'Nishkal'—i.e. he has no Kalaas, i.e. no separate or distinct attributes, forms, parts, divisions, variations and fractions as he is one immutable whole; one who has no taints, faults, blemishes and imperfections that can scar his immaculacy and purity; one who is immaculate and without any faults or blemishes as he is free from all the corrupting influences of Maya representing delusions, conceit and deceit).

He is 'Nishkriya'—i.e. he is not involved in any of the affairs of the world, as he is totally neutral, detached and dispassionate, has renounced everything, and being self-realised he knows that the deeds are done by the gross body and not by the Atma which is merely a neutral witness of what the body does.

He is absolutely 'Shaanta'—i.e. he is calm, peaceful, serene, rested, tranquil, having no restlessness or agitations.

He is 'Shiva'—i.e. he is an embodiment of the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, truthfulness, divinity and holiness.

He is 'Akshar'—i.e. he is imperishable and one who is represented by the divine word OM.

He is 'Avyaya'—i.e. he is not diminished; he is infinite; he is eternal, unchanging and imperishable; he is not subject to degradation.

He is the eternal Lord (the Supreme Being; Brahm) from whom Hari (Vishnu the sustainer), Har (Rudra the concluder) and Hiranyagarbha (Brahma the creator) have come into being.

This supreme Creator and Lord of creation cannot be known or verified or judged by proofs, evidences and logics.

The Lord has no beginning or end.'

After having honoured the Lord with the Rudra Sukta (hymn) as described above, the worshipper should offer him white Bhasma, the fruits of the Bel tree (the wood-apple tree; *Aegla marmelos*), and leaves of the Bilva tree (*Aegle marmelos*)⁴.

The leaves of the Bilva tree should be green (i.e. freshly plucked) and three in number. If green leaves are not available, then dry leaves can also be offered. [3]

[Note—¹Lord Shiva's throat is dark blue or purple in colour. Since the glow and radiance of the whole body of the Lord is golden as mentioned in this paragraph above, but the throat had turned black because he had kept the horrible poison he had drunk in his throat instead of allowing it to enter the stomach. When it is said that his neck has a yellow hue it is intended to mean that primarily the colour of his skin was like pure gold, though of course it had turned dark later on. The corroding poison which darkened Shiva's neck had emerged from the ocean when it was churned by the Gods and Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternity. The Lord had accepted to drink it to protect the rest of the creation from getting scorched by its heat and toxins. Since this creation is lodged in the Lord's own self, in his abdomen, he had kept this poison in the throat and did not allow it to enter his stomach. This resulted in the throat getting permanently burnt. The dark blue or purple colour of the Lord's throat is the result of this single event and shows the Lord's willingness to go to any length to grant his unilateral protection to this creation.

It is very interesting to note that while on the one hand Lord Shiva is depicted as being the concluder of creation—and this is his assigned role amongst the Trinity of Gods consisting of Brahma, whose role is to create, Vishnu, whose role is to sustain, nourish and protect the creation, and Rudra (a form of Shiva), whose designated role

is to bring about the conclusion of this creation—but on the other hand he had allowed himself to be permanently dis-coloured and take the risk of keeping the most horrible poison in existence lodged inside his body because otherwise this poison would kill the creation and scald everything in it to ashes. This is the reason why only Shiva is honoured as being the ‘Maha-Deva’, the ‘great’ God. Though Vishnu shoulders the formidable, most daunting and arduous task of taking care of the whole creation—and this is not a cake-walk and a joke considering what a man experiences in life taking care of his single family, what to talk of the whole society—this honour of being a Maha-Deva was not bestowed upon him. The same thing applies to the grand old patriarch of creation called Brahma who had not only created this gross world but even the sources of highest wisdom in the form of the venerable scriptures, but was not honoured with this title.

Hence, Shiva is truly the Supreme Being personified. One of his functions is to conclude this creation, and in this role he is known as Rudra, the angry form of the Supreme Being. But even as the same Brahm is known to have revealed himself in the form of each and every unit of creation, which in itself is extremely diverse and multifarious, the same Shiva has taken many names and assumed many roles, one of which is Rudra whose role is to bring about the ‘conclusion’ of existence.

The question arises—why did Lord Shiva who is known to be calmness and tranquility personified became so angry and vehement as to assume the ferocious form known as Rudra? Well the answer is simple—when the Supreme Being watched his own creation going out of control, when he observed that his off springs were getting nastily pervert and sinful, and inspite of the Lord being so gracious that he had given them a lot of leverage and had shown a lot of leniency they went from bad to worst, the Lord lost his patience and decided that enough is enough. He became angry at himself at having made the mistake of allowing himself to be engulfed in the veil of Maya (delusions) which is his own creation, and which had resulted in the creation of this world-like Frankenstein Monster that snatched his peace from him. It is much like a parent slapping a naughty child when he becomes extremely annoyed and feels disturbed by the latter’s mischief.

²The uniformity and non-duality between *Shiva and Brahm* has been expounded in— (i) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Dakshin Murti or Dakshin Mukhi Upanishad, Pancha Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 30, Skanda Upanishad, verse nos. 9, 13, and Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 32. (ii) Atharva Veda’s Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 3, section 2, verse nos. 11-15; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 32; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 3-8 and 15.

³The fact that Brahm has *symbolic thousands of eyes and limbs* has been reiterated in other Upanishads as well—for example (i) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Shewtashwatar Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 3, 11, 14, 16. (ii) Atharva Veda’s Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 11, and Canto 6, paragraph no. 11.

⁴Refer Canto 1, paragraph no. 1 of this Upanishad.]

4. After this, worship items, along with sweets, fruits and water, are offered to the Lord.

Then, the worshipper should repeat the Rudra Sukta eleven times, though the one incantation of this Rudra Sukta that was done earlier while invoking the Lord (as described in paragraph no. 3 above) is sufficient to bestow countless fruits (rewards) upon the worshipper.

He must do Japa (repetition) with Shiva’s Mantra having six or eight letters. Otherwise, the one-word Mantra of ‘Shiva’ is sufficient. [This one word Mantra is simply ‘Shiva’ or ‘Shivam’.]

[There is another way in which these stanzas can be interpreted. ‘Then, the worshipper should do Japa of Lord Rudra who has taken eleven forms due to differing

Gunas (virtues, qualities, characteristics) exhibited by them, though the Lord has no specific form or attributes as he is beyond such limitations and perceptions because the Lord is eternal and infinite. However, for the purpose of his worship and to pay one's obeisance to him, the worshipper should use the Mantra of Rudra having six or eight letters. If this is not possible, then the single letter Mantra 'Shiva' is sufficient.']

The six-letter Mantra consists of three words as follows—the first word is 'OM' (referring to the supreme transcendental Brahm and used for salutation), the second is 'Namaha' (meaning that the worshipper is bowing before the Lord), and the third is 'Shivaaye' (referring to Lord Shiva). Hence, the full six-letter Mantra is 'OM Namaha Shivaaye'. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + OM = 6.]¹

The eight-letter Mantra consists also of three words as follows—'OM Namaha Maha-Devaaye'. [Here, the word Maha-Devaaye means the Great God or Lord. [OM + Ma + Haa + De + Vaa + Ye + Na + Maha = 8.]

The eight-letter Mantra of Shiva is known as the Tarak Mantra², the one which provides liberation and deliverance to the spiritual seeker; it ensures his emancipation and salvation. This Mantra provides liberation and deliverance to the devotees of Lord Shiva who is said to live in this terrestrial world at a pilgrim place known as the city of Kashi (i.e. the modern-day city of Varanasi in India).

Preaching this Tarak Mantra of Lord Shiva is equivalent to the preaching of the Mantras of the Vedas. [In other words, this is the Veda Mantra.] [4].

[Note—¹The *six-letter Mantra* of Shiva or Rudra is 'OM Namaha Shiva OM' according to Tripura Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, paragraph no. 8. Refer also to Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 3, verse no. 12-13. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + OM = 6.]

But according to our present Upanishad, it is 'OM Namaha Shivaaye'. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 6.]

Refer paragraph no. 18 of the present Canto 2 of this Upanishad below.

²Some of the other important Upanishads that are dedicated to the *Tarak Mantra* are the following—Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2 (full); the Atharva-shikhar, 2/1; Atharvashir, Kandika (Canto) 4; Advaitarak, verse nos. 3, 7-11; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 15-16; Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8 which is fully devoted to this theme.

Tarak Mantra is a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The word 'Tarak' means an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature's soul, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pain from which he is suffering in this world. The Mantra that has this potential is called the Tarak Mantra. Hence, the Tarak Mantra is one which provides liberation and deliverance to the spiritual seeker; it ensures his emancipation and salvation.

The Atharva Veda's Atharvashir Upanishad, Kandika 4; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 8 describes that OM is the Tarak Mantra.

The Tarsar Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 2 says that 'OM Namaha Narayanaaye' is the Tarak Mantra.

The Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is elaborately described in Ramottartaponishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in Tarak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation. This Tarak Mantra is preached by Lord Shiva for the benefit of a dying man in Kashi, the pilgrim city which is Shiva's terrestrial abode.

It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 2/1; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme, transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advai-tarak, 2-3).

The word *Tarak* means to cause or enable to pass or cross over, to carry over, one that rescues, provides relief and succour, one that can provide liberation and deliverance to the creature from any bondage. Further, the word *Tarak* also refers to the 'eye of wisdom that liberates one from the darkness of ignorance and delusions', and it has relevance here because meditation leads to the opening of the inner 'eye' of insight that leads to self realisation and enlightenment. 'Tarak' also means a meter of 4 x 13 syllables; hence it refers also to the various Mantras used for the purpose of meditation.

There are various Upanishads dealing with this aspect of meditation and spiritual deliverance—such as Advai Tarak Upanishad and Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. These Upanishads describe the 'Tarak Brahm' in all its finer connotations.

According to Tarsar Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 2, it is the following 'OM Namoha Narayanaye'.

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition describes the Tarak Mantra as OM in its Canto 2, verse no. 2.]

5. Now, I (Shiva) will preach you (sage Jabal Bhusund) about the eclectic but most enigmatic concept of 'Brahm'.

I am that Brahm (the Supreme Being; the cosmic Consciousness) that has made the Soma (the celestial Moon); the Moon is my revelation.

Likewise, the Pawan (wind or air) is made by me, and it is my manifestation.

Similarly, the Soma (here literally meaning the juice of the Soma plant, but a metaphor for the elixir of life, bliss and eternity) is made by me; the Soma is rather my manifestation.

I am the one who created the Mati (or Buddhi; intellect and mind); the Mati is rather my manifestation.

The Prithivi (earth) is made by me; the Prithivi is my manifestation.

I have made the Agni (fire); the Agni is my manifestation.

I have created Vishnu (the sustainer and protector of creation); it is me who has been revealed in the form of Vishnu.

I have created Indra (the king of Gods) as well as all the other Gods; it is me who has been revealed in their forms.

It is me who has created the three worlds represented by the three primary words Bhu meaning the terrestrial world, Bhuvaha meaning the world above the surface of the earth, and Swaha meaning the heavens.

In fact, the entire creation and each single unit of it, all living beings, all the Bhuvans (levels of creation or different worlds)—all the multifarious aspects of creation, its myriad colours, shapes and forms that had existed in the past, exists in the present and would exist in the future—are all created by me; they are all my revelations. Their 'Soma' (i.e. their essence and fundamental basis, their life and soul) is me alone.

Lord Rudra who is the most potent and powerful of the Gods, Hiranyagarbha (Brahma who is the creator of the visible world), as well as the greatest of sages,

seers, ascetics and hermits etc. are none but my own manifestation; they are born of me. [5]

6. The essence known as Rudra (i.e. my sublime and subtle form as the life-infusing consciousness) is present in the fire element, the water element and the medicinal herbs. It is Rudra that gives them their worth and importance¹.

It is the same Rudra that is present in all the living beings of this creation (as their Atma, the pure consciousness that infuses 'life' in the otherwise lifeless gross body).

Indeed, it is none but me in the many forms that I have taken. These forms are known as the 'Atma', that is also known as the Antaraatma (the individual soul, the consciousness that resides in the creature's body and forms his inner-self), as the 'Brahm' (the cosmic Soul; the cosmic Consciousness that pervades throughout this creation), and as the 'Jyoti' or light and illumination (representing knowledge, wisdom, skills, expertise and enlightenment, the factor that helps the creation emerge from behind the veil of darkness, as well as the factor that removes darkness and shows the path ahead to the creatures of this creation once the latter has come into existence).

There is nothing better, more exalted and superior than me in the entire creation. In fact, it is me (Shiva in his cosmic form as Brahm, the Supreme Being) who is supreme and transcendental in this creation (or world).

He who understands my essential and fundamental form, and then accepts me and worships or adores me with this enlightened knowledge, is able to attain the chief goal of life (which is to break free from the fetters of ignorance and delusions, and instead attain spiritual purity that leads to one's emancipation and salvation, known as obtaining Moksha).

By knowing me, i.e. by becoming enlightened and realised about the esoteric secrets of creation, about the cosmic form of Consciousness known as Brahm as well as its microcosmic form as the Atma, a creature is freed from the spiritual disease known as the cycle of birth and death. He obtains the Amrit or the elixir of eternity and bliss. He crosses over or overcomes all forms of spiritual torments and miseries.

I am the ultimate destination of everything in existence. All forms in which this creation exists are mine.

I am the one from whom all the creatures take birth, I am the one whose form they all represent (or, it is me who reveals myself in their forms), and it is in my cosmic form that they all collapse and merge at the end of their tenure.

One must worship and adore me with this wisdom and knowledge. [6]

[Note—¹That is, the most esoteric and intriguing factor that renders these three things—fire, water and medicinal herbs—indispensable for creation, that gives them their inherent characteristic qualities and virtues that make them so unique, so worthy and so important for creation and its life, is known as Brahm. The latter is in the form of the vital life-sustaining and protecting qualities that are present in each of these three things.

This is why the ferocious 'fire' that knows nothing but to burn to ashes anything with which it comes in contact with is also the provider of heat and warmth without which no life is tenable or imaginable in this creation. It is the fire element that keeps the body warm, helps in creation of rain, crop, cooking and digestion of food, etc.

Similarly, the 'water' is so unforgiving that when it so decides it can simply wipe off life from the surface of earth as is evident during the doomsday deluge or great floods and high tides; the ocean can devour huge ships and a river in spate wipes off large villages in a fit of rage. But this same water is the first requirement for life

anywhere; scientists search for water as signs of life even in far off planets and stars. It is the water that provides nourishment to the creature, because all the nutrients of food are dissolved in it before they can be made available to the creature. Water is necessary to cool down the scorch of the fire on earth. Without water, no life is imaginable.

In the same vein, medicinal herbs are important to keep the creatures healthy and fit to work. The medicinal herbs are nothing but plants with special healing and purifying properties. They have chemicals that clean the body of the creature as well as the environment of all toxins that threaten life. This ability distinguishes the 'medicinal herbs' from other plants. The factor that makes them stand out is Brahm personified in this form. That is, the hidden stupendous ability and mystical power of the ordinary humble plant, which apparently seems lifeless, gross, worthless and useless, to clean the complex structure of the creature's body and the vast environment of the earth of life-threatening toxins and pollutants is the cosmic Brahm revealed in their (plants') gross exterior forms just like this same Brahm has revealed himself as the creature who performs most formidable and daunting tasks with his humble gross body having limited means and reach.

If we closely examine this verse we will understand the difference between the two terms 'Shiva' and 'Rudra' on the one hand, and between 'Brahm' and 'Shakti' on the other hand. Lord Shiva is extremely calm, serene, self-contented, self-realised and blissful like Brahm, and is therefore regarded as a personification of the latter (i.e. of Brahm). He remains perpetually involved in doing mediation and contemplation, remaining happy and submerged in the thoughts of the transcendental Truth. Hence, he is regarded as the patron deity of ascetics who themselves are regarded as personified forms of Brahm because they have become extremely self-realised, i.e. they have experienced the truth about themselves as being the Atma which is pure consciousness. This Atma is a microcosmic form of the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation known as Brahm.

When the same Shiva assumes an angry form of Rudra at the time of conclusion of creation, he shows an astonishing and an astounding level of dynamism, energy, power, strength and vigour that are synonyms of the cosmic Shakti of Brahm. It is like the case of lightening that is present in the dark rain-bearing clouds in the sky. This lightening appears suddenly, streaks across the sky and causes a huge blast of light and thunder, and if it happens to strike the earth leaves behind scorched trees and ruined buildings, only to vanish without trace in another moment in the sky, withdrawing itself into the thick bank of cloud from which it made its appearance.

This analogy of the lightening appearing from and disappearing into the clouds in the sky would explain the phenomenon of Rudra vis-à-vis Shiva, and Shakti vis-à-vis Brahm. Rudra appears momentarily from Shiva, accomplishes the task for which Shiva had to assume this ferocious and ruthless form of anger, wrath and vehemence personified, only to vanish into the calm and tranquil form of Shiva. Similarly Shakti appears from the neutral cosmic entity known as the divine Brahm, accomplishes what is expected of it, and then disappears into Brahm without trace.

Since everything in creation is a manifestation of Brahm, this unique character of Brahm and its relationship with its dynamism revealed as Shakti is also revealed in all the five primary elements of creation such as sky, air, water, fire and earth. Let us take one example of earth to understand how it works out.

The earth is the grossest of the five elements, being heaviest and most dense. It is inert and lifeless on the outside like any other celestial body of the fathomless heaven, but still it conceives and harbours all imaginable forms of life, takes proper care of them and provides endlessly for their necessities of existence. The earth is self-sufficient in this respect, and it does not need any other help to sustain life, or even to replenish its reserves which never deplete inspite of constant exploitation. So in this sense the 'earth' is Brahm personified. But when the 'mother earth' becomes angry, she vents her anger as earthquakes, landslides, floods, tsunamis, famines and

draughts, leading to large scale destruction and havoc. This is the Shakti form of earth.

Then again, the earth is a solid piece of cosmic body which is lifeless, neutral and barren at one place as evidenced by the endless stretches of rocks and sand seen at some place on its surface, but at the same time it constitutes of charming and vibrant forms of endless variety of fauna and flora symbolizing life in all its splendour and grandeur at the other place. Even when the earth seems to be neutral, lifeless and inane, it still has its inherent dynamism and energy as shown by its magnetic field and its movement not only around its own self but also around the sun. This means that 'earth' stands for Brahm as well as for Brahm's Shakti simultaneously.

Likewise, if we take the example of the fire and the water, we find that on the one hand they are harbingers of life, growth and development on the one hand, and when annoyed become the cause of widespread destruction and havoc on the other hand. For instance, fire is an essential component of life because without the fire there will be no warmth and light, and the resultant chill and darkness would snuff life out of this creation. But the same fire can scorch everything to ashes if it becomes annoyed and decides to punish the world it had so benevolently nurtured.

The water also behaves in a similar fashion. While water is called the benevolent 'elixir of life' as it is the only element which actually cradles life in its merciful arms by providing it with readymade nourishment and acts as a buffer, a coolant and a soft lubricant that helps this creation to overcome the harsh and abrasive conditions on earth, which is nothing but a solid and rugged ball of thick and hardened rock that would have caused severe injury to the creation if it was not protected by the water, the same water can wipe out life if it turns malevolent as is evident during floods, high ocean tides and huge waves, tsunamis etc., or as observed during draughts when the water decides to withdraw itself and let the life parch itself out by thirst.

Air also exhibits similar characteristics. On the one hand the air is absolutely essential for life to exist in this world, because without air the life would suffocate to death, but the same air can cause ruin when it becomes angry, as is proved during fierce storms and cyclones.

The sky is the cosmic bowl which harbours everything that exists in this universe, from the smallest piece of cosmic debris to the huge galaxies and planetary systems. It is in the sky that our earth lives, and it is in the sky that the air we breathe is contained. But it is the same sky in from which devastating meteors and asteroids might strike upon the earth to wipe out entire generations of creatures. [It is one such event that had wiped out the ancient dinosaurs from the surface of earth, and more recently one such meteorite had blasted its way down to earth across the skies in the Ural Mountains of northern Russia which injured thousands of people and cause material damage to buildings and factories.] During severe thunderstorms, hurricanes and cyclones, it is the sky that is said to 'open up' and pour rain on the earth which cause deluge, or blow fierce winds that strike out viciously any thing standing up in its path much like the swing of the Vajra of Indra, the king of Gods. It is one such deluge pouring down from the sky or heaven that is expected to wipe out the present generation at the time of doomsday. Then again, during wars, it is from the sky that rockets, missiles and arrows shower down upon armies to kill and slay mercilessly.

So we conclude that while all the elements and all the units of creation are indeed manifestations of Shiva or Brahm, the latter's life-fostering and benevolent nature is displayed in these units when they act as aids to development of life and its growth, while their destructive aspect is a representative of Rudra. The dynamism, energy, vigour, strength and abilities displayed by all the units of creation are, however, a manifestation of the Shakti in its many myriad forms.]

7. All the creatures and the Gods offer their prayers to me; they adore and worship me. [Here, the pronoun 'me' refers to the truthful form of Shiva, which is Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness revealed as the Supreme Being.]

The wind blows, the sun rises, the fire burns and gives heat, and Indra (the king of Gods) rules over this creation on my commands and according to the laws established by me, because they all fear me and are afraid of violating my orders and regulations.

I am a personified form of Soma (the sanctified essence or juice of the Soma plant that is used as a metaphor for eternity, auspiciousness, life and bliss) because it is me that is the inherent curative property that is present in all medicinal herbs, as well as the fact that it is me who is the sustainer and protector of this creation.

It is me who has revealed himself as the earth, the water, the fire and the wind. It is me who has manifested himself as the Kaal (death; time), and the Disha (various directions and their patron Gods).

It is me who is present as the Atma (soul; pure consciousness; the essence and the soul) of all living beings.

Everything and everyone is established in me; I am the one who bears them all; I am the one who forms their foundation, support and basis.

It is me who is established in all forms in this creation.

Those who are Brahm-realised and highly enlightened and erudite attain me who am the Supreme Being and the ultimate destination searched by them.

Brahma the creator and Shiva the concluder are none but my eternal form that is steady, unchanging, immutable, infinitely divine, supreme and transcendental. [7]

8. Though I have no physical eyes, but it is deemed that I have countless eyes everywhere in the sense I can see everything; nothing is hidden from my views.

Similarly, I have no physical ears, but still it is deemed that I have countless ears everywhere in the sense I can hear everything; nothing is hidden from my knowledge; there is no sound that I do not hear; nothing is said that I do not know.

I have no physical legs, but still it is deemed that I have countless legs everywhere in the sense that I can go everywhere I wish, and that nothing is beyond my reach.

I have no physical hands, but still it is deemed that I have countless hands everywhere in the sense that I can accept everything I wish and do everything I want; everything that is done in this world is done by me; everything that is accepted in this world is accepted by me; everything that is given in this world is given by me.

I have no physical heads, but still it is deemed that I have countless heads everywhere in the sense that all the functions carried out by the head of all the creatures in this world are deemed to be carried out by me alone.

I am the object and aim of all Vidyas (knowledge, skills, learning) as well as the Mantras (spiritual formulas).

In fact, Vidya is my personified subtle form; I am Vidya personified.

I am the Lord of the universe.

I do not decay or perish.

Anyone who knows and understands these eclectic virtues of my divine cosmic form (as Brahm, the Supreme Being) is freed from the fetters that shackle him to this material world like an animal held in captivity.

That is why I am known as 'Pashupaat'¹—one who liberates animals from their shackles; it also means freeing a living being from his animal-like lowly instincts that demean the exalted nature of his Atma. [Here, the 'animal' refers to the Jiva, the

living being or the creature, and the ‘shackle’ to (i) the never ending cycle of birth and death, (ii) to the numerous temptations of this mundane artificial and deluding material world of sense objects, and (iii) to the evil and lowly natural instincts that may exist in the Jiva that would undermine the holiness and divinity of his Atma. The Lord ensures that such lowly traits in his character are eliminated for good so that the creature can find liberation and deliverance, or emancipation and salvation.] [8]

[Note—¹Refer: References: (i) Atharva Veda = Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 8, 18; Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 14; Pashupat Brahm Upanishad, Purva Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 11, 32; Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse no. 7. (ii) Sam Veda = Jabalu-panishad, verse nos. 11-18.

Ahankar, or pride and ego, makes a man no less than an animal. This is stressed in Jabalu-panishad of Sam Veda tradition, verse nos. 11-18, and Sharav Upanishad of Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 which stresses that ‘Isha’, or the Lord Shiva who is regarded as the supreme Lord of creation, had to become a ‘Pashupati’, Lord of animals, just because he is the undisputed Lord of all the creatures, and those creatures who have lost wisdom and a sense of righteousness, those who are overcome with Ahankar, are no better than animals.

When the ‘Ahankar’ is eliminated or symbolically reduced to ashes, the creature becomes an ‘Ish’ from a ‘Pashupati’; in other words he has become a purified creature in the place of an animal-like creature. This transformation or metamorphosis—from an animal to a non-animal or from an animal-like creature to a wise and erudite person—is tantamount to acquiring truthful knowledge and become spiritually wise and enlightened.

The Lord is especially honoured by the epithet of ‘Pashupati’ because an enlightened worshipper targets all his spiritual endeavours towards attaining high levels of purity and holiness that entails that he first controls his basic animal-like natural instincts; he is expected to have completely exercised total self-restraint on his sense organs. Brahm is not sitting somewhere in the sky, but the Lord resides inside one’s own inner-self as his Atma. This Atma is the Lord of the creature. So when a worshipper pays his obeisance to ‘Pashupati Parmatma’ he is actually honouring the Atma which has learnt to practice exemplary self-control over animal-like instincts, characters, qualities and behaviour.

An entire Upanishad is named after this philosophy, and it is called the Pashupat Brahm Upanishad. This Upanishad is Chapter 19 of this volume as it happens to be the 19th Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda.]

9. The human beings who observe the tenets of Yoga and live in the middle world (that lies between the heaven and the hell, i.e. the earth, the terrestrial world) make efforts to attain me.

When they do attain me, they do not have to take a birth again.

The holy pilgrim city of Kashi (Varanasi) is established on the tip of my trident. All those who live there and die there are certain to reach me and become one with me (i.e. they find final liberation and deliverance for their souls in the sense that they do not have to come back to the world again).

Just like the offerings that are made to the raging fire during the fire sacrifice do not come back to the worshipper or cannot be retrieved by him no matter how hard he tries, those who leave their gross bodies (at the time of death) do not come back into this world and take a birth again. This is the tenet, the maxim, the axiom and the preaching of the scriptures. This is the auspicious duty of all spiritual aspirants¹. [9]

[Note—¹This observation is an excellent one and strikes-off in one masterful stroke all misconceptions about the fallacious notion of having to take a birth again. The body is cremated or buried after death, and it is either reduced to ashes when cremated or decays and gets decomposed into the elements if buried. So where is the

question of 'rebirth'? 'Death' in this context is restricted to the gross body, and not the soul or the Atma which is a Spirit that escapes from the body and flies off imperceptibly into the vast realm of the sky. Hence, if a dying man has no worldly desires left in him, this Spirit would simply not look down and seek a vacant slot to come back in the form of a newly born creature; it will be going on and on like a gas filled balloon. On the other hand, if the dying man has unrequited desires left in him, his Spirit would turn back and get a new birth as a newly born creature.

So in effect, the real liberation and deliverance is not merely leaving the gross body, but leaving it for good. And this can be achieved only by being truly wise, enlightened and knowledgeable about one's real spiritual goal in life. This can happen only when one becomes self and Brahm realised, because then he would find the world artificial and all its objects equally illusory. Who in his right senses would pursue a thing that has no substance or value, a thing that is as illusory as the mirage seen in a desert, instead of spending his time and energy to obtain something that is real and of real worth? That is, a wise man is one who spends his precious time and energy to find ways and means to attain self-realisation and Brahm-realisation which however should be his ultimate spiritual goal as his Mukti, or liberation and deliverance, is directly dependent upon success in attaining this goal.

A wise man should aim for the 'real Truth' instead of the 'virtual truth'. It is like picking up a real and rare piece of diamond instead of getting tempted to accept a cheaper version of diamond having the same glitter but lacking in value, or being distracted and waylaid by the temptations of accepting a worthless piece of glass having a glitter and shine resembling that of the original thing, but still remaining glass. These only deceive the beholder if he is not wise and discerning enough to judge what is good for him and what is not.]

10. Wearing the sacred Bhasma (ash) on the body (as prescribed in Canto 1, paragraph nos. 5-7) and marking the Tripund (the three-line mark on the forehead as mentioned in Canto 2, paragraph no. 2) is ordained by ancient religious tradition. Hence, one should not be careless about them.

Similarly, one should not show carelessness or laziness in wearing the Rudraksha beads (as described in Canto 2, paragraph no. 2) as well as worshipping me (Shiva) by the Rudra Mantras (as narrated in Canto 1, paragraph no. 1; Canto 2, paragraph nos. 3-8).

One should be especially vigilant about not doing anything inside a temple (or any other shrine) that is considered impure, inauspicious, unrighteous, unholy, corrupt and ignoble, and which may be against the decorum and sanctity of the holy place¹.

One must not show indolence or carelessness in observing religious vows, duties and sacraments. [10]

[Note—¹One must be exceptionally careful so as not to do anything that would defile a holy place such a shrine of Lord Shiva. From the metaphysical point of view it is to be noted here that even the body of the creature is an abode of Shiva, and therefore a wise and enlightened man must take proper care of what he does using his body, because even one wrong deed done or action taken by his body would be tantamount to defiling the holy abode of the Lord, which in this case is his own body.

The fact that the body is an abode of Lord Shiva has been reiterated in a number of Upanishads. References: As an *abode of Lord Shiva*—(i) The Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 72, 165-168, Canto 2, verse nos. 6-10, 20, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-15, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-5, 13-16, and Canto 6, verse nos. 32-33, 47; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 50 and 53; and Skand Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11. (ii) Sam Veda's Jabal Darshan Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 48-59. (iii) Atharva Veda's Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 7, verse no. 4.

Body as an abode of Shakti (the dynamic manifestation of Shiva and revealed as a divine Goddess) and 4 *Peeths*—Krishna Yajur Veda's Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 6-12.

Body as an abode of Shiva and Shakti—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda's Yog Kundali Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 75; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4. (ii) Atharva Veda's Brihajjabal Upanishad, Brahman 2, verse no. 8-9.]

11. [This paragraph describes the glories of the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva known as Kashi.]

For those desirous of Mukti (liberation and deliverance), residing in the pilgrim city of Kashi (the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva) is equivalent to doing Tapa¹ (penances, austerities and other holy deeds requiring commitment, sufferance, hardships and steadfastness). It is known as the Avimukta Kshetra². I provide liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to all those who live there.

Hence, those desiring such spiritual benefits should not abandon Kashi. There is no better place for spiritual welfare other than Kashi known as the Avimukta Kshetra.

Kashi has four important places at four corners. Inside this periphery is the central area, known as the 'Anthaa Griha'. Inside this central area there are five important places. Amongst them, the shrine of Lord Shiva is the best and most holy.

To the east of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Aishwarya' (the glorious virtues of fame, majesty, glory, greatness, divine faculties, super-human powers, opulence, wealth, fortunes, grandeur etc.)

To the south of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Vichaalan' (factors that induce confusions, doubts, restlessness, agitation, flux, delusions, illusions, passions, attractions, attachments etc.).

To the west of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Vairagya' (renunciation, detachment, dispassion, neutrality, non-involvement etc.).

To the north of this shrine is the symbolic abode of 'Gyan' (truthful knowledge, enlightenment, realisation, erudition, wisdom etc.).

My (Shiva's) symbol or image known as 'Shiva Lingam' is established in this shrine. It has mystical qualities and eclectic virtues that reflect my glories, divinity and holiness. These qualities and virtues are as follows—

It is 'Anant' (has no beginning or end, is infinite); it is Nirlipta (is not attached or attracted to anything or anyone); it is 'Avyaya' (eternal, unchanging and imperishable; not to get diminished or degraded); it is 'Anaadi-Anant' (has no beginning or end; is eternal and infinite); it is 'Ashesha' (it leaves no remainder or residue; this is because it does not end, and is eternal and infinite); it worthy of knowing and researching by the medium of the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Upanishads (Vedanta); is indescribable and incomprehensible; is immune to being degraded, denigrated or demeaned; is much sought after by my devotees and fulfills their desires; and is 'Advitya' (non-dual, unique and one of its only kind).

Besides this, it is the 'Aadhar' or support, foundation and basis of all that exists; is self-supporting and does not need for its self any foundation to rest upon; it is esoteric and mystical in as much as what it appears on the surface is not its true form (it appears to be a stone image, but actually it represents me who am invisible and ethereal); and is always honoured and worshipped by the various Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, Indra etc.

This symbol of mine is an image of illumination and light. That is why it is known as 'Jyotirlingam'—the Lingam or symbol of Shiva that resembles a male phallus, and is self-illuminated and glowing with the light of divinity and holiness that

effuses naturally from it. [It is like an electric bulb or a lighted lantern which gives out light that illuminates the surrounding area. The Lingam of Shiva is a symbol of the Lord, and it is called 'Jyotir-lingam' because it is radiant and splendid, emanating illumination and radiance ('Jyoti') as it is a symbolic form of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that is revealed in the form of Shiva.]

One should worship, pay obeisance to and honour me as well as my symbol known as this Jyotirlingam. [11]

[Note—¹The concept of Tapa—The word *Tapa* refers to doing severe penances, observing of austerities, enduring hardships and undergoing sufferance for a noble, auspicious and righteous cause. It requires dedication, commitment, sufferance and steadfastness of purpose. This Tapa helps by burning one's natural impurities, shortcomings and blemishes that have been inherited by the creature as a result of his past deeds and their consequences. In the context of Brahm realisation, Tapa also refers to meditation and contemplation because the mystical and most enigmatic Brahm can be realised only by turning inwards as opposed to attempting to find and search it out externally in this world. This means that an attempt should be made by the spiritual aspirant to know the nature of the 'true self', instead of the 'illusionary self', as this search would lead to realisation of the Truth. Concentration of the mind and focusing of its intellectual and discriminatory faculties on searching out the 'truth' from the stack of falsehoods appears to be a Herculean task, but with painstaking diligence and accompanying sincerity, with commitment and ardent devotion, the task is not difficult even as searching a piece of Gold in a hay stack seem very daunting on the face of it but once the Gold is retrieved, the entire effort is amply rewarded. While we are at this analogy of the hay stack and the Gold, the easiest and quickest way to retrieve the priceless necklace of gold is to burn the stack of worthless hay. Likewise, the easiest way to realise the Truth is to burn the surrounding shell of worldly delusions and falsehoods. Once the muck and filth is washed off from the mind and heart, their brilliant shine breaks through, and this light of enlightenment show where the 'gold', or Brahm, is hidden. Verily, that Brahm is not outside but inside one's own bosom. Brahm realisation is marked by the extreme exhilaration and ecstasy that comes to someone who has found his golden necklace amidst the stack of hay!

Even the Viraat Purush, the Lord from whom this creation has come into being, had done Tapa when he had decided to initiate the process of creation. The mystical powers of Tapa can be gauged from the fact that he was able to create the dazzlingly magnificent creation literally from nothing, as if by magic! Basically Tapa involves coordination of the energies of the mind and body, and focusing the combined force to achieve astounding results much like the use of razor-sharp laser rays to achieve penetrating powers and obtain very precise results.

The Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 34-35 describes the two types of Tapa, viz. the 'Asura Tapa' and the 'True and auspicious Tapa'.

The Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 3, Anuvak 2-6 asserts that the eclectic glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm and the accompanying sense of ecstasy and bliss called Anand are realised by a spiritual aspirant by doing Tapa. This fact has been preached by Varun, the Water God, to sage Bhrigu, his son.

²Avimukta Kshetra—The word *Avimukta* literally means 'that which is not free; that which is bound or shackled'. Here the word means that place or that entity that has the potential to set free those who are shackled by providing them liberation and deliverance from their bondage. It has many connotations such as—(a) The holy pilgrimage site of Kashi or Varanasi, a city of northern India where Lord Shiva is said to reside eternally on this earth and provide this liberation and deliverance to the soul of a dying man by uttering the Tarak Mantra in his ears. This site is referred to in the Atharva Veda's Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1. (b) Another site is Kurushetra

where the legendary Mahabharat war was fought. (c) According to Yoga philosophy, this site is located at two places corresponding to the holy sites mentioned above—one is the area around the ears, and the other is central point between the two eyebrows. (d) The Brahm-randhra which is the top central point of the head is also said to be the abode of Brahm. It is the Avimukta area because when the ascetic is able to concentrate his attention on this citadel, he achieves supreme bliss and peace. According to Yoga, when the vital energy of Kundalini is aroused, it snakes up the spine and enters this area, thereby immense bliss to the aspirant.

The word Avimukta literally means ‘that which is not free; that which is bound or shackled’. Here the word means that place or that entity that has the potential to set free those who are shackled by providing them liberation and deliverance from their bondage.

This is the place where all those whose Atma (soul) are shackled come searching to find a way to break free from their worldly bondage. It is like a spiritual reformatory where people needing reformation are allowed to live. All of them desire salvation and emancipation, all are shackled and tormented by the world and its endless agonies, all have sinned in one way or the other. The Avimukta Kshetra has the necessary wherewithal to provide the spiritual seeker with liberation and deliverance, such as the eternal presence of Lord Shiva, the most wise God who constantly preaches the dying man about the great Mantra for salvation, but the person seeking such freedom has to have the will and the motivation himself, just like the case where a reformation prison can help only those who wish to repent and relent on their past misdeeds, but it cannot improve stubborn characters. Mere presence in such a place would not be of much value if there is no sincere desire and will on the part of the creature to seek emancipation and salvation for his soul. The environment is conducive for such enlightenment because he hears the tale of woes of many others like him who have suffered immensely for their misdeeds, thereby igniting a sense of detachment for and repugnance towards this world in the creature. He realises that this world is full of sorrows and pains, and therefore he should endeavour not to do anything that would force his soul to revert to this horror once again. But at the same time if he is not vigilant and self-thinking, this same Avimukta Kshetra can prove to be counter-productive because he would learn dirtier tricks from other inmates of this spiritual prison.

This concept has been elaborately described in the following Upanishads—(i) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Advai Tarak Upanishad, verse no. 3; Tarsar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1. (ii) Atharva Veda’s Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Canto 4, verse nos. 1-16.

The *reason* why *Kashi (Varanasi)* is called the ‘Avimukta Kshetra’ has been elaborately explained in the *Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad*, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-16 (i.e. in the full Canto).]

12. Even the Sun God, the Moon God, the Fire God and the Wind God (i.e. the primary Gods) are unaware of the mysteries and enigmatic glories of this Shiva-Lingam¹.

The self-illuminated and self-emerged or self-created Lingam extends as far as the pit of the earth known as Paataal.

This Shiva-Lingam is an image of me who am the Lord of the world. Hence, it is known as ‘Vishwanaath’ Lingam.

Worshipping it and paying obeisance to it is directly worshipping and paying obeisance to me.

A worshipper who offers his worship and obeisance to me, who serves me and honours me with full devotion, sincerity and faith, by offering three leaves of the Bilva tree, and then offers the auspicious rewards of such exemplary worship to me

(rather than expecting any gain for himself in return for such worship or service), who wears the Bhasma (sacred ash) and the Rudraksha beads as prescribed, who has sought my shelter and has taken refuge in my holy feet, and who is an unquestioned and most committed devotee of mine—verily I say that I accept his worship and free him from the fetter represented by the endless cycle of birth and death.

Even a great sin and its evil consequences are neutralized by offering daily worship to my Shiva-Lingam, by offering libations to me (a process known as 'Abhishek') and praying to me by reading or reciting the hymns of the Rudra Skuta daily with the greatest of devotion and faith, and then drinking the water left over after the completion of worship and offering of libations to my Lingam.

Such a devotee is free from all sorrows, grief, miseries and torments. He is freed from the shackling effect of this mundane and entrapping world. [12]

[Note—¹The *Shiva Lingam* is a gross manifestation of Shiva who is a divine, subtle and sublime Being. The Shiva's Lingam is like an icon that is normally used to stand as a unique symbol for a particular deity or God. It is an emblem of Shiva. If we look at the Lingam closely we observe that it is a cylindrical structure passing through the center of a circular girdle or ring. This structure reminds one of a wheel with the central axle. This imagery is used to indicate the fact that Shiva is the supreme transcendental Brahm around whom the whole of the creation rotates. 'Rotates' is a metaphoric way of saying that the entire creation depends upon Brahm; it is centered around Brahm; Brahm is the pivot that supports the entire edifice of creation. Just like the wheel cannot move if the axle is removed, this creation cannot survive if Brahm, the Consciousness and the Truth of creation, is removed from it. The fact that this creation is like a wheel rotating around the central axle called Brahm is endorsed in a number of Upanishads, e.g. (a) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 11; Canto 6, verse no. 6; Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 2, section 2, verse no. 6; Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2-7; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 9, verse nos. 4, 6; Tripdvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph 3-14 (which describes the 'Sudarshan Chakra' of Vishnu); Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 6-7 (which describes the wheel or Chakra that is present in the navel and how it keeps the creature trapped in it); Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2 (which describes the Sri Chakra dedicated to Goddess Tripura who is regarded as the Mother Goddess; Surya Upanishad, verse no. 1 (describes the Sun God as the one who keeps the wheel of life and death, known as the Kaal Chakra, rotating). (b) Krishna Yajur Veda = Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, 6; Canto 5, verse no. 12; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = Paingalo-panishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 3-4.

Besides this eclectic viewpoint we also observe that a cylinder is a smooth surface that is round from all sides. It appears the same from whichever side one sees it. This signifies the fact that Brahm is uniform and even in all respects, and neither does it have any specific form and feature. Like the Lingam passing through the circular girdle around it, the entire creation too forms a ring that moves around Brahm which holds the creation together and passes through its center. Now, this 'center' also means a core, and hence this refers to the Atma, the soul, that is the pivot or the core around which life revolves in this world.

If we look further ahead and observe a potter's wheel and how the potter moulds his pots and pans on it we find that it has a striking resemblance to the Shiva Lingam. As the wheel turns the potter expertly raises the shape of his wares at its center, and the rotating potter's wheel can be treated as an apt metaphor for the way the Shiva Lingam represents the phenomenon of creation moulded from the dynamic energy of Brahm revealed as the Shakti that continuously revolves around the principal known as Brahm.

Iconographically, the Shiva Lingam has three distinct parts—the lower part fixed to the ground stands for Brahma the creator; the middle part of the wheel stand for

Vishnu the sustainer and protector of creation; and the upper part of the cylinder represents Rudra the concluder. These three Trinity Gods stand for the three basic and fundamental aspects of creation—birth, development and growth, and finally the end. They thus represent Brahm in its entirety.

The Shiva Lingam is called *Jyotirlingam* because it is mentioned in the Linga Puran, Chapters 17-20 that the Shiva Lingam appeared as an endless shaft of fire. And 'fire' is characterized by the virtues of light and illumination. It came to be known as the 'Linga' because all the creatures of this creation have a gross body in which their soul or their Atma lived, called the 'Linga Deha', and they reproduced themselves with the help of the genitals, called the 'Linga'. Since only the Supreme Being has this capacity to create and then sustain his creation, the grosser form of the Lord in the form of this creation and its self-replicating creatures was symbolized in the grosser symbol of the Linga. In other word, the Lingam represents the whole creation in a miniature gross form. This icon of Brahm is called 'Shiva' Lingam because Shiva is a personified form of Brahm.

It is also believed that it is called 'Lingam' because the entire creation would collapse at the end in Brahm, the ethereal cosmic Consciousness. The phrase 'Linga Deha' literally refers to the ethereal form of the corporal body of a creature. So when the creature sheds the body, his Atma would merge with the cosmic Atma known as Parmatma. Since Lord Shiva is the Parmatma—the Supreme Being—of this creation, it is natural that his symbol would be called a Lingam. It is to emphasize the fact that one should not be misled by its outer gross structure of being merely a cylindrical structure made of stone or rock but a divine symbol of the cosmic Atma that cannot be visualized by the naked eyes.

The physical Lingam is the visible form of the invisible Linga Deha of Shiva which is the Lord's ethereal and cosmic form.

Other references—(i) Krishna Yajur Veda = Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131, 168, Canto 2, verse nos. 5-11; Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 23.]

13. Anything that is eaten without first offering the above worship or service to me is considered polluted and unholy. Even water that is drunk without first offering worship or service to me is considered unholy and polluted. [In other words, one must thank the Lord for everything he accepts. It is a matter of courtesy, civility and good manners in modern society that one thanks others for even routine things. So is it not proper to thank the Lord who has provided us with the essential things of life even without our asking for them?]

If inadvertently by chance of error, or due to unavoidable circumstances, the above edict is violated, i.e. the devotee does not or cannot perform the worship and service of the Lord before eating or drinking anything himself, or giving something to eat or drink to others, then he must atone for his sin and seek forgiveness and redemption by first shaving off his head and applying the 'Panch-gabya' (the five products of the cow used for purification, viz. a mixture of cow's dung, urine, milk, curd and clarified butter) on it, followed by a purification bath with clean water while uttering the hymns of the Rudra Sukta. He should fast (abstain from eating and drinking) that day, do repentance for his sins and clean his tainted self by offering worship to the Lord by reading or reciting the Mantras of Rudra while looking up at the sun (as a gesture of inviting the positive energy, dynamism and glories of Brahm of whom the sun is said to be the most splendid, radiant and evident manifestation, to replenish the energy of one's own inner-self which might have been depleted due to one's involvement in the mundane affairs of this gross material world) and then feed Brahmins (as an auspicious gesture of charity and sharing with all).

By following the above procedure he is cleaned or exonerated from the evil of the sin. Otherwise he is subjected to grave troubles and tribulations till the time he dies, and is subjected to the horrors of hell even after death.

That is why it is advisable to eat and drink after offering worship and service to the Lord with flowers, leaves and water according to one's abilities and circumstances. [13]

14. By offering libations to my Lingam, which is my image, with the milk drawn from a Kapila cow (i.e. a cow with reddish-brown, white, or white-spotted skin) while reciting the hymns of the Rudra Sukta, a devotee can obtain purification (pardon) from the horrendous sin of killing a Brahmin.

Offering of libations with the curd made from the milk of the Kapila cow helps one to eliminate or clean the great sin caused by drinking intoxicating liquids.

Offering of libations with clarified butter made from the milk of the Kapila cow helps one to overcome the grave sin caused by stealing gold (or theft of any kind).

Offering of libations with honey helps one to overcome the horrible ignominy and sin caused by being amorous towards the wife of one's Guru (teacher and moral preceptor).

Offering of libations with white sugar helps one to overcome the sin of being cruel to others.

Offering of libations with milk and other products (as prescribed above) helps the devotee fulfill all his aspirations, desires and wishes.

By offering libations one hundred times with quantity of materials that are one hundred times more than that used for one standard routine offering (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal by weight) helps the aspirant to free himself from the fetters that shackle him to this world. [14]

15. My (Shiva's) image in the form of the Shiva-Lingam should be offered worship during the time of the Aadra Nakshatra (an asterism known as Aadra), on the full moon day, on the new moon day, the Vyatipaata Yoga (the seventeenth astrological union of stars), on the occasion of eclipses (solar and lunar), and on the day of the Sakranti (the summer and winter solstice).

During these days, worship should be done by first offering libations followed by oblations. For this, the following items are to be used—sesame seeds, rice, barley, three leaves of the Bilva tree, clarified butter made from the milk of the Kapila cow, scents and fragrances, incense sticks, lighted lamp, sweets, fruit etc. Then flowers and water in cupped palms of the hands should be offered most respectfully at the end of the worship.

By offering worship and service to me with devotion and faith, the devotee obtains Sayujya Mukti (i.e. he becomes one with me).

If the worship is done with rice of quantity that is one hundred times that used for standard routine worship (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal), the worshipper obtains the abode of the Moon God known as Chandra-loka.

If equal quantity of sesame seeds (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal) is used for worship, the worshipper obtains the abode of the Vayu God (the Wind God).

If equal quantity of horse beans (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal) is used for worship, the worshipper obtains the abode of the Varun God (the Water God).

If equal quantity of barley (i.e. roughly 100 kilograms or 1 quintal) is used for worship, the worshipper obtains the abode of the Surya God (the Sun God).

If twice the above amount of items are used for worship (i.e. if roughly 200 kilograms or 2 quintals are used), the worshipper obtains the higher heaven known as the Swarga-loka.

If four times the above quantity of items are used for offering worship to me (i.e. if roughly 400 kilograms or 4 quintals are used), the worshipper obtains the abode known as Brahma-loka, or the abode of Brahma the creator.

If worship is offered to me or my Lingam by using the items needed for such worship measuring one hundred times than the standard offerings (i.e. if roughly $100 \times 100 = 10,000$ kilograms or 100 quintals are used), the worshipper is freed from the jurisdiction of death, or clutches of death, as far as the Brahm-Kosha. [That is, he is freed from the fear of death till the time the creator would be born again. The word 'Kosh' means the source from which Brahma the creator was born, the point of time when Brahma was born. Refer paragraph no. 20 of this Canto 2 below.]

Since he is my devotee, he crosses over from the abode of Brahma and reaches my abode known as the Shiva-Loka that is beyond it. There is no abode or heaven better than it. He becomes free from all miseries and sorrows upon attaining it. He is freed from all fetters and encumbrances that had kept him shackled.

By worshipping me in my form as the Lingam, ascetics have attained great mystical powers. Those who do fire sacrifices (i.e. the worshippers of the sacred fire) are actually offering their obeisance to me when they offer their oblations to the sacred fire. It is me whose magnificence, holiness, eclectic glories and divine virtues are sung and lauded by the Vedas in their hymns.

It is proved beyond doubt by the great scriptures such as the Vedangas (branches of Vedas), the Upanishads, and the Itihaasas (ancient mythological histories) that there is nothing besides me in this creation. Everything is me; everything is established in me; I am the foundation and basis of everything. [This is because Lord Shiva is the supreme transcendental Brahm personified. Nothing exists in this creation that is not Brahm; it is Brahm who has manifested or revealed in every single unit of creation.] [15]

16. Hence, spiritual aspirants should worship me and serve me, diligently and with sincerity, in the holy pilgrim city of Kashi.

In this place, my attendants live in many forms. They have fearful countenance, wear numerous varieties of arms and armaments, and have numerous signs and identities.

Adorned by the sacred Bhasma and wearing the Rudraksha beads, all of them are involved in offering their service, obeisance and worship to me. They give oblations to me, and offer libations to me. [16]

17. The creator Brahma offers me his worship, pays his obeisance to me, and meditates upon me night and day in the eastern direction of this city of Kashi.

The sustainer and protector Vishnu raises his hands and holds his palms together on his head while he offers his worship and pays his obeisance to me in the southern direction of this city of Kashi.

The king of Gods known as Indra offers his worship and pays his obeisance to me most politely and with due humility in the western direction of this city of Kashi.

In the northern direction, Goddess Bhagwati (the Mother Goddess; Parvati; Uma) constantly meditates and contemplates upon me. She is radiant and splendid

as a personification of the fire as well as of light; her incandescent form resembles that of the glowing fire that is radiating brilliant light. She is devoted to me, wears ornaments made of gold, and clothes embroidered with gold.

The Vedas offer their worship, pay their obeisance, meditate and contemplate upon me in four forms. [This refers to the fact that the Vedas primarily were in the form of an un-divided text. They have been divided into four divisions later on to serve specific purposes. These four divisions are known as the Rig/Rik, Sam, Yajur and Atharava.] [17].

18. In the south Kashi is the place which grants the boon of Mukti (liberation and deliverance). It is called the 'Mukti Mandap', literally a pavilion or arena where Mukti is obtainable.

It is here that many of my attendants who are the caretakers and protectors of creation have their abode or camp. They are armed with weapons and are the destroyers of sins and their evil consequences. [Refer paragraph no. 17. This stanza refers to Lord Vishnu who is one of the many forms of the Supreme Being that Lord Shiva is. The many attendants mentioned here are the attendants of Lord Vishnu. The weapon referred here is the formidable 'Sudarshan Chakra', the famed serrated discus of Vishnu, and the mace that he holds.]

There, great sages and ascetics who are ardent devotees of Lord Shambhu (Shiva), who is also known as Pashupaat and Maha-Shiva, reside and cheerfully do Japa (repetition) of the eclectic Mantra of the Lord that is like an ornament (adornment; the glory and essence) of the Vedas.

This Mantra is the five-letter Mantra 'Namaha Shivaaye' prefixed with the ethereal monosyllabic word OM standing for Brahm or Pranav. Hence, the five-letter Mantra becomes 'OM Namaha Shivaaye'. It is actually a six-lettered Mantra. [OM + Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 6. The 'OM' stands for salutations to the Supreme Being.]

This is known as the 'Tarak Mantra'—i.e. the spiritual formula which can provide spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul of the creature. [Refer Canto 2, paragraph no. 4 of this Upanishad.]

At that place, i.e. in the 'Mukti Mandap', there is gem-studded altar. It is here that I sit down and give rest on my laps all those devotees of mine who have died in Kashi.

I touch their Bhasma and Rudraksha beads to sanctify and empower them. I also preach them the Tarak Mantra so that they do not have to take a birth again. They find liberation and deliverance from their gross body, and enter my form in their essential 'spirit' form. [That is, their spirit emerges from their dead gross body and enters me to merge in my cosmic Spirit. In other words, their individual Atma merges with the cosmic Atma known as Shiva so as to become one with the latter.]

I preach them the five-letter Shiva Mantra for the purpose of their Mukti so that they do not have to come back into this world under its powerful liberating effects just like the offerings made to a raging fire cannot be retrieved at any cost. [The five-letter Mantra has two versions, viz. 'Namaha Shivaaye'—Na + Maha + Shi + Vaa + Ye = 5; or 'OM Namah/Namaha Shiva—OM + Na + Mo/Maha + Shi + Vaa = 5. Both the Mantras are the same, except that the second one with the monosyllabic Mantra OM prefixed to it is regarded as more effective and powerful as it salutes the Supreme Being known as Brahm before actually bowing to the Lord. This is why it is the 'Tarak Mantra' instead of the simple five-letter Mantra sans this OM.]

This place is the spot where Mukti is obtained in this terrestrial world. [18]

19. The devotee is liberated and delivered from his gross body in the ethereal form of OM.

[OM refers to Pranav, the cosmic sound that represents Brahm. Since the cosmic sound of OM and the air or wind element are the two sides of the same coin and synonymous with each other—because the cosmic sound represented by OM was produced due to friction in the waves in ether, and it needed air to be propagated for the simple reason that sound cannot travel in vacuum—it follows that when the devotee dies, his Pran, which is another synonym of the air or wind element representing the vital spark of life present inside his body, escapes into the outer space to merge with the cosmic Pran, i.e. the air or wind element present in the vast and fathomless space of the sky outside the body.

In simple terms it means that the individual's Pran which inspires the inane gross body to make a sound as evident from the fact that all living beings make a sound or speak as long as they are alive, or have Pran in their bodies, assumes the form of the cosmic Pran represented by the ethereal word OM when the Pran leaves the confines of the gross body when the latter dies, to escape into the vast open space of the sky. The previously trapped or incarcerated air element manifested as the 'Pran' or the life of a living being has now been 'freed' from the confines of a gross body and restored to its primary cosmic form as the all-pervading and infinite air element that fills the space of the sky outside the limits of the gross body of any individual creature. This is synonymous with the creature obtaining his Mukti—because the 'Pran' and the 'Atma' are regarded as being synonymous with each other.

Further, it has been described in Yoga Upanishads how the Pran escapes from the body through the Brahm-Randhra, the hair-like slit on the top of the head, at the climax of Pranayam, and as it escapes it takes the Atma, the life-consciousness present inside the body, along with it. This is described as the Kaivalya Mukti in terms of metaphysics, and it is the sort of Mukti aspired for by ascetics.]

Those devotees who offer all their deeds (and their fruits or rewards) to me, are devoted to me, and keep their attention on me, well, they are liberated and become one with me; they assume my true form upon leaving their gross bodies.

This is known as 'Brahm-Vidya' (i.e. knowledge pertaining to Brahm, the transcendental Supreme Being)¹. It is meant for those who are my sincere devotees, and not for others.

[This is because such people see no difference between Shiva and Brahm. When they worship Shiva, they are actually worshipping Brahm. Those who are not so enlightened and spiritually wise would treat Shiva as one of the Trinity Gods and only recognize him as the concluder of creation. They would not know that Shiva is not an ordinary God but a 'Maha-Deva', the 'Great God', an epithet not even shared by Brahma the creator or Vishnu the sustainer.]

Those who reside in the holy pilgrim city of Kashi with the desire of attaining Mukti are empowered by mystical powers and blessed with spiritual insights and knowledge, making then enlightened and self-realised. [19]

[Note—¹*Brahm Vidya*—The main Vidya as far as a spiritual aspirant is concerned is the one which pertains to the supreme transcendental Truth of creation known as Consciousness or Brahm. It is called *Brahm Vidya*. Basically it means the most eclectic, the most esoteric and the profoundest of knowledge pertaining to supreme transcendental Divinity known as Brahm.

The concept of Brahm Vidya has been the chief subject of discussion of a number of Upanishads, especially the following:--

(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's = Kaivalya Upanishad, Brahm Upanishad, Panch Brahm Upanishad, Akchyu Upanishad, Tejobindu Upanishad, Varaaha Upanishad, Cantos 1-5, and Brahm Vidya Upanishad.

(b) Atharva Veda's = Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1-2; Shandilya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3; Atma Upanishad; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 4; Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 17-57; Canto 2, verse no. 37.

(c) Sam Veda's = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7-8; Keno-panishad; Avyakta Upanishad.

(d) Shukla Yajur Veda's = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad; Isha Vasya Upanishad, Adhyatma Upanishad. (e) Rig Veda's Mudgal Upanishad; Atma Prabodh Upanishad.]

20. The Brahm-Kosh is a treasury of Vigyan; it is Vigyan manifested in this form.

[That is, the essence of Brahm, the true knowledge of the supreme transcendental Consciousness, is obtained when one attains high level of wisdom, enlightenment, self-realisation and erudition. It is a knowledge that is not easily available, and comes with sincerity, commitment, faith, devotion, steadfastness, diligence and effort. If one does not possess relevant skills and knowledge, one is unable to do even any mundane thing in this world, so how can he know the most esoteric and enigmatic entity known as 'Brahm' if he does not have the requisite knowledge and skills needed for the purpose?]

The Brahm-Kosh has four nets or meshes that surround it like a ring or cover it like a sheath.

[The word 'Kosh' refers to the 'cell' where Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, lives inside the body of the creature. This 'Consciousness' is known as the Atma when it resides inside the individual's body. The Atma representing Brahm is surrounded by four rings which are like 'nets or meshes' surrounding some protected entity.

These four nets or meshes are the following four components of the creature's body—(i) the Pran Maye kosh or the subtle vital winds that give the spark of life to the body; (ii) the Mana Maye Kosh which is the subtle mind-intellect-heart complex of the body that controls all thoughts, emotions, sentiments, decisions, power to understand, analyse and deduce, etc.; (iii) the Anna Maye Kosh of the aspect of the body that survives on the food eaten by the creature; and (iv) the Anand Maye Kosh or the component of the body that gives the creature the sensation of bliss, happiness, pleasure and comfort.]

This Brahm-Kosh is not visible to Death; the latter does not cast its glance upon it. [Here, 'death' has been personified.]

[This is a metaphoric way of saying that the Atma is untouched by death; it cannot die or does not die. This is obviously because the Atma is an ethereal entity that is eternal, infinite and imperishable; the Atma is the cosmic Consciousness that is the quintessence of this creation. It is this Atma that lives inside the body of a living being as his 'true self' and as such it represents the cosmic Atma known as Brahm in its microcosmic form. Therefore, the cosmic counterpart of the Atma is Brahm, and like the Atma it is also eternal, infinite, without end or beginning, indestructible and imperishable—i.e. it is untouched by death. In this context, refer paragraph no. 15 above of this Canto 2.]

It cannot either be seen or visualized by any of the Gods such as Brahma (creator of the visible world), Vishnu (sustainer of the visible world), Indra (the king

of Gods who presides over the various functions of the visible world), Agni (Fire God), or Varun (Water God).

[These Gods have limited spiritual vision. They are neck-deep involved in the upkeep of the creation and carrying out their designated duties assigned to them by Brahm so much so that they do not have the time and inclination to meditate and contemplate upon Brahm. This is because Brahm had created 'Maya', the power to create delusions, at the very outset of the process of creation. No one was exempt from its influences, not even the Gods. This was a powerful and most potent weapon in the hands of the Supreme Being to keep all his assistants, in this case the various Gods named here, busy in their duties. Otherwise, once they actually realised that this world is an illusionary creation of Brahm, they would shun getting involved in looking after something that is merely a smoke-screen of imagination, without any pith and substance. So, it was necessary for Brahm to create Maya to ensure that his attendants keep on running the treadmill without realizing that they are running in futility and pursuing a target that they can never reach. This illusion was an absolute existential necessity and the need of the hour in practical terms for Brahm if he wished to ensure that the wheel of creation and destruction he has set in motion continued to rotate unhindered.

In other words and put simply, the Gods were happy and contented to be Gods and get praise by the lower creatures and humans who offered their oblations, libations and worship to them. They were proud that they were shown so much respect and honour by millions and millions of humble creatures. So where and what was the need for them to search for Brahm when they rolled in the luxury of praise and honour showered upon them by lesser creatures, or when they were fed by the choicest of things when people offered them oblations during fire sacrifices?

Hence, all the Gods remained just what they were, as 'Gods'. They did not achieve immortality and oneness with Brahm; they did not become Brahm-realised. They were just like high-profile ministers of an emperor who relish the privileges, enjoyments, pleasures and comforts that attend high office without realizing that these are transient and at the mercy of the emperor. Once the emperor decides to snatch these privileges from them, they would be like the man on the street, rather worse-off because they have become accustomed to a pampered life-style. The same is the case with these Gods. They are at the mercy of Brahm; they all would perish when the creation comes to an end. In fact, the seemingly senior Gods such as Brahm and Vishnu have a fixed life-span, and this is specifically measured in years, albeit this measurement is in astronomical terms as compared to human years. The specifics have been narrated in detail in Tripadvibhuta Maha-Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, paragraph no. 8-16.

On the other hand, self-realised, wise and enlightened sages, seers, hermits and ascetics, who were born as ordinary mortal humans with all the limitations that a human body imposed on them, had attained Brahm-hood even in a small span of time that a human being possesses.] [20]

21. It is in that Brahm-Kosh (i.e. the causal body where the Atma resides) where I—who am an embodiment of 'Tej' (represented by the self-radiant and splendid Atma, the pure cosmic Consciousness personified as the glorious and splendid self-illuminated 'Fire element')—sit.

[In other words, the Atma that lives inside the Brahm-Kosh is an image of Lord Maha-Deva, or Lord Shiva, the great and enlightened Lord God who is

personification of Brahm. This Atma is self-illuminated because it is an embodiment of the 'Fire element'; it is an embodiment of the 'fire-like virtues' of Brahm.]

I sit close to the daughter of the king of the snow-covered mountains. She has a golden countenance.

[This 'daughter' is the divine consort of Lord Shiva known as Parvati who, according to the Purans, is a daughter of the king of snow-covered Himalaya Mountains.]

My countenance glows with the light that is equivalent to countless moons. I wear the moon like a crown on my head. My three eyes are represented by the sun, the moon and the fire¹.

My divine form is adorned with the sacred Bhasma (ash of the fire sacrifice which is smeared all over his body).

Those devotees who remain concentrated on my divine and holy form, those who meditate and contemplate upon me, become free from sins. They not only find liberation and deliverance from these sins and their horrible consequences, but also find freedom from this entrapping world and its numerous stubborn entanglements. As a reward, they become one with me; they merge in me to become inseparable and indistinguishable from me. [That is, they attain Mukti which is spiritual liberation and deliverance.] [21]

[Note—¹The three eyes of Lord Shiva— From the metaphysical perspective, his two eyes are the conventional eyes, and his third symbolises his deep insight and great wisdom and enlightenment. Shiva personifies the fire element which also has a symbolic significance. The fire is known to burn all impurities present in gold when it is put into it, thereby purifying the metal. Similarly, fire is used in blast furnaces to extract iron from its ore. Fire has the inherent ability to reduce to ashes all filth and garbage, which is a metaphoric way of saying that a person who has worshipped this element in the form of Shiva is supposed to have burnt all his faults, blemishes and shortcomings that taint his character and soul, thereby purifying his inner self. The ash is indicative of total renunciation and detachment from the world of materialism, because it is indicative of a renunciate way of life and symbolically stands for burning of everything into the fire pit. That is why Lord Shiva has been called the patron God of ascetics, hermits and Sanyasis who worship the fire element only.

Besides these points, Shiva is the God assigned the task of concluding the world which necessitates his being closely associated with the 'fire element' in the sense that he must be as unrelenting, merciless, powerful and ferocious as the latter in order to conclude this creation inspite of all the odds. He must reduce everything to ashes just like the fire does. And it is from this ash that the new creation would emerge in due course. Herein lie the magic of creation and its chief Lord, Brahm, the Supreme Being—the fact that a new creation rises from ashes!

To quote *Yogtattva Upanishad*, verse no. 93—"This (i.e. the fire element is the symbolic abode of Lord Rudra or Shiva. [That is, he symbolizes the fire element.] One should meditate upon this Lord who has three eyes, who is the one renowned for granting boons (to his followers and devotees, and in the presence case to the ascetic), who is as splendid, illuminated and radiant as a sun which has just risen, and who has the ash of the fire sacrifice smeared all over his body (just like an ascetic, indicating that he is their great icon and patron deity of ascetics) (93)."

The *Mahopanishad* of Sam Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse no. 7 describes that Shiva was born from the forehead of the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, invisible and all-inclusive gross body of Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The *Panch Brahm Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 41 espouses that Shiva lives in the heart of the creature as an embodiment of 'Sat-Chit-Anand', i.e. as his Atma—"Shiva, as Sat-Chit-Anand personified, always lives in the heart. He is a constant witness of all that is happening. That is why the heart is regarded as the

doorway to liberation and deliverance from the traps that have been laid out by this delusory and cunning world of artificiality to ensnare the creature in its tentacles.”]

22. Those who live in Kashi and only discard waste from the body in the form of stool and urine (i.e. eat and sleep, without worrying for their spiritual welfare, or doing any worthwhile work and spend their time idling around), those who spend their time and life here seeking alms and donations, those who do not wear the sacred Bhasma or the Rudraksha beads, those who do not fast on Mondays, those who do not worship the various stars and my image in the form of Lord Vishwanath Shiva (literally the Lord of the world), those who do not do fire sacrifices and offer oblations to the sacred fire, those who do not do Japa of the five-letter Mantra of Shiva (Namaha Shivaaye), and those who do not offer their obeisance to the God known as Bhairav (one of the names of Shiva)—such people undergo immense sufferings that is equivalent to the one undergone in the most horrible of hells. This suffering is caused by my female attendants known as Bhairavis, as it is meant to give such sinful people punishment for their sins and misdemeanors as they have violated the sanctity of my edicts. This is also done by them to ensure that all the misdeeds done by such unscrupulous people are neutralized because they undergo punishment for them in the form of physical sufferings while they are alive.

By the time they die, I ensure that they are thus cleansed of all their spiritual faults, impurities and taints. As a result, instead of being condemned to hell they are provided with Mukti (liberation and deliverance) from their torments; they find my abode; they attain me. [When a creature has already undergone punishment while alive by being tormented by Lord Shiva’s attendants as narrated above, sinful people do not have to suffer any longer in hell because they have already suffered on earth. There can not be two punishments for any given crime. So, in this way the Lord ensures that his devotees do not have to suffer in hell for their sins and misdemeanors, but find salvation and emancipation.]

If someone discharges sperms or passes urine and stool inside the sanctum of a shrine, the spirits of his dead ancestors are made to partake of it. [That is, it is a most horrible, obnoxious and offensive act to indulge in sex or passing excreta in a temple. If one does this, his ancestors are made to eat it, instead of the offering of food that is usually done by a descendant for his ancestors.]

When such sinful people die, the Bhairavs (the ferocious attendants of Shiva), who have dark and reddish countenance (i.e. who are ferocious and fearful), make his body fall on their spears, throw it in a blazing fire pit, and inflict many other types of torments to it. [That is, the body of such a sinful man is impaled by Bhairavs as a punishment. The body is scorched and made to undergo immense pain and agony equivalent to being burnt in fire, which in practical terms means that such a man suffers from high fever, some grave skin disease, or burning sensation in his external and internal organs. He is subjected to great sufferings that are like the one suffered in hell.]

Hence, one must be extremely careful while they live in this holy place known as Kashi, and abstain from unscrupulous deeds and unrighteous actions because the entire place is deemed to be my holy abode in a symbolic form. No sins are forgiven here.

This is the great Upanishad which describes my form as the Lingam—the symbolic representation of my divine cosmic form. Amen! [22].

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 25

Ganpati Upanishad/Ganpatu-panishad

This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Ganpati (also known as Lord Ganesh), the God who is offered worship first in any religious ceremony as he ensures its successful completion and obtaining of desired fruits by the worshipper.

It is propounded herein that Lord Ganpati resides in the inner-self of all living beings as their Atma, the soul and the pure consciousness. It then goes on to explain the meaning of the word Ganapati, how to meditate upon the Lord, the Mala-Mantras dedicated to him which are used to turn the beads of the rosary while doing Japa (repetition of the holy Mantras), the spiritual rewards of such meditation and contemplation, some special Mantras of the Lord which help the worshipper to fulfill his desires and attain fruits of his efforts, the benefits of reading this eclectic Upanishad, and the rules to be followed while doing so as well as for preaching this Upanishad to others.

The visible form of Lord Ganpati has also been described in this Upanishad (verse no. 11-14).

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----Shanti Paath---

1. OM Salutations! I bow most reverentially to Lord Ganapati¹.

[Note—¹Lord *Ganapati* is also known as *Vinaayak*. Other names are the following:— Lord Ganesh (refer verse no. 8); Ekdanta or the Lord with one tusk, Vakratunda or the Lord with a bent trunk (refer verse no. 10); Vraatpati or the one who is the chief amongst the Gods, Ganapati or the chief of the attendants of Lord Shiva, Pramathapati or the chief of a special category of attendants of Lord Shiva, known as Pramaths, who give immense misery to those who are sinful, Lambodar or the one with a big abdomen; pot-bellied, Vighna-Vinaayak or the one who destroys all hurdles and misfortunes, Sri Varadmuti or the one who is an embodiment of blessings and grants whatever boons one desires, and Shiva-sut or the son of Lord Shiva (refer verse no. 15).

The Lord derives his name Gajaan or Gajpati or Gajamukh from the root word 'Gaj' meaning an elephant, and 'Ja' meaning an origin or birth. Hence, these names indicate that the Lord has taken birth in a form that has the head and body like that of an elephant. The elephant head stands for the macrocosm, while the rest of the body which resembles that of a human stands for the microcosm. These two aspects of this creation are not separate from one another but form a composite unit just like the head and the body of Lord Ganesh are not separate from one another but form one composite body of the Lord, though the head represents an animal (an elephant) and the rest of the body represents a human being.

In other words, one is regarded as learned, wise and enlightened only if he is able to see the Supreme Being even in the oddest and the most unconventional form of life in this creation. One must see the Lord in a healthy man as much as in a deformed

and a handicapped individual; one must see the Lord in an animal as much as in a human form.

Another connotation is the following—the word ‘ga’ implies ‘gati’ or fate and destination of creation, and ‘ja’ means birth or origin. Hence, the word ‘Gajpati’ means the Lord from whom the rest of the creation has taken birth, and in whom the creation would finally collapse and merge at the end.

One of the sub-Purans or Up-purans, known as ‘Mudgal-puran’ which is named after sage Mudgal is dedicated chiefly to the narration of the nine main incarnations of Lord Ganapati, or Lord Ganesh who is the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati, and is the chief deity who is worshipped first during any religious ceremony or auspicious activity. This Up-puran was probably written between 900-1100 A.D. The nine incarnations of Ganapati mentioned in this sub-Puran are the following—Vakradanta, Ekdanta, Mahodar, Gajaanana, Lambodar, Vikat, Vighna-raja, Dhumra-varna, and Yoga. Besides these nine incarnations, it also lists 23 more forms of Lord Ganesh.

He is said to be the wisest and most honoured of the Hindu Gods and is always worshipped in the beginning of any endeavour or enterprise, whether it pertains to the mundane worldly affairs or to the spiritual realm. This is done to invoke his blessings which preempt any evil forces from throwing a spanner in the wheel of the successful completion of the exercise.

The two wives of Lord Ganapati are said to be Buddhi and Shiddhi who are personifications of the virtues of intellect and the glories that come with achievements. The *Tripura Tapini Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 3, verse no. 15, describes the Mantra of Lord Ganesh, while Canto 4, paragraph no. 12 describes its importance for the worshipper.

The Mantra is “Ganaanam Twa Ganpatim Havaamahe Kavim Kavinaamupasra-vastabham; Jyestha Rajam Brahanam Brahmanaspata Aa Naha Srinva-annutubhiha Seed Saadanam”. [Briefly it means—‘I pay my obeisance and respect to Lord Ganesh who is the most senior amongst all the attendants of the Lord and even the Gods. He is most exalted, wise and learned. He is like the biggest king or emperor amongst those who are enlightened about Brahm, and is Brahm himself personified. There is no one better or senior than you. Be gracious upon me; be pleased with me. I bow before you most humbly and submit myself before you.’]

When this hymn is being said, the worshipper should prefix and suffix it with the Beej Mantra of Ganesh, which is the Sanskrit letter ‘Ga’ (as in gum) with a Bindu (dot) on top, and pronounced as ‘Gam/Gan(g)’ (pronounced as *gum* or *gun(g)*).]

Now let us understand the symbolism of the various parts of this God. His *large ears* imply that the Lord hears everything, from every corner, and from everyone; the Lord is extremely receptive and gathers information and knowledge from all available sources. He is a good listener, a virtue that makes him a good teacher, because one has to learn first and it is only then that he can teach others. The large size of the ear that resemble a winnow-basket or a hand-held fan indicate that the Lord is able to blow away useless pieces of information and accept only the useful ones like the case of the winnowing basket or the hand-fan that is used to blow away chaff and retain the grain.

His *large head* stands for great intellect and mind.

He has *two tusks*—one that is full stands for the Truth that is perfect, complete, priceless and beautiful. The other tusk that is broken indicates an imperfect world that is incomplete, worthless, and not as good as it seems to be. Since the two tusks are part of Lord Ganesh’s body, the implication is that both the Absolute Truth as well as the not-so-absolute truth is a part of the universal whole known as Brahm. In other words, the perfect world of spiritual truth represented by the full tusk, and the imperfect world of material sense objects represented by the broken tusk are part of the same universal Truth known as Brahm. The fact that the intellect helps one to discriminate between the right and the wrong only when there is a choice is indicated

by the two tusks—one that is full indicates the correct and the straight path, and the one that is broken implies the crooked and the wrong path.

The *bent and long trunk* has the following connotations—(i) it stands for OM, the cosmic sound that reverberates ('trumpets') in the ether that fills the space of the sky where the entire creation is harboured; (ii) since the trunk emerges from the head of the elephant and it can uproot big trees and clear the path ahead for the elephant, the implied meaning is that the Lord employs his mind and intellect to get rid of the greatest of delusions and ignorance and other spiritual obstacles or hurdles, no matter how crooked they may be, that come in the way of seekers of Truth.

His *wide mouth* indicates a good appetite, and this stands for his ability to accept a wide range of knowledge. It also means that the Lord can speak on a wide range of topics with the greatest of ease and with the highest level of erudition and expertise at oratory.

His *big belly* stands for his endless appetite for knowledge and wisdom which he assimilates with ease. Being a personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, it also means that the Lord harbours the entire creation inside his own self. His big belly stands for the immense size of the universe.

Ganesh has *four arms* indicating the four components of the Anthakaran, called the inner-self. These are Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankaar (ego, false pride etc.)

One of his hands holds a *Paasha (snare; rope)* which stands for worldly attachments and entanglements that the Lord is able to control. The second hand holds an *Ankush (goad)* which stands for the ability to exercise control over the sense organs and natural urges. The third hand holds a *Modak* (a ball of sweetmeat) which stands for the spiritual rewards. And the fourth hand is held in the *Var Mudra* which is used to bless his devotees and give them fearlessness.

His mount is a *small mouse*. The mouse is notorious for stealing grain and ruining the store. Hence it is a metaphor for all the evil and negative qualities in a creature that are demeaning for his soul and lead to his ruin, and the fact that the Lord sits on the mouse shows that the Lord helps one to overcome them; or the fact that the Lord is able to overcome and subdue all the negativities of creation. The 'small' size of the mouse indicates that even a small negative trait in us can rob us of all the other good we have like the small rat can ruin the greatest of harvest or a huge granary.

The mouse is fond of sweets and grains. This indicates that the Lord is fond of good virtues and qualities of creation, and he searches them out from all the corners of creation like the mouse that goes on rummaging for grain and sweetmeats throughout his life.]

2. You are an evident embodiment of the eclectic virtues that are collectively known as 'Tattwa', the essence and the basis of everything that is known as the 'Truth'. [This observation refers to the fact that Lord Ganesh is a personified form of the supreme transcendental Brahm. Brahm is the only ultimate and absolute Truth of creation. See below.]

You are the only one who is the 'Kartaa' or doer or creator of everything. You are the only one who is the 'Dhartaa' or sustainer and protector of everything. You are the only one who is the 'Hartaa' or the eliminator and the concluder of everything. [That is, you are a personified form of the Trinity Gods represented by Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder. In this respect you are a personified form of the Supreme Being whose manifestation these three Gods are.]

Indeed it is you who are a personified form of the supreme transcendental Brahm in all these forms.

It is you who is manifested in the form of the Atma, the pure conscious 'self', the 'soul', of the entire creation.

[The word Atma and Tattwa refer to and indicate the same thing, and it the 'Truth' of creation. The 'Atma' is the soul of anything in existence, and the 'Tattwa' refers to the essence, the fundamental basis and the reality of anything in existence. They both mean the same as far as the 'Truth' is concerned. The 'Tattwa' of this creation is the pure consciousness without which neither would this creation exist nor would it have any life, meaning and relevance. The pure consciousness is the truthful 'self' of any living being, and it is known as the 'Atma', the soul. Bereft of the Atma or the soul this world would be like a dead body with no life in it.

Therefore, the Atma is the Tattwa of this world and life in it, and the Tattwa is that essence without which the rest of the edifice of creation would be mere falsehood and an illusionary imagination of the mind.] (2).

3. I always speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. I always take the side of truth, and always endorse what is the truth. [In other words, whatever is said in this Upanishad is the truth, and nothing but the truth.] (3).

4. Give your (Ganpati's) protection to me. Give your protection to the 'Vaktaa' (the preacher or teacher). Give your protection to the 'Srotaa' (the audience and those who listen to discourse of the teacher). Give your protection to the 'Daataa' (the giver of knowledge, true advise, spiritual guidance and help). Give your protection to 'Dhaataa' (the one who creates, protects, sustains and preserves). Give your protection to the 'Anuvaachaan Sishya' (i.e. those disciples who give shape to the knowledge gained by listening to the teacher; those who put into practice or give effect to the knowledge so gained).

Give your protection to me from all directions—from the front, the rear, the north, the south, the top and the bottom. I most humbly beg you to give your constant protection to me from all the directions (4).

5. You are revealed in the form of letters and words that are the basis of eloquent speech and the finest of literature. You are enlightened and wise.

You are blissful and cheerful. You are Brahm personified.

You are Sat-chida-anand (Sat = truthful; Chit = consciousness; Anand = blissful). You are Advaitya (non-dual, unique, one of your only kind).

You are irrefutably the supreme transcendental Brahm personified; there is no doubt about it; it is a self-evident truth.

You are an embodiment of Gyan as well as Vigyan. [That is, you are erudite, sagacious, skilled and expert besides being enlightened, wise and self-realised.] (5).

6. This whole world has come into being from you. It is established in you; you are its foundation, basis and support. It finally collapses and merges in you.

The whole world is your reflection; it is you who is being seen in this world. [The world is your image; it is you who has manifested yourself as the world. This is obviously because you are Brahm personified.]

You have taken the form of the earth, the water, fire, the air and the sky (which are the basic five elements of creation).

The four types of speech known as the Paraa, Pashyanti, Madhyamaa and Vaikhari¹, are your manifestations.

You are beyond the definition of the three Gunas². [The three Gunas are Sata, Raja and Tama.]

You transcend all dimensions and planes of time and space, such as the past, the present and the future.

You have a divine and mystical form which is beyond the definitions that apply to the three types of bodies of all living beings in creation, i.e. the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body³.

You are established in the Mooladhar Chakra⁴; you form the basis that supports the body and provide the energy that sustains it.

The three forms of Shaktis, divine powers and dynamism of creation, known as the Icchaa Shakti, the Kriya Shakti, and the Gyan Shakti⁵, are nothing but your own manifestations.

Ascetics always meditate and contemplate upon you.

It is you who are manifested as Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer), Rudra (the concluder), Indra (the king of Gods), Agni (Fire God), Vayu (Wind God), Surya (Sun God), Chandra (Moon God), Brahm (the Supreme Being), Bhu (earth), Bhurvaha (the sky), Swaha (the heaven), and OM (the ethereal word representing Pranav and cosmic Consciousness). [This represents the all-encompassing cosmic form of Lord Ganapati, a form which is that of the transcendental Supreme Being.] (6).

[Note—¹(i) *Paraa*—the first type of speech which deals with the knowledge of that entity which is beyond perception and which cannot be seen; to speak about things which are beyond normal sight and knowledge; to speak about paranormal things that are beyond comprehension and range of perception. The knowledge enshrined in the Upanishads and Vedas dealing with the knowledge of the supreme, transcendental, eternal, imperishable and infinite Brahma, knowledge which can be known only by rising above the mundane plane of existence and acquiring spiritual powers which are collectively called ‘Paraa Gyan’. (ii) *Pashyanti*—the second form of speech refers to speaking about things that are visible, perceived and understandable. For example, seeing Brahm in the form of the physical world and narrating about this form of knowledge that is visible, tangible, accessible and verifiable. (iii) *Madhyama*—literally means ‘medium, median’. This refers to speaking softly and mildly, to speak pleasantly and sweetly, to speak inarticulately and in a low voice that is difficult to easily comprehend. It also refers to a speech that follows a medium, central path, not too extreme to the right or to the left. It can veer on either side according to circumstances, e.g. using words which have double-edged meaning. These words, for an example, can show vehement anger as well as can be used just to show mild reprimand or reproach. Similarly, they can show love and endearment which may have deeper and sincere meaning, or may be simply superficial. In the context of the Upanishad, it refers to the ‘median path to Brahma’, a path well-balanced and judicious, empirical and rationale. (iv) *Vaikhari*—that voice and sound which is loud, clear, robust and vigorous, symbolizing clarity of thought, firmness of conviction, exemplary confidence, energy and vitality. It is an epithet for Goddess of speech, Saraswati.

These four types of speech have been described in Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, verse no. 23. To quote—“The faculty of speech is divided by experts into four types or aspects—(1) *Paraa* (which refers to speaking about things which are beyond normal sight and knowledge, to speak about paranormal things that are beyond comprehension and range of perception); (2) *Pashyanti* (which refers to speaking about things that are visible, perceived and understandable); (3) *Madhyama* (to speak softly and mildly, to speak pleasantly and sweetly, to speak inarticulately and in a low voice that is difficult to easily comprehend); and (4) *Vaikhari* (to speak in a clear, loud and articulate way symbolising clarity of thought, firmness of conviction, exemplary confidence, energy and vitality).

Those who are experts and wise know all these aspects of speech. Out of these, the first three, viz. the Paraa, Pashyanti and Madhyamaa, are established in the cave-like heart. [This is to indicate that unless one is articulate in his speech, unless one speaks out loud and clear what he wants to say, and unless he is honest in whatever he speaks all his knowledge would remain confined to the deep cave of his heart, and the rest of the world would not be able to see what is hidden in this dark cave. No one would be able to know what is concealed in one's heart if he is not honest and forthright in what he says.] They are not revealed.

Compared to them, the Vaikhari speech is loud and clear; it helps one to articulately say what is in his mind and heart. It is this fourth form of speech that is employed by a man to express himself (23)."

²The *three Gunas*—The three Gunas are called Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. They have been described briefly in the following Upanishads of this volume:—(i) Chapter no. 6 titled the Brihjjabal Upanishad, Brahman 3, verse no. 1, note no. 2; (ii) Chapter no. 13 titled the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 64, note no. 1; and (iii) Chapter no. 22 titled the Devi Upanishad, note of verse no. 4.

³The *three types of bodies* of a living being are the following—the gross body consisting of the sense organs of perception and action, the subtle body consisting of the mind and the intellect, and the causal body consisting of the pure consciousness known as the Atma or the pure self of the creature.

They have been described in detail in a separate

⁴The *Mooladhar Chakra* is the subtle energy center at the lowest part of the abdomen, and it is said to support all the organs in the body, forming the virtual foundation of the body. It has been elaborately described in the Upanishads dealing with the philosophy of the 'Yoga'

The 'Mooladhar Chakra' is located between genitals and anus in the area called the perineum. It is the site of the symbolic Shiva Lingam (Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 168; Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 50) and the route through which the Apaana wind finds its entrance in the Kundalini (Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 13). It is also here that the ascetic hears the Naad. It is said to be a symbol of Shakti or the dynamic powers of Shiva principle (Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 8, 11-12 and Canto 3, verse no. 2; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 50).

⁵The word *Shakti* broadly means strength, powers and potentials that a person possesses. The concept of Shakti in the context of metaphysics refers to the one dynamic cosmic force of Truth known as Brahm expressing itself in three different ways because of the different equipments used for such expressions—viz. the body, the mind and the intellect. The three Shaktis are not actually different from one another but compliment each other because they have one origin and springs forth as the dynamism of the transcendental Truth and the absolute Reality known as Brahm. Knowledge possessed by Brahm is expressed through the equipment of the intellect, the desire to use this knowledge and put it into effect is done by the mind, and the actual action to give effect to the desires is taken by the body. If one component is removed, the entire setup wouldn't function just like it is necessary to have the full system in order to make the computer work.

These cosmic dynamic forces or powers of the supreme transcendental Truth are expressed in many forms, such as the powers of the mind and intellect, collectively called the 'Chitta Shakti', which is very powerful but not visible par se, and the cosmic powers that have unleashed the creation which are visible and manifested forms of those powers of the mind because the world itself is a creation of the mind of Brahma, the creator. The divine powers of the supreme transcendental Being called the enigmatic Brahm have been revealed, from time to time, as the various Goddesses, who are also called Shaktis for the simple reason that they represent these magnificent and unique virtues and powers of the supreme Being.

Let us analyse them one by one:—

(i) *Chitta Shakti*—The word *Chitta* refers to the faculty of reasoning and thought of the mind-intellect complex; the ability to pay attention and fix concentration upon a chosen subject which leads to understanding and a sharp memory; the conscious intellect as well as the sub-conscious mind; the powers of discrimination, understanding, paying attention, memorizing, and the ability to recollect and store information that are characteristics of the conscious powers exhibited by the mind and intellect apparatus; the sub-conscious and memory, along with its power to remember anything as depicted when the man involuntarily reacts to any given situation depending upon his memory-bank; the ability to concentrate and focus the mind on anything. (The concept has been elaborately described in Chandogya Upanishad, canto 7, section 5; Sanayso-panishad, canto 2, verse no.42-46).

The word *Shakti* means power and authority, potentials and energy that any entity possesses. Therefore, the combined stupendous powers exhibited by 'Chitta' are called Chitta Shakti.

Chitta is an integral *component of the Antahakaran* or the 'inner self' of a living being. This has been described in—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's Shaarirako Upanishad of, verse no. 4; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 101-102; (b) Shukla Yajur Veda's Paingal Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9, Canto 2, verse no. 3; Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 6; Subalo-panishad, Canto 9, verse no. 14.

(ii) *Kriya Shakti* which refers to the power of the gross physical body to act as per wishes of the mind and intellect. It is the Kriya Shakti which enables the supreme Authority to carry out its wishes through the organs of the body by taking various actions and doing different deeds. It is the ability of the body to actually do the deeds or take the actions and bring them to fruition. It also represents the ability to enjoy the results of doing such deeds and actions taken by the creature. The word also refers to being active and enterprising and the opposite of being lethargic and indolent. It is the actual ability to carryout his plans to their successful completion, i.e. to do deeds, to take actions and enter into enterprise, because simply sitting and procrastinating endlessly wouldn't give success unless there is assiduous activity and diligent effort, no matter how wise a man is and how determined he might be. The body is prompted into taking action by the desires and aspirations originating in the mind and intellect complex. If these desires are world-centric, then our actions and deeds would be also world-centric and so would be the result. This is because every activity gathers its quality from the texture of the desire that has prompted a particular action or deed. So, when the desire is to enjoy the outside world and its sense objects, the deeds and actions become entrapping and the cause of all world related miseries. On the other hand, if the desires are auspicious and noble, the same deed and action would become an instrument for spiritual upliftment as well as liberation and deliverance. In this context, the term *Karma Yoga* would be to coordinate the effort of the body and the mind not towards fulfilling worldly aspirations that would be ensnaring and enslaving in the long run but to divert them towards the divine goal of spiritual liberation and deliverance. And the tool in this endeavour would be to have auspicious, noble and righteous desires, aspirations and wishes, collectively called the different Vasanas or Ichaas inherent in a man, instead of the worldly ones. Once the desires are purified and chastened, the activities and deeds to fulfill or accomplish those Vasanas or Ichaas are purified and chastened proportionately. At its height, the total renunciation of desires for enjoying anything related to the external world of sense organs and their respective objects is called 'Vairagya'. This Kriya Shakti is more developed in those people who have a predominance of the Raja Guna or the second category of three basic qualities that decide the habits, temperaments and nature of any man. The Raja Guna makes a man more inclined towards enjoying the sense objects of the world and remain engrossed in the activities related to the gross world.

(iii) The *Ichha Shakti* relates to the power of the mind to have or make wishes, desires, aspirations and the determination to fulfill them. It is longing for anything, wanting to possess it any cost, and then endeavouring to acquire it. It is a precursor to

Karma Shakti. It is only when one wishes to do anything and has the determination to do it that he actually goes about doing anything at all, strives hard to get success in it, and then would like to enjoy the fruits of his labour. It is closely related to *Bhakti Yoga* inasmuch as when the Ichhas (desires) are turned away from the world and hooked onto the search for the Truth and Reality with devotion and sincerity of purpose, it helps the man to turn away from the entrapping world of delusions and artificial comforts towards the world of truth and reality, i.e. towards his true 'self', the pure consciousness. The word 'Bhakti' means to be sincerely committed and devoted to anything, any cause, any principle, any doctrine or any entity. In this case, the devotion is towards the supreme transcendental Truth and the absolute Reality, whether known as Brahm or as the Atma. Bhakti Yoga therefore means a devoted and committed approach that coordinates the desires and actions in such a way that they are diverted to realisation of the supreme Truth known as Brahm instead of the mortal and perishable world of delusions and entrapments.

(iv) The *Gyan Shakti* is related to the stupendous powers and authority possessed by 'knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment', and the instrument that implements this authority and power is the intellect. Gyan is empowerment, because without knowledge the mind and body would work like those of animals. Therefore, Gyan Shakti is the powers, potentials, authority, strength, respect and empowerment obtained as a result of acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, sagacity, scholarship and expertise in any subject. This Shakti represents the dynamic powers and potentials that are a natural accompaniment of these grand qualities. This is called Gyan Shakti simply because merely wish and determination wouldn't suffice if a person does not have the required knowledge and skill, the necessary expertise and level of wisdom required to accomplish his objectives successfully. In this context, *Gyan Yoga* would be to divert the diligence with which a man applies this knowledge, wisdom, erudition and skills to acquire the objects of this material world and get acclaim and applause for his expertise, knowledge and wisdom to achieving success in uplifting himself and realising the ultimate goal and truth of this life and existence, and freeing himself from the clutches of delusions which have tied him down through numerous lives to find final liberation and deliverance for his soul. Gyan Yoga endeavours to channelise one's knowledge into auspicious avenues and inspire the creature to make efforts relying upon the knowledge and wisdom he possesses to bring about a union between the individual creature's soul and the cosmic Soul and Consciousness known as Brahm so that ultimate emancipation and salvation is obtained and the cycle of delusions, birth and death and their endless horrors are got rid of. Therefore, Gyan Yoga entails diligent study and pursuance of the Truth, turning inwards and upwards instead of outwards and downwards, to separate the non-truth from the truth like separating the grain from the chaff, and finally coming to grasp with the eclectic concept of 'truth and absolute reality' of the 'self and the Atma', of 'Brahm and Moksha (final and ultimate liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation)'.

According to ancient texts, the divine Shakti or cosmic dynamic powers of the supreme Brahm has assumed three forms called the 'three Divine Shaktis. These three forms of the cosmic energy refer to the three forms that the supreme Brahm had taken for the purpose of creation. 'Brahmi' is the energy with which Brahma creates, and its relevant subtle counterpart here is the power to wish and aspire for and expect something. 'Rudrani' is the cosmic energy by which Shiva/Rudra ends this creation, or brings to a conclusion the creation which Brahma had made possible. 'Vaishnavi' is the cosmic energy by which Vishnu sustains and nourishes the creation, and its subtle counterpart is taking actions and doing deeds because without actions and deeds, the creation cannot be sustained. For all these activities—creation, sustenance and conclusion, knowledge, wisdom and intelligence are needed because success in any of these requires the requisite expertise and the ability to use and apply it judiciously.

In other words, Brahma makes this creation possible by wishing to do so in his mind. If the creation is righteous and virtuous, it is sustained and nourished by Vishnu, but if it goes wayward and starts committing evil and sins, Rudra takes charge and uses his energy called 'Rudrani' to destroy that evil part of the creation. Extending this logic further, we deduce that when the evil tendencies in the world will almost eclipse or outweigh the good qualities, Rudra would completely annihilate the creation, but the remnants of good elements left behind will help Brahma to re-start the cycle of creation once again.

The triad of powers and strengths called the *Trishaktis* that a man possesses as an expression of the dynamic forces of Nature are the following—his Kriya Shakti or the power to act and perform deeds, Iccha Shakti or the power to make desires and fulfill them, and Chitta Shakti or the power of the sub-conscious mind. All these Shaktis depend upon the Gyan Shakti or the power of knowledge because without knowledge nothing can be achieved in this world.

Besides these three, the following are also called Trishakti or the potential powers present in a man—(i) to have influence, impact, affect and sway upon others, (ii) to have enthusiasm, zeal, flourish, drive and courage, and (iii) to have a good advise in this world as well as the support of divine intercession or intervention of Gods who should be benign and favorably inclined towards him. Further, the three Goddesses—Kali (the black complexioned goddess of war), Tara, and Tripura also known as Tripur Sundari, are also called the Trishaktis, or the divine cosmic energy which has revealed itself in the form of these three divine Goddesses. These Goddesses are the various manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva. Parvati is usually referred to by one single epithet—Shakti—which literally means energy, vitality, strength and powers.]

7. [The Mantra associated with Lord Ganapati will be narrated now.]

First, one should pronounce the letter 'Ga' (as in gum) which is the first letter of the Lord's holy name. To this sound is appended the sound of the first vowel of the Sanskrit language, i.e. the letter 'A' (pronounced as in son; a pen). The next sound is that of the 'Anuswar', the dot put on the letter in Sanskrit to give it the sound that is equivalent to 'um' or 'un(g)' (as in *sum* or *sung* with a silent g).

The resultant Beej Mantra of Lord Ganapati resembles that of the supreme Brahm, which is the monosyllabic Mantra OM. The sign of this Mantra has a dot placed on the top of a half moon or a crescent moon.

Hence, the basic letter representing Lord Ganapati becomes 'Gam' (as in *gum*) or 'Gan(g)' (as in *gun(g)*-ho). It is the Beej Mantra (the seed or root Mantra) for Ganapati. When it is prefixed with OM, the salutary word for Brahm, the Supreme Being, the Mantra for Ganapati becomes 'OM Gam/Gan(g)'.

This Mantra is the Tarak Mantra of Lord Ganapati—i.e. it provides the worshipper with liberation and deliverance. It represents your divine form (just like OM represents the divine form of Brahm) (7).

8. The first aspect of this Beej Mantra 'Gam or Gan(g)' is the consonant letter 'Ga', the middle aspect is the vowel sound of 'A', the final sound is represented by the 'Anuswar' or dot placed on its top, and the conclusion or end of the pronunciation is represented by the Bindu, literally the 'dot' but here represented by the ethereal sound of OM. [OM Gam or OM Gan(g).]

In other words, the Beej Mantra 'Gam' or 'Gan(g)' is invoked by the spiritual seeker who wishes to research about the cosmic Consciousness through the medium of the ethereal word 'OM' that encapsulates the dynamism of the cosmic sound called

Naad that is generated in the ether by the vibrations caused by the cosmic Consciousness.

The ‘Sanhitas’ (a collection of hymns of a single Veda, in this case the Atharva Veda, which have been culled and presented here in the form of the Upanishad) are said to be the medium which help to bring together or establish a union between the seeker and the object sought.

[That is, the scriptures act as selfless and expert guides, facilitators and motivators to help the spiritual aspirant to reach his spiritual goal successfully by not only showing him the correct path but also pointing out to him the various pitfalls to be avoided and precautions to be taken on the way to his destination. They help him also by showing him the available alternative paths so that he can make a wise choice depending upon his mental temperament and natural inclinations, and thus make the spiritual journey all the more easy and convenient for him. In the present case, those who are devotees of Lord Ganapati are provided the best and well-researched path to attain the supreme transcendental Brahm through the medium of worshipping their patron deity, i.e. Lord Ganapati in this case. They will not have to make any especial or separate efforts to seek and attain the Supreme Being known as Brahm, or to seek and attain their spiritual liberation and deliverance elsewhere. They can get both at the same time as they worship Lord Ganapati, but this worship should be done with proper knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. They must understand that they are not worshipping any other God but the Supreme Being himself in this form of Lord Ganapati.

Hence, this ‘Sanhita’ of Lord Ganapati helps to establish a union between the individual seeker or worshipper and the Supreme Being in the form of Ganapati whom he worships. This Sanhita brings together the individual soul and the supreme Soul of creation. It helps the individual to attain self-realisation and Brahm-realisation as well as Mukti or Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation) while worshipping Lord Ganapati who is his patron deity.

The word ‘Sanhita’ has two parts—‘Sangha’ means to be together, and ‘Hita’ means that which provides for good, welfare and well-being. Hence the Sanhita is that scripture which collects and collates all relevant matters that is of spiritual worth for the aspirant but is scattered in the vast repository of knowledge, and present them to him in a coherent and a brief manner so that his path towards his spiritual goal is made easy and convenient, without distortions, schisms and confusions that may arise out of wrong interpretation of the original sources if not judiciously and intelligently understood.]

This is what the Vidya, i.e. the truthful knowledge and wisdom pertaining to Lord Ganesh says (8).

9. The Rishi (the sage who had first formulated this Mantra) is sage Ganak. Its composition pattern, known as the Chanda, is ‘Nichrid-Gayatri’. And its Devta (patron deity to whom this Mantra is offered or who is worshipped through it) is Lord Maha-Ganapati.

This great Mantra is ‘OM Gam’ or ‘OM Gan(g)’. [The full Mantra is ‘OM Gam Ganapataye Namaha’. It briefly means—OM Salutations! I bow most reverentially to Lord Ganapati’.] (9).

10. ‘I know and recognize the essence and the truthful form of the Lord with one tooth (tusk), i.e. the Lord known as Ekdanta. [That is, we know the real truth about the Lord called Ekdanta that he is no ordinary God or some mysterious deity who has

an unconventional and odd form with the head of an elephant having only one tooth instead of two. We know by the study of the scriptures and the wisdom derived by their study that he is none else but Brahm in this form. In this context, refer to the observations made in verse no. 8 above which says that the Sanhitas bring about a union between the individual seeking Brahm and the Lord himself.]

I meditate and contemplate upon the Lord known as 'Vakratunda' (literally one with a curved or bent trunk).

Let this Lord with the tusk show us and inspire us to follow the auspicious and righteous path.'¹ (10).

[Note—¹This Mantra is known as 'Ganesh Gayatri'.]

11. [Verse nos. 11-12 describe the physical form or the image in which Lord Ganapati is worshipped.]

The Lord (Ganapati) has one tusk and four arms. He holds a 'Paash' (a snare) and an 'Ankush' (a goad) in two of his arms, while the third is held in the 'Abhaya Mudra' (the posture that grants perpetual fearlessness to his devotees) and the fourth in the 'Var Mudra' (the posture that grants boon of wish fulfillment to his devotees). He holds a flag with the insignia of a rat/mouse (11).

12. His countenance is red like blood. His abdomen is large (big and pot-bellied). His ears are also large like the hand-held winnowing fan. He is covered in clothes of red colour.

His body is covered by a paste of red-coloured perfume. He is duly worshipped with red coloured flowers (12).

13. [This verse establishes that Ganapati is Brahm, the Supreme Being, personified.]

He is the Lord (Deva) who is always extremely benevolent, merciful and gracious towards his devotees. He is the cause of origin of this world (in his form as Brahm, the Supreme Being). He is imperishable and ever exalted, being immune to demotion, degradation or denigration.

He had revealed himself prior to the beginning of creation. Hence, he transcends Prakriti (Nature) and Purush (the Viraat Purush) alike.

[This is because Lord Ganapati is Brahm personified. Brahm is nothing but the cosmic Consciousness that existed prior to anything coming into being. When this 'Consciousness' decided to initiate the process of creation, its first sign was in the form of Naad or the cosmic vibrations that produced sound. The reference here is to the cosmic Naad which is the closest analogue to Brahm, and which pre-dated the coming into being of the Viraat Purush. It stood for the dynamism of Brahm that was revealed in the form of the cosmic energy of sound.

The Viraat Purush is a revelation of Brahm, and not the other way round. It was from the Viraat Purush that Prakriti or Nature came into being. Thus, Lord Ganapati, as Brahm, goes far beyond the beginning of not only the creation, but even the primary Viraat Purush who is the first macrocosmic, all-encompassing, all-pervading and all-inclusive relatively gross manifestation of Brahm. 'Relatively gross' in the sense that the primary form of Brahm is extremely subtle and sublime, having no forms and attributes, but when creation was to be initiated, this same Brahm transformed into a slightly grosser form known as the Viraat. It is only in relative term that Viraat is called 'gross' in comparison to the supreme transcendental Brahm, for the Viraat Purush in himself is the subtlest form in the creation that was about to be created and unfolded.] (13).

14. The ascetic and spiritual seeker who worships Lord Ganapati with this wisdom, knowledge and erudition is indeed the best and the wisest amongst all the ascetics and seekers of Truth (14).

15. I bow most reverentially to Lord Vraat-pati, the Lord who is the chief amongst all the Gods; he is the chief God in the community of Gods.

I bow most reverentially to Lord Ganapati, the Lord who is the chief amongst all the Ganas (attendants of Lord Shiva).

I bow most reverentially to Lord Pramath-pati, the Lord who is the chief amongst all the Pramaths (special type of attendants of Lord Shiva who are ferocious and inflict severe punishment to sinners).

I repeatedly bow most reverentially before Lord Lambodar (the Lord with a large abdomen), Lord Ekdanta (the Lord with one tooth or tusk), Lord Vighna-Vinaashak (the Lord who removes misfortunes and hurdles in one's path to success), Lord Shiva-sut (the Lord who is the son of Lord Shiva), and Lord Sri-Varad-Murte (the Lord who is an image of boons; the Lord who is a personified form of all prosperity and good fortunes; the Lord who bestows upon his devotees and seekers all material wealth and prosperity as well as good fortunes, majesty, grandeur and fame). (15).

16. This Upanishad belongs to the Atharva Veda tradition. A person who studies this Upanishad becomes eligible to attain Brahm-hood or Brahm-realisation.

None of the hurdles and obstacles can ever create any kind of hindrance for him. He obtains all round enhancements in comfort, happiness, joys, peace and contentedness pertaining to this world as well to his spiritual well-being.

He is freed from the horrible effects of five types of grave sins¹, their spin-offs and attendant consequences.

Reading of this Upanishad in the evening exonerates the devotee of the sins he has committed inadvertently during the daytime, and reading it in the morning does so with the sins of the previous night. Therefore, a person who studies, and reads or recites and studies this Upanishad twice a day is freed from the evil effects of all sins.

He gains the four types of great rewards obtained by a righteous man, such as Artha (financial well being), Dharma (the glory that accompanies propriety, probity, auspiciousness and righteousness), Kaam (fulfillment of all desires) and Moksha (liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation). (16).

[Note—¹The five great sins are killing of a Brahmin, drinking wine, theft, having sex with the wife of one's teacher, having lustful feelings for one's daughter, and to keep company of those who indulge in any of these sins.]

17. [Verse nos. 17-19 outline the rewards that come with studying as well as reading or reciting this Upanishad.]

This Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda should only be preached to the eligible disciple only, and to no one else. If someone does so, i.e. he preaches it to an incompetent or ineligible candidate out of Moha etc. (i.e. out of attachment for someone, to oblige someone, filial obligations, monetary and other pecuniary benefits, or some kind of social pressure etc.), then such a person falls from grace and is regarded as sinful (17).

18. He who studies, and reads or recites this Upanishad a thousand times is able to fulfill all his aspirations and desires.

A person who gives a ritualistic bath to Lord Ganapati while repeating this Upanishad, he becomes an expert orator.

A person who observes fast on the fourth day of the lunar cycle (called the 'Chaturthi') and does Japa (repetition) of this Upanishad, he becomes extremely Gyani (wise, knowledgeable, expert and enlightened).

This is the sacrosanct edict of the sage called Atharvan (who is regarded as the forefather of the Atharva Veda).

A Brahmin (or any other person) who knows how to do offering of worship to the Lord known as Brahm, the Supreme Being, by the medium of this Upanishad, he never faces any fear; he is never afraid of anything.

He who offers his worship and oblations to the Lord (Ganapati) by using fresh blades of the Durba grass (a dark-green reed named *Agrostis linearis* used for purification and ritualistic purposes)—such a man becomes equivalent to Kuber, the treasurer of the Gods. [That is, he is blessed with wealth and prosperity.]

He who does the fire sacrifice to worship Lord Ganapati by using the chaff obtained from rice grains as offerings to the sacred fire—such a man attains great 'Yash' (majesty, fame, good name and acclaim) as well as great 'Medha' (intelligence, prudence, understanding and wit).

He who does the fire sacrifice to worship the Lord by offering one thousand 'Modak' (sweets that are shaped like small balls, the size of a tennis or cricket ball)—such a man gets all his desires fulfilled; all his wishes and aspirations are realised.

He who does the fire sacrifice to worship the Lord by offering oblations mixed with Ghee (clarified butter)—such a man is able to get everything; nothing remains inaccessible to him. All his aspirations, expectations and hopes are fulfilled; he accomplishes everything in life.

He who initiates eight Brahmins into this eclectic knowledge and makes them an expert in this Upanishad (i.e. who helps in the propagation of this Upanishad and its eclectic philosophy)—such a man becomes as majestic, famed, glorious and radiant as the Sun.

If this Upanishad is repeated (with faith and devotion) on the banks of a great river or in the front of an image (of Lord Ganapati) at the time of the solar eclipse, the worshipper is able not only to harness the energy and the mystical powers of a particular Mantra that he prefers to use but also becomes an expert master in its practical usage for his spiritual welfare. That is, he is able to become an expert in the usage of the Mantra, and is also able to empower himself with the stupendous mystical powers that are associated with the particular Mantra.

He is freed from the greatest of hurdles and obstructions that he might be facing in his life. He is freed from the greatest of sins and their evil consequences. He finds liberation from the greatest of snares that these sins otherwise create for him; he is freed from the terrible consequences of sins committed by him, advertently or inadvertently (18).

19. A person who knows the astounding value, importance and significance, both metaphysical and spiritual, of this great Upanishad, and is aware of its immense mystical powers as outlined herein above is able to know everything; he becomes omniscient. There is nothing that he does not know, or needs to know more.

He acquires such great hindsight, insight and foresight that nothing is hidden from him. Indeed, these are the rewards of studying and teaching this great Upanishad. Indeed, this is what this great Upanishad says. Amen! (19).

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 26

Mahavakya Upanishad/ Mahavakyo-panishad

This Upanishad is a short one, having only twelve Mantras or verses. It was revealed to the Gods by Brahma, the creator. It primarily deals with the esoteric knowledge of the divine and the sublime entity known as the Atma, the pure consciousness which is the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality of creation. The Atma, which is inherently immaculate and enlightened, however appears to be veiled in a shroud of ignorance and its attendant delusions, thereby robbing it of its immaculacy, its majesty, its magnificence, its primacy, its pristine purity, its glorious virtues, and its divine character. When one becomes aware of the reality of the Atma, he discovers it to be as splendorous and radiant as the sun which is self-illuminated; the Atma is brilliant like the sun. This Atma is the supreme Shiva principle—i.e. it is the ultimate truth, most eclectic, sublime and holy, and a fount of bliss and beatitude.

The Atma is a personification of the supreme cosmic Consciousness that is also known as Brahm, and therefore it is the Absolute Truth of existence. The Atma is the truthful ‘self’ of all living beings. This ‘truthful self’ as well as Brahm are also known as the Hans, the divine Swan which is employed in the scriptures for an entity that is truthful, pure, holy and immaculate. Therefore, when a man becomes self-realised, he becomes Brahm-realised as well as a personification of Brahm. He then honestly proclaims ‘I am Hans’—i.e. I am a personification of Hans which is a divine bird symbolizing the eclectic virtues that are associated with Brahm as well as the Atma.

This realisation overwhelms the spiritual aspirant as he submerges himself in a high tide of ecstasy and bliss. The Upanishad concludes by highlighting the glories of it, and the immense spiritual benefits derived by reading and understanding it meaningfully.

The Upanishad derives its name ‘Maha Vakya’ from the fact that it preaches the Great Truth of existence, the ‘truth’ of the Atma and Brahm. The word ‘Maha’ means great, and ‘Vakya’ means a saying, an edict, an axiom, or an axiomatic maxim. It teaches and espouses the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta which essentially says that the ‘Truth’ is always one and not more than one, that this ‘Truth’ vis-à-vis this existence is known as the Consciousness, that the Consciousness is an immutable, eternal, constant, universal and uniform divine entity, and that it is known as the Atma at the microcosmic level of creation and as Brahm at the macrocosmic level. Knowledge of this eclectic and quintessential truth is a liberating factor for the creature who is tied in the fetters of ignorance and its attendant delusions. The Atma,

therefore, is the ‘Tattwa’ or the fundamental principle and essence of creation; it is principal aim of all spiritual aspirants; it is the real target that ought to be pursued by all seekers of Truth.

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the meaning of this Shanti Paath.

1. Once upon a time, the creator Lord Brahma said to the Gods—‘I shall preach to you that truthful knowledge (Upanishad) which is extremely mysterious, esoteric and secret, but at the same time it is extremely divine and spiritually elevating, liberating and enlightening. It involves the knowledge of something so enigmatic, subtle and sublime that it is beyond the reach and comprehension of the mind and intellect, as well as is imperceptible by all other sense organs of the body.

[That is, the divine entity that will be dealt with in this Upanishad is beyond the reach and outside the purview of any of the organs of perception—it cannot be seen by the eyes, it cannot be heard by the ears, it cannot be tasted or described by the tongue, it cannot be smelt by the nose, and it cannot be touched and felt by the skin. Similarly, it is beyond the scope of the mind and the intellect to understand it, imagine it, describe it in words, analyse it.]

The entity that is the subject matter of this Upanishad (known as the ‘knowledge of the truth’) can surely be experienced and witnessed first hand, but it cannot be expressed, defined and taught in words and understood the way one understands things of this material world and its gross objects.

[That is, I will tell you about the mysterious entity known as the Atma which is pure cosmic Consciousness revealed as the ‘self’ of all living beings. The individual’s Atma is a microcosmic form or aspect of the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma, the Supreme Being and the transcendental Brahm. This knowledge of the divine and the most enigmatic entity known as the Atma is spiritually enlightening and liberating in as much as it frees the creature from the bondages of ignorance, delusions, and their attendant perplexities and entanglements.

But this ‘knowledge’ is not at all like the knowledge that relates to any of the material objects of this physical gross world. It is the ‘knowledge’ that is ethereal and divine in its dimension, and that cannot be taught and learnt like the way one teaches and learns about material sciences, the science of matter that pertains to the things of this world. It is a ‘knowledge’ that provides an intense degree of ecstasy, contentedness and bliss to the knower, a knowledge that leads one to his eternal freedom from all sorts of shackles that had tied him down to the gross body and the equally gross world from time immemorial and from generation to generation.

This ‘knowledge’ is outside the purview of the sense organs of perception of the gross body, as well as of the instruments of the subtle body that are known as the mind and intellect with their magnificent and stupendous abilities that go far beyond the abilities of the gross body.

It is the ‘knowledge’ of the ethereal Atma that is pure cosmic Consciousness, and it cannot be condensed into words and languages. The Atma is to be experienced and witnessed first hand like one experiences the sweet taste of a sweet dish to know what ‘sweetness’ means. Like this instance when one cannot know how sweet a

particular dish is till he tastes it, and even then he is unable to narrate its sweetness or define the term 'sweet' no matter how hard he tries, the knowledge of the Atma is extremely subtle and enigmatic so much so that it is impossible to limit it in words or confine it to definitions and criterions.

The Atma is not a gross material thing like, for instance, a piece of glass that can be held up by a teacher for his students to tell them what 'glass' is. It is also not like wind or air that can be felt when it rubs against the skin. It is also not like the smell of some flower that can be smelt, or the sweet or sour taste that can be tasted, or a sound that can be heard. It is also beyond the reach of the astounding intellectual abilities of the mind. The only way to know the Atma is to experience it and witness its presence not only in one's own self but everywhere else in this existence.] (1).

2. This most profound but enigmatic Upanishad (knowledge) should not ordinarily be disclosed to a layman who is not interested in such knowledge or who is not competent enough to grasp its profundity, depth and extent.

It should be preached or disclosed on the other hand to those who are well-endowed with righteous qualities and possess auspicious virtues, who are introspective and contemplative by nature, and who remain sincere in the service of their elders and teachers (2).

3. A wise man should become absolutely neutral by shutting off the external world by closing both the eyes in a symbolic manner. One of the eyes stand for Vidya, and the other eye stands for Avidya. It is then that he is able to witness the 'self' known as the Atma when all distractions arising from the external world are dispensed with.

[A man sees this physical gross world with his physical gross organ of sight known as the eye. The same thing is seen by two persons, and they interpret it differently. When asked to narrate what they have seen, both would describe the scene in two different ways. The eye sees water in a desert mirage, but everyone knows that it is an illusion. The eye sees the sky as being blue, but the fact is that the sky has no colour. That is, one cannot rely upon even what the eye sees. The eye of one man sees a length of rope as a harmless thing, while the eye of another man sees the same rope as being a snake and makes him terrified. The eye sees that the disc of the moon changes every night, waxing and waning over a period of a month, but the fact is that the disc of the moon remains steady; it neither diminishes nor enhances in size and contour.

So, the same eye can give either a correct knowledge that is known as 'Vidya', or an incorrect knowledge known as 'Avidya'. This is the great paradox of this world.

If a thing is to be really 'true', than it cannot have two meanings or two existences. Therefore, that which is seen by the physical organ of sight known as the eye is misleading and not the truth simply because it changes from man to man.

The 'Absolute Truth' is however different, for it cannot be seen by the two physical eyes that enable a creature to acquire knowledge of the things of the material world—i.e. provide him with 'Vidya', or even mislead him by the smokescreen of delusions and ignorance that makes him believe in things that have no existence—i.e. provide him with false knowledge called 'Avidya'.

The knowledge of the eternal and universal 'Absolute Truth' is known as 'Gyan', which means wisdom and enlightenment. This pertains to the spiritual world that is beyond the purview of the physical world. It comes with experiencing the Atma by self-realisation. It translates into spiritual bliss and ecstasy on the one hand, and spiritual liberation and deliverance on the other hand. This insight comes with the

third eye of Gyan, the eye of enlightenment and wisdom that makes a man 'see' the eclectic truth of the Atma which is nothing but pure cosmic Consciousness and the absolute spiritual Truth of creation.

There is another way of understanding the terms 'Vidya' and 'Avidya' in the field of metaphysics. Since Vidya means knowledge that can be verified and proved, it relates to the Jagrat state or the waking state of consciousness when a creature is wide awake and actually sees and witnesses the physical world. All his organs of perception, i.e. the eye, the nose, the tongue, the ear and the skin, see, smell, taste, hear and feel the existence of the world in practical terms that cannot be denied. For all practical purposes, this knowledge is Vidya because it is for real and not imaginary.

When the same creature goes to sleep and begins to dream, he sees another world which seems to be as real as the physical world of the waking state, but in actuality it is imaginary, and therefore illusionary. This world is seen and witnessed by the creature in the state of existence of consciousness known as Swapna or the dreaming state, and the knowledge acquired now would be 'Avidya' because it is not the real thing.

Beyond these two states is the third state of existence, and it is called Sushupta or the deep sleep state. Here, the Atma takes over. The knowledge that is acquired now pertains to the world of the Atma which is pure cosmic Consciousness. Whereas the characteristics and virtues of the two previous worlds of the waking state and the dreaming state are subjected to constant change, those of the world of the Atma remain constant and steady. Anything that changes cannot be 'absolute and true', and therefore it follows that the knowledge of existence that comes when one knows about the Atma is the real knowledge which is called 'Gyan' (true wisdom and enlightenment).

This knowledge of the Atma comes with the third eye of Gyan which supersedes the two eyes of the body which metaphorically stand for the physical knowledge of the gross world, called Vidya, and the imaginary knowledge caused by delusions, called Avidya.]

When an enlightened and wise One (a man; a living being; a creature) shuts off the world by closing his eyes in a symbolic manner—i.e. when he stops paying any attention to the delusory world marked by a predominance of the Tama Guna (which the meanest of the three Gunas or qualities in creation) and its entangling temptations and negative effects—he is deemed to have freed himself from the deluding sights that arise out of the dominance of such Tama Guna, accompanied by their negative effects, in this world. Hence, he becomes eligible to see the 'truth' in an untainted and undistorted form; he sees the 'reality' without the interference of Tama Guna which would have otherwise distorted the sight of the reality and truth.

[Just like the case of a man finding immense peace of mind and stability of thoughts by shutting his eyes so that he is not distracted by the myriad problems and miseries that have their origin in the material world around him, or is torn between many choices and temptations which create havoc with the calmness of his mind and composure, a wise man who shuts off the external transient world by turning his mind and sub-conscious away from it, and rather focuses his attention inwards on the steady world of the pure conscious 'self', prevents himself from being sucked in the vortex of doubts and confusions as to what is true and what is not, what is liberation and what is entanglement, what cause comfort and happiness on the one hand, and discomfort and misery on the other hand. Such a wise, erudite and enlightened man is the one who finds real peace and bliss. He remains submerged in meditation and

contemplation; he remains engrossed in the thoughts of the pure conscious Atma to the exclusion of all other thoughts. He is neither perturbed by the delusions created by the world, nor is he too obsessed about finding liberation and deliverance. The reason is that he knows that the world has no pith and meaning in it, and therefore it is futile running around pursuing it. He also knows that the Atma is eternally liberated, and therefore there is no question of finding 'liberation' or Moksha for the Atma. He discovers the stellar qualities and divine virtues of the Atma that is marked by eternal peace and tranquility, the Atma which is eternal, imperishable, infinite, sublime, ethereal, holy, immutable, all-pervading, all-inclusive, omnipresent and omniscient.

The Atma is the pure consciousness that resides in the gross body as the 'truthful self' and the real identity of all the creatures (living beings). This Atma is eternally free and unbound, and therefore the question of the creature finding liberation does not arise. The natural corollary is that the notion that the creature needs Mukti is itself erroneous and misplaced. Therefore all the worries and consternations that the creature had about his fate and liberation prospects are automatically eliminated. So, when a creature becomes knowledgeable about the Atma and what constitutes his 'self', he becomes instantaneously liberated and delivered from the fetters of ignorance and delusions; he finds emancipation and salvation even without making any other effort to achieve this spiritual goal. The reward comes in the form of bliss and ecstasy which are natural accompaniments of self-realisation, or of acquisition of Gyan.

Since the Atma is the ultimate Truth of existence, it is also the 'Tattwa' or the quintessence of creation. Just like nothing can exist in this material without the basic unit known as the Atom, no life is possible in this existence without the Atma. Therefore, a man who has known the Atma has also known the Tattwa, and thus becomes a 'Tattwa-Gyani'—one who is well-versed in the essence and the fundamental truth of creation.] (3).

4. The Atma principle is enveloped or shrouded in a dark veil of ignorance. This veil prevents the truth of the Atma from being known; it prevents its shine and glory from coming to the fore. Thus, lack of correct and truthful knowledge of the Atma is known as 'Avidya'—or lack of Vidya. This basic ignorance is the cause of the existence of the entire creation in its gross form, extending from the mortal world consisting of mobile and immobile entities right up to the immortal entity known as Brahm, the Supreme Being.

[Basically, this paragraph means that the notion of 'duality'—known as Dwaitya—is wrong, as the cosmic Consciousness, which is the actual reality in creation, has no name and form, it is uniform and universal. It is the same Consciousness that is, on the one hand, known as Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation, and as the Atma residing in the creature's body at the microcosmic level of creation on the other hand. Lack of this knowledge is known as 'Avidya'.]

It is due to the darkness or delusions created by ignorance that one is led to erroneously believe that there exists a difference or separation between Brahm and the rest of the things in this creation.

All the Vedic rituals and their associated activities are done with some fruit or reward in mind. They are done in the physical world and involve material things. They presume the presence of so many Vedic deities to whom offerings and oblations are made during sacrifices and other obligatory religious duties. All these presume that there is a performer of rituals, a deity who is worshipped, and there is a set pattern and prescribed manner by which the former can access the latter. This

triumvirate is based on 'Avidya' or lack of truthful knowledge of the reality in creation that stresses on the eclectic principle of 'non-duality'—that there is only one uniform Consciousness in this creation, that it is the same non-dual Brahm which exists in all the forms that exist in this creation, that it is actually Brahm that is being worshipped in so many forms of deities, that this Brahm is nothing but the cosmic Consciousness that also resides inside the worshipper's own bosom as his Atma, and that no external forms of worship is needed to access this Consciousness because it is to be found inside one's own self and no where outside. All forms of physical rituals as prescribed by the Vedas are therefore merely routine mechanical activities of the mundane world, having no bearing on a person's spiritual welfare (4).

5. Till the time one is not fully enlightened as well as firmly and entirely convinced that the Atma, the pure conscious 'self', is not something inane, gross and shrouded in the darkness of ignorance and delusions, but is an entity that is most sublime, subtle, immanent, pristine pure, holy, immaculate, divine, self-illuminated and radiant because it has its origin in the equally glorious Brahm, the supreme transcendental Divinity, he should continue to pursue the path and practice those principles that would lead him to the acquisition of knowledge of the ultimate spiritual Truth. That is, he must relentlessly continue his quest for the 'Truth' known as the Atma.

'Vidya' (truthful knowledge) is different from and entirely opposite of 'Avidya' (lack of knowledge). 'Vidya' is eternally radiant and splendid like the sun; it is self-illuminated and brilliant like the sun. Everything related to the Vidya has a shine in it; it is accompanied by a halo of brightness and incandescent with divine energy like the sky around the sun that is brilliantly illuminated by the latter. Any body of knowledge that removes the darkness of ignorance and its accompanying delusions from the spiritual horizon of the aspirant is known as 'Vidya', and it is worth pursuing, worth accepting and worth implementing.

Such knowledge would enlighten the aspirant about the supreme Truth and the absolute Reality of creation, and it would always and invariably point to Brahm because there is no other Truth and Reality in this creation other than Brahm, the transcendental Supreme Being. When this knowledge (Vidya) is acquired, the seeker is said to have attained 'Gyan' which is true wisdom and enlightenment of the ultimate Truth (5).

6. The supreme transcendental Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness), which is as life-giving, as splendid and as self-illuminated as the celestial sun, resides in the gross body of every living-being who breathes in the form of the latter's Atma (soul; the 'self'). This Brahm (that resides in the creature's physical gross body as his Atma) is known as the 'Hans' (literally a divine Swan).

This 'Hans' also refers to the breath that comes in and moves out of the creature's body while making a subtle hissing sound while doing so.

['Ha' sound is made when one inhales, and 'Sa' sound is made when one exhales. This is a continuous process. In Yoga Upanishads it is referred to as the silent, steady and continuous involuntary repetition of the 'Hans Mantra' which pertains to the supreme transcendental Brahm. This is sort of involuntary meditation and contemplation done when a spiritual aspirant has accomplished certain level of enlightenment and spiritual achievement. Such an aspirant is not required to specially sit for Yoga at a fixed time or for certain duration of time, as his entire life is spent in meditation and contemplation. He is meditating upon Brahm and the Atma all the time, even when he is asleep or going about his mundane duties in this world. The

reason is that each of his breath is a repetition of the ‘Hans Mantra’ related to Brahm; he is always focused on Brahm. In this context, refer to (a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93. (d) Atharva Veda—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 4, 12-22, 26-27; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3.]

When the spiritual aspirant becomes enlightened and self-realised he becomes firmly convinced that his true identity is the ‘Hans’ that is an acronym for Brahm, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness that is the Absolute Truth of creation. That is, he becomes convinced that the ‘Hans’ is none but his ‘true self’; or that ‘he is the Hans (Brahm) personified himself’. [‘Hans So-a-Ham’.]

Meditating upon this Hans makes him enlightened about the vital winds known as Pran and Apaana (which are the two primary winds in his body, the former moving upwards, and the latter moving downwards in the body). This also enlightens him about the importance of breath and its control.

[This is because only when he concentrates his mind during meditation that he is able to hear the subtle sound of ‘Ha’ and ‘Sa’ being made by the vital winds as they come in and go out of the body in the form of breath. This leads him to discover that his Atma, the pure consciousness residing in his gross body as his true ‘self’, and the Pran, the vital wind that makes the sound of Hans, are synonymous with each other. One can’t exist without the other. If there is no ‘consciousness’ or life-awareness inside the body, the latter would not breathe, and if the breath is stopped the body would die automatically, thereby snuffing out consciousness from it.]

Hence, by constant and persistent practice of this eclectic Vidya (spiritual knowledge that is obtained by steady meditation and contemplation) for a long time does one become aware of the presence of the supreme transcendental Atma known as the ‘Parmatma’, the Supreme Being, that is honoured and eulogized by the epithet ‘Satchidaanand’—one that is ‘Sat’ or truthful, one that is ‘Chit’ or consciousness, and one that is ‘Anand’ or blissful.

In other words, when the spiritual aspirant becomes self-realised, he also becomes Brahm-realised. This results in his experiencing the presence of the truthful, the conscious and the blissful Atma in his own inner-being. He becomes enlightened, and this enlightenment means he has attained knowledge of the Absolute Truth. That is, he has attained true Gyan (6).

7. When one becomes self-realised and attains the highest echelons of enlightenment (i.e. he becomes a Gyani), he attains a stature of spiritualism that is as radiant and splendid as thousands of suns shining simultaneously; he becomes fulfilled and an ocean of tranquility, bliss and peacefulness like a huge and fathomless ocean whose water is absolutely calm; and he is fully soaked and completely submerged in the eclectic thoughts of the supreme transcendental Brahm with its accompanying bliss, beatitude and felicity.

This eclectic state of being is not Samadhi (the trance-like state); it is not the sign of attaining success in Yoga either. It is not the dissolution of the mind also.

Rather, it is a sign of establishment of oneness between the individual 'self' known as the Atma with the universal 'Self' known as Brahm. In other words, it is the establishment of oneness between the Jiva, the creature, and the Supreme Being. It is the union of the Atma with the Parmatma, the Supreme Being, that is the final aim of doing Yoga and attaining Samadhi. It is the endorsement and a first hand experience of the authenticity of the great metaphysical quintessential truth of the philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta that deals with the non-dual nature of the Atma and the absolute reality of creation. (7).

8. This state of existence when one has become self and Brahm realised is beyond the reach and purview of Agyan (ignorance in all its connotations) as well as Tama (darkness in all its connotations). It is, on the contrary, self-illuminated, radiant and splendorous as the Aditya (sun).

Those who are steady and consistent in their spiritual pursuit analyse everything having a name and form, patiently and with due diligence, in order to peer behind the external façade and see the sublime and subtle 'truth and reality' that is hidden behind it. It is then that they are able to experience and witness the supreme transcendental Consciousness that is the absolute Truth of creation known as Brahm. It is then that they realise that their own 'self' is the same 'consciousness' that is known as the Atma at the microcosmic level of existence, and the Parmatma at the macrocosmic level. This leads them to be convinced that there is indeed no difference between Brahm and their individual 'self'. In other words, they become one like the Brahm; they are fully convinced of the veracity of the statement 'Hans So-a-Ham', where the term 'Hans' indicates 'Brahm', and 'Ham' indicates their truthful 'self'.

[The self-realised man becomes convinced about the truth and the veracity of the doctrine of Advaitya Vedanta, the philosophy of non-duality. It basically states that 'Truth' is always one, and it is this single Truth that is revealed in all its myriad forms in this creation. To see the world as distinct from this Truth is Avidya, while interpreting it in the context of the Truth is Vidya. Knowledge of this Truth is Gyan.] (8).

9. This eclectic state of existence has been endorsed by the creator Brahma as well as the king of Gods known as Indra who is most powerful and the best amongst the Gods.

A wise, enlightened and self-realised person who knows the eclectic, sublime and divine form of Brahm, and who is fully convinced of Brahm's all-pervading existence and irrefutable truthfulness, is able to attain not only Brahm-hood but also access the Amrit, the elixir of eternity, blissfulness, beatitude and felicity, which accompanies such Brahm-realisation.

This blessed state of spiritual existence is the truthful and correct path leading to one's spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, and there is no alternative to it (9).

10. In ancient times, the auspicious and righteous Gods had worshipped the eternal and infinite Lord (Brahm) by a symbolic sacrifice that represented the eclectic knowledge of the latter that was gained by the former.

[Knowledge of Brahm is a painstaking exercise requiring intense meditation and contemplation. It is equivalent to doing stern Tapa or penance and austerity, as well as a Yagya or a fire sacrifice involving immense devotion, commitment, spiritual energy and effort. Since the Gods had attained the knowledge of Brahm, they had

attained a superior status in the hierarchy of creation; they had become immortal and exalted as opposed to ordinary mortal creatures.]

This was the first outline or step of the concept of Dharma (the principles of auspiciousness and righteousness) established by the Gods. That is, to seek and realise the ‘truth’ and eliminate all that is deluding and falsehood is the first and foremost requirement in Dharma. This ancient tradition has been followed by great sages and seers.

It is the divine eclectic Brahm whose glories and majesty are being eulogized by ancient Gods and saints; it is Brahm who is held in high esteem by them. It is this Brahm who is pursued and worshipped by them. It is this Brahm who is the ultimate ‘Deva’ or the exalted Lord God known as the Supreme Being (10).

11. ‘I am that eternal essence known as the ‘Arka’ (literally the juice, the essence, the fundamental) that is the basis of everything in creation. [That is, I am Brahm and the cosmic Consciousness personified.]

I am a personified form and the essence that represents the supreme ‘Jyoti’ (literally the ‘light’ representing consciousness and its eclectic knowledge, energy, divinity, sublimity, truthfulness etc.). [In other words, I am the cosmic Consciousness personified. I am fully enlightened and wise. I am truthful and divine.]

I am Shiva personified (i.e. I am most auspicious, beautiful, divine, holy, immaculate, and detached from this deluding creation—the virtues that are encapsulated in the term ‘Shiva’).

I am the Atma which is brilliant and self-illuminated like the sun.

It is me indeed who is the ‘Sukra’ (literally the sperm but here meaning the all-pervading light of consciousness) that infuses life and consciousness in all the creatures of creation.

I am the supreme ‘Jyoti’ (light; consciousness; truth) that illuminates everything in this creation. [That is, I have understood that my truthful form is the Atma which is the pure consciousness that is a universal entity which infuses life in all the living beings in this creation.

I know everything in this world, which is a metaphoric way of saying that the Atma is eternally enlightened and wise, and therefore nothing is hidden from it.]

I am never separate from that supreme Authority characterized by the above virtues; in fact I am that Authority.’ (11).

[Note—Refer also to Krishna Yajur Veda tradition’s Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 62. (ii) Atharva Veda tradition’s Atma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 8, 10-13, 19-22; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 13-16, 21-25, 31-46.]

12. By reading and studying this Upanishad in the morning (and contemplating upon its great teachings), one is exonerated from the sins committed by him (inadvertently) during the previous night. Similarly, by reading and studying this Upanishad in the evening (and contemplating upon its great teachings), one is exonerated from the sins committed by him (inadvertently) during the daytime.

Thus, by reading and studying this Upanishad (and contemplating upon its great teachings) twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, one is exonerated from the greatest of sins committed (inadvertently) by him at any time¹.

A person who reads or recites this Upanishad during noon time in the presence of the sun is freed from the five great sins² as well as numerous other sins committed (inadvertently) by him.

A person who reads and studies this Upanishad is able to gain the great spiritual reward obtained by reading and studying the four Vedas (because this Upanishad enlightens him of the quintessential truth and the eclectic principles that the Vedas enunciate and espouse).

Such a person is able to obtain the abode of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being (12).

[Note—¹In this context, refer to the following Upanishads of the Atharva Veda also— Ganapati Upanishad, verse no. 17; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 10; Devi Upanishad, verse no. 32.

²The five great sins are the following—killing of a Brahmin, drinking wine, theft, having sex with the wife of one's teacher, having lustful feelings for one's daughter, and to keep company of those who indulge in any of these sins.

According to some versions, the five great sins are the following—killing of a Brahmin or murder of any kind, drinking wine or any other intoxicating drink, gambling, infidelity, and eating meat because it involves violence.]

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-----Shanti Paath-----

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Chapter 27

Gopal Tapini Upanishad

This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Krishna whose other name is 'Gopal' (which literally means the Lord who takes care of cowherds, but implies in its ambit all the creatures of this creation). The Upanishad is in two parts—the Purva or previous section called the 'Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad', and the Uttar or subsequent section called the 'Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad'. Therefore, we shall divide this Chapter into two sections—viz. section 1 dealing with the first Upanishad, and section 2 dealing with the second Upanishad.

The 'Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad' essentially deals with the divine form of Lord Krishna as it describes that the Lord is none but the Supreme Being himself personified in his form. It goes on to describe the divine form of Lord Krishna which should be meditated upon, along with the eighteen-letter Mantra of the Lord and its spiritual importance. It then narrates the worship Yantra, the instrument that is used to offer worship to the Lord in formal forms of worship. This Upanishad was revealed by the creator Brahma when he answered the Gods who asked him as to who was the greatest God and Lord in creation.

The 'Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad' was however revealed by sage Durvasa for the benefit of the Gopis (milkmaids and cowherds' wives) led by Radha when they enquired from the sage about the truthful nature and form of Lord Krishna. This is because they were confused about the reality of the Lord and his divine nature as his worldly activities seemed to be quite the contrary to the established principles regarding divinity, immaculacy and code of decent and ethical conduct. But the truth of the matter is that the Lord was absolutely immaculate and uncorrupt internally as well as externally. When the ladies had their doubts about this fact regarding Lord Krishna, sage Durvasa preached them the truth of Lord Krishna's divine form and

nature. Incorporated in his teachings are the various metaphysical, theological and spiritual concepts.

The sage cites the conversation between Lord Narayan, the Supreme Being, and Brahma, the creator, wherein the former preaches the latter about the various aspects of the greatest of the different incarnations of the Lord as Krishna. Great metaphysical and spiritual truths are revealed in this discourse. The concluding part of the Upanishad lists sixteen great Mantras of Lord Krishna that were revealed to Brahm by Lord Narayan. They are on the same pattern as the ones revealed for Lord Ram in the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad.

The Krishna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition is another great Upanishad exclusively dedicated to the theme of Lord Krishna. It is Chapter 28 of this volume. It is a perfect companion of the present Gopal Tapini Upanishad, and must be read alongside it to get a comprehensive idea of the divine nature of Lord Krishna.

There is a worship instrument called the ‘Gopal Yantra’ which is used in the Tantra form of formal ritualistic worship of Lord Gopal Krishna. Its diagrammatic depiction is included at the end of this Chapter.

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Section 1

Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad

[This Upanishad describes the supreme divine nature of Lord Krishna, his sublime form that is worthy of meditation by spiritual aspirants, and his eighteen-letter Mantra. The main thrust or theme of this Upanishad is to espouse and establish the divine nature and virtues of the Krishna principle or the Krishna Consciousness, and to affirm that the physical form of the Lord is actually this principle or Consciousness in a personified form.]

1. The Gopal Tapini Upanishad pertaining to Lord Krishna is well known to sages Yagyawalkya, Lord Varaaha, sage Shatyayani, Lord Hayagriva, Lord Dattatreya and Lord Garud (1).

2. OM Salutations! I/we bow most reverentially before Lord Krishna who is a personification of the glorious virtues known as ‘Sachidaanad’. That is, he is ‘Sat’ or truthful; he is ‘Chid’ or enlightened and eternal consciousness; and he is ‘Anand’ or blissful.

He is able to do everything even without making an effort, i.e. he does everything by merely wishing to do it. [This is because he is almighty and all-powerful Lord of creation.]

He is worthy of knowing and the subject of research by the means of the Vedas. He is the universal Guru, or a teacher, guide and moral preceptor for all.

He is the witness of the Buddhi (intellect and thoughts) of all living beings, i.e. he knows what goes on in the mind and what are the inner thoughts of all the creatures; nothing can be hidden from him (2).

3. Hari OM Salutations! Once upon a time, the great sages and seers approached the great God Lord Brahma (the creator) and asked him—‘Oh Lord! Who is the most exalted and the best amongst the Gods? Who is the Lord by whom even the ‘Death’ is afraid? Who is the one by knowing the reality and truth or essence of whom everything worth knowing is known? Which is the entity that inspires and impels the world to remain engrossed or involved in the endless cycle of arrival and departure (i.e. trapped in the cycle of birth and death)?’ (3).

4. Brahma replied—‘Without doubt it is Lord Krishna who is the greatest of all the Gods. It is from ‘Govind’ (Krishna) that the Death is afraid. By knowing the Tattva or the essential form, the truth and the reality of ‘Gopijan-Vallabh’ (the Lord who is very dear to the cowherds), whatever is worthy to be known in this world becomes known.

It is the force of ‘Swaha’ that inspires the world to go around in a circle of birth and death.’

[The word ‘Swaha’ is pronounced when an offering is made to the sacred fire during fire sacrifices. It is believed that the Swaha is the mouth of the Fire God, and through it the offering is accepted by the deity to whom the offering is made, i.e. the Supreme Being. In the present context it means that it is the Shakti, or the cosmic energy and driving force of the supreme Lord that keeps the wheel of creation rotating endlessly. For this, the Lord employs his Maya Shakti, or the power to create delusions, that impels the creatures to remain entangled in the never-ending cycle of birth and death.] (4).

5. The Gods asked once again, ‘Who is Lord Krishna? Who is Govind? Who is Gopijan Vallabh? Who is Swaha?’ (5).

6. Brahma replied, ‘He who steals or forcefully takes away (i.e. banishes or vanquishes or reduces or eliminates completely) sins and their evil effects is known as Krishna. [In other words, Lord Krishna is the merciful and benevolent Lord who ensures that his devotees and followers find liberation and deliverance from all evil effects of sins and misdemeanors committed by them, advertently or inadvertently.

He who is the well-wisher and caretaker of cows (symbolizing humble creatures) as well as the earth and all its inhabitants is known as Govind. He is famed in the Vedas with this name and these glorious virtues.

He who removes the darkness of ignorance (known as ‘Avidya’) in all the cowherds who lived with him (symbolizing all the creatures who are devoted to the Lord and worship him faithfully), and instead inspires them towards the light of knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment and realisation (known as ‘Vidya’), and is therefore most dear to them and beloved of them, is known as Gopijan-Vallabh.

The Maya Shakti of this Lord (i.e. the Lord’s dynamic power to create delusions) is known as Swaha.

[Since ‘Swaha’ refers to making offerings to the fire during sacrifices, it means here that everything that comes into being is thrown into a tailspin of delusions by the Lord’s dynamic power to create delusions. The creature loses his bearings and is unable to see the truth and grasp the reality even though he reads the scriptures and is taught by a wise teacher; he continues to remain trapped in the web-like world. It is

the Maya Shakti of the Lord that is therefore instrumental in keeping the wheel of creation consisting of birth and death rotating perpetually. For had everyone become self-realised and enlightened, should everyone renounce this delusory world and remain submerged in meditation and contemplation, the world would become a barren place because all those who are born would find emancipation and salvation, no new creature would be born because all of them would have found final Mukti or emancipation and salvation, and the cycle of birth and death which is so characteristic of this creation would come to a grinding halt.]

In this way, those who remain submerged in the thoughts of the supreme Brahm in the form of Lord Krishna, those who do Japa (repetition) of the divine name of the Lord in the form of the various Mantras dedicated to Lord Krishna, thereby tasting the nectar-like elixir that these Mantras represent when they are repeated by the tongue, and those who remain devoted to the Lord and worship him continuously—they indeed become a personified form of the Amrit, or the elixir of eternity and blissfulness that the Lord and his Mantras represent (6).

[Note—It is well-established principle of psychology that if one continuously thinks of anything, or keeps some kind of company for a prolonged time, he is bound to be affected by it. So, when a person thinks of the Lord continuously, he is bound to be influenced by the Lord's virtuousness and divine characters. Even the most hardened criminal is changed in good company, so therefore even the greatest of sinner would be rendered sinless should he become aware of the Lord's divine presence everywhere, a thought which is in it's self most auspicious and holy. The Lord's divine aura would neutralize all traces of negativity from his life.

By remaining submerged or engrossed in the thoughts of the Lord, the devotee becomes one like him, and for all practical purposes he has withdrawn himself from this deluding and entrapping world and instead brought himself so much the nearer to the Lord. The devotee or the spiritual aspirant soaks in the divinity and holiness associated with Lord Krishna and Krishna Consciousness so much so that he himself begins to glow in it's radiance and begins to radiate the same divinity and holiness that is associated with the Lord and Krishna Consciousness.

It must be noted here clearly that this term 'Krishna Consciousness' refers to no other entity but the cosmic Consciousness that is known as the Parmatma or the Supreme Being. This term also means the supreme Atma or the supreme Soul of creation, and the Upanishads prefer to call it 'Brahm'. Knowledge of this fact is akin to acquiring of Gyan, and acquisition of Gyan leads to enlightenment and freedom from the fetters of ignorance and its attendant delusions. When one knows the 'Truth' one is freed from the bondage of falsehood. He understands that he has not to seek God somewhere high up in the sky, a place that is called Heaven, but in his own self as his Atma which is pure consciousness. The Atma or the pure consciousness is the spiritual aspirant's 'true self' just like the Krishna Consciousness that is the truthful form of the Lord known by the name of Krishna. This eclectic, sublime and divine knowledge makes him an image of Krishna himself.]

7. The sages asked once again, 'What is the form of Lord Krishna which is worthy of meditation? What is the taste of the elixir or nectar (Amrit) that is represented by constant repetition of his name? How is he worshipped? We wish to know the answer of all these questions, so please enlighten us about them.' (7).

[Note—Refer Section 2, Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad of this Chapter, verse no. 9 and its subsequent verses.]

8. Then Hiranyagarbha (one of the names of Brahma, the creator) answered as follows—'The form of Krishna—who looks like a cowherd boy and sits under the

divine Kalpa tree—that is worthy of adoration, worship and meditation is described in a Shloka (hymn) as follows:--

The Lord's eyes are as beautiful as a white lotus flower; the complexion of his divine body is dark like the rain-bearing cloud; he wears a glistening yellow Pitambar (which is a body-wrapping over-garment made of silk) that dazzles and shines like lightning; he has two arms; he sits in the posture known as 'Gyan Mudra' (a posture adopted by a learned teacher while preaching his disciples); he is adorned by a long garland known as the Vanmala¹ that extends from around his neck to his legs; he is the Ishwar (Lord) of creation; he is surrounded on all the sides by cowherd men and boys as well as milkmaids; he is present under the Kalpa tree² (which is the evergreen tree of the Gods and a fulfiller of all wishes); his divine body is adorned with magnificent ornaments; and he sits on a gem-studded throne in the center of a gem-studded lotus.

A soft, cool and sweet-scented breeze that blows across the Kalindi river, kissing the surface of its lively and energetic pristine waters, wafts in soothingly and comfortingly to serve the Lord.

A devotee who worships and adores Lord Krishna in the aforesaid form is freed from the shackles that tie him down to this mortal and delusory world. That is, he is able to obtain Mukti, or liberation and deliverance (8).

[Note—¹The *Vanmala*—This is a garland (mala) worn by Vishnu and is made of flowers of the forest/wild (Van). Refer for details in section 2 of this Chapter named Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 31, note no. 5.

²The *Kalpa Tree*— It is the evergreen tree of the Gods. It is said to possess mystical powers and can bestow all that is desired by an aspirant or seeker. The Botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is *Adansonis Digitta*; it is also called 'Parijaat' meaning 'descended from the sea', and 'Harsingar' meaning 'the decoration of the Gods, especially Lord Hari'. The English name of it is Coral Jasmine; in Latin it is called *Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis* (nyctanthes means the night flower, while arbor tristis means the sad tree). Its flower is said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dying silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legends, it was produced during the churning of the ocean for the search of Amrit, or the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, by the Demons and the Gods. The king of the Gods, Indra, took it away and planted it in his capital at Amravati. According to another legend (in Vishnu Puran), a princess named Parijaat fell in love with the Sun God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the Sun became disenchanted with her and did not like her overtures any longer. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew up from the ashes at the site of her funeral pyre. The flower of this tree could not bear the sight of the Sun, and therefore it blooms during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.]

9. Now, the form and nature of the taste of the elixir of the Lord's divine name and how to do Japa (repetition) with his Mantra is being described.

The Sanskrit letter 'Ka' (pronounced as in *come*), which is the Beej (seed) letter representing water, followed by the letter 'La' (pronounced as in *luck*), which is the Beej letter for earth, the long vowel sound of 'Ee' (pronounced as in *eel*), and crowned by the mark of the moon called the Anuswar (the 'dot')—when these are combined together, they form the Beej (seed; root) Mantra for Kaam (fulfillment of desires), which is 'Klim/Klin(g)'.

This is used as a prefix for the name of the Lord, i.e. Krishna. Hence, the first Paad or step of the divine Mantra of Lord Krishna is 'Klim/Klin(g) Krishnaaye'.

The word 'Govindaaye' is the second Paad or step, followed by 'Gopijan' which is the third Paad, 'Vallabhaaye' which is the fourth Paad, and 'Swaha' which is the fifth and last Paad of the Mantra.

Hence, the full Mantra consisting of five Paads or steps is 'Klim/Klin(g) Krishnaaye Govindaaye Gopijan Vallabhaaye Swaha'¹. This Mantra is known as 'Panch-padi', i.e. one that has five steps. [Briefly it means 'I offer my oblations to Lord Krishna who is the fulfiller of all wishes, is known as Govind because he is the protector of cows and other humble creatures, and is very dear to the cowherds because he manifested himself or was born amongst them.']

Since it embodies in its self or represents the five manifested aspects of creation, viz. the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon and the fire, this Mantra is said to have five limbs or aspects.

A spiritual aspirant who worships the Lord by doing Japa with this Mantra of five Paads or steps is able to attain the supreme transcendental Brahm, because Lord Krishna is no one else but Brahm personified (9).

[Note—¹Refer verse no. 16 also.]

10. In this context there is Shloka (hymn) that endorses the above view. It says that a worshipper who utters or pronounces the great Mantra of the Lord by saying the following words in the prescribed sequence—i.e. first saying 'Klim/Klin(g)', then 'Krishnaaye', then 'Govindaaye', then 'Gopijan', then 'Vallabhaaye', and finally 'Swaha'—he is able to meet the Lord soon and attain the highest stature of exalted existence.

Having steady and firm devotion for Lord Krishna is equivalent to worshipping him. It takes the following form—One should surrender himself to the Lord and abandon all sorts of desires and passions regarding this mortal world where he lives as well as the world that would be obtained upon death. That is, one should have no desires whatsoever, and devote all his energy and time in meditating and contemplating upon the Lord. Whatever deeds are done by him by the virtue of his existential constraints should be offered to the Lord, without any conditions attached. The surrender must be complete, involving all the organs of the body, both the physical gross organs of the body such as the organs of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin) and the organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, excretory and reproductive), as well as the subtle organs such as the mind-intellect complex.

This is also the true way of renunciation; this is the actual meaning of non-involvement in deeds, or doing deeds dispassionately.

Those who are expert in the Vedas worship and offer obeisance to Lord Krishna in a number of ways. Saints and sages worship the Lord known by the name of Govind by various means.

Lord Gopijan-Vallabh (i.e. the Lord who is most dear to the cowherd community in which he had manifested, and by extension to all human kind because the Lord incarnated as a human being) is the protector, sustainer and caretaker of the entire world.

It is this almighty and all-capable Lord who had employed his dynamic powers represented by Swaha to first create this world, and then nourish and sustain it.

Just like the single air or wind element, that is basically immutable, uniform, universal, constant and infinite by nature, assumes five different names and forms such as Pran etc.¹ by the virtue of the different functions that it performs in the body, Lord Krishna too appears to have different names and is revealed in different forms as

indicated by the five steps of the above Mantra. Actually, all the various names such as Krishna, Gopijan-Vallabh, Govind etc. pertain to one Lord; they all refer to one single Lord (10).

[Note—¹The *five vital winds* present in the body are the Pran, the Apaana, the Samaana, the Vyaana and the Udaana. They all refer to the same air or wind element, but are assigned different names according to the different functions they perform in the body of the living being.

(1) Pran—this is the main vital wind and usually refers to the breath without which life is not possible; it is the vital wind located in the upper part of the body. It is the wind that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without this wind infusing life in the body no other wind would be of any significance to the creature. It is present in the mouth, nose, heart, navel, big toe of the leg. (2) Apaana—this is the wind that passes down the intestines, and is responsible for ingestion of food, its digestion in the intestines and the final excretion of the waste product from the body—its grosser content through the anus and its fluid contents through the urinary system of the kidneys. This is the wind that moves down in the body and is chiefly located in the lower part of the body—in the intestines and anus, lower abdomen, thighs, knees. (3) Samaana—it is uniformly present throughout the body and as the name itself suggests it is responsible for uniform pressure and balance in the body besides equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body by maintaining proper circulation of blood. Therefore its functions somewhat resembles that of Vyaana wind. It is said to be especially present in the ears which are said to be the specialized playing field for the Samaana wind as it helps maintain balance in the body through the semi-circular canals in the ears. It also helps to coordinate the ears and the intellect because the latter would base its decisions on what it hears with the aid of the ears. (4) Udaana—this is the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough. It is predominantly present in the hands, legs and the various joints of the body. (5) Vyaana—this wind helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body as well as to ensure equal distribution of nutrients in the body by maintaining circulation. Hence, it works in close coordination with the Samaana wind. It also helps to control the functioning of the other winds. It is located in the ears, thighs, waist region, heels, shoulders and throat. Refer Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-7.

There are numerous Upanishads that deal with the Pran and other vital winds. Refer—(i) Sam Veda—(a) Chandogya Upanishad in its Canto 3, sections 13; Canto 5, section 1, verse nos. 1-15; Canto 5, sections 19-23 (describes how the five winds are satisfied; it also enumerates the Mantras pertaining to the five Prans); and Canto 7, section 15, verse no. 1; (b) Jabal Darshan panishad, Canto 4, verse no. 23-24; (c) Maitrayanu Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6-7 (which describes the functions of these winds).

(ii) Shukla Yajur Veda—(a) Subala Upanishad, Canto 9, verse no. 1-14; (b) Paingalo-panishad, canto 2, verse no. 3; (c) Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 5, 8-9; Canto 2, verse nos. 54, 77-87; (d) Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 3, Brahman 9, verse no. 26; Canto 4, Brahman 2, verse no. 4; Canto 4, Brahman 1, verse no. 3; Canto 5, Brahman 13; Canto 6, Brahman 1.

(iii) Krishna Yajur Veda—(a) Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 55^{1/2}-60, 95-100; (b) Varaha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 28; (c) Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 166; (d) Amritnada-panishad, verse no. 33-38; (e) Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 17-19; (f) Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 165 and Canto 5, verse no. 2; (g) Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 3, Anuvak 3, 7; (h) Katho-panishad, Canto 2, Valli 2, verse no. 10; (i) Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 2 (especially describes the three methods to

control the Prans); (j) Pran Agnihotra Upanishad, verse nos. 11-12, 14-18 (which describe the fingers that are directly related to the five principal winds and the Mantras of these winds).

(iv) Atharva Veda—Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 10 (that says that Pran controls all the activities of the body); Canto 4, verse nos. 42 (that says that the Chitta Vrittis inspire the Prans to become active), 85-89 (that say that control of Pran is equivalent to control of Vasanas, and briefly outline the methods by which Pran can be controlled); Canto 5, verse nos. 25-32, 50-53 (its verse nos. 52-53 aver that for a self-realised ascetic, the terms Pran and consciousness are the same); Prashna Upanishad, Canto 2-3; Mundak Upanishad, Canto 3, section 1, verse no. 4; Shandilya Upanishad, Canto 1, section 4, verse no. 12-13; Atma Upanishad, verse no. 18 (says that the body is kept active by the vital winds); Par Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 2 (the 4 aspects of Pran; that Pran moves through four Naadis); Bhavana Upanishad, verse no. 2/21-22.

(v) These vital winds have also been elucidated upon in sage Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no. 38-39.]

11. The sages asked once again, 'What is the way of offering formal forms of worship to Lord Govind who is the Parmatma (the Supreme Being) and the one who supports the entire creation? Please preach us about it.'

Brahma replied to them by describing the worship instrument through which one can offer formal forms of worship to the Lord. This is known as the 'Peeth' or the altar where worship is offered. It takes the form of a Yantra, literally an instrument of worship designed in the pattern of a geometrical figure.

[This figure is known as the 'Gopal Yantra' and its sketch is given at the end of this Chapter.]

Brahma described it in the following way—'One should make a golden eight-petal lotus on the altar or Peeth. These petals surround a central space where two equilateral triangles are drawn so that one is an inverted image of the other and placed one on the top of the other. This results in the formation of a star-like structure with six apexes or tips. [A circle is drawn around these apex points of the two triangles, and the petals of the lotus drawn earlier rest upon this circle in a ring formation.]

In the core or center of the two triangles shaped like six-pointed star is written the Beej Mantra of Kaam, i.e. Klim/Klin(g). This Beej is the medium by which all desires and wishes of the worshipper are fulfilled. Around it is written the full Mantra of Lord Krishna in a ring. This Mantra is 'Krishnaaye Govindaaye Gopi-Vallabhaaye Swaha'.

Then, in the six directions inside the enclosing circle that surrounds the two triangles that form the six-cornered star are written the six letters of the Mantra of Lord Krishna. This Mantra is 'Klim/Klin(g) Krishnaaye Namaha', and its six letters are Klim/Klin(g) + Kri + Shna + Ye + Na + Maha = 6.

They are written in a sequential manner in a clockwise pattern, starting from the north-west direction. Hence, in the north-west direction the Beej Klim/Klin(g) is written, followed by other letters as follows—in the north-east direction is written the letter 'Kri', in the east direction is written the letter 'Shna', in the south-east direction is written the letter 'Ye', in the south-west direction is written the letter 'Na', and in the west direction is written the letter 'Maha'.

However, in the space inside the six smaller triangles formed as a result of inverting the two larger triangles are written the Beej Mantras 'Srim/Srin(g)' and 'Hrim/Hrin(g)' standing for Maya Shakti of the Lord alternatively. That is, the Beej

‘Srim/Srin(g)’ is written in the first, the third and the fifth small triangles, while the Beej ‘Hrim/Hrin(g)’ is written in the second, the fourth and the sixth small triangle.

The letters of the Gopal Vidya and the Kaam Gayatri Mantra are written in a prescribed manner in the surrounding petals of the instrument.

The eight outer corners of the worship instrument are marked by the sign of the Vajra (the strong weapon of Indra; the goad and the thunderbolt). These eight corners are the north, the north-east, the east, the south-east, the south, the south-west, the west and the north-west. This outer periphery upon being completed forms the ‘Bhupur Yantra’.

For the purpose of worshipping Lord Krishna with this instrument, the Lord’s Mantra is first used for doing Anga-Nyas¹ along with the Mantras of Vasudeo (one of the names of Krishna), Rukmini (Krishna’s divine consort), Swaha Shakti (the Lord Maya Shakti; the Fire God), Indra (the king of Gods), the eight Vasus (the deities of the primary assets of creation), Partha (an epithet used for Arjun) and the various Nidhis (spiritual assets; in Tantra philosophy it refers to the various aspects of the divine Goddess) which are used for the purpose of providing ‘Avaran’ of the instrument².

The worshipper should meditate upon and worship Lord Krishna three times a day, i.e. at dawn, at noon and at dusk, by invoking the above Mantras of the Lord. The Lord should be offered worship in detail involving sixteen formal steps of worship³. This entitles the worshipper to obtain the four great fruits known as Artha (financial well-being), Dharma (auspiciousness and righteousness), Kaam (fulfillment of desires) and Moksha (liberation and deliverance). Indeed, he gets what he wants (11).

[Note—¹*Anga Nyas* is the process of ritual worship by which certain fixed points in the body are designated where the chosen deity is mentally invoked through the specific Mantra. This envisions that the mystical divine powers of the patron God or deity being worshipped by the Mantra are mentally invested in these fixed cardinal points of the body, thereby empowering the aspirant with their stupendous potentials as well as symbolically assigning the body to the tutelary God or deity to whom the particular Mantra belongs for his protection and blessing. Usually these six cardinal points are the following—the two legs, two hands, one head and one waist region. But according to this verse, they are the thumb, the tip of the fingers, the heart, the shoulders, the tuft on the top of the head, and the palm of the hand. There are prescribed ways of invoking the Mantras, and when done in a proper way it empowers the ordinary body of the worshipper with extraordinary divine and mystical powers.

Therefore, process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra’s divine mystical powers in the worshipper’s own body and make it holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take his seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is getting constant protection from this godhead. In the present context, since the Maha Vakyas speak of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the latter’s invocation and seating in the worshipper’s body would ensure that he becomes a versatile personification of Brahm. He is literally transformed from being an ordinary human being to an exalted being who is as revered and honourable as Brahm as well as a living embodiment of Brahm. Herein lies the importance of having firm faith in these Maha Vakyas because assuming the mantle of Brahm is not an easy task. The worshipper is expected to live up to his responsibilities as Brahm personified!

²The word *Avaran* means a protective ring, a covering, a screen, a shield, an encircling wall or ring, an obstruction. Here in ritualistic forms of worship this term applies to the worship of different Gods whose Beej Mantras are used to construct the instrument and whose divine intercession is sought by the aspirant for his protection and successful completion of his desires.

³The sixteen steps in formal forms of worship are the following—(1) Aavaahan (invoking or inviting the deity to be worshipped), (2) Aasan (giving of seat to the invited deity), (3) Paadya (offering water to wash the feet), (4) Arghya (offering water to wash the hands), (5) Aachaman (offering water to rinse or clean the mouth; a sip of water to clear the throat), (6) Snaan (giving a ritualistic bath), (7) Vastra (offering of new or freshly cleaned clothes to the deity) and Upavita (offering of the sacred thread), (8) Gandha (literally meaning a fragrance, and implying the offering of fresh sandalwood paste), (9) Pushpa (offering of flowers), (10) Dhupa (offering of lighted incense sticks), (11) Dipa (offering of lighted lamps), (12) Naivedya (offering of sweets and fruits along with water), (13) Tambul (offering of betel leaves as mouth-freshener), (14) reciting hymns in the deity's honour—called Mantra Pushpa (offering of flowers in the form of Mantras), (15) Pradakshina (circumambulation), and (16) Namaskaar (offering obeisance by bowing in front).]

12. In this context, there are certain Shlokas (hymns) which are narrated below.

‘Lord Krishna—who is all-pervading and omnipresent and the only one who keeps everyone under his control—is indeed the one who is worthy of praise, reverence, adoration, honour and worship. Though he is primarily one and non-dual, he still reveals himself in myriad of forms in this world. [That is, one must not be misled by the numerous forms and names of the Lord as to think that they are different from one another. The fact of the matter is that whatever that exists in this creation is nothing but a revelation of the same Lord. This Lord known as Krishna is actually the Supreme Being eulogized and honoured in the Upanishads as Brahm.]

Those devotees who faithfully and devoutly worship and offer their sincere obeisance daily to the Lord—who is honorably established on the worship altar described above (verse no. 11)—are the ones who obtain eternal peace, bliss and happiness, and no one else (12).

13. The Lord who is absolutely eternal, unchanging and uniform, who is an epitome of holiness, divinity and sublimity, who is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness, and who is the only one who fulfills all the desires of all the creatures—those persons who faithfully and devoutly worship and offer their sincere obeisance daily to such a Lord—who is honorably established on the worship altar described above (verse no. 11)—are the ones who obtain eternal peace, bliss and happiness, and no one else (13).

14. Those who are very enthusiastic about faithfully and diligently offering their worship and paying their sincere obeisance daily to Lord Vishnu (who had incarnated as Krishna and who is deemed to be the Supreme Being) through the medium of the worship altar and Mantras mentioned above (in verse nos. 9-11), and who desire nothing else but having devotion for the Lord and attaining nearness with him—such persons are the fortunate ones before whom the Lord voluntarily and quickly reveals his divine form as Gopal (Krishna), besides providing them with quick and easy access to his divine abode (i.e. providing them with Mukti) (14).

15. The Lord (here referring to the Viraat Purush, the primal form of Vishnu) who creates even the creator of this visible world, i.e. Brahma the creator, and then not only teaches him the Vedas but also inspires him to sing, chant or narrate them on his behalf (for the benefit of this creation), the Lord who is the illuminator or inspirer or motivator of the mind and intellect of all the creatures (i.e. the Lord who empowers the creature to think, analyse, deduce, and generally be intelligent, wise, enlightened

and discriminating)—verily, those who seek liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of their souls are advised to take the shelter and refuge in the holy feet of such a great and divine Lord (because he is indeed the Supreme Being, and there is no one greater than him) (15).

16. Those devotees who do Japa (repetition) with the holy Mantra of the Lord having five steps and eighteen letters by prefixing them with the ethereal salutary word 'OM' standing for the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness¹, are the ones to whom the Lord voluntarily reveals his true divine and holy form in the form of the cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma. That is, such persons become self-realised and enlightened. This is also tantamount to Brahm-realisation.

Hence, those who are desirous of finding liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle them to this delusory, mortal and entrapping world are advised to do Japa with this holy Mantra.' (16).

[Note—¹The complete Mantra is 'OM Klim/Klin(g) Krishnaaye Govindaaye Gopijan Vallabhaaye Swaha'. Refer verse no. 9 also. The eighteen letters following the prefix OM are as follows—Klim/Klin(g) + Kri + Shnaa + Ye + Go + Vi + Nndaa + Ye + Go + Pi + Ja + Na + Va + Lla + Bhaa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 18. If one includes the monosyllabic word 'OM', the Mantra has nineteen letters.]

17. It is from the basic Mantra having five steps (as narrated in verse no. 9) that is dedicated to Lord Govind that a number of other Mantras, for instance those having ten letters etc., have come into being. All of them provide welfare to the Jiva (the living being) who worships the Lord with them. These Mantras are invoked by Indra (the king of Gods) along with other Gods for the fulfillment of their desires and accomplishing success in obtaining majesty, power, authority, opulence, grandeur and fame in this world (17).

18. [This verse describes the genesis of creation.]

The sages said to Brahma, 'If this is the case, then please explain the meaning and importance of this Mantra to us.'

Brahma replied, 'During my lifetime in the previous life, I had been constantly meditating and contemplating upon the Parmeshwar, the Supreme Being, and had offered worship and obeisance to him. When half of my life had been spent in such devotion, the Lord's attention fell upon me. The Viraat Purush (Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being) was pleased with me and appeared before me as Gopal (the dark complexioned Lord known as Krishna who is a benevolent and most gracious caretaker of those who are dependent upon him or are his subjects in the kingdom known as this world).

I bowed most reverentially before him and prostrated at his holy feet. Being extremely pleased with me, and being of a gracious nature and of a kind heart he preached me the great Mantra having eighteen letters (verse no. 9, 16) to empower me to start the process of creation. Having done so, the Lord vanished from sight. This Mantra was an image of the Lord himself; it was a personified or revealed form of the Lord; it had all the dynamism, vitality, virility, strength, authority, power and energy of the Lord encapsulated in its words.

In due course of time when I desired to initiate the process of creation, the Lord inspired and enabled me to visualize the forthcoming world in its myriad forms and countless variations of all imaginable hues, formats and connotations in each of the letters of this Mantra. In other words, this time round the Lord revealed himself to

me not in his physical form as Gopal but personified as the letters of this Mantra. Since the world was encapsulated in this Mantra, and this Mantra was a personified form of the Lord, it follows that whatever that exists in this world (creation) is a manifested form of the Lord himself, and nothing else.

Now, I employed the first Paad or step of the Mantra (i.e. 'Klim/Klin(g)') to create the water element from its letter 'Ka' ('Klim/Klin(g)'), the earth from the letter 'La' ('Klim/Klin(g)'), the fire element from the letter 'Ee' ('Klim/Klin(g)'), the moon from the Anuswar (Klim/Klin(g)), and a combination of these letters to create the sun represented by the full Beej Mantra 'Klim/Klin(g)'.

From the second Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Krishnaaye', I created the sky and the air that filled it.

From the third Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Govindaaye', I created the Kamdhenu cow (the all wish-fulfilling cow of the gods) along with the Vedas and other bodies of knowledge.

From the fourth Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Gopijan-Vallabhaaye', I created the males and the females who would inhabit the forthcoming creation.

And finally, from the fifth Paad or step of the Mantra, i.e. 'Swaha', I created the rest of the mobile and immobile creation (18).

19. It was by worshipping Lord Krishna and doing Japa with his eighteen-letter Mantra prefixed with OM that the ancient king Chandradwaj, who was a saintly, pious and a wise king, attained the knowledge of the Atma, i.e. he became self-realised, developed profound renunciation towards this world, and attained freedom from the shackles of this gross body.

Those who are wise and enlightened always focus their attention on the divine abode of Lord Vishnu which is as splendourous and brilliant as the sun that shines majestically in the sky above, and is as vast and fathomless as the infinite sky in which this sun is located¹.

This divine abode is obtainable by having devotion for and doing Japa with the eighteen-letter Mantra of Lord Krishna mentioned herein above. Hence, wise ones always adopt this means to attain emancipation and salvation (19).

[Note—¹The divine abode of Lord Vishnu has been graphically described in the Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition. It is Chapter no. 11 of this volume.]

20. Some sages have a different take on the eighteen-letter Mantra (mentioned in verse no. 9). They assert that the earth element was formed out of the first Paad or step (i.e. 'Klim/Klin(g)'). The water element was formed out of the second Paad or step (which is Krishnaaye). The Tej or fire element was formed out of the third Paad or step (which is Govindaaye). The air or wind element was formed out of the fourth Paad or step (which is Gopijan-Vallabhaaye). And the sky element was formed out of the fifth Paad or step (which is Swaha).

This eighteen-letter Mantra of Lord Krishna is worshipped by the devotees and followers of Vishnu. It relates to the revelation of Lord Krishna's cosmic, omnipresent, omnipotent, all-pervading and all-encompassing form in creation in the form of the five primary elements known as Vyahritis from which the rest of creation was moulded.

One should always do Japa with this Mantra in order to overcome the darkness of ignorance and delusions and obtain freedom from their frightening effects (20).

[Note—Refer Section 2, Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 24 for a different take of this version of creation.]

21. In this connection, the following episode is famous. The magnificent Mantra from the first step of which the earth was created, from the second step of which the water was created, from the third step of which the Tej (dynamic energy, fire) was created, from the fourth step of which the air/wind was created, and from the fifth step of which the sky was created—it is the same Mantra that was invoked by the great ancient king Chandradwaj to reach the divine abode of Lord Vishnu, the abode known as Param Pad or the supreme stature of existence (21).

22. The supreme abode of the Lord (Vishnu in his form as Krishna, the Supreme Being) is embodied in the Mantra mentioned above. This abode, and therefore the Mantra, is characterized by the glorious virtues of being absolutely pure, holy, divine and immaculate, having no trace of miseries, grief, torments, misfortunes and pains of any kind. It is free from the negativity associated with greed, rapacity and other such demeaning qualities, and is out of bounds for worldly passions, yearnings and other such desires as well as attachments and infatuations for the material things of this world that have an altogether gross dimension.

In fact, this Mantra is a word manifestation of Lord Vasudeo (Krishna) himself, the Lord excluding whom nothing exists in this creation. The Lord is manifested in the form of the five Paads or steps of this Mantra as well as the five elements of creation (viz. earth, water, fire, air and sky which themselves are revelations of the five steps of the Mantra as narrated in verse nos. 20-21 above). (22).

23. The divine form of the Lord is characterized by the virtues known as ‘Sat-Chid-Anand’—i.e. it is truthful, it is consciousness, and it is bliss and happiness personified. [Refer verse no. 46 of the Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad which is section 2 of this Chapter.]

He is always present in the city of Vrindavan (located in Northern India) where the Lord symbolically sits eternally on a gem-studded throne under the Kalpa tree (which is the evergreen tree of the Gods).

I (Brahma) accompany the Marut Gods (the various forms of the Wind God) to say my prayers and pay obeisance to the Lord as follows—(23).

24/1. [In the context of the following prayers said in verse nos. 24/1 to 24/12, the reader is advised to see section 2, Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse nos. 47/1 to 47/17 of this Chapter.]

‘OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Govind (Krishna) whose revealed form is represented by this visible world with all its diversity and variations, who is the only one who creates and sustains the entire creation (world), who is the one who, on the one hand, has revealed himself as this world, and on the other hand, is its only and supreme Lord who takes care of it and regulates it (24/1).

24/2. I repeatedly bow and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Govind (Krishna) who is an embodiment of Vigyan (highest level of knowledge) and an image of supreme bliss, beatitude and felicity, who is so kind, gracious, benevolent, munificent, compassionate and loving that he attracts all creatures towards himself, and who is most dear to the heart of the milkmaids (24/2).

24/3. I bow and pay my sincere obeisance to the Lord who has lotus like eyes. I bow and pay my sincere obeisance to the Lord who wears a garland made of lotus flowers. I bow and pay my sincere obeisance to the Lord from whose navel the divine Lotus emerged (atop which the creator Brahma was born). I bow and pay my sincere obeisance to the Lord who is dear to Kamala (Goddess Laxmi, the patron goddess of wealth and prosperity)¹. (24/3).

[Note—¹This stanza alludes to the fact that Lord Krishna is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu whose divine consort is known as Laxmi whose other name is Kamla. The word 'Kamla' refers to the fact that she is as beautiful as the lotus flower as well as the fact that she holds a lotus flower in her hands.]

24/4. I repeatedly bow and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Govind (Krishna) who looks most beautiful and enchanting with a peacock feather adorning the lock of hairs on his head, whose mind and sub-conscious is never dulled and made senile (i.e. who is ever-intelligent, eternally wise and enlightened), and who lives majestically in the heart of Rama (Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, as well as her manifestation as Rukmini, the divine consort of Krishna) like a magnificent Swan (Hans) floating in the pristine pure waters of the Mansarovar lake (located in the upper reaches of the Himalayan Mountain range). (24/4).

24/5. I bow and pay my sincere obeisance to the Lord who is the destroyer or vanquisher of the clan of the demon Kansa, as well as is the slayer of Keshi and Chananur, who is worshipped and adored even by Lord Shiva (the third of the Trinity Gods who is responsible for conclusion of creation and is regarded as 'Maha-Deva', the great God as he is most enlightened and wise amongst all the Gods in creation), and who had accepted to become a charioteer for Arjun (during the epic Mahabharata war). (24/5).

24/6. The Lord has a natural habit of keeping the flute on his lips and playing it. He is the sustainer and protector of cowherds. He is the one who had trounced the arrogance and haughtiness of the most venomous and ferocious serpent known as Kaaliyaa Naag. The Lord had danced on the hood of the serpent floating on the swift currents of the Kalindi river. The ear-rings dangling from his ears dazzle and sparkle when they move from side to side as he turns his head (24/6).

24/7. The garland of lotus flowers on his chest is a symbolic representation of the numerous eyes of the beautiful milkmaids or wives of cowherds who fix their sights on the divine body of the Lord. The Lord looks most enchanting and bewitching as he engages himself in dancing and frolicking around.

I repeatedly bow and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Krishna who is the provider of refuge and shelter to those who seek such solace and succour in his lotus-like august feet (24/7).

24/8. I bow and pay my sincere obeisance to the Lord who is the crusher and eliminator of sins and sinful demons, who had borne the Govardhan hill on his hands to protect the community of cowherds (from being drowned in the continuous rain by holding the hill like an umbrella over them), and who had killed the demoness Putna and the demon Trinavrat (24/8).

24/9. I repeatedly bow and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Krishna who is immaculate and uncorrupt as well as steady and uniform, who has no trace of Moha (worldly attachments, infatuations, attractions etc.) in him, who is pristine pure and incorruptible by his inherent nature, who is an enemy of those who are unrighteous, unscrupulous and corrupt, who is so unique in his majesty, greatness, divinity, sublimity and holiness as well as in the possession of eclectic and glorious virtues that there is no one like him or comparable to him in this world (creation), and who is a great and the most glorious Lord ever known (24/9).

24/10. Oh Lord who is supremely blissful! Be pleased with me. Oh Lord who is the supreme One in this creation! Be graceful towards me. I have been made miserable by being bitten by serpents representing numerous troubles and tribulations that afflict my body and mind. Please give solace and succour to me; be kind to extricate me from my horrible condition in this world where I find myself surrounded by interminable miseries and agonies of countless kinds (24/10).

24/11. Oh Krishna! Oh the Lord who is dear to Rukmini (the divine consort of Krishna)! Oh the Lord who enchants the mind of cowherds and milkmaids (of Vrindavan where the Lord was born)! You are the revered and honourable Guru (moral preceptor, teacher and guide) for the whole creation (world). I am sinking or am trapped in this huge ocean represented by the mortal world characterized by delusions, ignorance and numerous entrapments. Please save me; please take me out of this quagmire, and redeem me (24/11).

24/12. Oh Lord Keshav! You are Lord Narayan (Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being) who eliminates all the miseries and agonies (of his devotees). You are known as Janardan (because you are most benevolent and munificent towards the humble and the meek; you take care of them and provide them solace and succour). You are known as Govind (as you take good care of the cows representing humble and helpless creatures, and are therefore very dear to them). You are an embodiment of extreme blissfulness, beatitude and felicity. You are also known as Maadhav (an epithet for Lord Vishnu). Please provide me with liberation and deliverance; please provide me with emancipation and salvation.' (24/12).

25. Oh great sages! The way I (Brahma) regularly offer my prayers and obeisance to the Lord by the medium of the above hymns (verse nos. 24/1-24/12) as well as by doing Japa of the Lord's Mantra having five steps (as narrated in verse nos. 9 and 16), you should also offer your worship by praying to Lord Krishna and paying obeisance to him in the same way. This would help you to cross over this ocean-like formidable world effortlessly and easily.'

This is how the creator Brahma preached the assembled sages and seers (25).

26. A person who repeats the divine Mantra of the Lord having five Paads or steps is able to easily and effortlessly attain the supreme abode of the Lord which is unique, divine, exalted, and one of its only kind. The divine abode of the Lord, or the state of existence whereby the devotees attains oneness with the Lord, is most mysterious and unique by nature. It is unchanging, unmoving and steady because it is eternal, uniform, infinite and imperishable. But the mystery of this exalted state is that inspite of it being steady, uniform and unmoving it is however very illusive, most enigmatic,

highly esoteric and extremely mysterious by nature. [In other words, it is very difficult to attain it, and only the Lord's grace can enable a person to reach it.]

None of the Gods representing the various sense organs of the body can ever have any access to it despite the fact that the Lord is present everywhere because he is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent.

One should steadily and faithfully devote one's self in mediating and contemplating upon Lord Krishna (i.e. on Krishna Consciousness) who is the Supreme Being (the cosmic Consciousness) personified. One should taste the nectar-like elixir of his divine name by doing Japa with it regularly. One should offer regular worship to him, meditate upon him, and offer prayers and obeisance to him.

This is what this Upanishad proclaims and teaches. Amen! (26).

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Section 2

Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad

[In this Upanishad, sage Durvasa has explained the divine and the most holy form of Lord Krishna that is known as 'Krishna Consciousness' to the Gopis, the milkmaids of Vrindavan, who doubted the divinity of Krishna and were confused about the reality and true form as well as the sublime and divine nature of the Lord. Weaved into the text is a conversation between Brahma, the creator, and Lord Narayan (Vishnu) wherein the latter explained great metaphysical, theological and spiritual doctrines to the former. The Upanishad incorporates the divine Mantras of Lord Krishna which are sixteen in number and which entitle the worshipper to obtain great spiritual reward of liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.]

1. OM Salutations! Once upon a time, the milkmaids of Vrindavan, who were always eager to spend time with Krishna, had spent a night in his company. At dawn, they said to Gopal Krishna, the supreme Lord, 'Oh Lord! Tell us which Brahmin should we feed now (or honour now) so that our wishes can be fulfilled.'

Hearing this, Lord Krishna replied, 'It is advisable to feed sage Durvasa for the fulfillment of your wishes.'

The Gopis (milkmaids) asked, 'Sage Durvasa's hermitage is on the other side of river Yamuna which is now in spate and surging with rapidly flowing currents of water. Say, how can we cross it to reach the other side?'

Krishna replied, 'All of you go to the bank of the river and say—'Our beloved Krishna is indeed absolutely incorrupt, immaculate, chaste, pristine pure, and an eternal celibate.' When you make this statement, the river would give you a path to cross over to the other side (because what you would say about me on its bank is the absolute truth).

I am the one who helps others to grow and develop. I am the one by remembering whom even the fathomless and infinite can be measured. I am the one by remembering whom even the most corrupt, unclean and unholy becomes untainted, immaculate, pure, clean and holy. I am the one by remembering whom even a person who has broken his vows and been unrighteous becomes like a person who is true to his words, is honest and truthful. I am the one by remembering whom even the most dispassionate and detached man becomes full of affection and love. And I am the one

by remembering whom even the most stupid of persons becomes well-versed in the Vedas and their knowledge.’ (1).

2. It is said that hearing this advice, the milkmaids went in search of sage Durvasa¹ who was an incarnation of Lord Rudra (i.e. Lord Shiva, because the sage was incarnate anger and wrathfulness). When they reached the river Yamuna, which is said to be a daughter of the Sun God, they repeated what Krishna had told them. The river gave them a path, and upon crossing it they arrived at the holy hermitage of sage Durvasa.

[This proved beyond a trace of doubt that whatever Krishna had said about himself as being incorrupt, chaste and immaculate inspite of having spent the whole night with women not legally married to him, frolicking with them and satisfying their desires, is indeed the ‘absolute truth’. This is a major reason why Lord Krishna is known as a ‘Maha Yogi’, the great ascetic who remains perpetually in a state of Samadhi (a state of trance that comes in the higher reaches of super-consciousness) and is unaware of what his physical gross body does. When we talk of Krishna being immaculate we mean not his physical body but the ‘consciousness’ that lives inside this body—the consciousness that is the ‘true self’ of the Lord and is known as the Atma. The difference between an ordinary man and the one who has become enlightened is that the former recognizes Lord Krishna with his physical body, while the latter sees deeper and becomes aware of the Krishna Consciousness that resides in this body.]

The Gopis bowed before sage Durvasa who was an incarnation of Rudra (the angry form of Shiva), and they pleased him by offering delicious sweets made of milk and clarified butter which they had brought especially for him.

The sage ate the offered food, dispensed with the leftovers in a proper way, and felt contented. He then asked the milkmaids to return home.

The milkmaids asked him, ‘How are we to cross the river Yamuna which is swelling and is in spate?’

The sage replied, ‘I eat only green grass. When you remember this statement on the banks of the river, the latter would provide you a path (because this is the truth).’ (2).

[Note—¹Sage *Durvasa*—The word ‘Druvasa’ literally means one who is difficult to live with or cope with. He had a great propensity for cursing at the least annoyance, and was an embodiment of anger and wrath. On the other hand, when he was pleased, he could bestow the greatest of boons.

He is said to be one of the twenty four Rishis of the famous Gayatri Mantra.

According to Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 2, sage Durvasa is regarded as an incarnation of Lord Rudra, the angry form of Lord Shiva. In spite of this one blight on his character as being ruthlessly short-tempered, he was nevertheless a highly enlightened, erudite, self-and-Brahm-realised sage of the highest and the greatest order. In fact, he is credited with expounding the profound metaphysical concepts that form the backbone of the teachings of the Upanishads in the form of his discourse given to the Gopis, or the milkmaids who accompanied Lord Krishna during his childhood days in Vrindavan, in the Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad which is the 27th Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Brahman 7, verse no. 3 asserts that he was one of the great ascetics who were honoured by the title of being ‘Paramhans’—i.e. an ascetic who was highly self-realised, enlightened and wise as well as one who was totally detached from all things concerning this mundane world and life.

He was the third son of sage Atri and his devout wife Anusuiya, born as a fraction or part incarnation of Rudra, the angry form of Lord Shiva. This was the probable reason of his inheriting the genes of vehement anger. He is regarded as a human incarnation of Shiva's arrow by which he had destroyed the three cities called the Tripuras which belonged to the demon sons of Taarakaasur.

Some of the well known incidents related to him are briefly the following—(i) He was so pleased with Kunti, the daughter of king Kuntibhoja, for her devoted service that he gave a most powerful and potent Mantra or a secret formula by which she could invite any God she wished and get a son from him. It is believed that the five Pandavas and the hundred Kaurvas around whom the great epic story of Mahabharat is built were begotten by her as a result of this boon she had got. (ii) On the advice of sage Durvasa, Lord Krishna had smeared his own body, except the feet, with the left-over of the sweet pudding eaten by the sage. As a result of this, Krishna's entire body, except the feet, had become impenetrable by any weapon, and this proved to be a great boon during the epic war of Mahabharat. (iii) He completed the half done sacrifice of king Shvetaki and enabled him to ascend to heaven. (iv) Being of a legendary short temper, once he had shown unwarranted anger against king Ambarisha which back-fired on him and he had to run for cover when the Sudershan Chakra, the discus weapon of Lord Vishnu, pursued him in retribution. Ultimately, it was the generous king who himself had to rescue him from this curse. (v) According to the legendary story of the epic Ramayan, sage Durvasa was responsible for Lord Ram abandoning his brother Laxman and the latter's ultimate demise which resulted in the final curtains being drawn on the story of Ramayana when Lord Ram, unable to bear the pain of his separation from his beloved brother who was so devoted, obedient and faithful to him, left this world by taking Maha-samadhi on the banks of the river Saryu. He was followed by the rest of his family members and the subject of the kingdom of Ayodhya who decided to accompany the Lord as it was too much an ordeal for them all to live in this mortal world in the absence of their beloved Lord Sri Ram. Hence, Durvasa got the infamous reputation of being the cause of unnecessary agony and pain to so many innocent souls in this world.]

3. Amongst the milkmaids was one named Gandhavi or Radha. The milkmaids were perplexed and dumbfounded. They were extremely surprised and confused by the two instances, one related to Krishna and the other related to Durvasa, because externally they appeared to be just the opposite of what they said.

[In the case of Durvasa they have seen first hand that he ate all the delicious sweets they brought for him, and now he says that he has never eaten anything but grass; how incredulous it is! In the case of Krishna they had spent the whole night enjoying his company and frolicking around, and then incredulously he says that he is chaste and never seen a woman in his life or has ever touched one! These two incidents seemed to contradict what their perpetrators said—it appeared incongruous to believe that Durvasa did not eat the sweets, and it was equally ridiculous to say that Krishna was chaste and had never touched a woman when he had spent the night in the company of so many women. But the fact of the matter is that the river gave them the right of way when they said at its bank that Krishna was immaculate, incorrupt and chaste, which proved that it was correct. Surely there must be some great mystery behind all this, and this aroused curiosity in the Gopis to find out the truth. It appeared to them as if they were witnessing some magic.]

So they discussed the matter amongst themselves and decided to seek clarification from the sage. Since Radha was the wisest in the group, she became their spokesperson, and asked the sage, 'Lord, how is it ever possible that Krishna can be eternally celibate and dispassionate even though he regularly plays with us and keeps our constant company? Similarly, how is it ever possible that sage Durvasa eats only

grass when he has eaten such delicacies and so many sweet dishes before us right now? [We are indeed confounded. It's extremely incredible and absolutely unbelievable. So please tell us the truth and explain this phenomenon for us.] (3).

4. All the milkmaids had made Radha their chief spokesperson, and they stood silently behind her. [What has been said in this verse finds a resonance in the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 1, verse nos. 4-8, and Canto 3, Brahman 7, verse nos. 2-23.]

Sage Durvasa explained, 'The sky has certain attributes (such as it being infinite, fathomless, vast etc.) as well as some degree of grossness, though this grossness is infinitesimally small and negligible. On the other hand, the Parmatma or the supreme Atma, which is cosmic Consciousness, has no attributes or defining qualities, besides being absolutely sublime and subtle. This Parmatma has revealed himself as the sky element and pervades throughout it uniformly in a subtle manner as he is omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing. But inspite of this fact that the Parmatma permeates in the entire space of the sky (just like air or ether fills the entire space of the sky), the Parmatma does not acquire any of the attributes and qualities or the elementary traces of grossness which the sky may have. The Parmatma remains separate and distinct from the sky inspite of being uniformly present everywhere in it. The sky element is a revelation of some of the eclectic virtues of the Parmatma as it is a manifestation of the latter, but the Parmatma is much superior to the sky element. It is not possible to equate the Parmatma with the sky element as the former is but a fraction of what the Parmatma is. In other words, the sky element has certain limitations whereas the Parmatma is limitless. The Parmatma has all the subtle qualities of the sky element, but the sky does not have all the divine and sublime qualities of the Parmatma.

This is metaphorically depicted when it is that the sky is unable to know who lives inside it; the sky is unable to see the Parmatma residing in its own self because for all practical purposes the Parmatma has completely merged his 'Self' with the sky, becoming one like the sky itself, so much so that there appears to be no perceptible difference between the sky and the Parmatma—though there is a vast difference between the two entities.

[It is like an empty pitcher being immersed in sea water. The water fills the empty pitcher instantly, and assumes the size and the shape of the pitcher. It is also now called the water of the pitcher instead of being called the water of the sea. But everyone knows that this is misleading—the water is the same, and it has no shape of its own for it assumes the shape of the vessel in which it is present.

So, when the cosmic Consciousness known as the Parmatma assumes the form of the gross body of a Jiva, the living being, the former appears to be the latter. But that is not the correct picture, for the Parmatma has no physical form whereas the Jiva has a definite form and character; the Parmatma is immortal while the Jiva is mortal. So, if one assigns certain attributes to the basically attribute-less Parmatma simply because the viewer is not wise and enlightened enough to know about the Truth of the matter, it does not mean that the Parmatma would become tainted. The confusion arises because the ignorant man treats the physical gross body of the Jiva as the latter's true self, instead of realizing that the truth is quite the contrary. The 'truthful self' of the Jiva is his Atma which is the 'Parmatma' that is being referred to in this instance because are the same 'consciousness' existing at two different levels of creation. The Parmatma is the 'cosmic Consciousness', while the Jiva is the same cosmic Consciousness but at the microcosmic level of existence.]

It is this Parmatma that resides in my body as my Atma, my 'truthful self'. In the likewise manner of the instance cited above, this Atma of mine, which is my 'true self', seems indistinguishable from my body in which it lives just like the Parmatma living in the sky seems erroneously to be inseparable or indistinguishable from the latter. [In other words, my 'true self' is not the body, but it is the Atma living inside the body. They are so closely related to each other that the one seems identical with the other. Or, there seems to be no difference between my true self and the body. But this deduction is erroneous and fallacious, because the 'self' and the 'body' are two independent entities. The body is perishable but the Atma is imperishable; the body is gross and visible while the Atma is subtle and invisible, and so on and so forth.]

The food was eaten by my body and not by the Atma, though externally it is difficult and impossible to differentiate between the two entities. Hence, though it appears that 'I' have eaten all the delicious things brought by you, the fact is quite the contrary. 'I', i.e. my 'truthful self' known as the Atma, has not eaten anything at all.

[The above logic and argument is being applied to all the five elements of creation now to prove that the supreme Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, which is the truthful identity of the creature, has nothing to do with what his gross body does, or how it feels.]

Similarly, the Parmatma has revealed himself as the air element; the air element depicts certain of the many life-sustaining virtues of the Parmatma. Therefore, the air element possesses or depicts some dynamic virtues exclusive to the Parmatma, but it would be absolutely erroneous to say that the air element is Parmatma himself, for the Parmatma is much superior to the air element and the latter is only one of the many manifestations of the former. In other words, the air element has certain characteristics and qualities possessed by the Parmatma, but the air element is not the Parmatma. The Parmatma pervades throughout the air element, and it is this Parmatma that gives the air element its characteristic qualities, its dynamism, energy and strength that enables it to inject life in the gross body of the creature. It is the Parmatma who has revealed himself as the air element in order to inject the spark of life in this creation in the form of the 'Pran' (breath and life). That is why the air element is known as the Pran, literally meaning life-factor. No life is imaginable without the air element. One shouldn't surmise that the Parmatma is air though air is one of the forms of the Parmatma. The air element is unable to know about the entity that resides subtly inside it, and which has rendered it with its characteristic powers and strength because for all practical purposes the Parmatma has assumed the form of the air element in his role as the provider of Pran to this creation. The air element inspires the perception of touch in all the creatures, but the irony and mystery is that it does not feel the presence of the Parmatma inside it.

This Parmatma resides in me (i.e. inside my body) as my Atma (i.e. my pure conscious soul which is my truthful 'self'), so how can I (i.e. my Atma which is my truthful 'self') ever be the enjoyer of what is being felt by the gross external body as the latter is distinct and separate from me? 'I' am not the body that enjoys physical senses or suffers from pain and miseries. 'I' am the Atma that enjoys or suffers from nothing.

The same logic is applied to the 'Tej' or the 'fire element'. It has certain characteristic qualities and glorious virtues that are revelations of the powers and dynamism of the Parmatma, but it would be totally naïve to call the fire element Parmatma, or the Parmatma as the fire element. The fire element represents the dynamic virtues of Parmatma that help to sustain life in this creation, provide the latter with the required energy, heat and light. The fire element has been empowered

by the Parmatma to sustain life, and as such it is a revelation of the Parmatma. But the fire element cannot claim to be Parmatma himself. This is metaphorically and aphoristically depicted by saying that though the Parmatma lives in the form of the fire element in creation, the latter is unable to know the former. In fact, the fire element thinks that it has an independent existence and possesses certain independent qualities, though the truth is that it is the Parmatma revealed in its form. [In other words, what one sees as the glorious virtues of the fire element are actually the magnificent virtues of the Parmatma that have assumed the specific form of the fire. In this sense it can be said that the physical form of the 'fire' which gives light and heat to this creation is actually a visible gross form of these virtues present in Parmatma. The heat, light and energy that the 'fire element' provides this creation is, in reality, being provided by the Parmatma himself in his manifestation as the 'fire'.

Since my true form is not the physical gross body but the eclectic Atma that is a microcosmic revelation of the Parmatma, the supreme Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, so when my gross body eats something how can 'I' be said to do so? The basic purpose of eating is to derive nourishment from the food eaten so that the body in which the Atma lives can be sustained. The body benefits not from the taste, the smell, the feeling or the colour of the food eaten but from the vital nutritional ingredients it contains (such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins, trace elements, etc.). The grass serves the same purpose in this respect if the body can extract its needed nutrients from it as much as a delicious dish served on a platter. This is proved by the cow and other herbivorous animals who live a perfectly healthy life grazing on grass.

[Compared to the animals, the man—who ironically considers himself very intelligent, choosy, knowledgeable, highly evolved and well-placed in the hierarchy of creation—always remains suffering from one disease or the other though he has a wide variety of food to choose from, eats well-cooked food, and pays a great deal of attention on counting calories and the amount of vitamins, protein and carbohydrate that are present in a particular food item.]

So the crux of the matter is that the perceptions of taste, smell, texture, colour etc. that are present in the food eaten do not matter to the sublime entity known as the Atma, but are limited to the gross body and its organs of perception which are equally gross. The Atma does not need any sort of tasty food to meet its basic requirement of nutrition to sustain a healthy body in which it (the Atma) lives. The Atma is not at all enamoured with any sort of taste or colour or smell or texture of the food that the body needs for its sustenance. Therefore, when one is enlightened about the true nature of his 'self' (i.e. when he knows that his 'self' is the Atma and not the physical gross body), it does not matter to him what he eats as long as it can be easily digested and assimilated by the body without any inconvenience or distress.

[Since the human body is so made that it cannot digest raw grass and would suffer if it is fed on it, the man is compelled to eat something else other than grass. An ignorant and an uninitiated worldly man thinks that he has eaten a delicious meal because of the erroneous perception that the body is his true identity and his truthful 'self', because the perception of taste is limited to the gross body and it is the latter that enjoys taste of what is eaten. The Atma is unaffected by the 'taste' of what is eaten; the Atma is concerned only with the fact that the food keeps the body healthy, energized, strong and active.]

Therefore, I am correct when I say that I have eaten grass and nothing more, because for me the taste, colour, texture and smell of the food eaten is irrelevant and immaterial, and what is relevant is the nutrition that my body derived from what I had

eaten. It is the nutrients present in the food that helps my Atma to extract sufficient energy and strength that sustains the body in which it lives. Hence, for me everything is the same as far as it provides the body its required supply of energy, vigour and strength.

[Therefore, eating delicious food, which silently harms the body and requires so much extra effort and time to prepare it, just to meet the basic requirements of the body is an extravaganza for me when such nutrients can be easily obtained from simple staple food which does no harm to the body and does not involve any hassles. The time and effort spent on acquiring delicious food to just feed the despicable body, which is a bag of stool and urine, can be saved for achieving higher and nobler goals in life]

The 'water element' is unique in the fact that it is the liquid elixir of life; it harbours life and provides it with nourishment, lubrication and smoothness. The water element is a revelation of the Parmatma for the purpose of sustaining life in this creation.

[All the nutrients in the food eaten are first dissolved in water before they can be absorbed by the tissues of the body and be of any benefit for the creature. Water is required to produce food in the first place. Without water, this earth would be a barren stretch of hard, lifeless and merciless rock. It is unimaginable to have life even in a rudimentary form if the harshness and the scorch of the sun's heat were not neutralized by the soothing and cooling effect of the water element. The earth would have burnt like hell had there been no rivers, oceans or lakes, or if there was no rainfall. Even food needs water to be cooked and digested in the body. The blood in the body consists predominantly of water. The sperm reaches the egg to fertilize it and sustain the wheel of creation only because it can 'swim' in the genital fluids which have water as their basic ingredient. Thus, the 'water element' is the quintessential, the fundamental and the basic requirement of life. These are some of the ways in which the water takes the role of the benevolent Parmatma to help sustain life in this creation. So it can be correctly said that water is one of the many forms that the Supreme Being has taken to play specific roles in the complicated process of creation, its sustenance, and its development and growth.]

The Parmatma is invisibly present in the water element and gives the latter its vital life-sustaining virtues, its glories, its importance, its significance, and its magnificence. The irony of the situation is that though the water element, like all its predecessors, is a revelation of the Parmatma, the cosmic Atma, it is unaware of its true identity. That is, the water element, like the sky, the air and the fire elements, does not know or does not realise that it owes all its eclectic virtues, all its glorious importance, all its magnificent life-sustaining abilities and its unique honour as being the quintessential 'nectar or elixir of life' to the inherent presence of the Parmatma in its bosom. It does not realise that it is actually the divine Parmatma in its form. Had it not been for the Parmatma who is hidden subtly in the water element, the latter would not have occupied such an important and exalted place in this creation.

[That is, the 'water' is the gross visible form that the invisible Parmatma has taken to act as the quintessential lubricant, nectar or elixir of life.]

It is the same Parmatma that resides in my gross body as my true 'self'. If the water element, like the other elements, is unable to know the Parmatma residing in its self, how can my body know this Parmatma as it is also made up of the elements mentioned herein above?

[The gross body is made up of the five elements mentioned in this verse—viz. the sky element, the air element, the fire element, the water element and the earth

element. If the basic ingredients that go into making some given product lack some basic quality, how can one expect this quality from the finished product? So, if these elements do not the importance of the Parmatma, how can one expect the gross body that is made up of them to know the Parmatma? Just like each of these elements thinking erroneously that they have an independent existence and have independent powers and authority that they can exercise at their free will, the body—which is constituted of them—also thinks that it has its own powers and abilities. The fact is quite the opposite. It is the Parmatma living inside each of these elements that gives them their importance and significance, and their abilities and powers. It is the same Parmatma living inside the body as the Atma that enables the body to be of so great an importance for the creature, for as soon as the Atma abandons the body the latter becomes useless and easily decayable.]

The Atma residing in my gross body derives the same nutrition from the grass as it does from the delicious food given by you (i.e. the Gopis). All the elements play their individual role in the task of providing nutrition to the body so that my Atma does not suffer inconvenience as long as it lives inside the body. [For instance, the air element known as the Apan wind helps the movement of food in the intestines and aids digestion. The Saman wind ensures that the nutrients are evenly distributed to all parts of the body. The fire element ensures that the food is cooked properly before it is ingested by the body, and then takes care of its proper digestion once it is inside the body by keeping the body warm and providing the necessary energy, heat and stamina to help in the process of digestion and assimilation. The water element plays its crucial role by providing the liquid medium needed in the process of digestion, such as softening of the food, making it react with the various enzymes and other digestive juices, acting as the solvent that dissolves the nutrients so extracted during the process of digestion so that they can be taken through the medium of the blood to all the corners of the body, and so on and so forth.]

The basic requirement of nutrition is provided by eating grass, so it does not matter whether I have eaten delicacies or not as far as the Atma is concerned, and as far as the Atma can be sustained inside the body without causing it any inconvenience. If the water element can help to provide the body with nutrition extracted from grass, then it does not matter if I eat grass or some kind of delicacy that you might have brought for me. If this basic purpose is not served, then again it does not matter whether I eat these delicacies or not. So obviously, the criterion to decide what matters to 'me', i.e. my 'true self', is not the sort of food that my body eats but the benefit it derives from such food eaten. Therefore, if the grass serves the purpose of providing the body with healthy nutrients than it is equivalent to eating the tastiest of food.

The 'enjoyment of taste' of delicious food is done by the gross body when the taste buds are tickled by the chemicals present in the food eaten when they get dissolved in the saliva, which again is basically water-based. But the sense of taste (and for that matter all the other senses such as sight, smell, sound and touch) are related to the gross body which is not my 'true self'. So how can I be said to have tasted any food?

The basic necessity of getting nutrition is met by eating grass or plants in any form as much as by eating the choicest of foods prepared with the greatest of investment of time, money and effort. That is why I am honest and truthful when I say that 'I always eat grass'.

Finally, the 'earth element' forms the foundation of creation. It gives support and rest to the entire living world. It is especially related to the perception of smell. It

is actually the Parmatma in this form and role. That is, the Parmatma performs the function of smelling and giving rest to the world in his form as the earth. The earth is the grossest of the five elements, but the miracle of the situation is that without the earth no element would have any relevance and bearing because all of them need some base for their own existence. It is the earth that is an eternal treasury of all essential elements required for life in this creation. Though grossest of the five elements, it is the earth that acts as the foundation of creation. It is the earth that gives shelter to the other four elements—it is on earth that fire, water, air and sky that harbour life are present. The same elements may be present anywhere in the vast recesses of the universe, but they do not support life without the presence of the 'earth'. It is on earth that vibrant life thrives.

[It is on earth that the air supports life in the form of oxygen and refreshing wind; it is near earth that the sky harbours birds and other winged creatures; it is on earth that water flows as rivers and streams, and supports vibrant and colourful aquatic life; it is on earth that one can observe the fire actually burning with all its brightness and splendour, and actually helping to cook food, keep the world lighted and the creatures warm and comfortable. If the 'earth' is removed from the picture of creation, the entire habitable world would simply cease to exist. What we would have is a vast, barren and an unoccupied bowl of the empty cosmos, a creation sans 'life'. There is no air, fire or water in the deep recesses of the cosmos far away from the earth. Even the sky which is near the earth's surface harbours life, and the same sky far away from the earth is a vacant space which sucks life rather than fostering it.]

That is, the Parmatma revealed himself as the earth element in order to carry out all the various functions that the earth performs in the scheme of things in this creation. Though the fact is that the earth is a revelation of the Parmatma who has wished to take up this role of providing this creation with a foundation as well as all the necessary wherewithal for its sustenance, it would be highly absurd to say that the earth is Parmatma, or vice versa. One of the obvious reasons for this is that the earth is gross and visible while the Parmatma is most subtle and sublime as well as invisible.

My gross body is constituted primarily of the earth element (which makes up its skin, bones, internal and external organs etc.). So how can it be the Parmatma? In the same vein, as has already been pointed out by me, my true self is the Parmatma living in the gross body as the Atma. Therefore, what the body eats is irrelevant for the Atma. How can I be said to have eaten something that is eaten by the gross body?

The Mana (mind) is the entity that imagines things, enters into debates, and has doubts about anything. It is the Mana that thinks about the sky and other elements. When everything in existence is nothing but the Atma in the sense that they are all revelations of the same cosmic non-dual Consciousness known as the Parmatma (also known as Brahm in the Upanishads), where is the question of a sky or any other element having its independent existence and identity?

When there is complete non-duality, when only one single spiritual Truth known as the ethereal Atma (which is the cosmic Consciousness) prevails in this creation after having eliminated all the various external forms that it takes, such as the sky, the air, the fire, the water and the earth, or their combination known as the body, the Mana would be left with no scope of jumping from subject to subject; it would have nothing to doubt and debate about. Say then, when everything else other than the Atma is eliminated, where is the scope of confusions and doubts?

I am indeed that ethereal and divine Atma that is most sublime and subtle in creation, so how can I be involved in enjoying the taste of food that has its origin in a

gross world, is prepared from gross ingredients, and is eaten, tasted and digested by the gross body? (4).

[Note—When Brahm, the Supreme Being, decided to create the universe or this mortal world, which was not only an awesome and formidable task but also highly complex and technical, he first created the five elements as the fundamental building blocks. These were the earth, the water, the fire, the air and the sky. These elements left to themselves were as inane and lifeless as the world with life in it—for instance, the earth was a hard and gross composite of rocks and soil, the fire knew only to burn whatever was put into it, the water understood nothing but drowning and flooding, the air just blew like a storm, uprooting trees and causing havoc all around, and the sky simply was a dark fathomless void full of cosmic dust and exploding stars and toxic gases. But the miracle of creation is that Brahm injected these same elements with the powers to foster life—for instance, the earth produced crops and food for the forthcoming creatures who would inhabit its surface, provided them with a residence and took care of their existential necessities by producing wealth and energy sources such as oil and coal. The water acted as the life-bearing elixir, a soothing balm, a lubricant and a solvent; no life could have been imagined without water. The fire provided the world with energy, warmth, light and heat. The air was so essential that it was honoured with the epithet of ‘Pran’ which literally means life as it was the air that injected movement and dynamism into the rest of the element as well as the creation. Finally, the entire edifice needed a place to live, and the sky was the cosmic city of Brahm where whatever he created found a habitat. The sky kept everything in place; is it not a fantastic miracle that inspite of the cosmic space being absolutely void everything floating in it or living in it follows a certain path and obeys fixed laws? For instance, the units of the solar system hang in complete void, with nothing to support them, but still they never dash into one another but follow a pre-set path over millions and millions of years.

This aspect of creation whereby the otherwise lifeless units are enabled to show all the signs of life and vitality are because Brahm has empowered them and vested them with these virtues much like an ordinary assembly of metals and plastic assume the name of a computer and performs stupendous tasks once this assembly is empowered and authorized to do so by the man. The functions carried out by the five elements are actually delegated to them by Brahm; it is the earliest example of the doctrine of ‘delegation of authority’. Brahm, however, kept to himself the supervisor and controlling authority, and all the elements were under his sole jurisdiction. They performed the functions of life only as long as Brahm wished them to do so. This fact is easily understandable by a simple proof—the earth harbours life, it is warm, welcoming and habitable, it produces crops and vegetations to give food to the creature, it produces minerals and wealth for the latter’s existential necessity and well-being, but the same earth could be merciless and cruel and wipe out life should Brahm wish to do so as happens during earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts and famines.

Each of these five elements represent Brahm or are an image of Brahm to the extent of the specific functions they carry out independently and the relevant authority that is delegated to them for this purpose, but they are not the superseding Authority and Power, they are not Brahm parse because their powers and authority are limited and reflect only a fraction of what Brahm is. Thus, it is clear that though these elements are true representatives of Brahm, they are not Brahm himself.

Just like an emperor who builds a city for himself, Brahm took up residence in the cosmic city known as the ‘creation’ that he created, and this is the reason why he is also known as the Viraat Purush. The word ‘Viraat’ means vast and colossus, and ‘Purush’ means one who lives in a city or a ‘Pur’. [Refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18.] Since this creation was extremely colossus and extended as far as the sky stretched, the whole of it became the realm of

Brahm. Just like the authority and mandate of an emperor covers the entire empire, the entire universe fell under the jurisdiction of Brahm.

The physical form of the vast creation was made up of the five elements created by Brahm, i.e. the earth, the water, the fire, the air and the sky. This is the picture at the cosmic level. At the microcosmic level, when the individual creature was made by Brahm, the body of this individual was a microcosm of this vast creation. It was thus made up of the same building blocks that were used for the creation of the universe, viz. earth, water, fire, air and sky.

Now, these five elements had two aspects each—one was the gross physical aspect, and the other was the subtle aspect. The gross aspect was used to mould the physical gross body, while the subtle aspect is what makes a creature a ‘living being’. It is this subtle aspect of each element that represents Brahm in as much as they are the life-giving and sustaining aspects of these individual elements.

As long as the creature is alive, all the elements function in a set pattern so as to keep his body alive. The body is a composite of these elements and it is a residence of Brahm at the micro level of creation just like the vast universe is the residence of Brahm at the macro level. Brahm resides in this body as the creature’s Atma or consciousness. Now, when this Brahm decides to quit the body, none of the elements is able to keep it alive. Had these elements been independent life-giving and empowering Authorities who could decide when the body would die or live, they could have kept the body alive even after the consciousness has left the body. But this does not happen. So again we see that the elements are not independent authorities but subservient to some supreme Authority known as Brahm.

In the present verse, sage Durvasa means that whatever is eaten by him is a thing done by the body consisting of these five elements. The earth element of the body smells the food because smelling is the function related to the earth, the water element tastes the food because the chemicals that produce the sense of taste are dissolved by the water present in the saliva to give taste of what is being eaten, the fire element of the body digests food and produces stool and energy that keeps the gross body alive and warm, the air in the form of the Apaan wind helps the downward movement of the food and its excretion from the body, and the sky gives the necessary space to lodge the food in the intestines. But all these are evidently relatively gross by nature, and none of them is the sage’s true self. Can any person call himself earth or smell, water or taste, fire or energy, air or Pran, and sky or space? It is ridiculous and absolutely absurd.

Hence, ‘he’—i.e. the ‘true self’ of sage Durvasa which is not the physical gross body but the ethereal entity known as the Atma—has indeed not eaten the delicacies brought in by the milkmaids. In fact, this Atma benefited from the food only to the extent that it provided the necessary energy and nutrition to the body so that the latter could harbour the Atma as long as the latter wished to remain inside it. Should the Atma decide to leave the body, it would not be bothered by what the body eats. This basic function of food to provide energy and nutrition is sufficed by green grass or any other edible plant as is proved by the fact that herbivorous animals live a perfectly healthy life even without eating sweet delicacies made of butter and wheat flour. So, the sage was truthful when he said that he eats only grass. This is also a metaphoric and aphoristic way of saying that the sage was least bothered by what he ate as long as it sustained his body.]

5. Lord Krishna, who is so dear to you all (i.e. the Gopis), is the cause of all things that exist in creation, both at the individual level as well as the composite level, and at the gross level as well as the subtle level. Like two birds living together, the individual Atma and the all-inclusive Parmatma have a correlation with each other¹. Out of the two aspects of the same Atma, viz. the grosser aspect known as the mortal creature and the subtler aspect known as the immortal Being, it is the former grosser

aspect that is the ‘Bhokta’ or the enjoyer as well as the sufferer in this world, while the subtler aspect is merely a ‘Sakshi’ or a neutral witness and observer of everything around it.

That is, the aspect of the Atma that enjoys or suffers is known as the Jiva or the living being, while the aspect of the Atma that is neutral is known as the Parmatma.

Both of them live in the body that is comparable to a tree where two birds live together. One of them is the ‘Bhokta’ and the other is the ‘non-Bhokta’ or a neutral observer. As has been explained above, the Jiva is the Bhokta as it suffers or enjoys in this world, while the Parmatma (Brahm) is the ‘non-Bhokta’ as it is neutral, dispassionate and immune to temptations of all kinds.

This latter aspect of the Atma, i.e. the aspect that is ‘non-Bhokta’, is represented by Krishna. How can that Lord (Krishna)—who is absolutely neutral, detached, dispassionate and unattached to anything or any body, in whom there is no trace of ignorance and its accompanying delusions that may create a situation whereby one has to consider whether he is free from all worldly fetters or is tied down by worldly attachments and temptations, and who is beyond the definitions and purview of the concept of either Vidya or Avidya (knowledge or ignorance respectively)—be ever regarded as being promiscuous, lustful and passionate? (5).

[Note—¹Refer (a) Krishna Yajur Veda’s Rudra Hridaya Upanishad, verse no. 41; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 6-7. (b) Atharva Veda’s Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1, verse no. 1-2; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 32. (c) Shukla Yajur Veda’s Paingal Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 13.]

6. A person who harbours willful hidden desires, passions and yearnings for the various temptations of this material world of sense objects, who willfully wishes to enjoy them and derive pleasure and comfort from them or their company, whose mind and heart willfully long for this world and its material charms and sensual objects, who allows his mind and heart to willfully harbour and dwell on such thoughts and be obsessed by them, who is literally possessed by such overwhelming thoughts and allows himself willfully to be so possessed, enjoying such thoughts and making no attempts whatsoever to get over them or rid himself of them—such a man is known as ‘Kaami’, a person who has ‘Kaam’ in him (i.e. a person who has various worldly desires, passions and lust inside him).

On the other hand, a person who accepts anything dispassionately just to please or oblige the other person who offers the thing to him lest he would be offended if the thing is refused, is not being lustful and willfully attached to the thing; he pays no attention to the thing, gives no thoughts to it, and does not even remember whether any such thing was ever given or offered to him, and whether or not he had accepted it or rejected it. He is internally a renunciate incarnate; he exemplifies the glorious spiritual virtue of detachment, dispassion, non-involvement and neutrality of the highest order. Say, how can such a person be called ‘Kaami’? This principle applies to Lord Krishna; he does what he does to please you while remaining completely dispassionate towards everything, being totally uninvolved in any thing pertaining to this gross body and the equally gross world, and therefore being able to maintain his internal immaculacy, purity, divinity and holiness.

Lord Krishna is independent from the body and its characteristic tendencies of taking a birth and getting old and infirm.

[This is because Krishna is highly enlightened and self-realised and understands that his ‘true self’ is the Atma, the pure consciousness, and not the body.]

Therefore, he has the characteristics of the Atma and not of the body. Lord Krishna is to be identified with his ethereal Atma that has the eclectic virtues of eternal and unmatched immaculacy, purity, divinity, holiness, sublimity and subtlety, as well as the grand virtues of immortality, imperishability and steadiness, rather than with his gross physical body which had taken a birth, which did so many worldly deeds, which either appeared to suffer from these deeds or even enjoyed them, and which has a limited time-span after which it had to leave this world like any other living being when the time is up.

In other words, like the Atma, Lord Krishna too is eternal, constant, infinite, imperishable, immutable and universal. Hence, Krishna never takes a birth, never becomes old or infirm and never dies because these are the characteristics of the gross body and not of the Atma.]

He is firmly established, steady, uniform, universal, eternal, infinite, immutable and imperishable. He is the essence known as the Parmatma, the supreme Consciousness, who lives in the sun to give it its light and energy, who lives as the Atma of the cows to make them bear life and be holy, who protects these cows to indicate that he protects all the creatures of this creation who are humble, docile and helpless, and who not only resides in all the ordinary and mortal cowherds as their 'self' or their Atma but also in the immortal and exalted Gods as their divine 'self'. The Vedas sing his divine glories in the form of hymns. He is not only the creator of all the Bhuts (elements) but also lives inside them to empower them and give them their individual characteristics and qualities.

The Krishna who is worthy of adoration, respect, worship, reverence and paying obeisance to is not the man known as Lord Krishna but the divinity known as the 'Krishna Consciousness'. This entity is as holy and divine as the cosmic Consciousness known as 'Brahm'. It is the only and the absolute spiritual Truth of creation; it is the Tattwa (essence) espoused and eulogized in the Upanishads. Therefore, my dear Gopis, this Krishna is not the one who had stayed with you the whole night, and about whom you have doubts as to his divinity, immaculacy and holiness (because you had erroneously thought that the person with the physical body given the name of Krishna by his parents is the only person known as Krishna, and out of your ignorance you had been deluded to think that the cowherd who played around with you is an ordinary human being who is haughtily boasting that he is the Parmatma, the Supreme Being).

Well, now do you see who the real Krishna, the Parmatma, is? It is this Krishna who is your beloved and Lord. [Therefore, how and why do you doubt his statement that he is an eternal celibate and absolutely dispassionate inspite of frolicking around with you and having spent a night in your company? Surely, you have not recognized or known his true form!]' (6).

7. Hearing this, Gandharvi (Radha) asked the sage, 'Oh great sage! How did this most mysterious, supreme and divine Lord Krishna come to live amongst us like an ordinary person? Say, how did you come to know the secret of the Lord? What is the great Mantra (divine formula) by which one can attain the supreme Lord? Where does this great and supreme Lord live? In what form and how did he take birth from the womb of Devki (Krishna's worldly mother)? Who is his elder brother Balraam? How is Gopal (Krishna) worshipped? Why and how did the eternal and immortal Supreme Being who transcends Prakriti (the all-encompassing and invisible cosmic Nature) and is beyond comprehension take birth in a gross form on this mortal earth? Please be kind to tell us all this clearly in detail.' (7).

8. Sage Durvasa replied, ‘It is a well established fact that prior to the beginning of creation there was only one divine entity known as Adi-Narayan. The entire creation remained dissolved in him, and it is from him that it emerged at the time of creation.

When he made a mental resolve to initiate the process of creation, a divine lotus emerged from his navel, and from it was born the creator Brahma. Lord Narayan advised Brahma to do Tapa (austerity and penance), and rewarded him with a boon.

Pleased by Brahma’s Tapa, Narayan asked him to seek a boon and be rewarded with whatever he wished (8).

9. Brahma asked, ‘Lord, which is the best amongst all the incarnations of the Supreme Being, the incarnation which provided contentment and fulfillment to all the Gods as well as to the rest of the creation, and which provided liberation and deliverance to all the living beings who remembered it and offered worship to it? How is the supremacy of this incarnation established, and how is it proved that this incarnation is indeed a revelation of the supreme transcendental Brahm?’ (9).

[Note—Refer to verse no. 7 and its subsequent verses of section 1 of this Chapter which is called Gopa Purva Tapini Upanishad in this context.]

10. Hearing this query from Brahma, the great Lord Narayan explained, ‘Oh son (refer verse no. 8)! Just like there being seven divine abodes in the heavenly mountain known as Meru where the Gods live and which are obtained by those devotees who worship these Gods devotedly, there are similarly seven holy abodes (cities) in this mortal world on the earth where those who seek spiritual liberation and deliverance by either following the Sakaam philosophy of worship or Nishkaam philosophy live.

[These seven cities are Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwar or Mayapuri, Kashi or Varanasi, Kanchi, Ujjain or Awanti, and Dwarka. The ‘Sakaam philosophy’ is to worship the Lord with some desire or set objective in mind, while the ‘Nishkaam philosophy’ envisages doing worship without expectation of any reward.]

The best amongst these seven holy cities is the city where the supreme Brahm had manifested himself as Gopal, hence it is known as Gopal-puri. [This is the present city of Mathura in India where Lord Krishna had spent his days.]

This city fulfills the wishes of both types of devotees, the ones who worship the Lord with some desire in their heart, as well as those who have no desires. It is equally rewarding for both the Gods as well as the ordinary creatures who offer worship to the Lord here (10).

11. Just like a lotus lives in a pond, this holy city exists on earth. [That is, just like the lotus remains clean inspite of living in a pond of dirty water, this city remains holy and divine inspite of being present in the world surrounded by corruptions and unholiness.]

It is known as Mathura and is protected by the Lord’s discus.

This city has twelve gardens or groves as follows—the vast forest-like garden known as Vrihad-van, the Madhu-van which is named after the famous demon Madhu, the Taal-van famed for its palm or toddy trees, the Kamya-van which is the playground for Lord Krishna, the Bahulaa-van named after one of the great devotees of Lord Krishna named Bahulaa, the Kumud-van which is full of lotus and lily flowers, the Khadir-van which is rich in Khadir trees (*Mimosa catechu*), the Bhadravan where Balbhadra (the elder brother of Krishna) used to move around, the Bhandir-van where only Bhandir trees (a kind of small plant, perhaps referring to

Cannabis Indica) are seen, the Sri-van believed to be the abode of Laxmi (the divine consort of Vishnu), the Loha-van where Loha did severe Tapa, the Vrinda-van named after the devotee of Krishna known as Vrindaa.

[These twelve gardens or groves are like the twelve petals of the lotus flower representing the city of Mathura or Gopal-puri.] (11).

12. Within the city of Mathura, the different Gods, humans, Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Naags (serpents representing inhabitants of the nether world) and Kinnars (celestial dancers) sing and dance in these twelve gardens or groves.

The twelve Adityas (Sun Gods)¹, eleven Rudras (forms of Shiva)², the eight Vasus (personified form of primary assets of creation)³, the seven Rishis (ancient sages)⁴, Brahma (the creator), Narad (the celestial sage who is one of the greatest devotees of Lord Vishnu of whom Krishna is one of the many incarnations), Lord Ganesh (the chief amongst the Gods), and the twenty Shiva-Lingams (symbols of Lord Shiva) known as Vireshwar, Rudreshwar, Ambikeshwar, Ganeshwar, Neelkanth, Gopaleshwar, Bhadreshwar etc. are all established in these twelve gardens or groves.

Amongst the twelve gardens or groves known as 'Vans', there are two main ones—viz. Krishna-van and Bhadra-van. All of them are very holy and auspicious. Gods live in them. Great mystics do Tapa (austerity and penance) there to acquire mystical powers (12).

[Note—¹The *twelve Adityas*—According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhata, Arayma, Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswan, Pusha, Parjanya, Twashta and Vishnu.

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as *Dhata* during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as *Aryama* during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as *Mitra* during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as *Varun* during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as *Indra* during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as *Vivaswan* during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as *Pusha* during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as *Kratu* during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as *Anshu* during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as *Bhag* during the tenth Hindu month of Pausa also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as *Twasta* during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as *Vishnu* during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

²The *eleven Rudras* are actually eleven subtle forms of Lord Shiva. They are in the forms of Gods as follows—(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugrareta, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda,

2/33/1). The word Rudra literally means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparajaet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.

³The *eight Vasus*— The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv (ध्रुव), Dhar (धर), Som/Soma (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods; it is white in colour and is said to be stored in the moon), Aapha (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhaas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolize the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The Ekakchar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Kandika (Canto) 1 says that the Vasus were created in the beginning of creation from the first Matra 'A' of OM representing the first leg of the supreme Brahm along with Brahma the creator, the Rig Veda, the Gayatri Chand and the Grahapatya Agni.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Vasus, along with the Rudras and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

The Devi Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 4 says that the Vasus are manifestations of the Mother Goddess, who actually represents the dynamism of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess is the energy, authority and powers of Brahm that are employed by the latter to create and control this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level.

The Vasu is this dynamism of Brahm revealed at the macrocosmic level.

⁴The *seven Rishis*—The seven great ancient sages according to the Shatpath Brahman are the following—Gautam, Bharadwaj, Vishwamitra, Jamdagni, Vashishtha, Kashyap and Atri. They belonged to the early Vedic period called the Vaivastava Manu Manvantar (the period of ancient history during the time of Vaivastava Manu)

According to the epic Mahabharata, they are however the following—Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya and Vashishtha. They belonged to the era known as the Swayambhu Manu Manvantara

According to astrology, these seven Rishis form the seven stars of the Polar Bear or the Great Bear, the group of seven stars seen in the night sky that point towards the Polar Star, the North Star.]

13. Images of Balraam, Pradumna, Aniruddha and Krishna are also established there. In these twelve divine forests (gardens/groves) of Mathura are established twelve consecrated images of the Lord.

The first image is worshipped by the Rudras. The second image is worshipped by Brahma, the creator. The third image is worshipped by the sages known as Sankaadi who are sons of Brahma. The fourth image is worshipped by the Maruts (the various forms of the Wind God). The fifth image is worshipped by Vinayak (Lord Ganesh and his attendants). The sixth image is worshipped by the eight Vasus. The seventh image is worshipped by the various sages and seers. The eighth image is worshipped by the Gandharvas (celestial musicians). The ninth image is worshipped by the Apsaras (celestial female dancers). The tenth image is secretly established in the sky and worshipped by the holy Spirits and those who live in the sky (such as the winged creatures like the birds). The eleventh image is secretly established in the Antariksha (the outer space or deep recesses of the sky beyond the atmosphere of the earth). And the twelfth image is established in the Bhugavha (the deep bosom of the earth; the nether world).

Those who duly worship these images in a proper way find freedom from death (i.e. they do not have to suffer the horrors of death); they obtain Mukti (or liberation and deliverance from this world); they cross over or overcome the miseries and torments associated with having to live in a mother's womb, taking birth, attaining old age and finally facing death, as well as the horrors of the three legendary torments known as the 'Trai-taaps'¹ that are associated with life in this world (13).

[Note—¹The three *Trai-Taaps* are the following—(i) Adhyaatmik—the problems associated with one's spiritual welfare, (ii) Adhibhautik—problems associated with the physical body such as old age infirmity, disease etc. as well as from other creatures such as wild animals, enemies and rulers of the earth who are repressive and cruel; and (iii) Adhidaivaik—problems related to unfavourable Gods and malignant stars.]

14. In this connection, there is a hymn which says as follows—'The city (of Mathura or Gopal-puri) is served served by Brahma (the creator of this physical world) and other Gods; it is always protected by the conch, the discus, the mace and the bow known as Sharnga (all of which are held by Lord Vishnu, the protector of creation, and deemed to be the Supreme Being); and which is also given protection by the rammer or the pounder of Balbhadra (the elder brother of Krishna). This city is very enchanting and most beautiful (for the purposes of spiritual pursuits).

Lord Krishna, the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma, always lives here in a symbolic form* along with his other forms known as Balraam, Pradumna and Aniruddha. He is always accompanied by his divine consort called Rukmini who represents his dynamic Shakti (the cosmic energy and mystical powers) that is inseparable from him.

[*The Supreme Being known as the Parmatma lives in Mathura or Gopal-puri in two forms—one is his physical form known as Krishna or Gopal, and the other is his cosmic, all-encompassing, all-pervading and omnipresent ethereal form known as

Krishna Consciousness. The latter form lives subtly as the Atma, the pure conscious soul and the truthful self of all living beings, while the former form lived in a physical form during the specific time known as the era of Dwapar according to the Hindu calculation of the cycle of birth and death. Since a physical form has a limited span, the Lord for his heavenly abode at the end of Dwapar, and his image or idol is honoured now in the present era known as Kali-yug to represent the same Lord.

The same principle applies to the other three forms of the Lord, i.e. to Balraam, Pradumna and Aniruddha, as well as to Rukmini.]

In spite of the fact that Lord Krishna is himself the only complete revelation of the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma, yet he is famous with four names (of Gopal, Balraam, Pradumna and Aniruddha) just like the instance of the Mantra known as 'OM' which is said to have four sounds corresponding to the letters A, U, M and the Ardha Matra or the half-syllable but is actually a monosyllabic sound that is ethereal and one which cannot be artificially fragmented or divided into different alphabets having separate notes of sound.

[Now, the correlation of the four forms of Krishna and the four subtle sound of OM is being described—]

Balraam stands for the 'A' sound or aspect of OM, Pradumna represents the second letter of OM, i.e. 'U' that stands for Taijas (energy), Aniruddha stands for the third aspect 'M' of OM, and the fourth Ardha Matra of OM stands for Rukmini, the divine energy of the Lord personified. The composite word 'OM' therefore stands for Lord Vibhu (the almighty and supreme Lord of creation, which here means Lord Krishna) himself (14).

15. A wise, enlightened and self-realised spiritual aspirant should worship Lord Krishna in his own Atma with the firm conviction that the Lord who is beyond the creation consisting of the three Gunas such as Raja Guna (as well as the Sata Guna and the Tama Guna), i.e. the Lord who is untainted and absolutely neutral as he transcends all characteristics and attributes that define this creation, is none but his (the spiritual aspirant's) truthful 'self'.

Thus, the worshipper must be convinced that he (the worshipper) is no one else but the Parmatma known as Krishna himself revealed in his truthful form as the Atma, the pure conscious 'self'. This Atma lives inside the physical gross body of the worshipper just like the Krishna Consciousness had lived inside the physical gross body of the Lord whom the Gopis had played with, the Lord who was known by the worldly name of Krishna by them.

He who thinks this way and is firmly convinced of the truth of this state of existence does indeed enjoy the bliss that comes with liberation and deliverance (from ignorance and delusions). He indeed becomes Brahm-realised and self-realised. He indeed becomes an expert in the knowledge of Brahm.

The eternal and all-pervading supreme Lord who dearly accepts and eagerly protects the entire creation inhabited by the humble Gopas (or cowherds representing the most humble of creatures), from the beginning of creation right up to its conclusion, as if these Gopas were the very own 'self' of the Lord, is the one who is known as Gopal (because he protects and gives shelter and succour to the Gopas).

Hence, 'Gopal' is a term that is applied to the Supreme Being known as Pranav or Brahm whose representative word is the ethereal Mantra known as OM, and who takes special care of this creation with great kindness, grace, magnanimity and benevolence. [As we must understand by now, the word 'Gopal' has two parts—(i) 'Gopa' means the humble and the docile subjects of the vast kingdom of the Supreme

Being that has been given the name ‘world’, and (ii) ‘Paal’ means one who takes care of his dependants. Therefore clearly, ‘Gopal’ is the Lord who takes care of even the humblest of his subjects.]

A wise aspirant should establish oneness between himself and the Lord by meditating upon him and thinking as follows—‘Lord Krishna—who is the essence of creation, who is the Absolute Truth of creation, who is the supreme transcendental Brahm, who is known by the name of Gopal, and who is an embodiment of eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity—is indeed the Lord who resides in my inner-self as my Atma, the pure conscious ‘self’. Therefore, I am none but Gopal.

[Obviously, I need not search Krishna or Gopal anywhere outside, for he lives inside my own body as my ‘truthful self’. What I need to actually do is to meditate and contemplate upon the Lord within my own self. Since I have realised that my ‘true self’ is the pure consciousness that is a microcosmic form of the super cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, my body naturally becomes an image of Brahm. Such a man who has sincerely understood the absolute truth of this metaphysical principle is known as a ‘Gyani’, the one who is wise and enlightened, the one who has come to know the ‘Truth’ of creation. The only difference between two men is that while one is known as a Gyani the other is known as an ‘A-Gyani’ because he does not have this knowledge. But this lack of knowledge does not alter the fact that the Atma lives in the body of both of them equally.

Therefore, if the Gyani says that ‘I am Brahm’ he is saying the absolute truth, while when the A-Gyani says the same thing he is being boastful and deceitful.]

OM Salutations! Indeed, Gopal—who transcends the limitations of time (such as the past, the present and the future)—is the ultimate and absolute Truth (because ‘Truth’ is steady and constant and not affected by the passage of time).

I am indeed that Gopal. I am indeed Lord Gopal (Krishna) who is truthful, unbound, limitless, eternal, infinite, constant, invisible and indefinable. [That is, I have realised my truthful form knows and the Atma which is the same as the Krishna Consciousness.]’ (15).

16. Lord Krishna assures Brahma as follows—‘Oh Brahma! I always live in the city of Mathura. I will always live there adorned by my conch, discus, mace, lotus and a garland known as Vanmala¹ (16).

[Note—¹The *Vanmala*—refer (i) section 1, Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 8; (ii) section 2, Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 31.]

17. My form is of cosmic dimensions as I am all-pervading and all-encompassing in this creation. My divine form is eternally enlightened and illuminated. It has no physical attributes and grossness of any kind. I live in a sublime and subtle form in the city of Mathura located in the continent known as Jambu-dwip (which is the present-day India) (17).

18. In this way, he who meditates upon me and remembers my divine sublime form which is ‘consciousness personified’ is surely most dear to me and is able to attain my divine abode.

I am always present in my divine form as Lord Krishna in the city of Mathura where the devotee should worship me in my divine form as narrated above.

[There is another way we can read this verse—‘I (Krishna) am always present in my divine form as the cosmic supreme Lord known as Krishna in the city of

Mathura where the devotee should worship me and remember me. Those who do so are very dear to me, and they obtain my abode.’] (18).

19. My wise and learned devotees worship me in four different forms according to the prevalent tradition in the four Yugs or the four divisions into which one cycle of creation is divided (19).

20. These four forms are that of Pradumna, Aniruddha, Gopal Krishna and Balraam. [Refer verse no. 13 above and verse no. 25 below.]

They also worship Lord Vasudeo along with his divine consort Rukmini.

[In the first Yug called Sata-yug, the fair-complexioned Balraam is worshipped; in the second Yug called Treta-yug, the blood-complexioned Pradumna is worshipped; in the third Yug called Dwapar-yug, the yellow-complexioned Aniruddha is worshipped; and in the fourth Yug called Kali-yug, the dark-complexioned Krishna is worshipped. In fact, the word ‘Krishna’ itself means ‘dark’.]

A wise man must worship me with the firm conviction that ‘I (i.e. his Atma, his true self) am the Lord known as Gopal who has no birth, as I am eternal and without an end; I am the ancient and truthful Pradumna; I am Balraam; and I am Aniruddha.’ (20).

21. Thus, a wise worshipper should honour me in his own Atma; he must worship me in the form of his Atma that is the pure consciousness and his truthful self.

I should be worshipped selflessly or without any worldly desires by following the principles of proper, righteous and auspicious conduct that I have established in the form of Dharma in the scriptures. [That is, one must lead a life of probity, propriety, righteousness and auspiciousness according to well-established doctrines laid down in the scriptures.] (21).

22. Those who worship my form should live near the Bhadra-van and Krishna-van. [Refer verse no. 12 above.]

Those who cannot find the desired auspicious reward or attain their spiritual objective due to any cause whatsoever inspite of religiously and faithfully following the laws of Dharma (auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety), or those who are trapped in the snare of Kali-yug from which they find hard to extricate themselves, if such people live in these two places (i.e. Bhadra-van and Krishna-van in the holy city of Mathura), then they reap the same benefits as those who are fortunate to worship me there.

[That is, it is easy to attain spiritual success if one worships me in Mathura or even simply lives there. The reason is that the atmosphere of the place is rich in devotional quotient and one can see and hear others worshipping the Lord. This creates in him a natural urge to do so himself as it is the natural wont of a man to emulate others to show that he is one step ahead of them. The atmosphere of a religious place is full of religiosity and holiness, though more often than not it is artificial and for show-off, but the pill would have its positive affects even if it is taken inadvertently and under peer pressure.]

Oh Brahma! Just like you have an affectionate relationship with your sons Sanak and Sanakaadi sages, just like Lord Shiva is affectionate towards his special attendants known as Pramaths, and just like I (Vishnu) am affectionate towards Laxmi (my divine cosmic consort), my devotees are similarly very dear to me; I am very affectionate and benevolent towards them.’ (22).

23. Brahma asked, ‘Oh Lord! Please tell me how did you become four in form though you are always one and non-dual?’

Similarly, how did the monosyllabic word OM got divided into four parts—A, U, M and the Ardha Matra?’ [Refer verse no. 14 above.] (23).

24. [This verse describes the genesis of creation.]¹

Lord Narayan replied, ‘Prior to the coming into being of this creation, there was only one Brahm who prevailed everywhere. In the primary stages of creation, the primary Nature known as Mool Prakriti came into existence from this Brahm. This Prakriti was ‘Abyakta’, i.e. it was invisible and indefinable. Since this Prakriti emerged from the Akshar (imperishable, that which does not decay) Brahm, it too had the same characteristic feature of being Akshar.

From this Avyakta Prakriti was created Mahattatva (the Great Tattva or the primary element).

From the Mahatattva was created the Ahankar (pride and ego) which was a combination of the three Gunas known as Sata (the best quality), Raja (the medium quality) and Tama (the lowest and meanest quality).

From Ahankar (dominated by the Tamas Guna) were created the five Tanmatras or senses of perception (such as smelling, tasting, hearing, feeling and seeing).

From these were produced the five Maha-Bhuts or the five elements which would act as the building blocks of the rest of the creation.

[These five Maha-Bhuts were the ‘sky’ which was produced from the perception of hearing because sound needed space to travel and heard at a distance, the ‘air’ which was produced from the perception of feeling as is evident from the fact that we can ‘feel’ the breeze blowing against our faces inspite of it being invisible, the ‘fire’ which was produced from the perception of seeing because fire gave light that enabled to the creature to see, the ‘water’ which was produced from the perception of taste as is evident from the fact that we can taste anything only when its chemicals are dissolved in the water content of the saliva in the mouth, and the ‘earth’ which was produced from the perception of smell as is proved by the fact that one smells anything on the surface of the earth, and there is no smell in outer space. Refer section 1, Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 20 for a different take on this stanza.]

{Though not mentioned here expressly but it would be however relevant to point out that out of the Ahankar that was dominated by the Sata Guna was created the patron Gods of the five physical organs of perception, and from the Ahankar dominated by the Raja Guna was created the five organs of perception in the body, such as the ear that hears, the skin that feels, the eye that sees, the tongue that tastes, and the nose that smells.

As has been stated above, the actual senses of perception, such as sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch, relate to the gross world of material objects, and are created by and related to the Tama Guna. This is because this Tama Guna has the propensity to tie the creature to delusions and lowly things of the world, things that lack the sublimity and subtlety of the Atma. When the Atma is overwhelmed by the Tama Guna it begins to seek the world through these perceptions. The Atma sees beautiful sights and gets enamoured by them, it hears pleasant sounds and wants to hear them again and again, it tastes delicious things and wishes to roll it in the tongue to derive more physical pleasure from them, it smells pleasant smells and wishes to repeat the pleasant experience, and it feels things that arouse passions in it and then begins to

long for their proximity. And when the all-powerful Atma manages to use the body to achieve success in these endeavours it becomes filled with 'Ahankar', i.e. it feels pride at its acquisition and becomes haughty and arrogant. The Atma thus gets entangled in the web of Maya or ignorance and delusions. It loses its primary form of being unattached and neutral, and rather becomes excessively possessive and obsessive. This state of affairs corresponds to the Jagrat or the waking state of existence of consciousness.

But when the Atma is tired of its wanderings and finds that it is never satisfied, it retires to sleep which is called the Swapna or the dreaming state of existence of consciousness. This means that the Atma withdraws its self from the external world reached and perceived by the five organs of perception, and goes to a world which is subtle and not as gross as the physical world. This is the world of dreams, and here the only part of the body that plays an active role is the subtle body known as the mind-intellect complex and its sub-conscious part. The latter helps the Atma to imagine things that were experienced during the waking state but were beyond the reach of the physical limitations of the body.

For instance, if a poor man yearns for the comfort of a palace he can't do so while awake, but surely his mind would allow him to live in a palace when he dreams. When his wishes are fulfilled, the creature feels contented and happy. But the unfortunate aspect of this whole scenario is that the creature has to finally wake up from his dreams to face the harsh realities of the world. So the Atma keeps on oscillating between the Jagrat and the Swapna states.

A time comes when the Atma discovers to its amazement that there is a state when eternal peace can be found, the state where even the tussle between the acceptable and the unacceptable does not exist. This is the Sushupta state of deep sleep. The Atma finds real peace and bliss here. But again, for an ordinary man, this state is also transient as the Atma reverses its states to the earlier two states.

Then it begins to search for a state where peace and tranquility can be made perpetual—and it is then that the creature discovers the fourth state known as Turiya or the post-Sushupta state. When this state is further transcended, one reaches the higher echelons of super-consciousness that is called Turiya-teet.

In brief we deduce that a wise and enlightened man is one who knows what true peace is, and what the spiritual Truth of the Atma is that is absolute and irrefutable.}

In this way, the supreme Brahm, which is primarily Akshar (imperishable and eternal) and Avyakta (invisible and attribute-less) becomes covered or surrounded by so many layers of qualities, attributes, features and characters that it appears to be quite the opposite of what it is supposed to be.

[Brahm has not only created everything but also pervades each pore of each unit of this creation; there is nothing in this creation that is not Brahm. Hence, since even the gross and perishable aspects of this creation where the grosser of the five elements dominate, for instance the body of the creature, is a manifestation of Brahm, it gives the illusion that Brahm is gross and perishable. Another instance is of the negative dimensions of creation such as the quality of Ahankar (ego and pride) dominated by the Tama Guna. Brahm is said to be without any of the attributes associated with this creation; Brahm is an immaculate entity. So to say that Brahm has Ahankar, which is a negative quality, would be an absurd proposition when applied for Brahm, but the fact remains that Ahankar is as much a part and parcel of creation as the other positive qualities. Since this creation is a composite manifestation of Brahm, it follows that if this creation has positive virtues as well as negative virtues,

then Brahm must also have them. This is because the product cannot have any quality that is not present in the ingredients that are used to create or make it.

In brief, it must be remembered that this creation is a composite of the good and the bad, and this was done by the supreme Creator to maintain a fine balance of power and qualities. He allowed the creation to take its own course with the help of the creative and the substance ability of the Raja Guna, and ensured that it followed a right path with the powers of the Sata Guna. But as the creation went on rolling forward, decadence and wear and tear set in. What was initially immaculate clean and divine began to beset with problems (just like any modern machinery that works absolutely fine for a few years than creates a headache for the owner). It was then the Lord employed the Tama Guna to wind up the canvas so that he can clean up the slate and start afresh. If he had not stepped in, the negative qualities would have suffocated the life out of goodness in this creation, a proposition that the Lord did not like because he had a moral responsibility to uphold the good qualities. Even as any father would not wish his son to go out of hand to give the family a bad name, the Supreme Being stepped in and brought to conclusion the corrupt creation when it began to become a Frankenstein Monster. Therefore, any further growth of the negative qualities brings about an implosion of the creation and its automatic end.

The result is that the true form of the supreme transcendental Brahm remains hidden from view. It can be sighted or realised only when a person becomes enlightened and understands that the Atma that drives this creation while remaining hidden from view is the truthful form of Brahm as it possesses all the eclectic qualities known to be characteristics of Brahm, while the rest of the world is the creation that is simply a grosser manifestation of this Atma.

And this understanding can come with inculcating noble virtues that pave the ground for acquisition of eclectic wisdom and knowledge of the 'Truth'. This is because if the moral and spiritual ground is not conducive to let the seed of Truth sprout then it would die an untimely death.

It is here that the different scriptures come in handy as they not only show the correct path but also advise the aspirant what to do to reach his goal. They act as teachers and guides. So, if one follows the line shown by the scriptures without questioning their integrity and authenticity, it is sure that he would easily reach his spiritual goal of finding Mukti or Moksha—which means liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.] (24).

[Note—¹The following Upanishads describe the *Genesis of Creation* in a very fascinating way—(a) Rig Veda tradition—Aiteriyo-panishad; Mudgalo-pansishad, Canto 2-4.

(b) Sam Veda tradition—Chandogyo-pansishad, Canto 3, Section 19; Canto 4, Section 17, verse nos. 1-3; Canto 6, Section 2-10; Maho-panishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 1-14; Canto 2; Canto 5, verse nos. 135-163.

(c) Shukla Yajur Veda tradition—Trishikhi Brahmin, Canto 1; Painglo-pansishad, in its Canto 1 and Canto 2; Subalo-pansishad, Canto 1-8; Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 1-2, 4-5; Canto 6, Brahman 4.

(d) Krishna Yajur Veda tradition—Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 1; Canto 2, verse no. 54; Canto 5, verse nos. 71-72; Panch Brahm Upanishad; Kath-rudra Upanishad, verse nos. 17-26; Shwetashwetar Upanishad, Canto 4; Canto 5, verse no. 5; Canto 6, verse no. 1-3; Taittiriyo-panishad, Valli 1, Anuvak 7; Valli 2, Anuvak 1-2 and 7; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 10-11; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8-12; Shaarirko-panishad, verse nos. 1-6, 16-20; Yog Kundalini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 20-23; Narayan Upanishad in all its paragraphs give a graphic account of how the creation came into being from Narayan or Lord Vishnu as the Viraat Purush;

Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 47 describes the genesis of Prakriti (nature of a creature), and verse nos. 58-59 narrates the five components of creation.

(e) Atharva Veda—Narsingh Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 1-4, 8; Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, Canto 2, verse no. 2-3, Canto 6, verse no. 4; Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1, verse no. 1, 7, 9; Mundak 2, section 1, verse nos. 1-10; Atharvashikha Upanishad, Kandika 1; Tripadvibhuta Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraphs 9-12; Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad, verse/paragraph no. 18, 20-21.

(f) *Vishnu Puran*, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-51; Chapter 3, Cantos 1-3.]

25. So, a wise, enlightened and self-realised person should think that I am Akshar, I am OM (the ethereal word used as a synonym for Brahm, the Parmatma, the supreme Atma) personified, I am Ajar and Amar (I do not become old and infirm, and neither do I die, as I am eternal, constant and imperishable), I am Abhaya (fearless), I am a personified form of Amrit (the elixir of bliss and happiness).

I am indeed Brahm who is fearless. I am indeed Mukta (liberated, delivered and eternally free) as well as Akshar (imperishable, steady and eternal; not subject to decay and depletion).

[In this stanza, the pronoun 'I' has two connotations—it stands for Lord Krishna who is preaching Brahma this Upanishad (refer verse nos. 23-24), as well as for the declaration made by a self-realised and enlightened spiritual seeker who has understood the truth and reality of the Atma as being his truthful identity. Once thus enlightened, when a self-realised man makes this declaration he is not being boastful or a hypocrite, but he is simply affirming the truth about himself. He knows that the pronoun 'I' stands not for the gross physical body but for the pure conscious Atma which is his 'true self' and which is the same as the supreme Atma known as the Parmatma. Another name for this Parmatma is Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

He whose eclectic form is eternal and whose authority is well established, he who has revealed himself as the whole creation which is nothing but his own form, he who is self-illuminated and revealed in the form of light, he who is uniformly all-pervading, all-encompassing, universal and omnipresent—it is this unique and non-dual supreme and transcendental Brahm who has revealed himself in four forms by employing his cosmic power to create illusions, known as the 'Maya Shakti'. This Shakti enables Brahm to conjure up a magical world of miraculous finery and clarity that is so life-like and a virtual reality that one is unable to distinguish between its illusionary form and the actual reality that it hides. This is why the four forms of the same Divinity known as Brahm are given four different names. Actually, they are the same Brahm appearing in all these four forms.

[It is like the same 'sky' being assigned different names depending upon its location—viz. the sky in an empty pitcher is called a 'Ghata-kash' ('Ghat' = pitcher; 'Akash' = sky), that within the walls of a monastery is called 'Matha-kash' ('Matha' = a monastery), that above the earth as the 'Akash', that beyond the gravitational pull of the earth as the 'Maha-kash', etc. But these are artificial boundaries created for the sky element which is otherwise an immutable, an indivisible, a uniform and a universal entity.

Another example can be cited of water contained in different containers or vessels being assigned different names—for instance we say 'the water in the cup', the 'water of the jug', the 'water of the river or the ocean' etc. Primarily, all samples of water are the same, and these different names do not change its basic nature or quality.

These four forms of Krishna are Gopal, Pradumna, Balraam and Aniruddha. See verse nos. 13, 20 and 25. There is no wonder in it. If Brahm can create this magnificent and fantastic world of stupendous variety and diverse aspects, shapes, colours and forms that continue to evolve endlessly and defy all imagination, it is a only child's play, so to say, for him to replicate himself in merely four forms when he can replicate himself in millions and countless more million forms in this vast and endless creation.] (25).

26. Balraam, the elder brother of Krishna and the son of Rohini, represents the letter 'A' of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm. He corresponds to the Jagrat (waking) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Vishwa.

Pradumna corresponds to the Swapna (dreaming) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Taijas. He symbolizes the letter 'U' of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm.

Anriuddha corresponds to the Sushupta (deep sleep) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Pragma. He symbolizes the letter 'M' of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm.

And finally, Krishna, in whom the entire creation has its foundation and origin, corresponds to the Turiya (transcendental) state of consciousness, and is therefore known as the Pranav. He symbolizes the Ardha Matra of the ethereal word OM representing Brahm. He represents the cosmic Naad (sound) that represents the presence of the cosmic Consciousness in this creation.

The other three forms are deemed to be included in this fourth form. Rukmini, who represents the dynamism of Brahm revealed in her form, is therefore an inseparable part of Krishna just as the Mool Prakriti from which the rest of creation has come into being is an inseparable part of Brahm (26).

[Note—The genesis of creation in relation to the four syllables of OM has been explained in the Atharva Veda's Atharva-shikha Upanishad, Kandika 1 in detail. The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Cantos 2-3, and Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2; Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 describe the same concept as has been outlined in the present verse of our current Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad but in the context of Lord Ram who was another incarnation of Lord Vishnu.]

27. The ladies of Braj (i.e. the milkmaids of Vrindavan) represent the numerous Mantras (hymns) of the Vedas that sing the glories of Brahm in their own way, but they do so from a distance and have myriad forms¹.

[This explains why there are so many Gopis surrounding one Lord Krishna. This also answers the basic misconception in the modern world regarding the relationship between the Gopis and the Lord. Neither were the Gopis lustful women nor was Lord Krishna a promiscuous man. The Gopis were personified forms of the hymns of the Vedas and they were praising their Brahm in the physical personified form of Lord Krishna. The Vedas had to assume this form in order to show by example how one should be focused on the Lord at all times of the day and the night, not bothering about what the people of the world say.

The mental state of the Gopis was like a man in Samadhi, the trance-like state of super-consciousness when he is unaware of the physical world and the physical body. Such a man is focused on his Atma and is unconcerned about everything else.

The question now arises that this being so, why then were the Gopis so doubtful about the truthful form of Krishna which is the basic reason for this Upanishad being taught? Well the answer is easy to understand—the Vedas wished to tell the world that the forces of Maya (delusions) are so great and overwhelming that

they managed even to delude the Vedas themselves, so there is no wonder if the same Maya would trap an ordinary man in its snare. The trick to get out of this entanglement is to seek guidance from the scriptures and endeavour to peer behind the external façade which is more often than not very misleading and not what it appears to be. A wise man is one who sees the 'hidden truth' and is not misled by the exterior appearances.]

On the other hand, the cosmic sound called Pranav represented by the ethereal Mantra OM is a universal and uniform Mantra that never changes and sings the glories of the same Brahm in one universal language.

[While the hymns of the Vedas are numerous in number and diverse in their contents and composition style, the Mantra 'OM' is only one. All of them sing the glories of the same Divinity. While OM is regarded as a monosyllable, the other Mantras of the Vedas have countless numbers of letters in them.

In the present context of the Gopis it means that each praises and shows reverence to the Lord in his own way like the different hymns of the Vedas using different styles of poetry and different words to sing the glories of the same Lord. The monosyllabic Mantra 'OM' would then represent the enlightened man who worships the Lord in a single form and place. He sees Brahm in the form of the Atma that is a universal and uniform entity. And the Mantra that he uses to offer his obeisance to the Lord is OM. He does not call Brahm by different names such as Gopal, Krishna, Vishnu etc., but as Brahm.]

While the Mantras of the Vedas represented by the milkmaids of Vrindavan offer their worship to Brahm from a distance, the monosyllabic Mantra OM represented by the four aspects of Krishna along with Rukmini offer worship to Brahm from a close quarter.

[The Gopis were personified forms of the hymns of the Vedas. It was not practical for them to stay with the Lord at all times of the day, and throughout their lives. Separation was a natural because they had a physical body that could not be present everywhere always. On the other hand, OM is a Mantra that one can use to remain in the close proximity of the Lord at all times of the day and night just as one breathes day and night.

Hymns of the Vedas representing formal forms of worship are limited in their time and scope—one cannot constantly and continuously repeat the hymns every second of his existence, but one continues to breathe every second of his life. Therefore, when one has become wise and enlightened enough to know that each breath of his is a sort of prayer offered to the Lord, and that the subtle humming sound made by the air coming in and going out of the body is actually the sound of OM resonating in the body, he worships the Lord at close quarters in a symbolic manner because breath is extremely close to the body as compared to the reading of the scriptures and saying aloud their verses.

Now, though OM is a monosyllabic sound, learned sages and seers have divided it into four parts for the purpose of analysis and understanding of the phenomenon of creation. Thus, OM is said to consist of four subtle parts—the letter 'A' which stands for initiation of creation, the letter 'U' which stands for development and expansion of creation, and the letter 'M' which stands for the conclusion of creation. The 'Ardha Matra' stands for the Shakti that enables this to happen.]

Just like the cosmic sound known as Pranav and its word representative known as OM are synonymous with Brahm (the cosmic Consciousness), Rukmini (the divine consort of Krishna) representing the primary Nature known as Mool Prakriti is also closely related to Brahm.

[That is, OM represents Brahm who is manifested as Krishna, while Rukmini represents the Mool Prakriti revealed in her form. This observation is an extension of what has been said in the opening lines of this verse that the Gopis represent the hymns of the Vedas in a personified form.]

This is what those who are expert in the knowledge and philosophy of Brahm affirm (27).

[Note—¹The fact that the Gopis were the hymns of the Vedas personified has been reiterated in the Krishna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda in its verse nos. 8 and 13, while verse nos. 1-3 asserts that they were manifestations of different Gods, sages and seers who had prayed to Lord Vishnu to allow them to be very near to him and enjoy the Lord's company which they were denied during Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Ram. This Krishna Upanishad appears as Chapter no. 28 of the present volume.]

28. Lord Gopal (Krishna), who is the foundation of the entire creation and the primary cause of its coming into being, is established in this creation in the form of Pranav or OM. Gopal and OM are synonymous with each other just like Brahm, Pranav and OM are also synonymous with each other.

Since the Maya Shakti (the dynamic power of Brahm to create delusions) is an inalienable part of Brahm, its representative word known as its Beej Mantra, i.e. the word 'Klim/Klin(g)', is also an inseparable part or aspect of OM.

[OM is a word Mantra for Brahm, while Klim/Klin(g) is the word Mantra for the Shakti of Brahm. Since Shakti cannot be separated from Brahm, this fact is depicted here by saying that 'Klim/Klin(g)' is an inseparable part or aspect of OM. Just like Brahm deriving his cosmic powers from the Shakti, OM derives its powers from the Beej Mantra Klim/Klin(g). Both complement and supplement each other just as vowels and consonants compositely form a language.

Whereas OM represents Brahm in its manifestation as Krishna, the Beej Mantra for Shakti, i.e. Klim/Klin(g) is represented by Rukmini. Just like Brahm and Shakti stay together, Krishna and Rukmini too stay together.] (28).

29. Those who worship my four forms in the holy city of Mathura are actually worshipping me (the Supreme Being known as Narayan or Vishnu) in these forms. In other words, they are worshipping Brahm. They obtain the bliss and contentedness that comes with finding freedom from ignorance and delusions.

The heart of the devotee is like a lotus with eight petals in which the Lord is enshrined for worship (29).

30. [The divine form of Lord Vishnu that is worthy of adoration and worship is being narrated now.]

The soles of the holy feet of the Lord (here meaning Lord Krishna) bear the mark of the signs that are closely associated with Lord Vishnu (because Krishna is an incarnation of Vishnu)—viz. the sign of the divine conch called the Shankha¹, the sign of the flag of the Lord known as the Dhvaj (which is his emblem as the Supreme Lord of creation; it has the Garud, the mount of Vishnu, embroidered on it), and the sign of the divine ceremonial umbrella known as the Chhatra that is over the head of the Lord as the Emperor of creation.

Besides these signs on his feet, the other signs are the following—the sign of the Srivatsa² that adorns his chest, as well as the gem called Kaustav Mani³ that dazzles brilliantly and enchantingly on his chest (30).

[Note—¹*Shankha*—Lord Vishnu's *Shankha* (conch) stands for the sky as well as the wind element because the conch is hollow and it makes a resounding sound when air

is blown into it. This sound represents the cosmic Naad, the background sound in ether from which, it is visualized by ancient sages and seers, that the entire creation emerged and derived its primary energy and dynamism. It is this Naad from which all forms of the languages are created, and the sound of the conch is so loud that it is heard for long distances. Hence, the sound of the conch stands for the generation and the propagation of life as well as of knowledge.

It is known as the *Panchjanya Shankha*. There is a legend associated with this Panchjanya Shankha (conch). There was a demon named Panchajanya. He lived in a miniscule form inside a conch at the bottom of the ocean. Once he ate the son of sage Saandipani. Lord Krishna had killed this demon, and retrieved the sage's son from the Yamloka, the abode of the God of death known as Yama. Krishna had taken this Shankha then, and it is called 'Panchanjanya' after the demon who lived in it.

The Shankha has a great symbolism when used by Lord Vishnu. It proclaims the presence of the Lord when he blows it. The sound of the conch is heard far and wide. According to some accounts, the conch alone stands for all the five elements of creation—viz. the sky, the air, the water, the fire and the earth. Now, let us analyse how the Shankha or conch stands for the five elements as observed here. The conch is hollow from the inside, indicating the sky or space element. It produces sound when air is blown into it, indicating the presence of the air element. The snail had this as its dwelling, and this snail lives in water. Thus, the conch indicates the fire element because it is this fire that helps a creature to survive even in water. The conch is formed in water and not on dry land like trees and terrestrial animals—indicating its origin in the water element. The body of the conch is hard calcium like the rocks and solid surface of the earth, indicating the presence of earth element as its integral part.

According to the Krishna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 16-17, the Shankha was born alongside Goddess Laxmi from the Kshir Sagar during the churning of the ocean, and therefore is regarded as the brother of the Goddess.

²*Srivatsa*—This is the mark of the foot of sage Bhrigu which he had cast on the chest of Vishnu ones when he got annoyed upon the Lord. The Lord is so enamoured of his devotees that instead of taking umbrage at this disrespect shown by the sage and punishing him for his misdemeanor, he had blessed the sage that his footprint would always remain on his chest as one of the jewels worn by Lord Vishnu. However, Laxmi was so angry at the temerity of sage Brighu that she cursed that henceforth she, in the form of wealth and material abundance, would always shun a Brahmin; it is believed that this is the reason why Brahmins, who are otherwise of a high birth, are always serving others in the society who are junior to them by birth for their monetary needs.

³*Kaustav Mani*—This is a glittering gem worn by Lord Vishnu, and it covers the sign of the Srivatsa. It was obtained at the time of the legendary churning of the ocean and automatically got lodged on the Lord's chest. {Mahabharat, Adiparva, 18.}

31. The Lord has four hands in which he holds a conch (Shankha), a discus (Chakra)¹, a lotus (Padma)² and a mace (Gadaa)³. The bow known as Shaaranga⁴ is slung across his shoulders.

His arms are adorned by magnificent armlets. The garland known as Vanmala⁵ that is placed around his neck enhances his bewitching beauty. The tiara shines magnificently on the crown on his head, while the wrist band or the bangle dazzles brilliantly on his wrists. The earrings dangling from his ears are carved (designed, shaped) like a crocodile or an alligator; they dazzle with a brilliant light when the Lord moves his head.

The Lord's divine and auspicious body is adorned by the Pitambar (which is a golden (yellow) coloured piece of seamless cloth that wraps around the body of Lord

Vishnu). The Lord's divine, reassuring and lovable form instills confidence and fearlessness in his devotees (31).

[Note—¹*Chakra*— The *Chakra* (discus) is a weapon of Vishnu that is designed like a serrated wheel and is depicted as being brilliantly illuminated and glowing hot like the fire. It is also ruthless like the fire and destroys everything falling in its path. Hence, it stands for the fire element as well as the power of the Lord to destroy all obstacles. It also signifies that Vishnu is able to reduce to ashes all the corruptions and evil forces of creation. The Chakra also stands for the cosmic mind, because like the restlessness and the tendency of the mind to continuously fly from one subject to another without pause, the Chakra too keeps on revolving and flying off to pursue its targets relentlessly on the instructions of Vishnu. Further, the Chakra also is used as a metaphor for this creation which has been visualized in the form of a cosmic wheel.

This Chakra is called *Sudarshan Chakra*. The word 'Sudarshan' means 'one that is auspicious, pleasing and comforting in appearance or to behold'. The 'Chakra' means 'a circle or ring' and it refers to a circular weapon which is like a round iron saw with hardened and sharp teeth. It is this invincible weapon that Vishnu uses more often than the rest to overcome the evil forces of creation.

According to legend, it was gifted to Vishnu by Lord Shiva when the latter was pleased by the former's offering of worship to him at Kashi (Varanasi).

According to the Krishna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 19, the Chakra was the personification of the Maha-Kaal, the Great God of Death, as well as of Shiva because the latter is regarded as the God of Trinity who is responsible for the conclusion of this creation, or cause death.

A great chunk of the first half of Canto 7 of the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to this discus.

²*Padma*— His *Padma* (the Lotus flower) stands for the water element as this flower grows in water and cannot survive without it.

The Padma or Lotus is a symbol of purity and cleanliness amongst the surrounding filth because the dirty water of the pond where the lotus grows does not stick to the petals of the lotus flower. It also signifies the fact that the Lord accepts only the best and the auspicious from amongst all in this creation because the lotus flower grows in dirty water of the pond but is untouched by its filth. So these divine virtues of purity and cleanliness are one of the many glorious virtues of Lord Vishnu.

The word 'Padma' also refers to the origin of creation because the creator Brahma was born atop the lotus that emerged from the navel of the Viraat Purush at the time of creation, as well as the fact that the opening of the bud of the flower is an imaginative way of depicting the unfolding or the emergence of creation from the primeval water. It symbolizes the continuously evolving world because lotus springs forth from water, and this world also springs forth from the causal waters of the cosmos and then grows in the vast ethereal space of the sky.

It also regarded as being closely related to the Sun and that is why it opens up when the Sun rises, and closes at sunset. Since the light of the Sun is a metaphor for wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment and purity of thoughts and actions, the Lotus in the hands of Vishnu indicates the presence of these eclectic virtues in the Lord, or that the Lord symbolizes these auspicious and divine virtues and qualities of creation.

The Padma is also a symbol of Goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of good fortunes and wealth. Laxmi is depicted in iconography as being seated on a divine lotus in full bloom.

³*Gadaa*— His *Musal* or *Gadaa* (mace, rammer, hammer, battle-ram, dumbbell) stands for the earth element because it is as heavy and gross as the latter. This Gadaa also stands for the cosmic intellect because the intellect is used to keep a strict control over one's wayward mind and its inherent fickleness, over one's sense organs and their inherent restlessness etc. This signifies the ability of the Lord to be able to

exercise infallible control over all aspects of creation. Being a metaphor for the intellect, the Gadaa also symbolizes the Lord's ability to separate the auspicious and the righteous from the evil and the pervert, or to forcefully subdue the evil, pervert and corrupting forces of creation symbolized by the wayward and restless mind as well as the indulgent organs of the body.

The Gadaa is known as the *Kaumodki Gadaa*. It has the following connotation. The word 'Kaumodki' consists of two parts—viz. 'Ku' meaning 'earth', and 'moda' meaning 'happiness. Hence, the mace of Lord Vishnu gives happiness to all the righteous creatures on earth by protecting them against the evil forces represented by demons.

It is called a 'Gadaa' because it was moulded from the strong bones of a demon named 'Gadaa', and hence bears his name. The demon gave up his bones to respect the wishes of the creator Brahma, who then got a mace crafted out of it at the hand of Vishwakarma, the God's engineer, and kept it with Varun, the Water God. It was given to Lord Krishna at the request of Agni, the Fire God, when the former had got the Khaandava forest consumed by fire.

There is only a slight difference between the Gadaa and the Musal, perhaps in their shape and size, but primarily their usage in practical terms is the same.

⁴*Shaaranga bow*— This symbolizes the cosmic senses of the Viraat Purush. This bow of Lord Vishnu is also known as the *Shaankhya Dhanush* (bow). It was made from the bones of demon named Shaankhya-chuda after he was killed by Lord Shiva.

⁵The *Vanmala*—Refer verse no. 16 of the present Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, as well as verse no. 8 of Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad which is section 1 of this Chapter. Briefly, it is a garland (mala) worn by Vishnu, and it is made of flowers of the forest/wild (Van). The flowers are of a wide variety with those of the Kadamba tree (*Nauclea cadamba*) being in the center or the dominant ones. Sometimes, marigold, daisy or xanthium flowers are shown as being used in this garland.]

32. The devotee should constantly and consistently remember and meditate upon my beautiful form with four arms as narrated above, or my form with two arms that holds a flute and is adorned by the peacock feather tucked in the lock of hairs on the head.

[The form with *four arms* refers to Lord Vishnu who is the macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, while the form with *two arms* refers to Lord Krishna who is an incarnation of the same Supreme Being on earth. Even as Vishnu has countless names, Lord Krishna too has many names, one of them being Gopal. Refer also to section 1, Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 10, last stanza.]

Both the forms are equally auspicious, holy and divine; they are equally worthy of worship, adoration and reverence.

The truthful knowledge of Brahm helps one to churn the entire world and arrive at the Truth. [That is, if one has become truly 'self' and 'Brahm' realised, if he has acquired true enlightenment and knowledge, he would not be deluded by the numerous versions of my form that are visible and described in the scriptures such as the various Purans (mythological histories), but would concentrate his attention on the quintessential 'truth' behind all these external forms.] (32).

33. The truthful form of Brahm that remains after having eliminated all forms of delusions in this world is the one that is found in the holy city of Mathura.

[That is, one should worship Krishna with an enlightened view. Krishna is to be worshipped as a personification of the grand virtues of Brahm that are at once subtle, divine, holy and sublime. The Krishna who is to be worshipped is not the physical form of the Lord that is found in images but the Krishna Consciousness that is an all-pervading divinity. This Krishna Consciousness is the same as the cosmic

Consciousness known as Brahm that is revealed in the form of the Atma, the ‘pure self’, of the worshipper. When one worships Lord Krishna with this wisdom and erudition, he is sure to find liberation and deliverance from the fetters of ignorance and delusions. Such a man is the one who is worshipping Krishna in the real sense; others are merely doing rituals and formalities which lead them to nowhere.]

This city of mine is like a lotus flower having eight petals. It represents the whole world in a miniature form. These petals are represented by the eight Digpals¹ who support this world from the eight corners. [Refer also to section 1 of this Chapter, verse no. 11 of Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad.] (33).

[Note—¹The *eight Digpals* are the following— Indra who is the king of Gods and who has a thousand eyes on his body, and is therefore called ‘Sahastraaksha’, Agni or the Fire God, Yam or the God of Dharma (i.e. the God responsible to ensure that the great tenets of righteousness and proper conduct are observed by the creatures, and to punish those who violate these laws), Niritiya (also known as Nairitya), Varun or the Water God, Anil or the Wind God, Indu or the Moon God (often replaced by Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods), Ishan or Lord Shiva, Brahma the creator, and Anant who is Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation (or Lord Seshnath, the legendary serpent who holds the earth on its hoods in a symbolic gesture to indicate that Lord Vishnu is responsible for taking care of this creation).

The eight Digpals are the divine forces of creation in a personified form of various Gods who are assigned the task of taking care of the entire creation. They are the following—(i) Indra who is the king of Gods and responsible for production of rain as well as to control all other Gods who are said to be represented by the various independent forces of Nature; (ii) Agni is the personified form of the fire element responsible for providing heat, energy, light, vitality, strength, vigour and vibrancy to creation; (iii) Yam is the personified form of death as well as assigned the duty to uphold the laws of Dharma (or the auspicious virtues of righteousness, nobility, propriety, probity etc.), and to punish those who violate it; (iv) Niriti or Nairitya who is the God responsible for the actual death and punishment of the sinful and unholy creatures in creation; (v) Varun is the personified form of the most essential ambrosia of life known as the water element that provides nourishment and lubrication to this creation, and is regarded as the basic element that harbours life in all its forms in its bosom; (vi) Anil is the personified form of the life-giving air or wind element which is also called Pran—literally meaning ‘life’ which is a proof of its importance and significance vis-à-vis this creation; (vii) Kuber is the treasurer of Gods and responsible to provide all the necessities of life to the inhabitants of this world; the Moon God is the custodian of the Amrit, the ambrosia of life and eternity which is a priceless asset for the creation; (viii) Ishan is Lord Shiva who is also known as Mahadev, the Great Lord, as well as the one who is responsible for maintain balance in this creation by controlling death, and hence is called the ‘concluder’; (ix) Brahma is the creator of the physical world as well as the body of knowledge known as the Vedas, and therefore assumes the role of a grand old patriarch of the family known as the world; and (x) Anant or Lord Vishnu who is so-called because he is eternal, infinite and endless, has infinite responsibilities, and is assigned the multi-prong duty of taking good care of the world in all respects. He is also called Anant as he is none but the eternal Brahm himself in the form of the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing and almighty Lord of creation. In fact, even Brahma and Shiva are said to be born from this Viraat Purush.

Refer Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 38.]

34. This lotus (symbolically representing the holy city of Mathura) has come into being from the vast ocean represented by this mundane and mortal world, and is a part of the world just like a lotus is a part of the pond where it lives.

[Though the city of Mathura is like other terrestrial cities on earth, it is however different from them because of the divine and holy aura rendered to it by the virtue of the fact that Lord Vishnu had spent the better part of his earthly sojourn in the form of Lord Krishna here. It is compared to a lotus which grows in a pond whose water may be dirty, but its petals always remain clean because the surrounding water does not stick to them. Similarly, the corruptions of the surrounding ordinary world do not alter the subtle level of divine aura present in Mathura. The metaphor of the lotus is employed to highlight the purity and holiness of the city of Mathura.]

Those whose heart and mind are immaculate and uncorrupt, i.e. those who are free from such taints as Raag and Dwesh (which means having attachments with anything or anyone on the one hand, or keeping jealousy, malice, enmity and ill-will with others on the other hand), those who are absolutely neutral and uniform in their views, and those who are equanimous and equitable by nature—they are the ones who are able to enjoy the proximity of this ‘lotus’ (symbolically representing the divinity, holiness and purity inherent in Mathura) like a swan does vis-à-vis the lotus of a pond where it swims.

The rays of the sun and the moon are like the fluttering flags of this divine city. The golden mountain known as Meru¹ is my flag-staff (34).

[Note—1Mt. Meru—This is the celestial mountain where the holy Gods are said to have their abodes. The Meru mountain is also called ‘Sumeru’—the ‘golden one’. The word ‘Meru’ literally means one that reflects light like a mirror or crystal. It is described in the Purans as the fabulous mythological mountain that forms the axis of the whole world. It is much like mount Olympus of Hindu mythology. All the planets revolve around it. It is compared to the cup or the seed-vessel of the lotus, the leaves of which symbolize the different Dvipas or continents and islands. The holy river Ganges from the heaven on its summit, and from there it divides into four streams and flows down to the rest of the world. The four Lokpals or the custodians of the four directions of the celestial compass occupy the corresponding face of this mountain which is said to be made of gold and glittering gems.

Its height is said to be one lakh Yojans which is equivalent to roughly 8 lakh miles. [1 lakh = 1,00,000 units; 1 Yojan = approx. 8 miles.]

Out of this huge size, 16,000 Yojans (8 x 16,000 miles) is under the ground, and 84,000 Yojans (8 x 84,000 miles) above the ground. On its top there is a flat plateau of approx. 32,000 Yojans (8 x 32,000 miles). It is here that Brahma the creator and his mind-born sons such as Daksha and the Saptarishis live. [refer Mahabharat, Vanaparva, 162; Bhagvata, 5/16.]

It is situated in the mystical Jambudvipa (the huge island by the name of ‘Jambu’), and Bharatvarsha (India) is said to be to its south. The abode of Lord Shiva known as Mt. Kailash, which is presently located in the northern reaches of the Himalayan mountain range, is said to be the same Mt. Meru.

The creator Brahma resides on its summit, and it is the meeting place of Gods, semi-Gods such as Gandharvas, and exalted sages and seers who have attained Brahm-hood.

Other connotation of the word ‘Meru’ is the central and prominent bead of the prayer rosary from where the rosary is turned.]

35. Brahma-loka (the abode of Brahma; the heaven) is like the ceremonial umbrella or the parasol held over or stretched over this city (i.e. the Brahma-loka represents Krishna’s head), and the seven nether worlds known as the Patal-lokas etc.¹ are my feet.

The spot of the Srivatsa² (footprint of sage Bhrigu) on my (Vishnu's) chest is a sort of my own footprint, because though it is a sort of a stigma it stills shows that Brahmins (here represented by sage Bhrigu) are my own forms (35).

[Note—¹The seven lower worlds according to the Padma Puran are the following—(i) Atal, (ii) Vital, (iii) Satal, (iv) Rasaatal, (v) Talaatal, (vi) Mahaatal, and (vii) Paataal.

²Srivasta—refer verse no. 30 above.]

36. Those who are expert in the knowledge of Brahm, those who are Brahm-realised do not see this Srivasta as a stigma cast upon me but a sign of my love and benevolence towards all, even those who are angry at me.

The Kaustava Mani represents the eternal light that makes the sun, the moon and the fire to be illuminated and show light to the world. It also represents the power of the faculty of speech to illuminate the world with the knowledge of the supreme transcendental Brahm.

Sata Guna, Raja Guna, Tama Guna¹ and Ahankar (ego and pride)² represent my four arms (because I, in my primary form as Lord Vishnu, rule over and control the all the qualities, attributes, characteristics and behavioral patterns in this world with the help of these four entities that help to define all the positive as well as the negative qualities of creation). (36).

[Note—¹(a) The *Sata Guna* is the best of the three qualities present in any creature. It is a positive quality and is marked by a propensity for following the path of nobility, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness, holiness and righteousness. Creatures that have a predominance of Sata Guna are inclined to do selfless service, be benevolent, merciful, kind and gracious, have coolness of head and a rationale and balanced mind, be contented, have humility and piety etc. Such creatures are devoted to good values in life and have a desire to acquire knowledge that would help them reach higher spiritual goals in life.

This Sata Guna is marked by high standards of ethical and moral existence that makes the bearer of such qualities highly respected in society. Such people have a spiritual dimension to their personality. This quality is spiritually uplifting and gives a divine halo to those who possess it and practice it.

The Vasanas that have the Sata Guna or quality dominant in them are like a veil covering the lamp or like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort.

(b) The second quality is the *Raja Guna* and it makes a man more attracted to this material world and its charms, and less spiritually inclined. The Raja Guna is the medium quality marked by a greater percentage of worldly passions, desires and attachments and their natural offshoots in a creature. It makes a creature inclined towards the material things of the gross world and their enjoyments, towards creation of wealth, its enhancement and protection, and generally having a desire for growth, development and expansion etc. It covers such qualities as worldly yearnings, passions, a stormy nature, agitated behaviour, ambitions, selfishness, expansionist tendencies, a desire to acquire, retain and develop such acquisitions even to the detriment of one's long term spiritual welfare and even if such actions cause pain to others. All these pertain to this materialistic world. Such qualities give worldly fame and prosperity. If these qualities are judiciously mixed with the Satwic qualities, then they provide the person the better of the two worlds, both in terms of worldly fame as well as spiritual well being.

The Vasanas that have the Rajsic Guna or quality dominant in them can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to

clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality.

(c) The third quality is called the *Tama Guna* and is the meanest and the basest of the three Gunas. It is a demeaning quality in a creature that leads to his downfall and perpetual entanglement with things that are considered improper and unethical. It creates an inclination for committing all sorts of sins, misdeeds and demeanours. It leads the creature towards negativity and inspires him to acquire negative qualities such as various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. It makes him inclined to be greedy, rapacious, haughty, arrogant, lustful, intoxicated, vile and wild to the extreme. Such a creature with a predominance of Tama Guna has utter disregard for propriety, noble virtues and ethics, for righteousness and morality.

In brief, it is the most degrading, denigrating and contemptible of the three characteristics in a person, and leads to such behaviour which is utterly immoral, denigrating and depraved, marked by grossness, crassness and recklessness. It therefore leads to his downfall, ignominy and ruin as well as ignorance, delusions, gloom, inertia, anger, frustration etc.

²*Ahankar*—This is the notion of having false ego, self-pride, self-assertion, vanity, boastfulness, self-righteousness, arrogance, haughtiness; a sense of hypocrisy, false prestige and false pride; to think that one is the doer and achiever; to erroneously believe that success is obtained by one's efforts alone, and that one is superior to others in many respects etc.

The notion of a separate and distinguished 'I'; the concept of 'I am'.

Ahankar from the metaphysical perspective is the erroneous concept that 'I' is the body and not the 'pure conscious soul', and this leads to a chain of undesirable consequences because of the grossness of the body as compared to the subtle and sublime nature of the soul. The ego that is generated due to the misplaced thinking of 'I am' as a distinguished entity from the rest of the creation leads to ignorance-based sense of false pride and prestige, called Ahankar (अहंकार), which in turn produces arrogance and haughtiness which are inseparable from Ahankar. The constant identification of 'I' (me) with the body and this material world of sense objects lead to the sense of possessiveness in the creature. 'Pure consciousness' mired by ego becomes 'a conditioned consciousness' and fails to remain pure.

This is why Ahankar has been likened to a minister of the king—it directs and regulates the actions of the consciousness which, under its influence, loses its independence. This 'conditioned consciousness', working through the mind-intellect-ego combine, is called, inter-alia, 'Chitta' (चित्त). The word also means sub-conscious and its memory bank. Hence this memory of the sub-conscious acts as a referral library for the intellect. The latter falls back on it and rely on it whenever it is in doubt. The quality of books in the library guides the student; similarly, the quality of inherent tendencies stored in the library of Chitta directly affects the inputs of the intellect, and through it, the mind and successively down the hierarchy to the body and its organs of perception and action.

Although the soul has nothing to do with this command chain involving Chitta (sub-conscious and memory)—Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations, nature and temperament) and Vasanas (passions and desires)—Buddhi (intellect)—Mana (emotions and notions, the emotive thoughts)—Sharir (body)—Karma (action and deeds)—the result of deeds and actions—more experience—stored in memory—and the chain continues, but for all practical purposes the Atma/soul is deemed responsible for it because of its sovereign nature.

So, the sincere seeker/aspirant should delineate this conscious from the rest of the chain and break the nexus between them so as to allow the glory of the pure consciousness of the soul to shine through like the splendorous sun breaking through from behind a curtain of clouds.

It is like removing the various veils or covers from around the candle so that its light shines through the darkness of the room and illuminates all the corners of it.

Example of a sleeping man—Ahankar is generally associated with the body when the creature thinks that he has so many achievements to his credit and that he has achieved them with his body. He erroneously begins to have a notion of possessiveness and belonging to this world; he starts to conjure up imaginary relations that have their relevance only as long as there is the body, for once a man dies these relations snap even without notice, and even in the case the ignorant Atma wished to retain them it cannot because the same son and wife whom he loved so much are eager to get rid of the dead body which is causing pollution in the household! So, when a man snuffs out Ahankar from his mental radar, he becomes as indifferent and dispassionate as a sleeping man who is unconcerned with the external world.

For example, if the house is on fire, a sleeping man wouldn't be bothered at all as long as he is asleep because he is totally disassociated with the house. He does not bother because he is not attached with his 'possession'; a sleeping man just cannot think that the house that he had built on his own strength and effort is getting destroyed. But once he gains consciousness, he is struck with grief and dismay. Similarly, when a wise man realises that the world is not related to him, and his true identity is his Atma and not the body, then he isn't bothered either with the body or the world with which the body is related and the various relations that exist only because of the existence of the body. The Atma has no relationships whatsoever. Absence of Ahankar eliminates all these at one go.

For all practical purposes, a wise man is as good as asleep as far as the external world is concerned. Even as a sleeping person forgets all about the outside world because his sense of belonging to and identification with the world, of calling the world mine and your, of having love or hatred, of having attachment or detachment, of having animosity/enmity or endearment and friendship, of having happiness or grief—all such emotions are literally 'asleep' with him. Similarly, a person who does not have Ahankar is freed from such emotions that are directly related with his sense of involvement with the world through the medium of the body, though he appears to be awake and active in this world.

The Atma or soul is pure and these things have got nothing to do with it. But because there is the false belief that the creature is the gross body and not the pure consciousness and pure self which is called the soul or Atma, all the external actions done by the body appears to have been done by the creature which, in fact, is an erroneous conclusion.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 3, verse nos. 20 describes how Ahankar interferes with a man's judicious and intelligent thinking, compelling him to believe in and get entangled with things that are not the truth.

The *Varaaha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 4, verse no. 25 asserts that a Jivan Mukta person—i.e. a person who has attained spiritual liberation and deliverance even while he is still alive and goes about his routine affairs of life in a normal way—has no trace of Ahankar in him.

Ahankar has been described in the context of the Antahakaran (the inner self of the creature) as being one of its main components in *Shaarirak Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 4; *Paingalo Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, verse no. 3; and *Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 6.

Paingalo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, in its Canto 1, verse 6 describes the concept of Ahankar in the context of the genesis of creation, and how it was able to influence even the supreme Brahm, in his grosser cosmic manifestation of Lord Vishnu, to get involved in the creation of this delusory world.

How Ahankar affects the creature's nature and temperament has been succinctly described in *Niralamb Upanishad*, verse nos. 11-12, 20. How it affects the path of spiritual liberation and deliverance of the creature, and why should it be controlled

has been explained in *Yogshikha Upanishad* of Krishna Yajur Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 34-37, 150.

How the Mana (mind) creates the notion of Ahankar has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 60.

Other references—*Subalo-panishad*, Canto 9, verse no. 13 of Shukla Yajur Veda.

How the Mana (mind) creates the notion of Ahankar has been described in *Yogshikha Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 60.

The concept of Ahankar has been elaborately described in *Adhyatma Ramayan*, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39 as well as in Lanka Kanda, canto 12, verse no.19. Further, how Ahankar affects a creature has been elaborately described in *Adhyatma Ramayan* of Veda Vyas, in its Uttar Kand, canto 6, verse no.41-52.]

37. [Verse nos. 37-38 describe the weapons of Lord Vishnu. Refer also to Atharva Veda's Tripadvibhuti Upanishad, Canto 7, paragraph no. 67.]

In my hand that symbolizes the Raja Guna are held the following things:--

The first is the conch named 'Paanch-janya', so-called because it is from it that the five primary elements (earth, water, fire, air and sky) were created.

[The hands of Lord Vishnu represent the Raja Guna because it is with these hands that the Lord takes care of the world. The five elements are the fundamental building blocks of creation, and the Lord has used his hands to craft this world out of them.]

The 'Chakra' (serrated weapon known as the discus) that is in my hand symbolizes the Mana (mind and heart) that is as fickle, restless, unsteady, easily disturbed, easily attracted and as easily distracted, and ever-changing like a child.

[And like a child it needs constant vigil and proper training lest it would be spoilt like a child who has not been properly reared, creating not only a huge problem for the parents when he grows up but becoming a nuisance for the rest of the society. In the present context it means that the Mana needs to be controlled. Like the Chakra of Vishnu which continues to revolve around the Lord's fingers even if the Lord does not use it, the Mana too continues to be restless and fidgety; it continues to whirl and move from one object to another without any provocation or cause. The Mana is also like this potent weapon known as the Chakra which a creature can either use for his welfare or for his ruin.

So, while a wise and erudite man uses the powers of the Mana to overcome all spiritual hurdles and get over all moral obstacles, a foolish man would use the same Mana to gratify the urges of his sense organs, and to get entangled in the world voluntarily by allowing himself to be deluded by the temptations and charms of this material world.

The continuous rotation of the Chakra also signifies the continuous rotation of the wheel of this world. If the creature is not careful then the Mana also joins the whirling just like a leaf trapped in a whirlpool begins to rotate out of control.] (37).

38. The bow in my hand known as 'Shaarang' symbolizes Maya (the power of delusions which is so overwhelming that nothing escapes its battering).

[The twang of the bow is so loud and horrifying in the battle-field that it instills fear and threat of life in the heart of one's enemies. The sound of the Lord's bow is so awe-inspiring and formidable that it sort of leaves the world dazed and dumbfounded. This is exactly what Maya does when it wields its powers—it so stuns the creature so much that he is unable to decide what to do and what not to. Just like the strike of the bow, the stroke of Maya leaves one dazed and dumbstruck. The

creature who has been hit by the blow of the Maya begins to hallucinate and have nightmares just like a man who has seen the havoc the bow plays in the battle-field.]

The lotus in my hand symbolizes the whole creation that is under my control.

[It ought to be noted here that the visible creation has its origin in Brahma, the patriarch of creation, who himself was born atop a divine Lotus that emerged from the navel of the Viraat Purush which is the primary form of Vishnu. Hence, all creation can be traced back to a cosmic Lotus that emerged from the primordial gel of life symbolized by the celestial ocean of milk known as the Kshir-sagar.]

The mace that I hold in my hands represents the Adi-Vidya or the primary form of basic knowledge.

[The mace is used by the Lord to crush and pound those who have deviated from the path of righteousness and auspiciousness. It is much like the ceremonial gavel that a high court judge uses to restore order in a court of law. Just like a human being need not know the huge tomes of legal documents to lead a civilized life which is based on pure common sense and basic intelligence, the codes of basic behaviour that the Lord expects his subjects to follow, and be punished if not followed, are represented by the mace. The mace is primarily intended to enforce law and order in this creation.

It is like the gavel a judge uses in a court to restore order, a stick a teacher uses to discipline the class, and the baton a policeman employs to control a rowdy crowd.] (38).

39. The four fruits of all auspicious and righteous efforts, i.e. Artha (material well-being and financial prosperity), Dharma (the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety), Kaam (fulfillment of desires and aspirations), and Moksha (liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation), are represented by the ornamental and beautiful arm-bands that adorn my forearms.

My throat represents the virtue that is known as 'Nirgun'—i.e. an entity that is without attributes, qualifications, characteristics and features. It is like a garland that surrounds everything in creation. This entity that is known as Nirgun has no beginning and end, i.e. it is infinite and eternal.

[It refers to that form of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, which existed prior to the emergence of this visible world. It had no attributes like the world which subsequently came into being. The word 'Nirgun' means without attributes and qualifications, while the word 'Saguna' means one having attributes and qualifications. So while Brahm is Nirgun, its revelations as the Trinity Gods is Sagun, though of course this 'Sagun' is also very close to being a 'Nirgun' because these Trinity Gods are invisible and subtle as compared to the rest of the world which has a visible form and is gross. The terms 'Nirgun' and 'Sagun' therefore acquire a relative meaning. They represent the three basic steps in creation—the first being emergence of creation which is represented by Brahma the creator, the second being the development and growth as well as the care of the creation that has come into being which is represented by Vishnu the protector of creation, and the conclusion of creation which is represented by Shiva in his angry form of Rudra.

That aspect of creation which cannot be described or defined or qualified is termed as 'Nirgun', while that aspect which can be known and described, and to which attributes can be assigned, is called 'Sagun'. Since sound has no specific form and definitions, it is 'Nirgun'. On the other hand, words that can be understood come under the category of 'Sagun'.

Primarily these three forms are all Nirgun because they simply represent Brahm playing these three roles himself in a subtle form. But as this creation evolved, the need was felt to visualize things, and this need was made by the Purans which gave some specific forms to these Trinity Gods. But still they remained subtle and invisible to the eyes of the man, so later on came the concept of incarnations such as that of Krishna as detailed in the present Upanishad.

The throat is cited here to represent the Nirgun aspect of Brahm because it is in the throat that sound is produced if one wishes to speak. Brahm has been conceived as the cosmic Consciousness that makes its presence felt in the form of the cosmic sound known as Naad. This sound is generated in the ether by the virtue of the energy generated by this cosmic Consciousness. The same 'Consciousness' resides in the body of the living being as the Atma that speaks through the sound made in the throat. No one has seen Brahm like no one has seen the Atma, but their incontrovertible presence is known when they produce sound.

Besides this, the 'sound' has no form like the alphabets of any given language. The alphabets have some or the other geometrical shapes, but sound cannot be drawn into specific sketches or diagrams. This also proves that pristine and primary form of sound is 'Nirgun' while its more developed form as the alphabet and the written language are its 'Sagun' form. This is why the throat is regarded to represent the 'Nirgun' aspect of the Supreme Being in this verse.

As long as one does not speak clearly and only makes guttural or humming sounds in the throat, no one can know what he means. That is, his intentions and knowledge remain hidden from the world. This is a Nirgun aspect of the knowledge that he wishes to communicate. On the other hand, if he speaks clearly and coherently everyone would know what he wishes to say. This would therefore be equivalent to the Sagun aspect of the same knowledge.

There is another interpretation of this phenomenon. The throat of Vishnu is regarded as the cosmic conch in a symbolic way because it produces the cosmic sound that has been called the Naad in the context of Brahm. Lord Krishna who is preaching this Upanishad is an incarnation of the same Lord Vishnu. Therefore, the throat of Vishnu stands for the Nirgun aspect of creation and the throat of Krishna stands for the Sagun aspect of Krishna. No one has ever heard what Lord Vishnu has ever said to any God, but what Lord Krishna said is well known.] (39).

40. The garland around my neck (Vanmala) is a symbolic representation of the primary Maya (delusion creating powers of Brahm) which itself has no birth (because it is an integral part of Brahm which has no birth or beginning). This is why your (Brahma's) mental-born sons (such as Sankaadi) call 'Avidya' (ignorance having its genesis in Maya or delusions) a form of garland around my neck.

[This world is revealed from the Viraat Purush, the primary and primordial form of Vishnu. This world is characterized by a the dominance of ignorance that prevents the creature from being aware of the actual 'truth' of creation and his own 'self', thereby forcing him to remain trapped in this cycle of birth and death, and suffering from their accompanying horrors and agonies. This is due to the influence of Maya which acts like a millstone around the neck of the creature. Hence, the metaphor of the garland symbolizing Maya and Avidya around the neck of Vishnu is cited here because of the simple reason that the Viraat Purush has revealed himself as the creature, and Maya acts like a millstone that is worn like a garland around the neck of this creature.

The garland is also a metaphor for the stupendous responsibility that Lord Vishnu has as the care-taker, sustainer and protector of this creation created by Maya. This world is like a mill-stone around the Lord's neck, a bridle or a throat-latch which he carries with pleasure and without complaining at all.

Since the world is such a beautiful and enchanting place for the reason that it is created by Maya, this garland is also depicted as being bewitchingly beautiful just like the fascinating world it has managed to create.

This world is created by Maya, the power of the Lord to conjure up an extremely fascinating world from nothing, something which is not the reality, and is therefore deluding for those who think it to be real. The magic is that the Lord manages to maintain a fine balance between the two—he helps the Maya to perpetrate this creation, and at the same time keeps tight leash on its vagaries.

The garland is like an honour bestowed upon the Lord to mark the fact that the Lord has most expertly, avidly, diligently and wisely taken good care of the world with all its diversities and incongruities created by Maya, without ever complaining or failing in his duties, but miraculously remaining free from the effects of delusions that this Maya creates in this world.

From the perspective of the creature, if he falls in the trap of the attractions of the fascinating world around him, a world created by Maya, he wears this symbolic garland of Maya around his own neck that would act as a heavy burden on his chest. On the other hand, if he is wise and erudite to remain detached from the world inspite of doing his assigned duties diligently, he would be like Lord Vishnu himself. The former type of creature is trapped in this world of delusions, while the latter type is said to be spiritually liberated and delivered.]

My truthful form that is known as 'Kutastha' (i.e. an entity that occupies a high position, is unalterable, unchanging, steady, immovable and constant, and is most secret, enigmatic, hidden and esoteric) is symbolized by the glorious tiara on my head. This form of mine is like the crown-jewel or the tiara on my crown. It represents my most exalted and supreme form as the Lord of creation and the Supreme Being (or 'Brahm') (40).

41. The two aspects of creation, viz. one that is 'Kshar', i.e. one that is perishable, and the other that is 'Uttam', i.e. one that is the best and imperishable, are represented by the two earrings that shine and dazzle on my ears.

In this way, those who remember me and meditate upon my divine form, daily and constantly are able to find Moksha (spiritual emancipation and deliverance; liberation and deliverance from this world of delusions and ignorance). (41).

42. Such a devotee surely finds Mukti (liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation). Surely, I devote myself to him and his welfare for all times to come (42).

43. What I (Narayan) have told you (Brahma) is the truth. I have described to you my Sagun as well as Nirgun forms. [That is, I have narrated for you both my forms, one that has attributes and the other that is without any attributes.] (43).

44. Brahma asked, 'Lord, how can one determine the forms of yours that you have described to be with attributes (Sagun)? How do the Gods worship them? How do Rudra, Brahma, Vinaayak (Lord Ganesh), the twelve Adityas (Suns), the Vasus, the

Apsaras (celestial female dancers and singers), and the Gandharvas (celestial musicians) worship them?

Which is that esoteric and mystical entity that is invisible but steady in its exalted position in creation?

Who is that Lord, and how is he worshipped by humans?' (44).

45. Lord Narayan replied, 'My primary universal non-dual form however has twelve subtle forms¹ that act as the primary sources of origin of everything else in this creation. These twelve forms are the twelve basic virtues or characteristics that are present in this creation, and have been personified as different Gods and semi-Gods, as well as human beings. [These subtle forms represent the basic characters and the defining qualities that are characteristic of each unit of creation. This is explained below.]

One of my aforesaid forms is known as Shiva, and the other is Rudra. Though Shiva is a personified form of the virtues of calmness, tranquility, blissfulness, wisdom, enlightenment, meditation and contemplation, Rudra exemplifies anger, wrath and vehemence.

[That is, I change my form from one of being 'Shiva', the calm One, to one of 'Rudra', the angry One, depending upon the needs of the time and exigencies of circumstances. For instance, as long as the creation does not go out of control, I remain submerged in meditation and contemplation, letting the wheel of creation, which I have myself created and set in motion, take its own course; I give it a lot of freedom and flexibility. But when things begin to go out of hand, I assume the angry form of Rudra to clean-up the slate to start the process afresh and to punish the guilty. In other words, both Shiva and Rudra are none else but my form, albeit two diametrically opposite ones.]

This principle applies to all the other entities as well. That is, I am present in a subtle form as the Brahmi principle in Brahma the creator.

[The characteristic quality and the ability that is present in Brahma, the creator, that entitles and enables him to create this visible world of an ever-changing variety and an astounding diversity, as well as the Vedas which are repository of all knowledge in this creation, is actually a manifestation of the Supreme Being who lives in Brahma in a subtle form as the quality or virtue known as 'Brahmi' that enables Brahma to do what he is best suited to do and for which he is best known—that is to 'create'. Thus, creativity is one of the forms of Brahm, the Supreme Being.]

Similarly, I am present as the principle of holiness and godliness in the Gods, as the principle of humanity in humans, as the divine power that eliminates all hurdles and overcomes all obstructions in the path of auspiciousness and righteousness that is possessed by Lord Vinaayak (Ganesh), as the principal factor that illuminates and gives light and energy to the rest of creation that is the hallmark of the twelve Adityas (Suns), as the ability and skill needed to create and master the art and craft of music that is inherently present in the Gandharvas (celestial musicians), as the ability and skills needed to dance and sing that is inherently possessed by the Apsaras (celestial female dancers and singers), as the ability to fulfill all needs of the creation that are the characteristic attribute of all the Vasus and is represented by the cow known as Kamya (because it is said to be holy and the all wish-fulfilling cow of the Gods), and as the invisible and subtle form known as the 'Avyakta' which refers to the cosmic omnipresent Supreme Authority and Power that pervades throughout the creation in an invisible and subtle form, and which is the subject matter of all research into the unknown, the esoteric and the mystical.

I am eternally established in my exalted position as the Supreme Being who is immune to the fluctuations characteristic of this mortal world which takes a birth and dies, the creation that has a beginning and an end. I remain constant, steady and ever-present even while the rest of the creation oscillates between birth and death, the world that comes into existence and ends, the world that waxes and wanes, the world that swings between falsehood and truthfulness (45).

[Note—¹Upon close examination of this verse, we find the twelve subtle forms of the Supreme Being as follows—Shiva, Rudra, Brahma, Gods, humans, Vinaayak, Adityas, Gandharvas, Apsaraas, Vasus, Kanya (cow), and Avyakta.]

46. The form of mine that is present in the form of humans is marked by three qualities that are characteristic of all human beings—i.e. the qualities of Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. [That is, all human beings have these three qualities in varying degrees. These Gunas have been explained above in note of verse no. 36.]

My immaculate form which is known as ‘Sat-chid-anand’—one that is truthful, enlightened and blissful, is known only by having devotion for me. This form is a treasury of ‘Vigyan’—a fount of true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment of the highest order, as well as of ‘Anand’—a fount of extreme bliss, beatitude and felicity. [Refer verse no. 23 of the Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad which is section 1 of this Chapter.] (46).

[Now, in the following seventeen verses, from 47/1 to 47/17, the divine Mantras of Lord Krishna are narrated. It is to be noted that Krishna is regarded as no one else but Brahm personified. In this context, the reader should also refer to verse nos. 24/1 to 24/12 of the Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad.]

47/1. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has revealed itself as my Atma (pure consciousness) that is my Pran (literally my life, here referring to my ‘true self’). It is the Truth that has also revealed itself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). It is this same Divinity that has also revealed itself as my Atma (47/1).

47/2. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Krishna who is known as Govind and who is very dear to the cowherds and milkmaids (of Vrindavan). It is the same Lord who is the ‘truthful one’ (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/2).

47/3. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has revealed itself as the vital wind known as the Apaana which is a form of my Atma (pure consciousness) because it sustains life in my gross body. It therefore symbolizes that divine entity that is also the universal Truth in creation, and that has also revealed itself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). It is this same Divinity that has revealed itself as my Atma (my true self). (47/3).

[Note—The *Apaana* is the wind that helps in digestion of food, thereby providing nourishment to the body, as well as eliminating waste from the body to prevent it from being poisoned by accumulation of toxic waste inside it.]

47/4. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Krishna who is known as Pradumna and Aniruddha. It is the same Lord who is the ‘truthful one’ (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/4).

47/5. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has revealed itself as the vital wind known as the Vyan which is a form of my Atma (pure consciousness) because it sustains life in my gross body. It therefore symbolizes that divine entity that is also the universal Truth in creation, and that has also revealed itself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). It is this same Divinity that has revealed itself as my Atma (my true self). (47/5).

[Note—The *Vyan* is the wind that is responsible for accepting or giving away anything.]

47/6. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Krishna who is also revealed in the form of Lord Ram¹. It is the same Lord who is the ‘truthful one’ (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/6).

[Note—¹There are two Upanishads dedicated to Lord Ram, viz. the Ram Rahasya and Ram Tapini. They are included in this volume as Chapters 12 and 13.

Special note should be taken of this verse that affirms that Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are the same; they are two forms of the same Supreme Being.]

47/7. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has revealed itself as the vital wind known as the Udaan which is a form of my Atma (pure consciousness) because it sustains life in my gross body. It therefore symbolizes that divine entity that is also the universal Truth in creation, and that has also revealed itself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). It is this same Divinity that has revealed itself as my Atma (my true self). (47/7).

[Note—The *Udaan* is the wind that is responsible for lifting the body.]

47/8. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Krishna who is also known as Devki-nandan (the son of Devki). It is the same Lord who is the ‘truthful one’ (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/8).

47/9. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has revealed itself as the vital wind known as the Samaan which is a form of my Atma (pure consciousness) because it sustains life in my gross body. It therefore symbolizes that divine entity that is also the universal Truth in creation, and that has also revealed itself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). It is this same Divinity that has revealed itself as my Atma (my true self). (47/9).

[Note—The *Samaan* is the wind that is responsible for nourishing the body (as it takes the nutrients to all the parts of the body), and maintaining uniformity and balance in the body.]

47/10. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Gopal who is also known as Aniruddha. Both these forms are the divine forms of Lord Krishna personified. It is the same Lord who is the 'truthful one' (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/10).

47/11. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Gopal who is the chief Atma or the personified form of the cosmic supreme Consciousness of creation. It is the same Lord who is the 'truthful one' (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/11).

47/12. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Gopal who is also known as Indra (the king of Gods and representing the chief controller of all the sense organs of the body of the creature). It is the same Lord who is the 'truthful one' (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/12).

47/13. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Gopal who is the Bhut-Atma or the principal Consciousness that lives inside the mortal creatures as their individual Atma, and who has also revealed himself as the creature or the living being. It is the same Lord who is the 'truthful one' (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/13).

47/14. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Gopal who is a personified form of the chief Purush or the Viraat Purush (the cosmic form of Brahm that is all-pervading and all-encompassing, and from which the rest of the creation, including the creator Brahma, has emerged). It is the same Lord who is the 'truthful one' (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/14).

47/15. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Gopal who is the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. It is the same Lord who is the 'truthful one' who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/15).

47/16. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Gopal who is the all-pervading and universal Atma or the principal Consciousness of creation that uniformly lives inside all the creatures as their individual Atma which is their truthful 'self'. It is the same Lord who is the 'truthful one' (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being), and who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/16).

47/17. OM Salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to the Lord (i.e. Krishna) who is the one who prevails in all the states of consciousness, viz. the Jagrat or waking state, the Swapna or dreaming state, the

Sushupta or deep sleep state, and the Turiya or transcendental state of existence. It is the same Lord who is the ‘truthful one’ (i.e. Brahm, the Supreme Being) who has also revealed himself as the Bhu (earth), the Bhurva (sky) and the Swaha (heavens). (47/17).

48. The only one Lord known as Gopal is hidden as the ‘Antaryaami’ (one who lives in the inner-self of all living beings, and as such is privy to all their thoughts).

He is omnipresent and all-pervading.

He is the Atma, the pure conscious soul of all the creatures. [And therefore he is the truthful ‘self’ of the entire creation.]

He is the Lord who controls all rewards and fruits of all endeavours. [That is, he is the supreme Authority who decides which creature deserves what for his particular effort.]

He is the one who provides an abode to all living beings and acts as a foundation that supports the entire creation from all sides. [That is, all the creatures of this vast creation find succour and solace in the Lord. He supports them and provides them with shelter and refuge.]

He is a neutral witness for all and of all. [Nothing is hidden from him as he is omnipresent and all-pervading. He is non-partisan, and therefore the best witness one can ever find. That is why he sits in judgment for all the deeds done by the creature during his lifetime, as it is impossible to hoodwink him. He observes everything dispassionately like a neutral observer and is therefore a neutral witness to all that is happening in this creation. Nothing escapes his observation and reach.]

He is personified Consciousness.

He is ‘Kaivalya’, or one of his only kind. He has no parallel and match, and is therefore unique and non-dual. He is the ‘only’ destiny of creation in as much as everything in existence arises from him, lives in him, and collapses to finally merge with him at the end.]

He is ‘Nirgun’—i.e. he is the one who has no attributes, no definable qualities and no physical features (48).

49. Besides the forms enumerated herein above, all other divine forms of Lord Krishna are equally worthy of adoration, honour, reverence and worship. Therefore, I bow before and pay my sincere obeisance to the following Gods—Lord Rudra (the form of Shiva which brings about the conclusion of creation), Aditya (the legendary twelve forms of the Sun God), Vinaayak (Lord Ganesh who is worshipped before any other God), Surya (the celestial Sun who is a visible manifestation of the Supreme Being’s glorious and splendorous form), Vidya (personified form of knowledge as Goddess Saraswati and her revealed form as the Vedas and other ancient scriptures), Indra (the king of Gods and the one who controls all the organs of the creature’s body), Agni (the Fire God), Yam (the God who controls death and decides the punishment or reward a creature deserves for his life; also referring to the virtue of self-restraint personified), Niriti (one of the ten Digpaals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe; he is the patron deity of the south-western direction and worshipped in that corner), Varun (the Water God), Marut (the Wind God), Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Ishan (Lord Shiva), Brahma (the creator of this visible creation inhabited by living beings), and all other Gods, even those not mentioned here.

[All of them are the different manifestations of the same Supreme Being known as Brahm, like Lord Krishna who is one of the revelations of Brahm and to whom this Upanishad is dedicated.]’

Having finished quoting the conversation between Brahma and Lord Narayan, sage Durvasa said to Radha and other milkmaids, ‘After preaching Brahma—who was an image of Lord Narayan’s own self (as he was born from Narayan and therefore carried his divine genes in him and represented the creative aspect of Narayan)—this holy Gopal Tapini Upanishad, and empowering him with the authority and the ability to initiate the process of creation on his behalf, the Lord (Narayan; Vishnu) vanished from sight (49).

50. I (Durvasa) have narrated to all of you (Radha and other milkmaids) whatever I had learnt from Brahma, his sons Sankaadi and others, as well as from sage Narad.

Now, all of you must proceed to your homes.’¹

Thus ends this Upanishad known as Gopal Tapini Upanishad (50).

[Note—¹Sage Durvasa sought to remove doubts about the divinity of Lord Krishna that had cropped up in the minds of the Gopis. In the process he had also taught them the fundamentals of metaphysics and spiritualism. He had told them to recognize who they actually were (refer verse no. 27 of Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad; section 2 of this Chapter). This wisdom and enlightenment is fundamental to obtaining freedom from the snare of all worldly delusions and entrapments, which in turn means obtaining Mukti or liberation and deliverance.

This principle applies to all the living beings, and not only to the Gopis. Showing the correct path is the main duty of the Guru, and in this respect sage Durvasa acted as the wise Guru for the Gopis of Vrindavan.]

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----Shanti Paath----

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Chapter 28

Krishna Upanishad/ Krishno-panishad

This Upanishad reveals the divine aspects of Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu that appeared on earth in the Hindu era known as Dwapar, which was the third of the four-era cycle of creation and conclusion. He followed the incarnation of Vishnu as Lord Ram in the previous era known as Treta-Yug.

There is a legendary tale that the great Gods and sages who lived in the heaven once approached Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and caretaker of this creation and regarded as the Supreme Being himself, and told the Lord that they were so overwhelmed by the Lord’s divine form during his incarnation as Ram that they wished to be very near to him and enjoy the privilege of his close company with an unrestricted access to him, the benefit they were denied during the Lord’s incarnation as Ram. At this request, Vishnu granted them their wish and promised them that during his next incarnation as Lord Krishna they would have this good fortune. This fact is revealed in verse nos. 1-2 of the present Upanishad.

The rest of the Upanishad is dedicated to explain the divine form of Krishna. It explains how Lord Krishna, along with his different companions as well as opponents, symbolized the various aspects of the Supreme Being alongside the auspicious and righteous aspects of creation as well as those aspects that are opposed to auspiciousness and righteousness. It establishes that Lord Krishna is none but Lord Vishnu in a visible human form. It stresses that a person who knows this secret and worships the Lord as such is able to get the reward that is equivalent to going to all pilgrim sites as well as obtain liberation and deliverance from this gross body and this entrapping world.

This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Krishna, and therefore supplements and compliments the Gopal Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter no. 27 of this volume. The story of Lord Krishna's incarnation is however described in detail in the Bhagvat Maha Puran, in its 10th Skandha or Canto. Other sources are the Harivansha Puran in its section called Vishnu-parva, and in the Vishnu Puran in its 5th section.

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. When the great Gods saw the divine, the most auspicious and the extremely charming form of Lord Vishnu (in his incarnation as Lord Ram), the like of which did not or would never exist anywhere in this creation, they were dumbfounded, absolutely astonished and completely overwhelmed by it. They said to the Lord (Vishnu, who had incarnated as Lord Ram), 'Oh Lord! We did not have any wish to live on this earth because we do not like it, but it was the once-in-a-lifetime attraction of having a chance to embrace (see, come close to and establish a direct connect with) your divine form that we gave our consent when Brahma, the creator, requested us to take birth in this world. Hence, we want to embrace you.'

[These Gods had manifested themselves as the different companions of Lord Ram to fulfill his mission to eliminate the evil demonic forces on earth led by their king Ravana of Lanka. This entire legendary story is narrated in the epic called 'Ramayana' of which several versions are available.]

[Lord Vishnu replied--] 'All of you would embrace me (i.e. come very close to me and play with me) in my next incarnation (as Lord Krishna).'

[Like the Gods, the sages and seers too requested Lord Vishnu—] 'Make us milkmaids and cowherd boys in that incarnation(of Krishna) so that are wish to embrace you (i.e. to be very close to you and have unrestricted access to you) can be fulfilled. We gladly accept to adopt any form of a body that gives us a chance to come in direct contact with your divine form.' (1).

2. Hearing this earnest prayer of Rudra and other Gods, the Lord (Vishnu) replied, 'Oh Gods! I shall definitely give you a chance to touch my divine form and derive spiritual bliss from it. I shall certainly fulfill your desire.' (2).

3. All the Gods were ecstatic and overjoyed on this assurance of the Lord. They exclaimed, 'We are contented and fulfilled.'

Soon, all the Gods presented themselves to serve the Lord during his incarnation as Krishna. [That is, they manifested as different cowherd boys and milkmaids of Vrindavan during Lord Vishnu's incarnation on earth as Krishna.]

The Lord's own form that was an embodiment of bliss and happiness had revealed its self in its fractional form as Nanda, the head of the cowherd community (of Vrindavan).

The personified form of Mukti (liberation and deliverance) revealed herself as his consort named Yashodaa (3).

4-5. Maya (the dynamic power of the Supreme Being to create delusions) is said to be of three kinds—viz. Satvic, Rajsic and Tamasic depending upon the ratio of the three Gunas that is dominant in any one of its three aspects. Out of these, the Satvic Maya is said to be the foremost and the first one, the Rajsic the second one, and Tamsic the third and the lowest one.

The Satvic Maya is the dominant character of Lord Shiva, also known as Rudra, who is the most ardent and the wisest devotee of the Lord. [This is why Lord Shiva is also known as Mahadeva, the Great God. In spite of his cosmic role as being the ruthless and uncompromising concluder of creation, he is known to be of an exemplary calm disposition and peaceful temperament, submerged always in contemplation and meditation. Sata Guna inculcates the great virtues of renunciation and enlightenment in the entity that possesses it, so Shiva is the most dispassionate and enlightened of all the Gods. This makes him the patron deity of ascetics.]

Brahma, the creator, has Rajsic Maya as the dominant character. [Raja Guna is concerned with creation and constant involvement in it. This is the function of Brahma.]

The demons had the Tamasic Maya as the dominant character. [Tama Guna creates the tendency to be evil and sinful, characters unique to the demons.]

Thus, Maya is said to be of three kinds, and since the entire creation is a product of Maya it too has these three characteristics in it.

Besides these three forms there is the Maya which is the primary form of Maya from which these three have evolved. This primary Maya is directly related to Lord Vishnu, hence called the 'Vaishnavi Maya'. It is sort of the parent of all the other forms of Maya. It is so powerful and so strong that no one can ever defeat it; not even Brahma the creator could overcome it. [This is the reason why Brahma, though being the creator of the Vedas—which are supposed to be a repository of all knowledge in creation—could not comprehend who Narayan or Vishnu was. This fact is amply clear in Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad in which Narayan himself taught the creator the truth of his (Narayan's) divine Self.] (4-5).

6. This Vaishnavi Maya that is worshipped by the Gods and is directly a part of the supreme Brahm is the one that revealed its self as Devaki.

The Vedas revealed themselves as Vasudeo, the husband of Devaki. These Vedas constantly worship me and sing hymns in my honour who is the complete Divinity.

The object of worship and adoration by the Vedas is the supreme transcendental Brahm, and it is this Brahm that had revealed himself as Krishna¹ and his elder brother Balraam (6).

[Note—¹The story of Lord Krishna appears in detail in the Bhagvat Maha Puran, in its 10th Skandha or Canto. Other sources are the Harivansha Puran in its section called Visnu-parva, and in the Vishnu Puran in its 5th section.]

7. This personified form of the supreme, transcendental and divine Brahm that is the eternal ‘truth’ and the essence of the Vedas is the one who had revealed it’s self on this earth in a personal form (as Krishna), and is also the one who played around with milkmaids and cowherd-boys in Vrindavan (7).

8. The hymns of the Vedas took a personified form and revealed themselves as the milkmaids and cows of Lord Krishna.

[Refer to verse no. 13 of the present Krishna Upanishad, and also to the Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 27 which appears as section 2 of Chapter 27 of this volume.]

Brahma had revealed himself as the lock of Krishna’s curly hairs, while Lord Rudra (Shiva) formed his flute.

The Sagosur (i.e. Indra, the king of Gods) had revealed himself as the ‘Sring’ (a musical instrument known as the ‘horn’ as it is made from the horn of an animal). (8).

9. The heavenly forest of Vaikunth (the divine abode of Vishnu in the heaven) had revealed it’s self as Gokul (where Lord Krishna was born).

The numerous trees in this Gokul stand for the uncountable sages, seers, hermits and ascetics who are doing Tapa (austerity, penance and other stern religious duties)¹.

The numerous faults and negative qualities in this creation represented by Krodh (anger) and Lobha (greed) had manifested themselves as demons and their kith and kin. These negative qualities are eliminated in the Kali Yug (the present era of the four-era cycle) by merely invoking the name of Krishna (9).

[Note—¹The various sages and other holy souls transformed themselves as trees to have proximity with the Lord when he took up his residence on this earth as Lord Krishna in Gokul. When one does severe ‘Tapa’, he is supposed to remain immobile like the trees, hence the symbolism is most appropriate here.

We have seen earlier in verse no. 1 that the sages and seers had left the choice of what form they could take, or the type of body in which they would be born upon the Lord. So, while some became milkmaids and cowherd boys, some became trees. Perhaps those sages and seers who were aged, those ascetics who did not like much physical movement or playing around, and rather preferred remaining submerged in meditation and contemplation, or those who had reached higher echelons of Samadhi where physical closeness with the Lord was inconsequential, were the ones who had turned themselves as trees.

It can also be said that these trees represented those great sages, seers, hermits and ascetics who had reached that transcendental state of super-consciousness which generated such strong pull—like the gravitational pull of a heavy planet or the magnetic pull of a strong magnet—that the subtle cosmic Consciousness embodied in the form of Lord Krishna got pulled towards them like so many cosmic bodies get pulled towards the heavy planet or so many pieces of iron get attracted to a heavy piece of magnet.

The Gopis and cowherd boys represented those sages and seers who were at different levels of spiritual awakening and spiritual achievement while pursuing their spiritual goals in life, they had covered different milestones in their spiritual paths but had yet to reach the pinnacle or the citadel of enlightenment when they no longer had to pursue their spiritual dreams any longer. They had different teachers, followed different paths and adopted a variety of means to find spiritual Mukti (freedom) and know about the ‘Absolute Truth’ known as Brahm; they were still in the process of

acquiring true wisdom and enlightenment. That is why the Gopis and the boys of Vrindavan ran behind Krishna, had different ideas of him, and looked at him with different emotions and views.

On the other hand, the ‘trees of Vrindavan’ represented those elderly ascetics and hermits who were steadfast and robust in their spiritual convictions, who had already achieved their spiritual goal in life, and who preferred to remain steady in doing Tapa (austerity, penance and sufferance), Yoga (meditation), Dhyan (contemplation) and Samadhi (state of transcendental existence which is like a trance). This made them literally ‘immobile’ as they remain steady and rooted firmly in their beliefs and faiths like the trees as compared to other spiritual aspirants who ran behind pursuing scriptural study or seeking guidance from learned teachers or visiting pilgrim sites in search of salvation which always eluded them. The term ‘immobility’ is a figure of speech and a metaphoric way of saying that such ascetics and hermits did not have to search for the ‘Truth’ any longer, for this ‘Truth’ came to them by its own self. When they became ‘trees’ they remained as rooted in their beliefs and convictions, as engrossed in meditation and contemplation which made them immobile as they were in their earlier lives. We can deduce that they continued to do Tapa and Yoga even when they assumed the body of a tree. So, the ‘spiritual Truth’ in the form of Krishna voluntarily came to them instead of them searching for it in this gross world like the Gopis and the cowherd boys symbolically did while they followed Krishna wherever the Lord went.

These are some of the obvious reasons why they became ‘trees’ and why Lord Krishna himself came to roam in their vicinity as compared to the case of the Gopis and cowherd boys who came to Krishna instead of the Lord going to them! The difference between the two situations is very clear and stark.

We can safely surmise that the ‘trees’ represented the enlightened beings of an earlier era, while the ‘milkmaids’ and the ‘cowherds’ symbolized those who were yet not up to the spiritual mark. This also explains why the Gopis had doubts about the real form and divine nature of Lord Krishna as narrated in the Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad.]

10. The supreme Lord known as Hari (Vishnu) had revealed himself in the form of Gopal (Krishna).

This mortal world is trapped in the delusions created by Maya, so it is very difficult for it to comprehend the maverick tricks played by Krishna in this world (10).

11. The effects of Maya are so overwhelming that even the Gods are not spared from them. It is this Maya that compelled Brahma to become a lock of curly hairs on Krishna’s head, and Shiva to become a flute. Say, how can an ordinary mortal creature ever expect to fathom (comprehend, know, understand) this Maya? (11).

12. Surely, the strength of wisdom, sagacity and erudition that the Gods inherently possess, and of which they are proud, has been trounced by the overriding power of Maya of the Lord.

Seshnath (the legendary serpent on whose coiled body Vishnu reclines on the surface of the celestial ocean known as Kshir-sagar) had revealed himself as Balraam. [During the incarnation of Vishnu as Lord Ram, this Seshnath had accompanied the Lord as his younger brother Laxman.]

The supreme transcendental Lord (Vishnu) had revealed himself as Krishna (12).

13. The sixteen thousand one hundred eight consorts of Krishna headed by the chief consort named Rukmini represent the numerous hymns of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

The countless milkmaids and cowherd-boys of Vrindavan who accompanied Krishna on earth too represent the hymns of the Vedas (13).

[Note—Refer verse no. 8 of this Upanishad and its accompanying note.]

14. The negative quality of ‘Dwesh’ (enmity, malice, ill-will) had manifested as the demon named Chaanur Malla, the negative quality of ‘Matsarya’ (jealously and envy that lead to anger and wrath) revealed it’s self as the invincible Mushtik, the negative quality of ‘Darpa’ (false pride, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, conceit, rashness, boastfulness, false sense of grandiose) had become the elephant known as Kuvalyaapeed, and the negative quality of ‘Garva’ (vanity, self-praise, haughtiness, arrogance, pride, ego, self-righteousness, self-importance) had come to become the demon Vakasur who could fly in the sky. [The symbolism here is very evident—when a person becomes haughty he is prone to talk beyond his means, which is expressed by saying that he is flying in the air or building castles in the air.] (14).

15. The auspicious and noble virtue known as ‘Daya’ (mercy and compassion) revealed it’s self as mother Rohini, while Mother Earth became Satyabhama.

The great horrors and torments of creation personified themselves as the demon named Aghaasur, while the Kali-Yug itself became the king of demons known as Kansha (15).

16. Lord Krishna’s great humble friend of childhood known as Sudama personified the auspicious virtue of ‘Sham’ (tranquility, bliss, self control over the senses, equanimity, forgiveness and tolerance).

Akrur represented the glorious virtue of ‘Satya’ (truthfulness), and Udbhav symbolized the noble virtue of ‘Dam’ (which is akin to the virtue of Sham, meaning self-restraint and control over natural urges).

Lord Krishna’s famous Conch is a personified form of Lord Vishnu, and since the conch is said to be brother of Laxmi (as both had emerged from the ocean at the time of its churning by the Gods and the demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternity and bliss) it is also a manifestation of Goddess Laxmi (16).

17. This Conch was produced from the Kshir-sagar, the celestial ocean of milk, and its sound is as resounding and awe-inspiring as the grave rumble and thunder of dark clouds in the sky.

The numerous pots and pitchers of milk and curd that Krishna had broken in his childhood days (while playing around in Vrindavan) represented the earthly flow of the Kshir-sagar, the celestial ocean of milk on which Vishnu had eternally reclined before coming down on earth as Krishna.

[In other words, Krishna had recreated the celestial ‘Kshir-sagar’ on earth in a symbolic manner by making milk and curd flow on earth by breaking the vessels in which they were kept. This ‘breaking of the vessels to release the milk and curd’ has another connotation—it signifies that only when a person breaks free from pre-set mental conditions, only when he breaks free from emotional obstructions and demolishes artificial boundaries created by this gross world and the equally gross body, only when he overcomes his imaginary inhibitions and worthless reservations, and instead lets himself go free like a bird, would he be able to taste the nectar of

freedom and deliverance. It is only then that he can truly enjoy the bliss that comes with realisation of the 'truth' and spiritual enlightenment. Otherwise he would remain bogged down for life in the quagmire of delusions and entanglements so characteristic of this mortal world of material objects.

By breaking the pots and allowing the milk, the butter and the curd to flow freely on earth, or sharing their hoarded stock with his friends, Lord Krishna gave the following signals—that he has come to let the rewards of Dharma (i.e. the benefits of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety and nobility) flow freely on this earth, to make them easily available to those who follow the right path shown by him, and to unlock the gates of salvation and emancipation so that even the ordinary masses can have access to them. The Lord always shared the milk, the butter and the curd with his cowherd friends to indicate that he has come to spread happiness, cheer and joy to all the creatures who decide to follow him, and to indicate that one must share all goodness and treasures of this world with his brethren. Goodness and joy must not be hoarded and locked in; the world must be made a prosperous and a joyous place to live with abundance of prosperity and wealth as well as robust health and nourishment for all as symbolized by the milk, curd and butter let loose by Krishna.] (17).

18. When Krishna played around in Vrindavan—playfully kicking around, stomping his feet, jumping and rolling over in the milk, butter and curd that spilled over from overturned or broken pots and pitchers, giggling gleefully while he threw them around, splattering the whole surrounding place with these things, and getting himself soaked, smeared and smudged all over the body in the process—he was actually re-enacting in this world his cosmic experience as Lord Vishnu who was splattered and drenched all over by the spray of celestial milk from the heaving waves of the ocean of milk, known as the Kshir-sagar, as it splashed against the colossus body of the Seshnath, the legendary celestial serpent on whose coiled body the Lord reclined before the creation came into being.

The Lord is ever-ready to trounce the wicked and the evil, and equally ever-ready to protect the holy, the pious and the humble creatures (18).

19. Lord Krishna had incarnated as a human being to show unbound benevolence and munificence upon all the mortal creatures, as well as to protect and uphold the laws of Dharma (auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety) that has its origin in him. [This is because the Lord, in his cosmic role as the Supreme Being, is the one who had himself established Dharma, and therefore it is his duty and obligation to protect it just like he protects the rest of his subjects.]

The powerful Chakra (serrated discus) that was created by Mahakaal (the great God of Death; Lord Shiva) to give as a gift to Lord Hari (Vishnu) is held by Krishna in his hand. This discus is also a representative of Brahm, the Supreme Being (19).

20. The Vayu (the Wind God) revealed himself as the garland known as Vijayanti that is worn by the Lord.

Dharma assumed the form of the whisk.

The Khanga (sword), which is as radiant and dazzling as a fiercely burning fire, was created by Maheshwar (Lord Shiva). (20).

21. The ancient sage known as Kashyap became the pestle in the household (of Krishna's father Nanda). Mother Aditi (the mother of Gods) revealed herself as the

rope (that was once used to tie Lord Krishna to the pestle when he was being too naughty).

The various Siddhis (mystical powers) revealed themselves as the Lord's conch and discus.

The Bindu (the dot) that is placed on the top of Sanskrit letters as their crown-jewel is represented by the sky which acts as the celestial umbrella or parasol on the head of Krishna (21).

22. All the divine Gods and their various forms that are described by great sages and seers, and which are worshipped in various forms by all the ordinary creatures and the wise ones, find their only support and succour in Lord Krishna.

All these divine Gods and their forms are indeed the form of Krishna in their individual forms; it is Lord Krishna who is being worshipped and honoured in their forms—there is no doubt about it. [This is in consonance with the doctrine that all the Gods are actually the various manifestations of the same Brahm who has assumed their forms to carry out different roles and functions in the scheme of creation.] (22).

23. The Gadaa (mace) in the hand of the Lord is the destroyer of all enemies and is a personified form of Kaalikaa, the goddess of war and of destruction of enemies.

The Vaishnavi Maya (the primary form of Maya) has revealed itself as the bow known as Shaarang held by Lord Krishna (because this particular bow is held only by Lord Vishnu of whom Krishna is an incarnation).

The Kaal, the God of death, has revealed himself as the other bow held by the Lord (23).

[Note—It is to be noted here that two bows are mentioned. One is the bow held by Vishnu, and the other is the one held by Krishna. Since Krishna is a revelation of Vishnu it is to be surmised that the two bows are also the same, the second one being a visible manifestation of the celestial bow known as Shaarang.

The bow here is depicted as a personification of Death for obvious reasons—bow is used in battles, and it kills. Bow is never used to give birth to new life, and hence its depiction as an embodiment of 'death' is appropriate.]

24. The Padma (lotus) that represents the seed from which the entire mortal world emerged is held playfully by the Lord in his hands. [This Lotus represents the entire mortal and visible world because it is from it that Brahma, the creator, has first emerged, and who sub-sequentially gave birth to this creation, including the earth which acts as the fertile ground where the creation grew and developed into its present form. By holding this Lotus in his hand the Lord signifies that he has full control over this world; the world is virtually 'in his hands, under his command'.]

Garud, the legendary vehicle of Lord Vishnu, took up the form of the Indian Fig tree known as Bhandir.

The celestial sage Narad had revealed himself as Sudama, the humble childhood friend of Krishna (24).

25. The virtue of Bhakti (devotion for the Lord) has manifested as Vrindaa.

Buddhi (intellect) that acts as the light that shows the correct path to all the living beings had revealed it's self as the Lord's deeds and actions.

The different entities which accompanied the Vibho (the Lord who is almighty, all-pervading and supreme; Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Krishna) during his sojourn on earth are entirely one with the Lord; neither are these entities separate from him nor is he separate from them. [This statement supports the non-dual

view of the Upanishads that everything is Brahm personified. It is the same Atma that lives in various bodies in this creation.] (25).

26. When the Lord (Vishnu) revealed himself upon earth (as Krishna), he had brought along with him all the inhabitants of his divine abode known as Vaikunth, the heaven (26).

27. Those who are well acquainted with this secret are the ones who are known as learned and wise; they are eligible to receive all the fruits that come with such divine knowledge.

They are able to find freedom from the shackling effect of the mortal body, and consequentially find spiritual liberation and deliverance or spiritual emancipation and salvation (called Mukti or Moksha). This is what this Upanishad says. Amen! (27).

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----Shanti Paath----

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Chapter 29

Hayagriva Upanishad/ Hayagrivo-panishad

This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Hayagriva, the horse-headed incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The word ‘Hayagriva’ has two parts—‘Haya’ means a horse, and ‘Griva’ means a neck or head.

This Upanishad was revealed to sage Narad by the creator Brahma when the sage requested him to preach Brahm Vidya, the knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being.

The Upanishad lists a number of Mantras of Lord Hayagriva, and emphasizes in its concluding verses the fact that the primary form of Mantras that were offered by the Gods to the Supreme Being were in the form of musical sounds resembling the neighing of a horse, instead of articulated words (verse no. 16-17). This is the genesis of the Beej Mantras of any given hymn.

When Brahm revealed it's self as Lord Hayagriva, the latter had ‘neighed’ to speak to the Gods, because a horse neighs and does not use words to speak. In other words, the primary form of all knowledge that was revealed in this creation was in the form of mere sound. This endorses the view that the cosmic sound known as Naad, and its monosyllabic conceptualization as the word OM is the basic root of all creation and the seed of all knowledge that is encapsulated in various languages.

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. Salutations to Lord Hari who is the supreme Brahm represented by the word OM! Once, the celestial sage Narad¹ approached the creator Brahma and requested him, 'Lord, I want to learn about Brahm-Vidya², the knowledge pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. This is an excellent knowledge which helps the knower to get rid of all his sins and their accumulated negative effects very soon. The person who reads and studies this knowledge of Brahm Vidya so as to become acquainted with its intricacies is able to achieve great acclaim, majesty and fame in this world.' (1).

[Note—¹Sage Narad—A detailed note on sage Narad is given in Canto 1, verse no. 1 of Chapter 8 named 'Narad Parivrajak Upanishad' of this volume. This particular Upanishad is regarded as the reference book for all Sanyasis.

²The concept of *Brahm Vidya* has been the chief subject of discussion of a number of Upanishads, especially the following:--

(a) Krishna Yajur Veda's = Kaivalya Upanishad, Brahm Upanishad, Panch Brahm Upanishad, Akchyu Upanishad, Tejobindu Upanishad, Varaaha Upanishad, Cantos 1-5, and Brahm Vidya Upanishad.

(b) Atharva Veda's = Mundak Upanishad, Mundak (Canto) 1, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 2, section 1; Mundak (Canto) 3, section 1-2; Shandilya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3; Atma Upanishad; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 4; Canto 4, paragraph no. 1; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 17-57; Canto 2, verse no. 37; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph no. 19.

(c) Sam Veda's = Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 7-8; Keno-panishad; Avyakta Upanishad.

(d) Shukla Yajur Veda's = Brihad Aranyak Upanishad; Isha Vasya Upanishad, Adhyatma Upanishad. (e) Rig Veda's Mudgal Upanishad; Atma Prabodh Upanishad.

The Atharva Veda's *Bhasma Jabal Upanishad*, Canto 2, paragraph no. 19 defines succinctly what constitutes 'Brahm Vidya'.]

2. Brahma replied, 'If one knows certain hymns and Mantras¹ (esoteric and mystical divine formulas in the form of letters, monosyllables, words, phrases or hymns etc.) of which the Lord known as Hayagriva² is the patron deity, then certainly such a person is deemed to have the knowledge of (and be well acquainted with) the Vedas, the Dharmashatras (various scriptures that teach the doctrines and tenets of Dharma or righteousness, auspiciousness, probity and propriety), Itihasas (ancient Hindu histories), and the Purans (Hindu mythological histories).

Indeed such a person is able to achieve great fame and acclaim besides acquiring immense mystical powers (2).

[Note—¹The hymns dedicated to Lord Hayagriva are narrated in verse nos. 3-5, and the Lord's Mantra is given in verse no. 8.

²Lord *Hayagriva* is the horse-headed incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The word 'Hayagriva' has two parts—'Haya' means a horse, and 'Griva' means a neck. Hence, the Lord with the neck, and therefore the head of a horse is known as Hayagriva.

There are two main interpretations of this incarnation of Lord Vishnu. According to one, when sage Yagyavalkya was deprived of the knowledge of the Yajur Veda due to the curse of his Guru Vaishampaayana, he went and did severe Tapa (austerity and penance) to please the Sun God. Pleased, the Sun God taught him another version of the same Veda by assuming the form of a deity with the head of a horse. Since the Sun is a visible manifestation of the Viraat Purush, one of the more subtle forms of Lord Vishnu, it was actually Lord Vishnu himself who had taught the sage this Veda. Hence, Lord Hayagriva is regarded as the Lord of knowledge and learning, and is given the same respect as shown to Goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of learning and wisdom.

According to another story, there was a demon with the head of a horse, and he was therefore called Hayagriva—the horse-headed one. He was the son of Diti, the mother of demons. He did severe Tapa (austerity and penance) on the banks of the river Saraswati and offered his worship to Goddess Jagdambika (Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva and the cosmic Mother). The Goddess was extremely pleased by his severe Tapa and asked for a boon, upon which Hayagriva requested immortality. The Goddess told him that all who are born must die, so this grant was practically not feasible. She asked him to ask something else. The demon was cunning, so he re-phrased his request and asked that he be killed by someone who was exactly like him. He thought that since no two living beings are alike, he would indirectly get immortality. The Goddess granted him his desired boon. Thus armed, he let loose terror in the world, thinking that no one would now be able to kill him.

To get rid of him the Gods designed a strategy whereby Lord Vishnu lost his original head and was grafted with the head of a horse by the medicine men of the Gods named Ashvini Kumars. They are the twin sons of the Sun God. Thus, Vishnu also became a 'Hayagriva'. It was in this form that the Lord slayed the demon. This story appears in Devibhagwat, 1/5.

According to the third story, the Vedas had been stolen by two demons named Madhu and Kaitav who had hidden them in the eastern ocean. Lord Vishnu had assumed the form of Hayagriva to kill them and restore the Vedas.

The legend about the birth of these demon says that at the time Brahma the creator emerged atop a thousand-petal lotus that sprouted from the navel of Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush, two drops of water symbolising the two Gunas (qualities) of Raja and Tama (the medium and the lowest type of qualities) were present on one of the petals on which Brahma sat. Madhu was born from the drop of Raja Guna, and Kaitav from the drop of water representing Tama Guna.

Once they went up to the heaven and saw the Vedas in all their glorious form placed alongside Brahma who was engaged in the process of creation. The duo immediately stole the Vedas and hid them under the water of the eastern ocean. Brahma was confounded and requested Lord Vishnu to retrieve them as the Vedas were the former's eyes as they contained all the knowledge needed for all the aspects of creation. So Vishnu appeared as a deity with a head of a horse—i.e. as Hayagriva. The heaven was his head, the rays of the Sun were his glistening hairs, the sky and the underworld were his ears, the earth was his forehead, the river Ganges and Saraswati were the two halves of his chest, the oceans were his thighs, the Sun and the Moon were his eyes, dusk was his nostril, OM was his ornament, electric was his tongue, the Pittars (Spirits of dead ancestors) were his teeth, the Brahma Loka was his lip, and Kalratri (the night of the doomsday) was his neck.

Lord entered the ocean and went to the ocean bed, the nether world called the 'Patal Loka'. There, he began to neigh melodiously, singing the hymns of the Sam Veda. The two demons were so enchanted by this singing that they came out to hear it. Lord Hayagriva got an opportunity and he immediately took the Vedas and gave them to Brahma. After their restoration, he went back to the ocean and lived there for some time.

When the demons reached the place from where they had heard the sweet singing emanating, they found no one. So they got suspicious and rushed back to where they had concealed the Vedas to find them missing. Then they began frantically to search for the Vedas as well as the miscreant who removed the scriptures from the hiding place. They reached the surface of the ocean and found Lord Vishnu peacefully reclined on the bedstead of the celestial serpent named Sheshnath. They assumed that certainly the Lord was the one who had taken away the Vedas. They shouted and caused so much raucous that Lord Vishnu woke up from his cosmic sleep, and then there ensued a battle between the Lord and the demons which lasted for five thousand years.

Pleased by their valour and ardour, Vishnu asked them to request for a grant of a boon. The haughty demons retorted and sneered at the Lord, asking the latter to ask for a boon instead. The Lord asked that they be killed at his hands. [Markandey Puran, 81/74.] Taken aback, the demons said that they were also entitled for a boon as promised by the Lord himself. The Lord granted them permission to ask, and they requested that they be killed at a place where the earth was not submerged in water. [Markandey Puran, 81/76.] Vishnu immediately spread his thighs on the surface of the ocean, and deluded by the Lord's Maya the demons thought that dry earth has emerged from the ocean. Aside of this, they also found in this happening a chance of their own salvation and so willingly put their heads on it. Vishnu invoked his Sudarshan Chakra (the sharp weapon of Vishnu which is like a circular saw) to chop off their heads. This episode is described in detail in the Markandey Puran, Chapter 81.

Perhaps this episode describes how the continents and islands came into being during the process of creation.

Iconographically, Lord Hayagriva is depicted as having a human body and the head of a horse. This incarnation resembles the Nrisingh incarnation when the Lord had assumed a body whose lower part was that of human, and the upper part that of a lion.]

3. The hymns dedicated to Lord Hayagriva are the following—‘The Lord who is manifested as the entire ‘Vishwa’ (world) and is known in the form of the visible world, the Lord who is an image of consciousness, enlightenment and bliss, the Lord who is the patron deity of all knowledge (i.e. without whose blessings no knowledge can be acquired, and who is a treasury of knowledge himself) is the Lord known as Hayagriva. I repeatedly bow before Lord Hayagriva with the greatest of reverence, faith and sincerity, and I pay my obeisance to the Lord by saying Swaha repeatedly (3).

4. The Lord (Hayagriva) who had retrieved the Vedas stolen by the demons (Madhu and Kaitav—see note of verse no. 2), the Lord who has a majestic and magnificent form with the head of a horse, the Lord whose cosmic form is represented by the ethereal word OM (i.e. who is a manifestation of Pranav or Brahm, the Supreme Being), and whose divine form representing knowledge is manifested in the form of the Vedas (i.e. who is a manifested form of the Vedas)—I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to this Lord known as Hayagriva. I also offer my oblations to him by saying Swaha repeatedly (4).

5. The Lord who is a personified form of ‘Udgit’ (literally ‘a classical form of song’ representing the Sam Veda, so-called because this Veda is sung melodiously, incorporating all the finer tones and notes of music as compared to the other Vedas which are chanted differently in a monotone), the Lord who represents Pranav (the ethereal word OM that itself represents Brahm), the Lord who is the patron deity and the presiding Lord of all letters and sounds (and hence of language, the spoken word and all sorts of knowledge because the latter is taught and learnt by the medium of words and the spoken language), the Lord who is a personified form of all the Vedas (and not merely the Sam Veda), the Lord who is so esoteric, mysterious and enigmatic that he is beyond the reach of comprehension, imagination and thoughts, the Lord who is all-knowing and omniscient as he is an image of wisdom and enlightenment—I am delighted to become enlightened about this Lord known as Hayagriva, and I repeatedly bow most reverentially and pay my sincere obeisance to Lord Hayagriva. I also offer my oblations to him by saying Swaha repeatedly.’ (5).

6. This Mantra (narrated in verse nos. 3-5) has Brahma (the creator), sage Atri, Ravi, also known as Savita (the splendid Sun God), and sage Bhargava as its 'Rishis'. [The 'Rishi' of a Mantra is the first enlightened soul, whether a God or a great ancient sage or seer, who had first visualized, conceptualized or formulated any given Mantra. In the case of the Mantra of Lord Hayagriva, they were Brahma, Sun God, Atri and Bhargava.]

The 'Chandas' (style of composition of hymns) in which this Mantra was composed are Gayatri, Trishtup and Anushtup. [The *Gayatri Chanda* has 24 letters and syllables in all which are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$. The *Trishtup Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines in which each line has 11 letters; $11 \times 4 = 44$ letters in all. The *Anushtup Chanda* is a verse with 4 lines, each line having 8 letters = total 32 letters. It was first conceived by an ancient sage named Anustuv, hence it bears his name.]

The 'Devta' (patron deity to whom the particular Mantra is dedicated) of this Mantra is obviously Lord Hayagriva.

The 'Beej Mantra' (the seed letter from which this Mantra is formulated) is 'Lohau' (or 'Hrisau').

The 'Shakti' of this Mantra (i.e. the divine mystical powers that this Mantra inherently possesses) is represented by the eclectic expression 'So-a-Ham'. [The Shakti is that aspect of the Mantra which gives it its dynamism and energy. In the present case, the expression 'So-a-Ham' enables the worshipper of Lord Hayagriva to attain self-realisation as this is the ultimate fruit of all spiritual endeavours. The expression is one of the great sayings or Maha-Vakyas of the Vedas. It literally means 'That supreme essence is me'. This 'me' refers to the Atma of a self-realised spiritual aspirant who has understood the metaphysical truth that the Atma of the individual is an image or a microcosmic form of the cosmic Atma known as Brahm which is the Absolute Truth in creation. The Atma as well as the Brahm are the same Consciousness existing in two planes—the former at the microcosmic level, and the latter at the macrocosmic level.]

In the eclectic Mantra 'So-a-Ham', the word 'So'— meaning 'that'—refers to the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm, while the word 'Ham'—meaning 'me'—refers to the spiritual seeker who has realised the 'truth of his Atma and of this own self' as being the same cosmic Consciousness that resides in his gross body. So in essence, the self-realised person honestly declares that 'he is a personified form of Brahm'.]

The 'Kilaks' of this Mantra are the same as the Beej (seed) Mantra 'Lohau' (or 'Hrisau').

It is invoked for the dual purpose of enjoying worldly comforts and pleasures as well as for obtaining liberation and deliverance from this world.

The 'Anga Nyas' (consecrating different parts of the body of the worshipper by invoking the powers of the Mantra) is done by saying the three letters of the Mantra of Brahm, which is the Mantra 'OM'. These three letters of OM are 'A', 'U' and 'M'¹. [It ought to be remembered here that it has been clearly said before that Lord Hayagriva is a personified form of OM or Pranav. Hence, by doing Anga Nyas with OM the worshipper virtually consecrates his body with the purity and holiness of the Lord himself.] (6).

[Note—¹The concept of OM is a subject matter of intense discussion and elucidation in the field of metaphysics, and a chain of Upanishads have very nicely described it.]

7. Now, Dhyān (how to do meditation and contemplation, and focusing one's mind and sub-conscious on the divine Being known as Hayagriva) is being described.

'Lord Hayagriva's divine form holds a Shankha (conch), a Chakra (discus, the circular saw-like weapon held by Vishnu), and a book (representing the Vedas and symbolizing knowledge). His hands are held in a special posture known as Maha-Mudra. The Lord has four arms. [This is because Lord Hayagriva is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the second of the Trinity Gods and the sustainer and protector of creation. The Shankha and the Chakra as well as the four arms are trademarks of Vishnu as depicted in the Purans and in iconography.]

I worship and meditate upon Lord Hayagriva's divine form which is as beautiful as the full Moon.' (7).

8. [Now, the esoteric Mantra of Lord Hayagriva that is used in formal worship and which has various Beej Mantras is being narrated.]

The esoteric form of Mantra dedicated to Lord Hayagriva is constructed as follows—'OM' and 'Sri' are the first two letters. 'Lohau' (or 'Hrisau') is the third letter. [See verse no. 6 also.] 'OM Namo Bhagwate' is the next part of the Mantra having seven letters. [OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te = 7.] 'Hayagriva' is the next part consisting of five letters. [Ha + Ya + Ga + Ri + Va = 5.] 'Vishnava' is the next component having three letters. [Vi + Shna + Va = 3.] 'Mahayam Medhaam Pragyāam' is the next part having six letters. [Ma + Hayam + Me + Dhaam + Pra + Gyaam = 6.] And finally, the concluding part consists of the words 'Prayachha Swaha' which has five letters. [Pra + Pa + Chha + Swa + Ha = 5.]

The Lord referred to in this Mantra corresponds to the Turiya state of Consciousness. In other words, a spiritual aspirant who worships the Lord, who meditates upon him and contemplates upon the Lord with this Mantra attains the Turiya state of exalted existence.

Therefore, the full Mantra becomes 'OM Sri Lohau (or 'Hrisau') OM Namo Bhagwate Hayagriva Vishnava Mahayam Medhaam Pragyāam Prayachha Swaha'. [It briefly means 'Salutations to Brahm and his cosmic Shakti represented by OM and Sri respectively. The Beej Mantra for this combination revealed as Lord Hayagriva is Lohau or Hrisau. OM Salutations! I bow before the Lord known as Hayagriva who is none but Lord Vishnu. I am fully enlightened and aware of this fact. With this knowledge and wisdom, I offer my oblations to the Lord.'](8).

9. [Now, the second Mantra of Lord Hayagriva is being narrated.]

'OM' and 'Sri' are the first two letters. 'Lohau' (or 'Hrisau') is the third letter. [See verse no. 8 also.] 'Aim Aim Mai' are the three letters of the next part of the Mantra. 'Klim/Klin(g) Klim/Klin(g)' are the two letters of the next part. 'Sauha Sauha' are the two letters of the next part. 'Hrim/Hrin(g)' is the one letter that forms the next component of the Mantra. 'OM Namo Bhagwate' is the next part of the Mantra having seven letters. [OM + Na + Mo + Bha + Ga + Wa + Te = 7.] 'Mahayam Medhaam Pragyāam' is the next part having six letters. [Ma + Hayam + Me + Dhaam + Pra + Gyaam = 6.] And finally, the concluding part consists of the words 'Prayachha Swaha' which has five letters. [Pra + Pa + Chha + Swa + Ha = 5.]

This is the fifth Mantra of Lord Hayagriva. [The first three Mantras are narrated in verse nos. 3-5, the fourth one is given in verse no. 8, and therefore the present one is the fifth one.]

The final shape of this Mantra is as follows—'OM Sri Lohau (or 'Hrisau') Aim Aim Mai Klim/Klin(g) Klim/Klin(g) Sauha Sauha Hrim/Hrin(g) OM Namo

Bhagwate Mahayam Medhaam Pragyam Prayachha Swaha'. [The single letters Aim, Klim, Sauha and Hrim are Beej Mantras standing respectively for Vaak or the faculty of speech, Kaam Shakti or the power of desires, the fire element, and Maya or the power of delusions. The meaning of the rest of the Mantra is narrated in verse no. 8 above. In other words, the previous Mantra is further infused with the esoteric and mystical powers of these Beej Mantras to make it more powerful and energized.] (9).

10. Now I (Brahma who is narrating this Upanishad) shall describe to you (Narad) the Brahm Vidya or the knowledge that outlines how the word Hayagriva is one and the same as the word Brahm which refers to the Supreme Being.

The word Hayagriva is based on one letter, viz 'Ha'. It is the encrypted form of the Brahm-Vidya or the knowledge pertaining to Brahm. It was given (preached or passed on) by Brahma, the creator, to Shiva. Shiva gave it to Sankarshan; Sankarshan to sage Narad; Narad to sage Veda-Vyas; and Vyas narrated it for the rest of the creation. [This is because it was sage Veda-Vyas who had classified the Vedas and extracted their spiritual philosophy in the form of the Upanishads which teach about this Brahm Vidya.]

When the three Sanskrit letters 'Ha' (as in *hut*), 'Sa' (as in *son*), and 'Ma' (as in *mother*) are merged together, we get the Beej Mantra 'Hasaum'. [There is another alternative to this, and it is the Beej Mantra 'Halaum' consisting of 'Ha', 'La' (as in *luck*) and 'Ma'.]

By meditating upon the combined form of the two letters 'Ha' and 'Sa', which forms the monosyllabic Mantra 'Hans', one is able to have access to both Laxmi and Saraswati (i.e. one attains material prosperity and well-being as well as knowledge and expertise represented by these two Goddesses respectively).

[It should be noted here that the combined form of the two letters produce the word 'Hans' which literally means a Swan. But from the metaphysical perspective, Hans refers to the pure consciousness known as the Atma that resides in the inner-self of all living beings as their truthful 'self' and which is an image of the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm. There is a chain of Upanishads that emphasis that the word 'Hans' is a divine form of Mantra that directly relates to Brahm, the Supreme Being.]¹

Those who become self-realised and enlightened by meditating and contemplating upon the twin letters 'Ha' and 'Sa' (i.e. the eclectic Mantra 'Hans') are indeed the ones who attain Videha Mukti—i.e. they obtain the final liberation and deliverance when they will not have to come back in this world to assume another body as a creature; they emancipation and salvation is final and complete.

They become so exalted that they have sway over the Dikpaals (the custodians of the world), the various Kings, the Naags (the custodians of the nether world) and the Kinnars (the custodians of the treasury of the Gods) (10).

[Note—¹Since the main thrust of the Upanishads is to ignite spiritual awakening and make the seeker see the 'Truth', they always strive to establish the fact that this 'Truth' is always the same and can be easily visualized and understood by the means of a number metaphors and instances, one of them being the 'Hans' or the divine Swan. The main objective is to establish that Vishnu, Hayagriva, Brahm, Parmatma and Atma, as well as OM, the ethereal sound representing Pranav, are the same universal divine entity known as the super transcendental Consciousness which is the Absolute Truth of creation.

Now let us examine how the concept of these three Sanskrit letters 'Ha', 'Sa' and 'Ma' fits into this picture. The word Hans has 'Ha' as its first letter, the divine Swan is called a Hans and it also has 'Ha' as the first component, and the name of Lord

Hayagriva, who is regarded as the first divine form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, to make sound, or 'speak', also has this 'Ha' as its first letter. Incidentally, the first cosmic causal body of Brahm is known as Hiranyagarbha which also has the letter 'Ha' as its first component. In the Mantra 'So-a-Ham', the second component 'Ham' refers to the living being, and the letter 'Ha' is its first part. The link is obvious—first came into being the cosmic form of Brahm as Hiranyagarbha, which transformed as Hayagriva. Since the living world came into being as a second step, the 'Ham' part stands for the living being.

Similarly, the second letter 'Sa' is also the second letter of word Hans, and is the first letter of the Mantra 'So-a-ham'. This is because Brahm, who is also given the name of Hans because of its purity and knowledge, has revealed itself as the Atma of the creature. The Upanishads have described this Atma as Hans along with Brahm. So, the second letter 'Sa' establishes a link between Brahm and the Atma of the living being.

Now we finally come to the third letter 'Ma'. This letter is the third letter of OM, the divine Mantra standing for Brahm, and symbolizes the conclusion of creation. It kind of establishes a bridge seamlessly linking the present and the future. OM represents the wide space of the sky where the Atma dissolves upon leaving the confines of the gross body of the creature. 'Ma' is also the last letter of the Mantra 'So-a-Ham' implying that once the wise and enlightened man becomes self-realised and recognizes that his 'self' is the Atma known as Hans, an epithet and an aphorism used for Brahm, he effortlessly leaves his grossness that is associated with the physical body to become sublime like these two divine entities, the Atma and Brahm. This achievement or knowledge leads to his Mukti—his liberation and deliverance from the fetters of ignorance and its attendant delusions.

For the concept of Hans (Swan), the reader should consult the following Upanishads—(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyan Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99. (b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans. (c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93. (d) Atharva Veda—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 4; Pashupata Brahm Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 4, 12-22, 26-27; Canto 2, verse nos. 1-3; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6.]

11. Those who do Japa (repetition) with this single-letter Mantra of Lord Hayagriva, i.e. the Mantra 'Hans', become so mystically empowered and authoritative that even the Sun does not violate its duties and rises at the appropriate time out of awe of him, out of respect for him.

[That is, they become as powerful as the Supreme Being himself. The Sun cannot violate the laws of Nature set by the Supreme Being, and since the worshipper of the Supreme Being also becomes as powerful as the Lord himself if he attains self-realisation, because this makes him one like the Lord himself, the Sun rises in promptly and efficiently in the allotted time so that he can offer worship to the Lord.

There is another connotation to this statement. Since the Sun is a personified splendorous form of Brahm, it keeps its words and rises in time to allow the worshipper to offer his oblations to the Lord at the correct time slotted for this purpose.

The third connotation is that he becomes as powerful and holy as the ‘fire element’ because the Sun is regarded as an eternal treasury of this element.]

This single-letter Beej Mantra of Lord Hayagriva is like a king amongst all the Mantras (11).

12. Similarly, the Beej Mantra ‘Lohaum’ also stands for Hayagriva.

The Mantras of Lord Hayagriva provide the worshipper with Amrit, i.e. he finds the elixir of bliss and eternity.

The worshipper urges Lord Hayagriva to bless him with this Amrit by saying ‘Kuru Kuru Swaha’. That is, ‘Oh Lord! Please do give me the elixir of eternity and bliss, and provide for my welfare and well-being. Please certainly do it (‘Kuru, Kuru’ is said twice to stress that the request is urgent and sincere). I am offering this oblation to you (by saying Swaha).’ [The word ‘Kuru’ repeated twice indicates stress on the request that the worshipper makes to the Lord. He pleads with the Lord not to neglect his prayers.]

For such a worshipper who does Japa with the Mantras of Lord Hayagriva, all sorts of welfare and prosperity represented by Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth), authority over the faculty of speech represented by Vaani (spoken word) and expertise in all knowledge represented by Saraswati (the Goddess of knowledge, speech and wisdom), and success in all the eight branches of Yoga become easily attainable. [The eight branches or limbs of Yoga are called ‘Ashtanga Yoga’. They have been explained in detail in the Upanishads dealing with Yoga. Briefly, these eight limbs or branches are Yam, Niyam, Aasan, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi.]

‘Let the Beej Mantra ‘Lohaum’ (refer also to verse nos. 6 and 10) representing Lord Hayagriva entitle me to have authority and control over the whole world. Let it empower me; let it certainly do it (‘Kuru, Kuru’). I offer my oblations for this purpose (by saying ‘Swaha’).’ (12).

13. If one becomes enlightened about the divine and eclectic Mantras narrated in this Upanishad, he becomes purified, sinless and holy in spite of his being unpurified, corrupt, sinful and unholy previously.

Even he who has lost his vows of Brahmacharya (i.e. he who has lost self-control over his passions and lust by becoming indulgent and promiscuous) regains his lost exalted position by the good affects of these divine Mantras.

He is freed from the sins of having contact with a woman who is not worthy of being in contact with.

He is also cleaned of the corrupting influences of having entered into a conversation with a vile and corrupted man who has fallen from his righteous path.

Even such horrendous sins as killing of a Brahmin (or any kind of violence against other creatures) are pardoned by the positive affect of these Mantras (13).

[Note—This is a standard method adopted by the Upanishads to highlight their importance. It must be understood that merely reading some Mantra cannot wash off one’s sins. The hidden meaning is to stress the power of these Mantras. They are beneficial only when the sinner is sincerely interested in atoning for his sins; they are effective only when he sincerely wishes to repent and undo what wrong he had done in the past. It is then the Upanishads are of any help to him. Habitual offenders and sinners beware, for the eclectic and pristine philosophy of the holy Upanishads is not meant for them.

Refer also to other Upanishads of the Atharva Veda, for instance For instance—Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 12; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph

no. 10; Canto 2, paragraph nos. 12, 21; Ganapti Upanishad, verse no. 17; Devi Upanishad, verse no. 32; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 13; Dattatreya Upanishad, Section 3, stanza 4; Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 39; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 3; Canto 4, verse no. 14; and Canto 6, verse nos. 8-9, 13-18; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 12.]

14. A wise, enlightened and realised person who does Japa with the Mantras of Lord Hayagriva and worships the Lord faithfully easily finds emancipation and salvation by merging his own Atma, i.e. his own 'self', with the Parmatma, i.e. the supreme Atma represented by the Supreme Being, when he leaves his mortal body upon death just like a man enters his own house without observing any formalities and without seeking anyone's permission.

[That is, such a person gets the right of way to his the liberation and deliverance of his soul upon death. He would not have to come back in this mortal world by taking birth again. This is possible because he would have merged his own Atma, which is his 'true self', with the cosmic Atma known as Brahm. This is due to the fact that Lord Hayagriva is no one else but Brahm personified.

In other words, such a worshipper finds 'Kaivalya Mukti'] (14).

15. These Mantras of Lord Hayagriva refer to the same entity that is implied in the great sayings, known as the Maha Vakya¹, of the Vedas. These Maha Vakya refer to Brahm that is supremely enlightened (Pragya) and blissful (Anand).

The first Maha Vakya is 'Tattwamasi'—i.e. that supreme essence or truth is you; the second Maha Vakya is 'Ayamatma'—i.e. that essence known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness, is my own Atma, my own 'self'; the third Maha Vakya is 'Brahm Aham'—i.e. Brahm is me; the fourth Maha Vakya is 'Aham Brahmasmi'—i.e. I am Brahm. (15).

[Note—¹Refer also to (i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad. (ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi). (iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-3, 8; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi). (iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk Rahasayo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse no. 16; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2. (v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 ('So-a-Ham'); Canto 6, paragraph no. 22 ('Twam Brahmasmi'; 'Aham Brahmasmi'; 'Twamewaaham'; 'Ahamev Twam'); Canto 8, paragraph no. 5 ('Brahmaasmi' or I am Brahm; 'Ahamasmi' or Indeed it is I/me; 'Brahmahamasmi' or I am indeed Brahm; 'Yoahamasmi' or That is I/me; 'Brahmaamashmi' or Brahm is I/me; 'Ahamevaaham' or I am indeed I/me.); Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14 (Tat Twam Asi—That Art Thou); Ram Uttar Tapaini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9-10 (So-a-Ham); Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 8 (Brahmasmi—I am Brahm personified); Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-8 ('Hans So-a-Ham'); verse no. 11 ('So-a-Hamarka'—that essence is me).]

16. [Before we narrate the next four verses, i.e. verse nos. 16-19, it is imperative to clarify certain points so that the reader can understand the finer nuances of these verses.

The best form of any Mantra has both the vowels as well as the consonants of the Sanskrit language built into it, but these are so subtle, hidden and silent that they are indiscernible to and understandable by the hearer of the Mantra. Nevertheless, the supreme Lord to whom the Mantra is offered understands the idea expressed in the Mantra. Hence, the best form of Japa (repetition) of the Mantra is that which is done continuously, without break between two letters or words, and in an indiscernible manner so much so that the person who does Japa himself loses track of what he says and becomes lost in the bliss created by the reverberations generated by the sound of the Mantra.

He communicates with the Lord in much the same way as Lord Hayagriva had 'neighed' in the heaven when he spoke to the Gods, and the way the Gods offered their prayers to him in return by singing the hymns in such a fashion that the words appeared slurred and telescoped into each other in a continuous stream of sound waves of varying pitch and tone. The words are not pronounced articulately and clearly, but in a series of nasal and throat sounds as in the case of the letters 'Ha' (as in *hut*), 'Na' (as in *nut*), 'Sa' (as in *sun*) etc. This is the classical method of saying hymns of the Vedas, the way they are done especially in the case of the Sam Veda.

It must be remembered that the primary function of letters and words or phrases is to express one's thoughts, and when extended to the Mantras to offer oblations to the Supreme Being. In its primitive form and in its most initial stage, all letters were merely in a 'sound form' that was undivided and unclassified into various letters of the vowels and consonants. In its subtlest form this sound was the un-manifest 'OM sound' of Pranav, which is the cosmic background sound in ether that is present everywhere but not easily heard by all and sundry. This ethereal sound of OM is a synonym for Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that produced the vibration in the cosmic ether that resulted in the generation of sound waves which was later conceptualized by sages and seers as the monosyllable word 'OM'. When this same un-manifest Brahm revealed itself as Hayagriva, the horse-headed divinity, the sound that the latter made was that of a horse's 'neigh'. Hence, all that was meant and understood by the word OM was also meant by this Hayagriva's neighing. Neighing of a horse has no discernible words and phrases; it is simply a long-drawn series of sound waves that have the letters 'Hi' (as in *hill*) and 'Ni' (as in *nil*; *niece*; *neither*) as the dominant sound. In between is the sound of 'Sa' (as in *hiss*) when the horse breathes.

So, when Lord Hayagriva 'neighed' in the heavens, the ideas that he expressed were understood by the Gods who represented the primary form of the forces of creation and Nature. Likewise, the Gods prayed to Lord Hayagriva also in the same way—i.e. they sang hymns in the Lord's honour which were not in clear-cut articulate language consisting of words or letters as we understand the term 'spoken language' to mean in the modern world, but in an esoteric language consisting of merely long-drawn sounds of the vowels and consonants.

Sound is generated in the throat while the articulate language is produced in the mouth. The most primitive form of sound in the cosmos is Naad represented by the word OM, and it reverberates back and forth throughout the cosmic ether. The primary form of the cosmic Consciousness had produced this Naad, and when the creation began to take shape and the need was felt for expression, this Naad crystallized in the form of various sounds of the audible and the inaudible spectrum. When Brahm first spoke, it was a higher pitch of this Naad and it resembled the shrill sound resembling the neighing of a horse. It filled the entire creation from end to end. Since the sky is a hollow place where this sound was generated, it is compared to the

neck of the Supreme Being, hence the name 'Hayagriva'. 'Haya' means a horse, and 'griva' means a neck. Ancient sages and seers hit upon the idea of the 'horse' when they experienced this noise and its shrill tones when a horse neighed. So they created this idea of the cosmic form of Brahm as Hayagriva who first produced sound to make this world realise that the Lord is there and to help the creatures to express themselves and make their presence felt too. This is how the concept of Hayagriva evolved amongst many other reasons, and this is why all primitive forms of language consist of mere sounds made in the throat. This is best exemplified by the animals which are primitive forms of creatures in the evolutionary ladder as compared to humans, as well as in the language of the ancients and the tribal people who are cut off from modern civilization.

The fact that the first known form of Brahm is that of a 'horse' is endorsed in the Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 1. From the first sound produced by the cosmic 'horse' in the form of 'neighing' evolved all the other tones and notes of sound which eventually evolved into full-fledged languages. The alphabets are nothing but geometrical shapes given to these sound by ancient sages and seers when they felt the need to write down their knowledge for future generations.

The process of expressing one's self was initiated by Lord Hayagriva by his cosmic neighing. This is how primitive language came to be expressed in the very beginning. It was in this way that the primary form of knowledge was revealed at the beginning of creation. Language and its fine nuances were later-day creation when the initial form of this language resembling a horse's neighing was too difficult for all the creatures to decipher and understand. It would be observed that animals do not speak in any man-created language; their language is the language of Mother Nature. A horse neighs, a dog moans and the serpent hisses; all express themselves clearly which another of their species would clearly understand, though what they wish to say is incomprehensible to us humans.

When the Gods prayed to Lord Hayagriva, and for that matter to the Supreme Being in his most primary cosmic form as Brahm, they did not employ any language. They simply 'neighed'. Perhaps this is how the Sam Veda came into being, as it is sung in the classical style of musical form with its unique long-stretched sounds with varying pitches and tones that are generated in the throat, instead of being chanted rhythmically in crisp and articulate words of the Sanskrit language which can only be pronounced by the tongue and the mouth as is the case of the hymns of the other three Vedas (Rig, Shukla and Atharva). The idea here is that the Lord understands what the creature wishes to tell him even if he has no words to express himself just like a mother would easily understand what her infant wishes to say though the child does not know how to express himself in words.

Therefore, two versions of offering prayers to the Supreme Being have been given in the following verses. One form, which was employed by the Gods and is deemed to be the best form, is narrated in verse nos. 16-17 when no words are employed but merely a musical sound is generated, and the other form is the one described in verse nos. 18-19 when articulate words are used for the same hymns. The latter form is adopted by those worshippers who are not experts in classical form of music. Both the forms are acceptable to the Lord.

The following verses would now make sense to the reader.]

The Mantra has both the vowel sounds and the consonant sounds built into it. [This is because the Mantra is made of letters as Beej Mantras, or as words and phrases.]

The Gods pronounce the letter 'Ra'¹ (as in *rung*) if it comes at the end of any hymn in much the same way as they would pronounce the letter 'Ni' (as in *niece*, *neither*, *nil*), or its various associated forms, such as 'Ne' (as in *nettle*, *nephew*) etc. [In other words, they added the long vowel sound of 'I' or 'Ee' to it. Hence, the bland sound of the consonant 'Ra' would become 'Ri' or 'Ree' (as in *rim*, *reel* or *ream*) when it is appended by the vowel sounds of Ee or I.]

This creates a resonating effect which so drowns them (the Gods) in its sound waves that they experience an extreme sense of exhilaration and ecstasy. [The resonance of this sound massages their nerves and they feel the sense of extreme bliss.] In other words, they taste the elixir of eternal bliss known as Amrit when they sing the hymns in this manner (16).

[Note—¹It should be noted here that the Sanskrit alphabet 'Ra' is also the Beej (seed) for the fire element as well as for Lord Ram who is one of the incarnations of Vishnu. The Fire God is amongst the first personified form of the Supreme Being, and one of the first Gods to be honoured in the Rig Veda, as the Fire God embodied and exemplified all the glories, splendour, radiance, energy, purity, powers, authority and vitality so characteristic of the cosmic Lord who needed all these virtues to initiate this creation, and maintain it once it came into being. The celestial Sun is regarded in the Upanishads as a living embodiment of Brahm, and the Sun is an evident cosmic cauldron of fire.

So the correlation is clear. Like the Fire, the first manifestation of Brahm was the sound resembling that of horse's neighing. The fact that it was the Sun God who had assumed the form of a divine Horse (Hayagriva) to teach the Shukla Yajur Veda to sage Yagyawalkya also go to reinforce this view.]

17. The Gods are immersed in an ocean of ecstasy and bliss when they sing the hymns in a Raaga known as 'Gauri' (which is a tune of classical music). These hymns can be of one stanza, two stanzas, four stanzas, eight stanzas, nine stanzas, or multiple stanzas of thousands of letters and words.

Such hymns exist and reverberate in the vast space of the sky (known as 'Vyom'). [In other words, the ether is pregnant with the hymns sung in honour of the Lord by the Gods. It is these hymns that were crystallized in the form of the Vedas, but their primary form in the heaven is merely a sound. Obviously, the ethereal sound of OM is being referred to here as many Upanishads clearly expound that all forms of sounds have their genesis in OM. The cosmic sound that produces OM is known as the 'Naad', the 'sound of cosmic music'. Just as classical music need not have words to be played on musical instruments, the prayers also need not have articulate language to be offered to the Lord and understood by him.] (17).

18. The Mantras should be pronounced clearly by employing the lips, the nose, the teeth, etc. [This is because some class of letters are pronounced by the involvement of the lips, such as Sanskrit letters 'Pa' (as in *pump*), 'Pha' (as in *fruit*), 'Ba' (as in *bulb*) etc.; others require the involvement of the nose, such as the letters 'Na' (as in *nut*), or the teeth, as in the case of the letter 'Da' (as in *then*), or the tongue as in the case of the other letters such as 'Ta' (as in *two*, *teeth*) and 'Cha' (as in *choke*) etc.]

The Mantras should be said continuously, in an unbroken stream of words and letters so that they appear to be like a wheel in motion. The worshipper should offer his prayers to Ishan (the Lord, the Supreme Being) in this way.

[It ought to be noted here that while verse nos. 16-17 emphasis that the Gods offer their prayers to the Supreme Being in a series of sounds, viz. like the neighing of a horse, the man is supposed to offer the same prayer of the Vedas in articulate

language. This is the case if he is not an expert in classical forms of music so that he can sing the hymns in the typical way the Gods had sung them. So such a worshipper articulately pronounces the words of the hymns. But the continuous pronouncing gives the Mantra a subtle hue of music because of the rhythm and tone involved in the incantation.

‘Ishan’ means an emblem (‘Nishan’) of the Lord (‘Isha’). The implication is simple—when a worshipper offers prayers or obeisance to Lord Hayagriva or even his own Atma, he is actually honouring the Supreme Being known as ‘Brahm’. All other forms and deities to whom worship is offered are actually emblems of Brahm; they stand for Brahm.] (18).

19. The creator and controller of this creation has established this great system of Mantras. He has enabled even the serpent to understand the language of music as is evident from the fact that by playing the Indian lute the serpent can be controlled as it is completely overwhelmed and enthralled by its music.

[The music emanating from the lute has no words, but it is sufficient to enchant the serpent. The serpent understands the music and gets so ecstatic that if the lute is played expertly it would raise its hood and sway from side to side in joy. The same music will mean nothing to the man or any other animal. It is believed that it is very easy to control even the most ferocious snake with the help of certain Mantras when they accompany the playing of the lute.

The snake actually does not understand what song is being played on the lute, but the frequencies generated by sound of this instrument are sufficient to massage its nerves to such an extent that the sense of ecstasy and exhilaration is aroused in the reptile.

The idea being conveyed here is that though one may not know the meaning of the Mantras fully, though he may not be an expert in the science of Mantras, or know the intricacies of metaphysics and spiritualism, but still if he repeats some given set of Mantras they are bound to produce their positive effects upon him even though he may be unaware of them, or he may be enjoying these benefits unwittingly.

There is one other significance of citing the case of the Indian lute vis-à-vis the serpent. The serpent is made ecstatic only by the sound or the music of this instrument, and it pays no heed to any other musical instrument. Therefore, if one were to attain Brahm and understand the potentials of his Atma, he must use the correct Mantra and follow the correct path as envisaged by the Upanishads. Wrong Mantra repeated wrongly will produce no effects like the serpent is not aroused by any other musical instrument except the Indian lute.]

This ‘wheel’ represented by the continuous chanting or singing of the Mantras is represented by the symbolic halo around the Sun that consists of its brilliant rays, and around the Gods that represent their divinity and holiness. [In other words, if the Mantras are incanted properly in the prescribed manner, the person also develops a halo of holiness around himself.] (19).

20. If this Brahm Vidya (Upanishad that expounds the knowledge of Brahm) is read with proper understanding on the Ekaadasi day (the eleventh day in the fortnight of a lunar day), the worshipper becomes an exalted being. This is the great spiritual blessing one gets by honouring Lord Hayagriva (because this Upanishad is dedicated to this Lord).

The worshipper obtains 'Jivan Mukti'—i.e. he finds liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death even while he continues to live in this world with a gross body and continues to go about the routine affairs of his life.

One must therefore do Japa with the divine Mantra of the supreme Brahm, which is 'OM Namō Brahmanē Dhaarnam Me' (i.e. 'OM Salutations! I am accepting Brahm in my inner-self').

By accepting the Supreme Being, who has no forms and attributes, as being his own 'truthful self', one indeed becomes emancipated and delivered.

This is the edict of this Upanishad; this is its truthful teaching. Amen! (20).

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----Shanti Paath----

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Chapter 30

Dattatreya Upanishad/ Dattatreyaopanishad

This Upanishad is dedicated to Lord Dattatreya who is believed to represent Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. The story regarding this form of Vishnu has been narrated in a note to stanza no. 4 of Section 1 of this Upanishad.

It has a total of three Sections or Khandas. The Mantras (hymns) of this Upanishad are in the form of a running prose, with only one in the style of a verse. For the purpose of narration, however, we shall divide the prose into convenient paragraphs or stanzas.

It is one of the revealed Upanishad as it was preached by Lord Narayan, the Supreme Being, when he was asked by Brahma, the creator, about the transcendental knowledge that is not only supremely enlightening but also a provider of liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death in this mortal world. The Lord advised him to meditate and contemplate upon the element of 'Sattva', the quality of eternal truthfulness and purity from which effuse equally eternal virtues of holiness, purity and divinity. Those who do so realise that the Lord to whom this Sattva refers to is a personified form of 'Datta', i.e. the One who gives the boon of the knowledge of the transcendental and the divine, the One who provides Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance. This knowledge pertains to Brahm, the Supreme Being that is the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth of creation.

On successful meditation as advised by Lord Narayan, Brahma was able to become realised as he experienced this Sattva principle, the principle of the eternal Truth. He then preached it to others.

After this preliminary introduction, a series of Mantras dedicated to Lord Dattatreya are given. These Mantras are of different categories, such as one-lettered, six-lettered ones etc. All this is narrated in the first Section.

The second Section gives the Mala-Mantra, the long Mantra used to turn the rosary by those who worship Lord Dattatreya.

The third and the final Section outlines the reward that the worshipper gets by practicing the teachings of this Upanishad, and offering his oblations to Lord

Dattatreya and meditating upon him. Such a person becomes Jivan Mukta, i.e. he obtains spiritual liberation and deliverance even while he is alive and active in this mortal world.

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

Section 1

1. OM Salutations! Salutations to Lord Hari¹!

Once, Brahma (the creator), approached Lord Narayan (Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush—who is universally regarded as the personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, and even the parent of Brahma the creator) in his divine abode in the Satya-Loka (the supreme abode situated in the heaven where only truthfulness exists)

The Lord is an Emperor of the great Universe that he has created, with the Satya-Loka as being the citadel where he lives.

Brahma asked the Lord—‘Oh Lord! Please tell me what is that which is known as ‘Tarak²’, i.e. one that gives liberation and deliverance to the soul from the endless cycle of birth and death and their accompanying horrors?’ [1].

[Note—¹The name *Hari* is one of the many names of Lord Vishnu, and the Lord is so-called because he virtually steals—or takes away, removes, eliminates—all the pains, agonies and misfortunes of his devotees; he makes them immune to the horrific consequences of the sins committed by them.

Usually in the scriptures, the names Vishnu, Hari, Narayan and Viraat Purush are synonymously used for the Supreme Being.

²*Tarak*— Tarak Mantra and Tarak Brahm—The *Tarak Mantra* is that which provides final deliverance to the soul of the spiritual seeker or aspirant. It is said in the Upanishads that the Mantras pertaining to Lord Ram are called the Tarak Mantra, and therefore Lord Ram is the *Tarak Brahm* (refer especially Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1, and Canto 5, verse no. 4/4).

Tarak Brahm is that divine aspect of the super consciousness known as Brahm which provides the spiritual aspirant with Mukti and Moksha—i.e. final liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. The formula used to achieve this eclectic goal is known as the *Tarak Mantra*.

The Tarak Mantra is therefore a group of esoteric, ethereal and holy syllables, words or phrases having mystical powers and divine potentials that can achieve miraculous results for the adherent as they have the authority to bestow special spiritual abilities on the creature and help in his liberation and deliverance, his emancipation and salvation. The word ‘Tarak’ means an entity that takes one across some formidable obstacle that seems otherwise insurmountable and unconquerable. It is a medium by which all hurdles and impediments in one’s path that prevent one from attaining his spiritual goal are overcome easily. It is therefore an instrument that provides spiritual liberation and deliverance to the seeker, one that gives emancipation and salvation to the creature’s soul, a vehicle that can take a creature across the ocean of endless miseries and pains from which he is suffering in this world and from which he sincerely wishes to find freedom.

The word *Tarak* means to cause or enable to pass or cross over, to carry over, one that rescues, provides relief and succour, one that can provide liberation and deliverance to the creature from any bondage. Further, the word Tarak also refers to the ‘eye of wisdom that liberates one from the darkness of ignorance and delusions’,

and it has relevance here because meditation leads to the opening of the inner 'eye' of insight that leads to self realisation and enlightenment. 'Tarak' also means a meter of 4 x 13 syllables; hence it refers also to the various Mantras used for the purpose of meditation.

There are various Upanishads dealing with this aspect of meditation and spiritual deliverance—such as Advai Tarak Upanishad and Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. These Upanishads describe *Tarak Brahm* in all its finer connotations.

Other Mantras can give him everything else in this creation, such as attainment of all types of Siddhis and other super-natural powers and abilities, or acquisition of other rewards such as Dharma, Artha and Kaam as mentioned in verse no. 3 of Canto 5 of the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, or other such great achievements that are rare, but they do not provide him with 'Moksha' so easily as does the Tarak Mantra.

There are various Upanishads dealing with this aspect of meditation and spiritual deliverance which is known as Tarak. For instance especial mention can be made of the Shukla Yajur Veda's *Advai Tarak Upanishad*, especially its verse nos. 7 and 9, and *Tarak Upanishad*. As the name itself suggests, these two Upanishads are dedicated to this theme of Tarak, and they describe *Tarak Brahm* in all its finer connotations.

References: Some of the important Upanishads, besides the present Dattatreya Upanishad, that are dedicated to this *Tarak* are the following—Tarak/Tarsar Upanishad; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-12; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 1-2 (full); Canto 4, verse no. 14; Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1-47; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Cantos 2-3 and 5 (full); the Atharva-shikha, 2/1; Atharvashir, Kandika (Canto) 4; Advaitarak, verse nos. 3, 7-11; Nrsingh Purvatapini Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 15-16; Naradparivrajak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8 which is fully devoted to this theme; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 4 and 18 (Shiva's Tarak Mantra).]

2. Lord Narayan¹ replied—'Meditate upon my divine form which is Sat (truthful), Anand (blissful) and Chid (enlightened and consciousness) personified. This divine and eclectic form of mine is the Sattva essence (the Truth principle) where I live eternally. [That is, I live in truthfulness.] {This would enlighten you about your query.}

I am known as 'Datta'—one who gives. [Here it means that Lord Narayan is the Tarak, i.e. he is the One who provides—gives, bestows, grants—the worshipper with the fruit of spiritual liberation and deliverance; the one divine entity that helps the creature to find freedom from all his fetters pertaining to this entrapping world and the gross body in which his soul lives.]

Those who realise this fact, as well as those who preach this fact to others are no longer regarded as ordinary mortal creatures of the mundane and entrapping world of delusions, but are deemed to be liberated themselves as well as be a provider of liberation and deliverance to others.'

[That is, those devotees who meditate upon me and realise my truthful form also become my own image in as much as they are transformed from being a creature who is trapped in this delusory world to an enlightened being who has obtained liberation and deliverance himself, along with being empowered to liberate others. They are 'Tarak' themselves. Since I am known as 'Datta', as I am the provider—a giver, a bestower, the one who grants the boon of Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance to the devotee—the worshipper who attains me (Brahm; the spiritual Absolute Truth), becoming self-realised and Brahm-realised as a result, also becomes

a 'Datta' himself as he is empowered to show the path of Mukti (liberation and deliverance) and the path of Sattva (truth) to others.]

Hearing this advise, Brahma meditated upon Lord Narayan and realised the Lord's truthful form. This form of Narayan was the all-pervading and all-encompassing form that covered the entire universe in its ambit. This was the form of the Viraat Purush known as Narayan or Vishnu. It was this form which is known as the 'Datta'—the form which provides liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the creature not only from the cycle of birth and death with their accompanying horrors but also from the dark pit of ignorance and delusions in which all living beings are trapped. [2].

[Note—¹Narayan—According to the *Tarsar Upanishad* of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, Canto 1, verse nos. 2, the Tarak Mantra is the following *OM Namoha Narayanaya*. To quote this verse in full—" Next, sage Bharadwaj asked sage Yagyavalkya, 'What is that Tarak Mantra?' Yagyavalkya replied, 'The Tarak Mantra is the following—'OM NAMOHA NARAYANAYA'. [This Manta briefly means 'OM salutations! I bow and pay my obeisance to the supreme Lord Narayan.] It refers to the supreme, eternal, omniscient, enlightened and transcendental consciousness known as the Atma (or Brahm). It is that divine entity that should be worshipped, adored, revered and honoured. [In other words, when one worships Narayan, he is deemed to be worshipping the supreme Brahm who has revealed himself as the pure conscious Atma of the individual creature at the micro level of creation, and as the Viraat Purush called Narayan (or Vishnu) at the macro level.]

[Now the sage explains the meaning of the three words of the Mantra--] The first word 'OM' represents the imperishable, immutable and eternal Atma. The second word 'NAMOHA' represents 'Prakriti' or Mother Nature. The third word 'NARAYANAYA' stands for the macrocosmic manifestation of the un-manifested transcendental Brahm. Anyone who understands this sublime and mystical fact is able to attain or acquire the essence of 'Amrit', which is the ambrosia of eternity, bliss and blessedness. This eclectic knowledge is the supreme form of knowledge.

[The entire Mantra has eight letters. Now the sage explains their significance in another way--] 'OM' represents the supreme Brahm. The 2nd letter 'Na' stands for Vishnu, the sustainer of creation. The 3rd letter 'Ma' represents Rudra or Lord Shiva, the concluder of creation. [These two letters combine to form the second word 'Namo']. The 4th letter 'Na' symbolises 'Ishwar', the macrocosmic causal body of creation. The 5th letter 'Ra' stands for 'Viraat', the macrocosmic gross body of creation. The 6th letter 'Ya' represents 'Purush', the macrocosmic Male aspect of creation. The 7th letter 'Ana' stands for 'Bhagwan', the great Lord. And the last letter, the 8th, is 'Ya' and it symbolises 'Parmatma', the supreme, transcendental Atma or Soul. [The 4th till the 8th letters form the third word 'NA-RA-YA-NA-YA' of the holy, sublime, ethereal and mystical 'Tarak Mantra'.] In this way, those who become enlightened about the sublime, subtle and esoteric meaning of this Tarak Mantra become great persons (honourable souls) who transcend the humdrum and become exalted, erudite, wise and superior to their fellow men. [2]"

The Mantra that has the astounding spiritual potential and mystical powers that can provide the soul of the frustrated, agitated and hapless creature trapped in the labyrinth of miseries and torments with final liberation and deliverance is called the Tarak Mantra. It helps him find freedom from all the fetters and delusions associated with this world and creation, and obtain final peace and rest for his soul.]

3. When Brahma thus meditated and realised the divine form of Narayan, i.e. when he became Brahm-realised and enlightened about the Truth, he exclaimed—"Da Hans". That is, the Lord who gives ('Da' standing for one who gives) is none but 'Hans'¹ (literally a divine Swan but implying the supreme transcendental Brahm who is the

Supreme Being for whom this epithet is used). [This phrase 'Da Hans' may also mean 'the Supreme Being who gives life and consciousness to the world lives in the form of the Jiva, the creature, as his true self known as the Atma or the soul'.]

The Beej Mantra of this 'Hans' qualified as 'Da' is 'Daam' (i.e. the consonant 'Da', as pronounced in *mother*, with the long vowel sound of 'Aa' as pronounced in *master*, resulting in the letter 'Daa', and its Mantra form is 'Daa(m) or Daam' where 'm' is silent). Hence, 'Daa(m)' is the one-lettered Mantra of the Supreme Being known as Narayan and Hans.

[That is, the Beej Mantra or the seed monosyllabic divine letter related to the Supreme Being, who 'gives' and resides in the individual creature as his 'Atma', is 'Daa'.]

This Beej Mantra 'Daa(m)' is the Tarak Mantra² of the Supreme Being known as Hans.

One should meditate upon it. It gives freedom from having to reside in a mother's womb and undergoing its accompanying horrors again. [That is, it frees the worshipper from having to take a birth again.] [3].

[Note—¹*Hans*—The divine Swan—References for the term 'Hans':

(a) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 6; Canto 6, verse no. 15; Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 3-4; Dhyani Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 24, 61-65; Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 20-28, 34, 60-64, 78-79; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-132, Canto 2, verse nos. 9-11, Canto 6, verse no. 20, 35-36, 53-54; Yogtattva Upanishad, verse no. 99.

(b) Shukla Yajur Veda—Hansopanishad is exclusively dedicated to explain the concept of the pure conscious Atma by way of using the metaphor of a Hans.

(c) Sam Veda—Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse no. 31-35, 82-83, 93.

(d) Atharva Veda—Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4; Pashupati Brahm Upanishad, Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 12-15, 19-21, 23-26, and in Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse nos. 10-11; Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, verse no. 1; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 6.

An enlightened and self-realised person thinks of himself as a Swan and feels exhilarated that he is not an ordinary man bogged down by worldly fetters, but an exalted soul that is like a Swan.

The bird *Swan* or Hans is considered the most pure, clean, wise, erudite and clever among the birds. It is said to eat pearls, which means it picks up and accepts only the best amid the variety of things available to it in the form of an assortment of various gems and jewels representing the dazzling charms of this world. It is also reputed to drink milk leaving aside the water content in it symbolising its ability to imbibe the essence and the best, and leave the rest aside. It is also the vehicle of Goddess Saraswati, the patron Goddess of knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, speech and learning, indicating that it bears these glorious virtues. Hence, the reference to a swan while describing a creature conscious of the vital wind or Pran passing through him means the basic, inherent and intrinsic tendency of that wisened and intelligent creature is to be the best, most pure and divine, wise, awakened and enlightened, adroit, clever and sagacious like the swan, and pick all the goodness and forsake all that is bad in this world. Saraswati rides on a swan, symbolising the creature's inborn enlightenment and excellence of his mental caliber. Symbolically, Saraswati resides in his Pran because it rides on the swan, i.e. in his heart, throat and mind—that is, his heart has purity of emotions, he speaks well of all, and his wise words are sought after by all as priceless gems of wisdom, and his mind is intelligent, discerning and noble.

A wise man is expected to pick up the truth and leave aside the non-truths from the basket full of worldly charms of astounding proportions and myriad forms of temptations present in this creation.

Those wise men who have developed the level of wisdom, erudition and sagacity that they can discriminate between what is good and what is not, what is true and what is false, what is liberating and what is ensnaring for their soul are also honoured by the epithet of being a 'Hans' (Swan) because they are just like the Swan which has the legendary ability to pick up pearls from an assortment of gems, and drink milk leaving behind water and other adulterants in it. Even amongst such wise and enlightened men, those who have realised the 'truth' about their own self in the real sense, i.e. have become 'self-realised' and hence 'Brahm-realised' truthfully, and have consequentially attained the highest level of enlightenment and wisdom are called 'Param Hans'—literally meaning those who have accessed the 'supreme type of enlightenment'. The grand and auspicious virtues and characteristics of such an exalted Sanyasi who is self and Brahm realised has been described in detail in the *Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition.

This Atma is wise and enlightened. It is likened to the bird Swan because this bird is regarded as a metaphor for these grand virtues. Again, just like the Swan that floats majestically and with dignity on the surface of the water of a lake, remaining unaffected by the impurities present in the water, the Atma too lives in a body with the same attitude and dignity. A wise man understands that he bears the cosmic Consciousness in his inner-self as the Atma which is as immaculate and dignified as the Swan floating on the surface of a lake.

There is another reason why the metaphor of the Swan is used for a wise man who is lost in deep meditation on the 'self' and the 'truth'. The neck of the Swan is curved inwards like the alphabet U with its beak lying almost parallel to its abdomen as it floats calmly on the surface of the water. For a casual observer this posture reminds him of a person who is lost in some deep thoughts. Hence, when ancient sages and seers were searching for an instance to illustrate the state of existence of a man lost in deep meditation and contemplation they hit upon the metaphor of the Swan as being the most appropriate one.

The alphabet 'Ha' of the word 'Hans' is sounded by the vibration of the exhaled wind passing through the vocal cords present in the throat or the wind pipe which connects to the nose, while the alphabet 'Sa' is sounded by the root of the tongue which opens into the mouth when the breath is inhaled. Both the nose and the mouth open in the same cavity called the throat. Hence, the inter relationship between 'Ha' and 'Sa' is evident. The main objective of this Upanishad is to make the Yogi (a person who follows its tenets of meditation) aware that he is like the divine swan, but he was unaware of his own divinity and sublimity, his exalted and noble stature, till that was pointed out to him. So he must become one like a 'swan', remind himself constantly that he is like a swan, and he must not do anything or act in anyway which is not befitting his exalted and superior status which is equivalent to a wise swan.

During the twenty-four hour period covering a single day and night, a person inhales and exhales, or breathes, roughly twenty-one thousand times, because each cycle of inhalation and exhalation is equivalent to saying one Mantra 'Hans' consisting of the two syllables 'Ha and Sa' (refer Dhyandindu Upanishad, verse no. 63).

Hans, the divine Swan, is also one of the twenty-four incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu had once appeared as a divine Swan to preach the four celestial sages Sankaadi who were the mental sons of the creator Brahma.

Once it so happened that Sankaadi approached Brahma and wanted to know how can someone, who wished to have Moksha (final liberation and deliverance from this material world; freedom from attachment to the sense objects of this world; emancipation and salvation), effectively control his mind and sub-conscious and

divert them away from the material charms of the world and its sense objects, and towards the inner self where the Atma, the pure consciousness, resides?

Brahma was confused and did not have the answer. So they meditated upon Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, from whom Brahma was born. Thus Vishnu appeared as a divine Swan. The sages could not recognise the Lord in that form and asked who he was. Then Vishnu, in his form as a Swan, preached the great tenets of metaphysics and Vedanta to Sankaadi. Thus, this revelation of Vishnu as a Swan was an embodiment of the greatest and the most refined form of spiritual knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment. Henceforth, Swan came to be known as a synonym for these eclectic and divine virtues. This story appears in Srimad Bhagwat, 11/13.

The Swan is depicted as a vehicle of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. In other words, those who worship Swan ride on the crest of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment.

The concept of the 'Hans' has been elaborately dealt with in the *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kanda/Canto 1, verse nos. 12-15, 19-21, 23-26, and in Kanda/Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2. This Upanishad clearly stresses that '*Hans*' is a term employed to refer to the Atma as well as Brahm. While the Atma is the pure consciousness that is the 'true self' of the individual creature, Brahm is the cosmic Consciousness represented by the Mantra 'OM' or 'Pranav'. The Hans Mantra is the 'Sutra' or thread that links the Atma to Brahm.

It is from this Hans (or Brahm) that the entire creation, including its ninety-six Tattwas, the Trinity Gods etc., have come into being—refer: Purva Kand/Canto 1, verse no. 14-15 of *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*. By due diligence and constant practice, an ascetic or the spiritual seeker can establish a seamless uniformity between the Atma and the Hans (Brahm)—refer: Uttar Kand/Canto 2, verse no. 2 of *Pashupat Brahm Upanishad*.

The Atharva Veda's *Mahavakya Upanishad*, verse no. 6 says that Brahm and the Atma are the same, and that since the term *Hans* (a divine Swan) is used for *Brahm* it means that it also implies the *Atma* of the individual creature. It also says that the word '*Hans*' refers to the breath that comes in and goes out of the body of all those who breathe.

The *Dhyan Bindu Upanishad*, verse no. 24 and 61-65, of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition which primarily deals with meditation and contemplation on Brahm in order to obtain emancipation and salvation of the soul of the creature says that the supreme transcendental Brahm, known also as Pranav, resides in the heart of all the living beings in the form of a Hansa.

²The *Tarak* is that aspect of the Brahm, the Supreme Being, that bestows Mukti (spiritual liberation and deliverance; emancipation and salvation) to the seeker. Therefore, Brahm is called 'Datta'—'one who gives' Mukti. And the Mantra for this aspect of Brahm is 'Hans'.

The significance of the letter 'Da' or 'Daa' lies in the virtue of liberally giving away the things which are very dear to one. This means that a person renounces all his attachments and attractions with those things he gives away to others. It also implies abandoning all desires and yearnings for all things of this material world, abandoning or shedding all desires to gratify the natural urges or please the natural inclinations of the sense organs of the body, to snap all ties with the gross and entrapping world as well as the equally gross and entrapping body. Only a person who has snapped all ties with the world, a person who does not have any obligations and responsibilities to fulfill, a person who is stoic and not a serf of his desires and passions can feel himself free and untied. He is not under any bondage or compulsions to do this or that, or to please this world and keep it in good humour so that the world can provide him with the comfort and pleasures he expects in return for serving the world.

A man is tied in knots only till the time he has anything to expect from the world, and once this expectation is given away or abandoned, he becomes untied or 'free'.

The realisation of the ultimate spiritual Truth about one's Atma and the Parmatma, the supreme Atma, the understanding of what is the 'truth' and what is the 'falsehood', what is 'freedom' and what is 'entanglement' or 'entrapment', alongside total renunciation and detachment from this mundane and gross world of material sense objects which are perishable and non-eternal is a state of existence that takes a man across the vast ocean of known as the 'world', and gives or provides him freedom from all sorts of shackles. That is, spiritual realisation itself is the 'Tarak' in as far as the spiritual aspirant's needs for finding Mukti (liberation and deliverance) or Moksha (emancipation and salvation) is concerned. One of the primary reasons is that this realisation frees him from the formidable fetter of ignorance and its accompanying darkness of delusions.

Thus, a creature who has given up all attachments with this world and the body, and who has broken up all links with them, is the one who can be said to have crossed this vast ocean-like world in which the body acts as the millstone around the neck of his Atma which is his true self. This achievement is like the 'Tarak' for his Atma because it helps him to break free from their bondage.

So we see we have two connotations of the word 'Tarak'. One pertains to the Supreme Being—who in the case of this Upanishad is Lord Narayan—who bestows Mukti or Moksha to sincere spiritual seekers, and the other is the way of self-realisation which the seeker selects himself to break free from the strong shackle of ignorance and delusions, shackle that keeps him tied in knots to this world and the body. The various Mantras that are prescribed in the various Upanishads are merely tools in the process of realizing the 'Truth-principal'.

In both the cases it is the scriptures that come to his aid by showing him how to benefit from the Lord's benevolence and largesse, and how to go about attaining the exalted stature of self-realisation, how to do it in practical world.]

4. This Mantra has Gayatri as its Chanda (style of composition). Its Rishi (the sage or seer who had first formulated and tested the effectiveness of a given Mantra) is Lord Sada Shiva (the eternal Lord Shiva) himself. Its Devta (the deity to whom the Mantra is dedicated) is Lord Dattatreya¹ himself.

Just like the case of a huge banyan tree being subtly present in the small seed of the tree, the entire universe is hidden and subtly present in the single Beej Mantra (which is 'Daa(m)') of Lord Dattatreya.

This is the exposition of the single-letter Beej Mantra of Lord Dattatreya. [4].

[Note—¹Lord *Dattatreya*—Lord Dattatreya is regarded as a fractional incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord of creation in his cosmic form as the Viraat Purush from whom the rest of the creation, including the creator Brahma himself, was created.

The word 'Dattatreya' means 'one who was given to Atri', or 'the form of the Trinity Gods which gives or bestows or grants boons to his devotees'.

According to mythological accounts, sage Atri and his chaste wife Anusuya were childless, and having a desire to have a son they prayed and did severe penance. All the three gods of the Hindu Trinity, i.e. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the concluder appeared before the couple and requested them to ask for a boon. Upon the couple's request, all the three Gods became their sons. Brahma became the sage known as Chandra representing the Moon God, Vishnu became the wise and enlightened sage Dattatreya, and Shiva became the angry sage Durvasa.

The *Shandilya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition endorses this episode with a slight change in its Canto 3, section 2, verse nos. 7-8 wherein it is said that the Supreme Being himself revealed in the form of sage Atri.

The word 'Dattatreya' has two parts—'Datta' and 'Treya'. The first half 'Datta' refers to the Lord who gives boons, and the second part 'Treya' refers to something that has three dimensions.

This latter part 'Treya' again has the following meanings—(1) It refers to Lord Shiva who has three eyes, and hence called 'Trinetra', because Shiva is also known as 'Maheshwar', the great Lord by which epithet the Supreme Being is honoured (refer Canto 3, section 2, verse no. 5-6 of Shandilya Upanishad). (ii) It refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm which has three forms known as Sakal, Nishkal and Sakal-Nishkal which incorporates in their ambit the entire creation, both the visible and the non-visible, the gross and the subtle (refer Canto 3, section 1, verse nos. 2-6 of Shandilya Upanishad).

According to another version of this story, the three Gods decided to check the chastity vows of the wife of Atri and came disguised to cheat on her. Anusuiya was no ordinary lady, and realizing their ill intentions she transformed them into her son with three heads and six arms, each head standing for one of the Gods.

Dattatreya is counted amongst the seven celestial sages called the Sapta Rishis. He is said to have created the Som Plant whose juice, called the 'Som Rasa', is used during fire sacrifices as an offering to Gods.

Iconographically, Dattatreya is shown with three heads and six arms holding the emblems of the three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, viz. a water pot, a conch and a discus, and a trident respectively. In fact, this great sage is regarded as a combined revelation of the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, in as much as he possessed the virtues of them all.

A bull representing Dharma (righteousness) is depicted as his mount. Four dogs representing the four Vedas are his constant companion.

The concept of Dattatreya is an attempt by ancient sages and seers to harmonize the three cults of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva that had created an artificial and unwarranted rift in the edifice of religious unity amongst the Hindus.

Dattatreya is also credited with expounding the great characteristics of Avadhut Sanyas in Avadhut Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition when he taught them to sage Sankriti.

The Jabal Darshan Upanishad of the Sam Veda tradition is also credited to Lord Dattatreya in which he has preached in detail the 8-fold path of Yoga, called the Ashtang Yoga, to Sankriti, his disciple.

He had also preached Prahalad, the great devotee of Lord Vishnu, about the eclectic state of Avadhut Sanyasi in the form of a huge python. He had taught King Alarka about Tattva Gyan (the fundamental knowledge of spiritual Truth and the quintessential philosophy of metaphysics).

Being a great Sanyasi himself, he was endowed with stupendous mystical powers called Siddhis. One of the sects of Siddhas regard him as their patron sage.

Sage Dattatreya had made *twenty four Gurus* or teachers. The remarkable thing is that none of these twenty four Gurus was a human being—he had learnt even from the elements (earth, water, fire, air, sky), animals (elephant, deer), birds (pigeon, hawk), reptiles (snake, worm), insects (moth, bee, spider), a fish, the moon and the sun, a child, a girl, a prostitute, an arrow-smith etc. These are very interesting episodes, and are being briefly summarized here.

The following are the twenty four teachers and what Dattatreya learnt from them. (1) Earth—the earth sustain all sorts of life and nourishes each creature, even those who virtually eat into her bosom by mercilessly and ruthlessly exploit her. The human race is the greatest exploiter of the earth by digging into her bowels and extracting whatever it can to satisfy its selfish vested interests without bothering for the future of earth much like a vulture digging its beak and extracting last bit of flesh from a cadaver. The earth is very magnanimous and forgiving. It goes on giving and giving without expecting any thing in return, and does not complain like a loving mother who would rather prefer to die than deny her child whatever she can afford.

The greatness is that still she does not complain! (2) Air—the wind moves everywhere, visits all kinds of places but never gets attached to any place or thing. The air is free from all attachments, relations and bonding though it touches all and pervades everywhere. It purifies everything and gives life to all in the form of ‘Pran’ or breath without any discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, race, creed etc. It gives life to a friend as much as it gives life to one’s enemy. The air taught him to be totally detached in his dealings with the world inspite of living in it and helping it by infusing fresh breath of knowledge and hope to the best of his ability. (3) Sky or Akash—the space of the sky accommodates everything and everyone in its vast bosom. This taught him to accept and accommodate all in life, but remain uninvolved in or unattached with them just like the sky which harbours uncountable number of things in its vast bosom but remains totally indifferent to them and unaffected by them. (4) Water—it is refreshing and cool and nourishing. No life is possible without water, and it is regarded as the only universal elixir of life. This taught him to sustain all and be soothing, comforting and refreshing for all the creatures. Like the inherent quality of water to act as the universal soother and lubricant of this creation, to cool down the heat and provide solace and succour to tormented creature, a true saint should also act as the one whose company gives happiness and joys to all, whose company provides the much-needed spiritual solace and succour to all. (5) Fire—it gives light, heat and energy. It is upwardly mobile—as is evident from the direction the flame of a raging fire takes. It is all-purifying on the one hand, and burns to ashes whatever impurity is put into it on the other hand. This taught him to welcome everything like the fire does, but purify them before finally accepting anything, and to reduce to ashes all that is impure and tainting that would affect the purity of the Atma. (6) Moon—it appears to wax and wane, but really it remains the same. This taught him the fact that the world and the body undergo innumerable changes but the true ‘self’ always remains unchanging, steady, uniform and immutable. (7) Sun—it is the ‘eye’ of the world and gives the latter light, heat and energy in a selfless and unbiased manner. The sun illuminates all but does not need anything to illuminate its own self, and neither does it get tainted by the dark and gloomy things it illuminates. On the contrary, the darkness of all things vanishes as soon as the brilliant light of the sun falls upon them. The glory of the sun is so overwhelming that no form of gloom and darkness can ever survive in its presence. This taught him to illuminate the world and remove its darkness of ignorance by the light of knowledge and wisdom while remaining immune himself to the darkening and spiritually denigrating affects that are caused by this deluding and corrupt world. (8) Pigeon—this is the typical story of a householder’s life. The parent pigeons went out in search of food for their young one day when a bird-catcher spread his nets and caught the offspring. When the parents returned, the mother pigeon saw the plight of the young one and jumped into the net. Then the male pigeon too jumps into the net because he cannot live without the family. The bird-catcher was overjoyed. This taught him that worldly attachments only lead to one’s ruin and downfall. (9) Python—it stays at one place and swallows any creature that happens to pass that way. He would not forage for food but wait for it to come to him. This taught him to be contented with whatever comes his way. (10) Ocean—The ocean is a vast and fathomless reservoir of water but it continues to continuously receive waters from all the rivers that incessantly pour their contents into it. In spite of this, the ocean never overflows with water, and it never breaks self-imposed restrictions of not submerging the earth. This taught the sage that no matter how much knowledge and wisdom one possesses or thinks that he has, he must keep on learning throughout his life; he must have an open and receptive mind that welcomes all sorts of knowledge. Again, as all the waters being poured into the ocean from different rivers having their sources in myriad of places becoming one and homogenous with the water of the ocean, the wise and enlightened man should accept knowledge from all sources but extract their essence and convert them all into one uniform body of knowledge that would not act as a distraction or a cause of

perplexity for him but would only add to his profound knowledge and wisdom. Like the ocean remaining within its boundaries, the wise man is one who never shows off his knowledge, or becomes haughty and arrogant because of his mystical powers and knowledge. The ocean harbours a complete marine eco-system inspite of its harsh salty waters—this taught the sage to be benevolent, compassionate, magnanimous and kind towards all inspite of the harsh conditions in which he might be forced to live; he must give shelter to all who come seeking refuge with him, and take care of his dependants to the best of his ability. Like the ocean, he too must be self-contented and aloof from the world, because the ocean never expects any water from the rivers, and is unconcerned with what is happening on land. (11) Moth—it gets attracted to the fire, and as a result of his infatuation with the fire and its light it gets caught and burnt. This taught him not to be tempted by the beauty and charm, the fascinating colours and magnificent forms of this artificial world of sense objects, for they would trap him and eventually drain him of all his energy and vitality, leading to his destruction. Any sort of worldly attachments would sear and scorch his soul and rob it of its peace and bliss. The attractions of the world are like the trap that would scorch his spirit by forcing it to lead a lifetime pursuing the sense objects of the world which keep on burning him with desires and expectations that are never fully fulfilled. Jealousy, hatred, frustration, animosity, malice and greed are its natural attendants. After having spent a lifetime in realizing the material objects of the world, a day would finally come when his worn out and descript body would die. Like the fire of the flame burning the moth, the attachments with this world and desire for it would also burn the man. (12) Honey Bee—it collects nectar from numerous flowers and converts them into one homogenous honey. This taught him to imbibe knowledge from whatever source available, and then convert it into one body of knowledge that is 'truthful'. A wise man is one who draws the essence, the nectar, from all sources of knowledge, and then deduces the 'truth' from it which would of any value for him like the 'honey' produced from the nectar drawn by the bee from various flowers. It also taught him that a mendicant should also collect a little bit of food from different households instead of relying on one house. (13) Elephant—it is notorious for the sense of touch. During the mating season they rub against each other. This weakness is exploited by hunters to catch them. This weakness taught the sage that he should be wary of the pleasures obtained by touching sensual things in this world. (15) Honey Gatherer—he stealthily takes away all the honey so painstakingly collected by the honey-bee over a long period of time involving immense labour. This taught him two things—it is useless to hoard things as one day death would snatch everything away, and second it is futile to hoard without sharing things with others because one day they are bound to be snatched away from us. (15) Deer—it is by nature attracted to music, a weakness exploited by the hunter to trap it. So, one should be wary of pleasant and sweet sounds emanating from this world because poison is more often than not laced with sugar. (16) Fish—it is attracted to the hook and got caught due to its desire to eat the bait. So, the fish taught him to have control over the taste buds of his tongue. (17) Pingala—she was a prostitute. One day the saint, during his wanderings, came to take rest under the tree on a street where she lived. He watched her eagerly waiting for a customer who never turned up. She finally gave up and went to sleep with the realization that if she had spent so much time invoking the Lord present in her own bosom, she would not have to wait for the Lord so long. This taught the saint that disappointments come to us when we expect something from this world and then hope that it would provide it to us. It is therefore an exercise in futility to expect the world to give real comfort and joy to anyone. The real happiness lies inside. (18) The Kurara Bird (a species of Hawk; an Osprey)—the bird had a small piece of flesh in its beak. Seeing it, other larger and stronger birds pounced on the unsuspecting poor Kurara bird. Distraught, the Kurara suddenly realised that the cause of its torments is the piece of meat, and so it dropped it instantly from its beak. The other birds swooped on the meat and stopped pursuing the Kurara. This incident

taught the saint that if one clings on to material things in this world, no matter how desirable they are, they would never let him live in peace. It is better to drop them at the earliest; it is better to drop all worldly attachments, and instead devote time in the search of the Truth of life. (19) Child—a child becomes so engrossed in his playthings that he forgets hunger and other bodily needs. Children fight with each other during the course of playing, but soon forget everything. This taught him to remain engrossed in contemplation and meditation on the ‘self’ and enjoy this state of existence like a child remaining engrossed in its playthings and being oblivious to anything else around him in this world. A wise ascetic should also be as deeply submerged in meditation as this child playing with his toys so much so that he becomes totally oblivious of the surrounding world around him. He should be immune to the world as well as even to one’s own bodily problems. A wise man must be innocent like a child—he might get angry at others but never takes anything to heart. The child plays with toys, but suddenly throws them away and wants something new. Likewise, the wise man enjoys the world, but he never gets hooked to it at the emotional and sentimental plane. (20) A Girl—some people had come to see the girl with a proposal of marriage. She went inside the house to prepare food for them. In the course of grinding spices her bangles clashed with each other and made a disturbing noise. She removed them one by one until one remained—then there was no noise. This taught him that when the mind is distracted by so many things, the man never finds peace. So the best way to concentrate the mind is to remove all extraneous distractions in the form of numerous paths and philosophies, and instead focus on one path that would lead him to the ultimate Truth preached by the Upanishads, the Truth that is absolute, uniform and immutable. (21) An Arrow-smith—he was so engrossed in his single-pointed devotion to his work of preparing the arrows and giving them the right contours, aerodynamic shape and sharpness to their tip that he was unaware that the king’s entourage was passing by. This taught the saint the importance of single-minded pursuit of one’s goal. (22) Snake—it never makes its own hole and lives in holes made by nature or other animals. A true saint should realise that the Atma has no body of its own but lives on borrowed bodies during its sojourn in this world. Again, the snake effortlessly leaves its dead cuticle, and this taught the sage that the Atma would similarly leave this body one day at the time of the body’s death, without any effort, pain or attachment to the older body, to find a new abode for its self. Hence, one should not be unduly concerned about the gross body which is bound to be abandoned one day. Another thing that the sage learnt was that the body is not one’s true identity as the ‘truthful self’; it is merely a temporary habitat for the ‘self’. This ‘self’ is the pure consciousness known as the Atma that would move to another body when the latter becomes too old and useless for it just like the snake leaving its dead cuticle and moving out into a new skin. (23) Spider—it creates a web from its own body, moves around it, and then swallows it. Similarly, the supreme Lord has created this world, sustains it, and finally retracts it into himself. Further, the spider creates the web and remains trapped in it much like the creature who creates this artificial world by his mind and then remains trapped in it for life. And finally (24) Worm—a wasp caught hold of a worm and kept it in a hole. The wasp kept humming around this worm that was so terrified of the wasp and continuously subjected to this humming that ultimately it became wasp-like itself. Similarly, when a man concentrates upon something continuously, whether willingly or unwillingly, he would become one like the subject on which he contemplates. If he contemplates upon the world, he would become one like other mortal ignorant creatures, and if he contemplates upon something that is sublime and divine, he would become sublime and divine himself.

5. Now, the six-lettered Mantra is being narrated.

‘OM’ is the second letter of the Mantra. [The first letter obviously is ‘Daa(m)’ narrated in stanza nos. 3-4.] ‘Hrim/Hrin(g)’ is the third letter; ‘Klim/Klin(g)’ is the fourth letter; ‘Glaum/Glaun(g)’ is the fifth letter; and ‘Draa(m)’ is the sixth letter of the Mantra.

This is the six-letter Mantra of Lord Dattatreya.

[This Mantra has only Beej Mantras. Its full form is ‘Daa(m) OM Hrim/Hrin(g) Klim/Klin(g) Glaum/Glaun(g) Draa(m)’. The six letters in this case are the following Beej Mantras—Daa(m) + OM + Hrim/Hrin(g) + Klim/Klin(g) + Glaum/Glaun(g) + Draa(m) = 6.]

The mystical divine powers incorporated in this esoteric Mantra are experienced by those who meditate and contemplate upon it successfully.

This six-letter Mantra has Gayatri Chanda. Its Rishi is Sada Shiva. And its Deva is Lord Dattatreya. [5].

6. Now, the eight-letter Mantra dedicated to Lord Dattatreya is being narrated.

This Mantra is ‘Draa(m) Dattatreyaaye Namaha’. [Draa(m) + Da + Ttaa + Tre + Yaa + Ye + Na + Maha = 8. It briefly means ‘I bow before Lord Dattatreya’.]

The word ‘Dattatreya’ means one who is ‘Sata’ or truthful, ‘Anand’ or blissful, and ‘Chid’ or a personified form of consciousness and enlightenment.

The word ‘Namaha’ refers to the eclectic state when one voluntarily bows his head before someone who is most exalted and divine. This state is full of bliss and ecstasy when one feels fulfilled.

This eight-letter Mantra also has Gayatri as the Chand, Sada Shiva as the Rishi, and Dattatreya as the Devta. [The *Gayatri Chanda* has 24 letters and syllables in all which are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$. All the original hymns of the Vedas are said to be composed in this style as it is supposed to be the best and the most ancient form of composition style of hymns.]

The Kilak (peg or anchor) as well as the Beej Mantra of this Mantra is ‘Dattatreyaaye’. [That is, the divine power that infuses this Mantra with its inherent stability, and helps the worshipper to attain mystical powers relying upon it, is Lord Dattatreya himself.]

The word ‘Namaha’ is the Mantra’s Shakti or dynamic powers. [This is because it compels or inspires the worshipper to bow and submit himself before the supreme Lord voluntarily, on his own accord. It also makes others to whom it is preached to bow and submit themselves before the Lord voluntarily.] [6].

7. The twelve-letter Mantra dedicated to Lord Dattatreya is the following—

Its first letter is ‘OM’; its second letter is ‘Aim/Ain(g)’; its third letter is ‘Hrim/Hrin(g)’; and its fourth letter is ‘Krom/Kron(g)’. The fifth word is ‘Ehi’, followed by the two words ‘Dattatreya Swaha’.

This twelve-letter Mantra of Lord Dattatreya is regarded as the king amongst Mantras.

[Hence, the full Mantra is ‘OM Aim/Ain(g) Hrim/Hrin(g) Krom/Kron(g) Ehi Dattatreya Swaha’. The twelve letters are delineated as follows—OM + Aim/Ain(g) + Hrim/Hrin(g) + Krom/Kron(g) + E + Hi + Da + Ttaa + Tre + Ya + Swa + Ha = 12. It briefly means ‘OM Salutations! I offer my oblations to Lord Dattatreya who is honoured by the Beej Mantras Aim, Hrim and Krom’.]

Its Chand is Jagati; its Rishi is Sada Shiva; and Devta is obviously Lord Dattatreya. [The *Jagati Chanda* is a verse of 4 lines with 12 letters in each line, bringing the total number of letters to 48.]

The Beej (seed) of this Mantra is 'OM' (referring to the supreme transcendental Brahm). [That is, it is from Brahm that this Mantra originates; it is Brahm who is being honoured by this Mantra.]

The Shakti or dynamism of this Mantra is represented by the word 'Swaha'. [This word is pronounced while offering oblations to the chosen deity. It implies that when one has surrendered himself to the Supreme Being that he becomes entitled to enjoy the Lord's energy and powers.]

And the Kilak (peg or anchor with which this Mantra is established) is represented by holistic wisdom and enlightenment. [7].

8. [Now, how to do 'Anga Nyas'¹, or sanctifying the different parts of the body by invoking the Mantras as well as investing these parts with the powers of the Mantra is being narrated.]

The Beej Mantra 'Draa(m)' is said for doing 'Anga Nyas' on the heart (left side of the chest).

The Beej Mantras 'Hrim/Hrin(g) Klim/Klin(g)' are said for doing 'Anga Nyas' on the head.

The Beej Mantra 'Ehi' is said for doing 'Anga Nyas' on the tuft of hair on the top of the head (cranium).

The Beej Mantra 'Datta' is said for doing 'Anga Nyas' as a protective shield, called the Kavach, on the upper part of the body, stretching from across the two shoulders right up to the navel region in the abdomen and the whole length of the two hands. [In other words, 'Datta' is said while doing Anga Nyas to symbolize a shield ('Kavach') covering the body.]

The Beej Mantra 'Aatre' is said for doing 'Anga Nyas' on the two eyes-lids.

The words 'Swaha Astraaye' are said for completing the process by offering oblations to Lord Dattatreya. It symbolically empowers the body and invigorates or recharges its natural weapon ('Astra') against all attacks by evil forces. That is, it enhances the body's inherent stamina, strength, energy, vitality and vigour. It virtually acts as the invincible weapon to afford protection to the worshipper once he offers himself or submits himself to the Lord.

When successfully done, this helps the worshipper to be as empowered and divine as Lord Dattatreya himself. One must be fully acquainted with this fact along with the process and its glorious affects. [8].

[Note—¹Anga Nyas—There are two aspects of invoking any given Mantra and sanctifying the worshipper's body with them. They are known as (i) *Anga Nyas* and (ii) *Kar Nyas*. They are done with any Mantra using its seed or root called the 'Beej' of that Mantra, and are the two basic rituals of invoking the divine powers of the Mantras which are basically mystical formulas employed in religious practice, specially during occult rites and meditation of which this Khechari is a part. The word 'Kar' means hand, and 'Anga' means body, while 'Nyas' refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the body are touched and certain Mantras are said. It also means the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the invoked Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points. Therefore, Anga Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra's supernatural powers and potentials by

invoking it and reposting it on the various locations of the body and its vital parts, such as the limbs, the abdomen and chest, the throat and forehead etc.

In other words, the process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra's divine mystical powers in the worshipper's own body and make it sinless, holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take its seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is not only getting constant protection from this godhead but also has been dutifully purified and made auspicious. The body is now the symbolic seat of Divinity represented by the deity, and from the metaphysical perspective it has been now officially made the abode of Brahm as all the Gods are nothing but manifestations of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation. With the deity firmly established in the body of the worshipper, the latter is deemed to personify all the glorious, majestic, divine and magnificent virtues exemplified by the worshipped deity.

In the context of the Beej Mantras, it refers to invoking their divine cosmic dynamic powers and establishing them on various parts of the body, or assigning the patron Gods of these seed Mantras some specific part of the body so that they can establish themselves there.

Hence, doing Kar Nyas with the Beej Mantras would be to establish these symbolic Gods representing the cosmic, divine and mystical powers that are encrypted in the different Beej Mantras on the hand of the practitioner, while Anga Nyas would be to do the same on other parts of the body such as the chest, abdomen, shoulders, throat, forehead etc.

The locations on the body where Anga Nyas is done has great metaphysical significance. Besides the locations mentioned in the present Upanishad, there are other primary sites where it is usually done. According to *Ram Rahasya Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse no. 43, these ten locations are the following—Brahm-randhra (which is the hair-like slit on the top of the skull), the forehead, the central point of the eyebrows (where the symbolic third eye of wisdom is said to be located), the upper palate, the two earlobes, the heart, the navel and the two thighs = 10 sites.

Primarily there are six sites according to the same Ram Rahasya Upanishad's verse no. 23 where the primary seed or root words, called the Beej Mantras, are invoked. They are the following—the Brahm-randhra (top of the skull), the central point of the eyebrows, the heart, the navel, and the two thighs = 6 sites.

9. Now, the Mantra with sixteen letters is being narrated. This Mantra is so important and esoteric that its secrets should not be revealed to unworthy persons even if one is threatened that he would be forced to give his Pran (life), or his Mana (attention, mind and heart with its emotional and sentimental quotient), or his eyes, his ears, and even his head (by either bowing before the other or by severing it for refusing to divulge this Mantra).

It ought to be preached only to one's disciple who serves the teacher most diligently and faithfully.

Now, the details of the Mantra are being narrated as follows—

The first letter of the sixteen-lettered Mantra dedicated to Lord Dattatreya is 'OM'. The second letter is 'Aim/Ain(g)'. The third letter is 'Krom/Kron(g)'. The fourth letter is 'Klim/Klin(g)'. The fifth letter is 'Klum/Klun(g)'. The sixth letter is 'Hraam/Hraan(g)'. The seventh letter is 'Hrim/Hrin(g)'. The eighth letter is 'Hrum/Hrun(g)'. The ninth letter is 'Sau-ha'.

The tenth word is 'Dattatreyaaye' which consists of five letters (Da + Ttaa + Tre + Yaa + Ye). [Hence, the number of letters till now is $9 + 5 = 14$.]

And finally comes the word ‘Swaha’ which is the eleventh word (consisting of two letters ‘Swa’ and ‘Ha’). [Therefore, the total number of letters is now $14 + 2 = 16$.]

[The full Mantra of sixteen letters is as follows—‘OM Aim/Ain(g) Krom/Kron(g) Klim/Klin(g) Klum/Klun(g) Hraam/Hraan(g) Hrim/Hrin(g) Hrum/Hrun(g) Sau-ha Dattatreyaaye Swaha’.

The sixteen letters of this Mantra are the following—OM + Aim/Ain(g) + Krom/Kron(g) + Klim/Klin(g) + Klum/Klun(g) + Hrim/Hrin(g) + Hrim/Hrin(g) + Hrum/Hrun(g) + Sau-ha + Da + Ttaa + Tre + Yaa + Ye + Swa + Ha = 16.]

This Mantra has Gayatri as the Chanda, Sada Shiva as the Rishi, and Lord Dattatreya as the Devta (deity). Its Beej (seed part of the Mantra) is OM; its Shakti (dynamism and strength) lies in the word Swaha; and its Kilak (peg or anchor) is the word Dattatreyaaye (because it relies on the strength of Lord Dattatreya). [9].

10. The Anga Nyas with this Mantra is done as follows—

‘OM’ is said while doing Anga Nyas on the heart.

‘Klam/Klan(g) Klim/Klin(g) Klum/Klun(g)’ are pronounced while doing Anga Nyas on the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the head; the cranium).

The esoteric letter ‘Sauha’ is said while doing Anga Nyas to symbolize a shield (‘Kavach’) covering the body.

The word ‘Dattatreyaaye’ is said while doing Anga Nyas on the eyes.

The words ‘Swaha Astraaye’ are said for completing the process by offering oblations to Lord Dattatreya. It symbolically empowers the body and invigorates or recharges its natural weapon (‘Astra’) against all attacks by evil forces. That is, it enhances the body’s inherent stamina, strength, energy, vitality and vigour. It virtually acts as the invincible weapon to afford protection to the worshipper once he offers himself or submits himself to the Lord.

A worshipper who does meditation and contemplation upon Lord Dattatreya with these esoteric Mantras becomes a personified form of the virtues of Sata (truthfulness), Chid (enlightenment and consciousness), and Anand (blissfulness). He is able to attain sustained peace and happiness as well is entitled to Moksha or spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation. [10].

11. When the above Mantra (narrated in stanza no. 10) is suffixed with the Beej Mantra ‘Sauha’ it becomes a Mantra dedicated to Lord Vishnu. [This word ‘Sauha’ means ‘that is’ or ‘it refers to’. Hence, when appended to the Mantra dedicated to Lord Dattatreya it clearly means that the Mantra refers to the Lord who is known as Vishnu. That is, ‘He who is worshipped as Dattatreya is also worshipped as Vishnu’.]

When one uses this Mantra, he is deemed to be worshipping Lord Vishnu.

[The Mantra would be as follows—‘OM Aim/Ain(g) Krom/Kron(g) Klim/Klin(g) Klum/Klun(g) Hraam/Hraan(g) Hrim/Hrin(g) Hrum/Hrun(g) Sau-ha Dattatreyaaye Swaha (as narrated in stanza no. 9, followed by the word) Sauha’.] [11].

12. Now, I shall narrate the Mantra of Lord Dattatreya composed in the Anushtup Chanda style. [The *Anushtup Chanda* is a verse with 4 lines, each line having 8 letters = total 32 letters. It was first conceived by an ancient sage named Anustuv, hence it bears his name.]

All the parts of this Mantra are as epithets which describe the divine and exalted virtues of the Lord.

The Mantra is as follows—‘Dattatreya Hare Krishna Unmatt-ananddaayaka; Digambar Mune Baal-pishaach Gyan-saagar’. [It briefly means ‘Lord Dattatreya is no one else but Lord Hari (Vishnu) as well as Lord Krishna. He stays in a transcendental state marked with extreme ecstasy, and is a provider of blissfulness (to his devotees). He is in the form of an ascetic who remains naked and appears from his external appearances as if he is a wild child. [This indicates he is absolutely carefree and innocent.] He is nevertheless an ocean of Gyan or knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment and erudition.’]

Verily, this is what this Upanishad says. [12].

13. This Anushtuv Chanda has Sada Shiva as the Rishi (i.e. it was Lord Shiva who had first formulated this Mantra; he was the one who had first visualized the Mantra when he was meditating).

The Devta or the patron deity to whom this Mantra is offered is Lord Dattatreya.

Now, doing Anga Nyas is being described.

‘Dattatreya’ is said while doing Anga Nyas on the heart.

‘Hare Krishna’ is pronounced while doing Anga Nyas on the head.

‘Unmatt-ananda’ is said while doing Anga Nyas on the Shikha (the tuft of hair on the head; the cranium).

‘Daayak Mune’ is pronounced while doing Anga Nyas as the Kavach (body armour).

‘Digambar’ is pronounced while doing Anga Nyas on the eyes. [This is very significant in the sense that the worshipper asks the Lord to enable his eyes to see the ‘naked truth’ in creation, because the word ‘Digambar’ means to be naked.]

‘Pishaach Gyan-saagar’ is said while invoking the Mantra as the invincible weapon to protect and empower the body of the worshipper.

I (Brahma) have personally verified the effectiveness and dynamic powers and mystical strength of this Anushtuv Chanda (Mantra).

All sins that I might have committed even before my birth, and even those that I may have committed since my birth, are pardoned or eliminated or nullified as the great benefit of properly meditating upon and invoking the mystical powers of this Mantra.

Those who are well-versed in this knowledge can benefit others also. They obtain the spiritual reward of Moksha, i.e. they obtain liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. They indeed become highly wise and enlightened.

This is what this Upanishad asserts; this is what it expounds. Thus ends the first section. [13].

Section 2

[This Section describes the meaning of the various Beej Mantra used in Section1.]

The Vyahriti (primal word; the esoteric Beej Mantra) known as ‘OM’ refers to the Lord who is honoured and worshipped by the Mantra which has the following meaning—‘OM Salutations to Lord God Dattatreya. I bow before him.

By merely remembering him, one is able to get the four great fruits. [These are (i) ‘Artha’ or financial well-being, (ii) ‘Dharma’ or auspiciousness and righteousness,

(iii) 'Kaam' or fulfillment of desires, and (iv) 'Moksha' or emancipation and salvation; liberation and deliverance.]

The Lord removes the greatest of fears and horrors (by merely remembering him). The Lord is the giver or provider of the greatest of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment (by merely remembering him).

The Lord is a personified form of the cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma which is eternally enlightened and blissful.

The Lord's form as an ascetic is one like a child who is naked, wild, carefree and innocent.

The Lord is a great ascetic of the highest order, known as an Avadhut.

The Lord enhances the pleasure of Anusuiya (the wife of sage Atri and the mother hermitress for whom Lord Vishnu took the form of son known as Lord Dattatreya) by becoming the son of sage Atri (her husband sage).

The Lord is the fulfiller of all wishes and desires; he gives all the fruits requested by the worshipper.

Such a Lord is implied in the word 'OM'. [Obviously this means that Lord Dattatreya is Brahm personified as the word 'OM' is used to mean the supreme transcendental Brahm who is the Supreme Being.] [1].

2. The Beej Mantra or Vyahriti known as 'Hrim/Hrin(g)' refers to the Lord who removes or eliminates the snare or trap of Moha (worldly attachments, attractions and infatuations caused by delusions and ignorance). [2].

3. The Beej Mantra or Vyahriti known as 'Krom/Kron(g)' refers to the Lord who gives all sorts of Vibhuti (fame, majesty, renown, magnificence, grandeur, qualities, virtues, etc. that are great assets for any living being) to the worshipper. [3].

4. The Beej Mantra or Vyahriti known as 'Sauha' refers to the Lord who is so magnificent, kind, gracious, compassionate, munificent and benevolent that all are naturally attracted to him. [It also means that a worshipper of Lord Dattatreya acquires such divine virtues in him that the world is naturally attracted to him.] [4].

5. The Beej Mantra or Vyahriti known as 'Srim/Srin(g)' refers to the Lord who removes all sorts of grief and sorrows that burden the mind and the heart of the worshipper. [5].

6. The letter 'Ma' (as in *mother*) stands for Moha or worldly attachments, attractions and infatuations. It is also one of the forms of Beej Mantras or a Vyahriti. [6].

7. The word 'Vashat' is also a form of Beej Mantra or Vyahriti. It stands for the strength and power invested in the Mantra so as to enable it to be employed in the form of an invincible weapon. [7].

8. The words 'Vashi Kuru Vashi Kuru' (literally meaning 'to control something; to rein it in; to restrain it') is also a form of Beej Mantra or Vyahriti. It is said to request the Lord to control one's enemies and adverse circumstance. It refers to the ability of Lord Dattatreya to control everything and anything when requested to do so by his devotee. [8].

9. The Beej Mantra or Vyahriti known as ‘Hum/Hun(g)’ refers to the Lord who is able to attract as well as repel everything, no matter how formidable and awe-inspiring it might be. [9].

10. The letters pronounced by the lips such as the consonant ‘Pha’ (as in *fruit*) represent the quality of ‘Vidweshā’—i.e. malice, ill-will, hatred, enmity, jealousy etc. It is also a kind of Vyahriti because these are primal characters present in all living beings in a smaller or greater degree. [10].

11. The letters pronounced like the Sanskrit consonant ‘Tha’ (as in *ant-hill*) symbolize a grave or heavy tone employed during incantations of Mantras. It also means to be exceedingly ecstatic and exhilarated while chanting the Mantra aloud so much so that the mind loses awareness of everything else. This is also a form of Vyahriti as it is a primal form of emotion of a living being. [11].

12. The letter ‘Kha’ (as in *blockhead*; *khaki*) stands for the sky element. The sky acts as the pillar that supports the rest of the universe. The sky prevents the edifice of creation from collapsing into the nether world. All the planets stick to their designated places in the cosmos because of the support given to them and the restraint imposed on them by the buffer-effect of the sky. The sky is the primary form of support and pillar for the rest of the creation. Hence, its Beej Mantra ‘Kha’ is also a Vyahriti. [12].

13. I bow before the Lord who can kill and eliminate (my sins and enemies). I bow before the Lord who gives me prosperity and well-being. I bow before the Lord who sustains me in all possible ways.

This great Mantra can thrash to pieces (completely eliminate) all my slavery and compulsions. It can eliminate and nullify the bad affects of all the stars that are opposed to me. It can completely eliminate all my problems and troubles. It can remove all my sorrows and agonies. It can eliminate my misfortunes and poverty. It can eliminate all the diseases and torments that afflict my body and provide due nourishment and protection to it. It can give my mind and sub-conscious contentedness, peace and stability.

It is personified form of all the great Mantras; it is single Mantra representing the auspicious effects of all the great Mantras. OM Salutations! This is the best and the most beautiful and holy doctrine enunciated by this Upanishad. Thus ends the second Section (Khand). [13.]

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Section 3

1. Now we shall describe the knowledge of this Mantra’s esoteric aspect.

It is in the Anushtuv style of Chanda. Its Rishi is Sada Shiva. Its Devta (deity) is Lord Dattatreya. Its Beej (seed) is the word ‘OM’. Its Shakti (dynamism and strength) is ‘Swaha’. Its Kilak (peg or anchor) is the Beej Mantra ‘Draa’. [1].

2. Eight Mantras of Lord Dattatreya have been narrated in this Upanishad. A worshipper who meditates daily upon Lord Dattatreya and studies these Mantras is blessed and made pure and clean by the Wind God, the Fire God, the Moon God, the

Sun God, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Rudra the concluder of creation. [2].

3. Doing Japa with these Mantra is equivalent to doing Japa with a hundred thousand Gayatri Mantras and Rudra Mantras. Likewise, it is equivalent to doing Japa with ten-thousand-ten-million 'OM' Mantras.

The worshipper who does such Japa is able to provide liberation and deliverance to the spirits of his dead ancestors going back to one hundred generations, as well as the members of his family in the forthcoming generations extending to another one hundred generations.

He is deemed to be holy and purified amongst his peers and compatriots. [3].

4. Great sins committed by him, such as killing of a Brahmin or a cow, are pardoned by studying and following the teachings of this Upanishad.

He gets the auspicious fruit of doing such noble act as donating money and food-grains, as well as establishing places which provide drinking water to the thirsty.

He is exonerated from the sin of having to eat things not worthy of eating, either due to adverse and unavoidable circumstances, or inadvertently when he is unaware of what he has been offered to eat.

He is successful in practicing the different Mantras. He is indeed a true Brahmin. [4].

[Note—This fact that sins can be forgiven, or at least their evil effects can be done away with has been stressed in a number of Upanishads of the Atharva Veda tradition. For instance—Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 12; Bhasma Jabal Upanishad, Canto 1, paragraph no. 10; Canto 2, paragraph nos. 12, 21; Ganapati Upanishad, verse no. 17; Devi Upanishad, verse no. 32; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 13; Dattatreya Upanishad, Section 3, stanza 4; Sharav Upanishad, verse no. 39; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 3; Canto 4, verse no. 14; and Canto 6, verse nos. 8-9, 13-18; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse no. 12.]

5. The esoteric knowledge of this Upanishad should only be preached to a devoted disciple. This knowledge gives countless benefits and rewards. It provides sure Jivan Mukti or spiritual liberation and deliverance to its practitioner even while he is alive in this world and goes about doing his normal duties.

This magnificent and great Dattatreya Upanishad was revealed by Lord Narayan himself to Brahma, the creator. Amen! [5].

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----Shanti Paath----

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Chapter 31

Garud Upanishad/Garudo-panishad

This Upanishad is dedicated to Garud, the legendary bird Heron or Eagle which is regarded as the celestial vehicle of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation. Garud is no ordinary bird, but has divinity and greatness inherent in him, as otherwise he would not have been selected by Vishnu to be his mount. Being the only God in the closest proximity of Vishnu, Garud acquires special significance for the devotees of Lord Vishnu. He is invoked to neutralize all sorts of negative and horrifying circumstances in this world which resemble the poison or toxin contained in the bite of a venomous serpent that torment the spiritual aspirant endlessly. This special virtue and power of Garud is derived from the fact that he is regarded as the greatest foe of the poisonous snake. Therefore, the knowledge of the Mantras dedicated to Lord Garud are directly related to the mystical occult powers that help one to overcome the poison of snake-bite. This knowledge is called 'Garud Vidya'.

The Upanishad enumerates and describes in detail all the different Mantras pertaining to Lord Garud, how to do Japa with them, how to use them in practice (verse nos. 2-8), and what are the great benefits of invoking and mastering these Mantras (verse nos. 12-25) on the same pattern as done in the other Upanishads dedicated to different deities. The divine form of Lord Garud is also narrated (in verse nos. 5-7).

In the course of its narration, the Upanishad lists the names of different types of snakes (verse nos. 5 and 24) along with the exceptionally magnificent and miraculous power of Garud to neutralize all types of poisons (verse nos. 9-24). The worshipper of Lord Garud becomes immune from the bite of venomous insects and reptiles (verse no. 25).

This Upanishad was first revealed to sage Narad by Brahma, the creator. It was then passed down the line of sages and seers for the benefit of the creatures of this creation (as listed in verse no. 1).

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----Shanti Paath----

Please see appendix no. 1 for the English of this Shanti Paath.

1. Now we shall describe the great mystical knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. It is known as 'Gaarud Brahm Vidya'.

This knowledge was first preached to sage Narad by the creator Brahma. Narad revealed it to Brihatsen. Brihatsen taught it to Indra (the king of Gods). Indra preached it to sage Bharadwaj. And Bharadwaj taught it to those disciples who were called 'Jivat-kaam', i.e. the ones who were eager to acquire knowledge of the Divine in all its aspects and make their life worthwhile by helping others to overcome their worldly torments and miseries. (1).

2. The 'Rishi' (the sage who had first visualized or formulated the Mantras) of this Garud Maha Vidya (the great mystical knowledge related to Lord Garud) is the

creator Brahma. [This is obviously so because Brahma was the one who had first revealed it to Narad—see verse no. 1.]

Its composing style is known as ‘Gayatri Chanda’. [A ‘Chanda’ is the style in which the hymn was composed, and ‘Gayatri’ is the Chanda that has 24 letters and syllables in all. They are divided into 3 steps or stanzas of 8 letters or syllables each. Hence the total is $3 \times 8 = 24$. All the original hymns of the Vedas are said to be composed in this style as it is supposed to be the best and the most ancient form of composition style for hymns.]

The Devta (the deity to whom a particular hymn is dedicated) is obviously Lord Maha (great) Garud.

This Mantra (hymn) is invoked and used for the purpose of pleasing Lord Garud as well as doing Japa (repetition) with it so that one can overcome all the poisons and toxins (which are metaphors for all sorts of worldly torments, horrors, agonies and miseries, as well as evil consequences for sins and misdeeds) that torment and horrify the worshipper (2).

3. [Now, the Mantras and the process of doing Kar Nyas as well as Anga Nyas¹ with them are being described.]

The first Mantra is ‘OM Namō Bhagvate Angustaabhyam Namaha’. [Briefly, it means ‘I bow before Brahm (OM) and salute the Lord by touching my thumb’.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the first finger in both the hands.

The second Mantra is ‘Sri Maha-Garudaaye Tarjanibhyam Swaha’. [Briefly, it means ‘I offer my respects and oblations, by saying ‘Swaha’, to the great Lord Garud by touching my thumb with the first finger’.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the first finger in both the hands.

The third Mantra is ‘Pakshindraaye Madhyamaabhyam Vashat’. [Briefly, it means ‘I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra ‘Vashat’, to the great Lord who is the King of Birds by touching my thumb with the middle finger’.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the middle finger in both the hands.

The fourth Mantra is ‘Sri Vishnu-Vallabhaaye Anaamikaabhyam Hum’. [Briefly, it means ‘I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra ‘Hum’, to the great Lord who is very dear to Lord Vishnu by touching my thumb with the third finger’.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the third finger in both the hands.

The fifth Mantra is ‘Trelokya-paripujyataaye Kanishtikaabhyam Vaushat’. [Briefly, it means ‘I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra ‘Vaushat’, to the great Lord who is worshipped, honoured and respected in the three worlds (i.e. in the terrestrial world, the heavens and the nether worlds), by touching my thumb with the fourth finger’.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should touch the thumb with the fourth finger in both the hands.

The sixth and the final Mantra is ‘Ugra-bhyankar-kaalaanal-rupaaye Kartalkarpristabhyam Phat’. [Briefly, it means ‘I offer my respects and oblations, by saying the Beej Mantra ‘Phat’, to the great Lord who is most ferocious, aggressive, fearsome, and like ‘death’ itself personified, by placing the back of both my palms against each other (by crossing my hands at the wrist-joint)’.] When this Mantra is said, the worshipper should place the back of the palms against each other by crossing the hands at the wrist-joint.

Each time these Mantras are said, the six cardinal points of the body, such as the heart etc., should be touched by the thumb and the relevant finger. This is known as 'Anga Nyas'. [The points are the heart, the forehead, the cranium, the eyes, the shoulders and the navel.] (3).

[Note—¹*Anga Nyas* and *Kar Nyas* with Mantras—There are two aspects of invoking any given Mantra and sanctifying the worshipper's body with them. They are known as (i) *Anga Nyas* and (ii) *Kar Nyas*. They are done with any Mantra using its seed or root called the 'Beej' of that Mantra, and are the two basic rituals of invoking the divine powers of the Mantras which are basically mystical formulas employed in religious practice, specially during occult rites and meditation of which this Khechari is a part. The word 'Kar' means hand, and 'Anga' means body, while 'Nyas' refers to an invocation, or vesting or assigning any entity with something, or entrusting an entity with some trust and responsibility; to deposit, repose, trust, pledge, entrust, keep, place, etc. This is a ritualistic process in which certain parts of the body are touched and certain Mantras are said. It also means the purification of the individual parts of the body and the installation of the individual letter of the invoked Mantra, complete with its full potentials, at those points. Therefore, Anga Nyas is a process of pledging utmost faith and conviction on the divine and holy Mantra's supernatural powers and potentials by invoking it and reposting it on the various locations of the body and its vital parts, such as the limbs, the abdomen and chest, the throat and forehead etc.

In other words, the process of doing Anga Nyas is to symbolically establish the Mantra's divine mystical powers in the worshipper's own body and make it sinless, holy, auspicious, sanctified and empowered. The deity being worshipped is symbolically requested to come and take its seat in the body, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is not only getting constant protection from this godhead but also has been dutifully purified and made auspicious. The body is now the symbolic seat of Divinity represented by the deity, and from the metaphysical perspective it has been now officially made the abode of Brahm as all the Gods are nothing but manifestations of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Authority of creation. With the deity firmly established in the body of the worshipper, the latter is deemed to personify all the glorious, majestic, divine and magnificent virtues exemplified by the worshipped deity.

Anga Nyas is therefore the process of ritualistic worship by which certain fixed points in the body are designated where the chosen deity is mentally invoked through the specific Mantra. This envisions that the mystical divine powers of the patron God or deity being worshipped by the Mantra are mentally invested in these fixed cardinal points of the body, thereby empowering the aspirant with their stupendous potentials as well as symbolically assigning the body to the tutelary God or deity to whom the particular Mantra belongs for his protection and blessing.

In the context of the Beej Mantras, it refers to invoking their divine cosmic dynamic powers and establishing them on various parts of the body, or assigning the patron Gods of these seed Mantras some specific part of the body so that they can establish themselves there.

Hence, doing Kar Nyas with the Beej Mantras would be to establish these symbolic Gods representing the cosmic, divine and mystical powers that are encrypted in the different Beej Mantras on the hand of the practitioner, while Anga Nyas would be to do the same on other parts of the body such as the chest, abdomen, shoulders, throat, forehead etc. The locations on the body where Anga Nyas is done has great metaphysical significance. Usually these six cardinal points are the following—the two legs, two hands, one head and one waist region. But according to the *Shuk Rahasya Upanishad*, verse no. 20 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, they are the thumb, the tip of the fingers, the heart, the shoulders, the tuft on the top of the head, and the palm of the hand. There are prescribed ways of invoking the Mantras,

and when done in a proper way it empowers the ordinary body of the worshipper with extraordinary divine and mystical powers.

According to Ram Rahasya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, verse no. 43, these ten locations are the following—Brahm-randhra (which is the hair-like slit on the top of the skull), the forehead, the central point of the eyebrows (where the symbolic third eye of wisdom is said to be located), the upper palate, the two earlobes, the heart, the navel and the two thighs = 10 sites.

Primarily there are six sites according to the same Ram Rahasya Upanishad's verse no. 23 where the primary seed or root words, called the Beej Mantras, are invoked. They are the following—the Brahm-randhra (top of the skull), the central point of the eyebrows, the heart, the navel, and the two thighs = 6 sites.

According to its verse no. 83-85, there are five sites for doing Anga Nyas for a warrior. These are heart (left chest), forehead/central point of the eyebrows, the top of the head where the tuft of hair is located and which is the site of the Brahm-randhra, the body armour or shield, and the arms and armaments of the aspirant warrior. This is also followed in the worship of Shakti, the divine dynamic powers of creation, such as Durga, Parvati and Saraswati (the goddess of speech, knowledge and wisdom). Refer also Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad, verse no. 4 of Krishna Yajur Veda.

However, the Dattatreya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Section 1, Canto 1, stanza no. 8 says that the Mantra of Lord Dattatreya (a form of Vishnu) are used for doing Anga Nyas on the following parts of the body—viz. the heart, the head (forehead), the cranium (top of the head), the upper part of the body including the two shoulders and the arms, and the eyes.

The human body is a microcosm of the cosmos, because according to the genesis of creation, the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-inclusive manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm, had metamorphosed in the shape of the human body, and therefore this body is a manifestation of the entire creation including all its Gods and all their astounding potentials.

The creation has been visualised as having three divisions which form the so-called three worlds—viz. the heavens represented by the head of the human body where the Brahm-randhra, forehead and the eyebrows are located; the terrestrial world or the earth symbolised by the heart and the navel; and the nether or lower world by the legs and the two thighs. It must be noted that the two earlobes stand for the two extreme directions of the cosmic globe. So, when the aspirant does Anga Nyas with any Mantra on these specific points, he symbolically purifies these points on his body and empowers them with the mystical and ethereal powers of the powerful forces of Nature which these Mantras embody as mystical formulas encrypting astounding dynamic energy and forces of creation. This is a perception which implies that the ethereal and mystical powers and potentials of the Mantras representing the stupendous forces of Nature that control creation, right from its conception to its development, growth, expansion, sustenance and conclusion, are invoked and established throughout the breadth and length of this visible creation manifested in the form of the body of the aspirant. In other words, the aspirant hopes that he would be empowered with all the glorious virtues and auspicious powers and stupendous potentials and majestic authority vested in the Viraat Purush at the cosmic level.

But at the same time this visualization of the body being a manifestation of the Viraat Purush carries a load of noble responsibility with it. If the worshipper is enlightened and wise enough so as to be doing the Anga Nyas with full understanding of its metaphysical and spiritual import, then he must also realise that he is not an ordinary mortal creature who indulges in the pursuit of worldly pleasures and comforts, or who thinks that success in this material world is the ultimate goal and criterion of success in life. On the other hand, he should endeavour to live a life of exemplary sacrifice and service, devoting his time on researching the ultimate Truth of his own self as well as the rest of creation; he must endeavour to fine out the way

to free himself from the endless cycle of birth and death, and ensure that he gets final emancipation and salvation in this very life itself. He must aim and find the source that would give him eternal peace and happiness as well as contentedness and bliss of fulfillment. Otherwise he would be wasting his precious time and energy in worthless and meaningless perfunctory rituals.]

The Dakshin Murti Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 7, 9, 11-12, 14 describe the five forms of Shiva and how the five Beej Mantras dedicated to the different divine qualities that Shiva personifies are employed in doing Anga Nyas.

The Surya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 1, says that the six basic vowel sounds of the Sanskrit language are used to do Shadanga Nyas when the worshipper prays to the Sun God by invoking the Mantras narrated in this particular Upanishad.

The Shuk Rahasya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its verse no. 20 describes how the divine Mantra OM is used for this purpose.]

4. These Mantras should be tied in by saying (uttering) the three primal words, known as the Vyahritis, which are 'Bhu', 'Bhuvaha' and 'Swaha' representing the terrestrial world and its mortal creatures, the sky and its inhabitant creatures, and the heavens with their Gods and Spirits respectively. These Vyahritis should be prefixed with OM which is the greatest of Vyahritis.

[Thus, though not specifically mentioned in this Upanishad, the six Mantras of verse no. 3 would become as follows—

- (i) 'OM Bhu Bhuvaha Swaha OM Namō Bhagwate Angustaabhyam Namaha'.
- (ii) 'OM Bhu Bhuvaha Swaha Sri Maha-Garudaaye Tarjanibhyam Swaha'.
- (iii) 'OM Bhu Bhuvaha Swaha Pakshindraaye Madhyamaabhyam Vashat'.
- (iv) 'OM Bhu Bhuvaha Swaha Sri Vishnu-Vallabhaaye Anaamikaabhyam Hum'.
- (v) 'OM Bhu Bhuvaha Swaha Trelorkya-paripujyataaye Kanishtikaabhyam Vaushat'.
- (vi) 'OM Bhu Bhuvaha Swaha Ugra-bhyankar-kaalaanal-rupaaye Kartalkarpristabhyam Phat'.] (4).

5. [This verse is more in the form of a paragraph than being exactly like a verse in a poetry.]

Now, 'Dhyan', i.e. the process of meditation and contemplation upon the divine form of Lord Garud, is being described.

'The Lord's right leg is shaped like the symbol known as 'Swastika'. [The thigh bone, the shin bone and the foot are held at right angles to each other.]

The left leg is folded-in from the knee-joint. [The calf touches the rear of the thigh.]

The Lord holds both his hands in the Mudra (posture) known as 'Pranaam'. [It is sign of showing respect to others, and to welcome them. To do Pranaam, the person holds the hands in such a position that the flat surfaces of the two palms of the hands are placed against each other, with the fingers of one hand also touching the corresponding fingers of the other hand as the hands are bent at the elbow and held together in front of the chest.]

Lord Garud is very dear ('Vallabha') to Lord Hari (Vishnu).

He (Garud) holds the serpent known as 'Anant' in his left hand by wrapping it round his left wrist like a band.

The serpent known as 'Vasuki' is draped across his chest like a sacred thread.

The serpent known as 'Takshak' is worn by him like a girdle around the waist.

The serpent known as 'Karkot' is placed around his neck as if it is a garland or a necklace.

The serpent known as 'Padma' adorns his right ear like an ornament (an ear-ring), while the serpent known as 'Maha-Padma' adorns his left ear like another ornament (another ear-ring).

He wears the serpent known as 'Shankha' on his head like a crown, and the serpent known as 'Gulik' around his arms like an arm-band.

The two serpents known as 'Paundra' and 'Kaalika' are used as whisks.

He is being cheerfully served by such serpents as 'Ela' and 'Putrak'.

The Lord's eyes are coloured 'Kapil' (reddish-brown), and they glow with the radiance of pure gold. His arms are long. His shoulders are broad.

He is adorned by ornaments made up of serpents of various kinds.

His complexion is radiant like pure gold up to the knees, while the area around the waist is white like that of snow. The throat is red like 'Kumkum' (saffron mixed with vermillion). His face has the radiance of hundreds of full moons. The tip of his nose and mouth (lips) has a bluish hue.

He wears large ear-rings.

His mouth is horrifyingly fearful with ferocious jaws.

He wears a most brilliant crown on his head.

He has Kumkum smeared on his body, giving it a reddish tinge. His face is fair in complexion like the lily or lotus flower and the moon.

Oh the mount of Lord Vishnu! I bow before you. Please always take care of my welfare, protection and sustenance.'

The worshipper should meditate daily upon this divine form of Lord Garud, which is magnificently adorned with the ornaments of serpents, three times a day, i.e. at dawn, at noon and at dusk.

When Lord Garud is pleased with this worship he neutralizes all the poisons that may be tormenting the worshipper just as easily as fire burns a heap (bale) of cotton (5).

6. 'OM Namō Bhagwate Sri Maha-Garud'. [Briefly, it means 'I bow most reverentially to the Lord who is known as the Great Garud, the majestic Lord in the form of an Eagle or a Heron'.]

He is the king of birds. He is very dear to Lord Vishnu. He is worshipped by all the three worlds (i.e. by the terrestrial world, the heavenly world, and the nether world). He is very terrible, awe-inspiring, formidable, violent and sharp like the fire of the dooms day. He possesses hard, strong and unbreakable nails, beak, teeth and jaws. His tail is very sturdy and stiff. And the wings as well as the rest of his body are equally strong and sturdy.

You are most welcome, oh Lord Garud. Come and take your exalted seat that is reserved for you.

Remove or eliminate or neutralize the poison (in the form of negativity, unrighteousness, un-holiness, inauspiciousness, evilness and sins) that is being spread by those who are vile, wicked and evil.

Eliminate or neutralize the negative and horrifying consequences that accrue by even touching such poison. [That is, protect me even from the contact of such bad people.]

Remove from my vicinity and neutralize the venom of poisonous snakes (and other such reptiles and creatures) that creep or crawl.

Remove from my vicinity and neutralize even the poison that might be hidden from my sight. [That is, please protect me from poison of all kinds, whether it is visible or invisible.]

Destroy or neutralize all kind of poisons. Destroy them; burn them; neutralize them; eliminate them. Reduce all kinds of poisons to ashes (by burning them).

For this purpose, I (the worshipper) am offering this oblation to you (Garud) by saying 'Hum Phat Swaha'.

[After saying the above hymns to invoke the formidable power of Garud to neutralize all the bad effects of poisons of all kinds, the worshipper offers his oblations to the Lord by saying the Beej Mantra 'Hum Phat', which, simply put, means to crush anything and beat it to pulp or break it into smithereens. Here, it is the poison and its horrifying effects that are sought to be crushed and completely eliminated. Then, to wind-up the worship and the process of offering oblations, the word 'Swaha' is pronounced. 'Swaha' is believed to be the mouth of the sacred fire through which the latter accepts all offerings offered to the concerned deity by the worshipper.] (6).

7. You (Garud) are as radiant and splendorous as the full moon. [Or, you are surrounded by a divine halo that resembles the brilliant silvery light that surrounds the disc of the full moon.]

The sun is deemed to be present in your clenched fists. When you clench your fists, they radiate a high intensity burst of dynamic energy that resembles the disc of the sun in the sky which shines blindingly with an enormous amount of energy and splendour. [That is, when you clench your fists in preparation to strike or show your dynamic powers, they appear to be radiating so much energy and dynamism that one is extremely terrified to look at it just like one is terrified to look at the sun with the naked eye for fear of getting blinded.]

Similarly, the different Mudras (various postures of your body) that you adopt resemble the different contours of the earth. [The earth is not a smooth spherical ball. It is full of the profoundest variations in contours or features that one can ever imagine—for instance, there are sky-touching mountain peaks and ridges as well as deep gorges and valleys; there are flat lands as well as undulating mountain ranges; there are vast stretches of parched and dry land in the form of barren deserts on the one hand, and marshy and swampy land on the other hand; there are rivers and oceans; there are rich vibrant forests consisting of tall evergreen trees that are extremely attractive and enchanting, as well as algae, fungi, shrubs and plants of bland nature and stunted growth that do not seem to attract any attention towards themselves, or even endless stretches of barren rocks and boulders. The metaphor here is to indicate that like the features of the earth which are never the same at two places, the various Mudras in which Lord Garud sits are also never the same; they vary from time to time, and each time the Lord sits he adopts a new posture.]

Oh Lord Maha (Great) Garud! Please be kind to eliminate and neutralize all sorts of poisons. For this purpose, I am offering this oblation to you by saying the Beej Mantra 'Hum Phat Swaha'. (7).

8. 'OM Kship Swaha'. [The worshipper invokes the divine glory of Brahm, the Supreme Being, to offer his oblations to Lord Garud by saying OM and Swaha respectively. He requests Garud to throw away all the poisons far away from him so as to protect him from their horrible effects.] (8).

9. OM Salutations! All sorts of poisons that are being produced and have been accumulated over time in this world, poisons that are harmful to the other creatures ('Tatkaari') as well as for me ('Matkaari'), are neutralized and destroyed by the countering effects of the great knowledge that is narrated in this Upanishad. This is done by invoking the stupendous powers and dynamic energy of Lord Garud.

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison, for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects. [It is just like the case of one army being defeated by another army which is stronger than the first, or the case of the life-threatening effects of one wrong medicine being neutralized by another medicine that is its self a great poison if taken independently. This principle is used in the field of Homeopathy for the treatment of diseases, and also in the theory of vaccination.]

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my respects and oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (9).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 12-24 also.]

10. OM Namō Bhagwate Maha-Garudaaye! ['OM Salutations! I bow before the Lord known as the Great Garud'.]

He is the vehicle (mount) of Lord Vishnu. He is worshipped and honoured in the three worlds (i.e. in the terrestrial world, the heavenly world, and the nether world).

His strong, sturdy and sharp nails and beak are as strong, sturdy and sharp as Vajra, the invincible weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

His body is adorned by wings which are equally strong and sturdy.

Oh Lord Garud! Please come; you are welcomed by me.

Oh Lord, please enter, and be kind to disperse, scatter away, throw away, neutralize, destroy or eliminate ('Chhindhi-Chhindhi') all poison that is present here.

For this purpose, I am offering this oblation to you by saying the Beej Mantra 'Hum Phat Swaha'. (10).

11. You (Lord Garud) have beautiful and magnificent wings. You are as dynamic as the Fire God.

The 'Stoms' (hymns or prayers that are incanted) having three stanzas or lines, known as the 'Trivitra Stoms', are your head, while the 'Stoms' known as 'Gayatra' are your eyes.

The two wings of yours personify the two types of 'Saams' (hymns that are sung) known as 'Brihat' and 'Rathanthar'.

The 'Yagya' (fire sacrifice or any other religious practice or deed) is represented by your inner-self where the Atma, the soul, lives. [That is, internally you are as holy and pure as the sacred fire of the sacrifice or the essential philosophy behind any religious act.]

All the 'Chandas' (style of composition of the hymns of the Vedas) are personified in the form of various parts of your divine body.

Your name is 'Yajur' signifying the fact that you personify the Yajur Veda itself.

The Saam known as 'Vamdeo' is your body, and the Saam known as 'Yagaayagi' is your tail. [That is, your body and tail are a personified form, and therefore as holy and sanctified, as these two hymns.]

The fire known as 'Dhishnaya' is personified as your nails. [That is, your nails are as scorching as this fire.]

Oh Lord Garud with beautiful wings! Please rise up and move up high in the sky towards the sun and attain the heaven (11).

12. This divine and most esoteric knowledge was revealed in some ancient time on the new moon and the full moon days.

All sorts of great poisons that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud.

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (12).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 13-24.]

13. Oh Tatt-strayam! [Salutations to the knowledge and the deity of this knowledge which together are able to destroy and neutralize the horrifying effects of the most venomous of poisons and toxins.]

All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Anantak' serpent or a messenger of 'Anantak' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Anantak' is one of the forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (13).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-24.]

14. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Vasuki' serpent or a messenger of 'Vasuki' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Vasuki' is another form of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (14).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-13, 15-24.]

15. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Takshak' serpent or a messenger of 'Takshak' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Takshak' is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (15).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-14, 16-24.]

16. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Karkotak' serpent or a messenger of 'Karkotak' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the

mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Karkotak' is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (16).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-15, 17-24.]

17. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Padmak' serpent or a messenger of 'Padmak' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Padmak' is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (17).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-16, 18-24.]

18. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Maha-Padmak' serpent or a messenger of 'Maha-Padmak' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Maha-Padmak' is the senior serpent to the one known as Padmak, and it is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to

poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (18).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-17, 19-24.]

19. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Shankhak' serpent or a messenger of 'Shankhak' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Shankhak' is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (19).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-18, 20-24.]

20. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Gulik' serpent or a messenger of 'Gulik' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Gulik' is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (20).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-19, 22-24.]

21. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Paundrakaalik' serpent or a messenger of 'Paundrakaalik' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Paundrakaalik' is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (21).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-20, 22-24.]

22. All sorts of great poisons that either may be a personified form of 'Naagak' serpent or a messenger of 'Naagak' that harm other creatures as well as me are destroyed and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic eliminating effects of the mystical and esoteric knowledge as narrated in this Upanishad dedicated to Lord Garud. ['Naagak' is one of the many forms of venomous serpents in creation.]

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (22).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-21, 23-24.]

23. All sorts of great poisons that are represented by poisonous creatures such as the spider, small or big, the scorpion, the fast moving serpents, or any other kind of harmful and poisonous creatures that exist in this world consisting of mobile as well as immobile things, whether such poisonous creatures harm other innocent creatures of this creation or harm me who have done nothing wrong—all such poisons and their bearers (i.e. the poisonous creatures cited here as instances) are eliminated and destroyed by the dynamic powers inherent in this esoteric knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud as narrated in this Upanishad.

The most horrible of poisons that are produced and have accumulated over time in this world are neutralized and destroyed by the auspicious and countering

effects of this esoteric and divine knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud. This knowledge as outlined in this Upanishad is so profound and a very powerful poison itself that no other poison can stand its onslaught. It is able to neutralize all other poisons and toxins effectively. This esoteric and mystical knowledge pertaining to poisons and how to neutralize them is in its self a great poison for the simple reason that poison needs another poison to counter its ill and horrifying effects.

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (23).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-22, 24.]

24. All the great serpents in creation, such as Anantak, Vasuki, Takshak, Karkotak, Padmak, Maha-Padmak, Shankhak, Gulik, Paundrakaalik etc. along with their ancestors and descendents, other poisonous and ferocious creatures that bite and spread poison, such as the ones having a poisonous beak, poisonous teeth, poisonous jaws, poisonous body or poisonous tail, other poisonous creatures that roam around everywhere in this world and spread poison by their bite, such as the poisonous scorpion, the poisonous spider, the poisonous rat, the poisonous musk-rat or mole, the poisonous lizard, the poisonous ants, insects, worms and maggots that infest households and live in crevices in the floor, the wall etc., the white-ant, those poisonous and harmful creatures that live on plants, trees and twigs, their leaves, stems, bark, roots, branches, flowers and fruits etc., those poisonous and harmful creatures that live in holes in trees or earth, other poisonous and harmful animals such as monkeys, dogs, cats, jackals, lions, wild boar, those harmful creatures that are born from an embryo (like mammals), or from an egg (like birds), or from seeds (like trees and herbs), or from sweat and slime (such as leech), other harmful creatures that attack either with a weapon held in hand (like one's enemy who hits with a baton or club) or by throwing the weapon (such as an arrow or spear), other poisonous and harmful creatures that live in festering wounds and injuries, all sorts of poisons which may be either naturally produced in Nature or are artificially made, all ferocious and cruel creatures that torment and terrify others without rhyme or reason such as ghosts, phantoms, ogres, vampires, goblins, demons, Satan etc.—no matter who they are and what type of poison or toxin it is, all of them are destroyed, crushed, eliminated and neutralized by the auspicious and dynamic energy and force of this esoteric knowledge pertaining to Lord Garud as narrated in this Upanishad.

This knowledge is so powerful that it sucks and destroys up all sorts of poisons or poisonous creatures that cause harm to others as well as to me. It crushes them; it vanquishes them; it burns them; it reduces them to ashes; it neutralizes them.

Let this great knowledge and its patron deity (Lord Garud) completely eliminate them all, destroy them, kill them and neutralize them all.

This esoteric knowledge destroys the most ferocious of poisons, whether they are out in the open and clearly visible (such as rats, lizards, snakes etc.) or are hidden from view (such as bed-bugs hidden in mattresses, or germs and viruses that infect wounds).

In helping to neutralize the horrifying poisons, this knowledge has proved to be as effective as the Vajra, the invincible and formidable weapon of Indra, the king of Gods.

I offer my (respects and) oblations to this great knowledge as well as to Vajra by saying 'Swaha'. (24).

[Note—Refer verse nos. 9, 12-23.]

25. A worshipper who reads, studies or hears this Upanishad on the day of the new moon is not bitten by serpents as long as he lives.

Success in practicing this mystical esoteric knowledge (that enables a person to neutralize the effects of snake bites or other poisonous creatures) is achieved by initiating eight other Brahmins in to this knowledge and using herbs and other medicinal twigs for the purpose of neutralizing the poison.

[The edict necessitating initiation of eight Brahmins is to propagate this knowledge, because in ancient times a great number of people perhaps used to die due to bite of snakes and other poisonous creatures due to lack of modern medical treatment. The term 'Brahmin' should not be taken too literally, for it implies anyone who may be interested to learn and practice this knowledge whereby he can serve humanity by anti-doting poisons and it's attending sufferance. The herbs and other medicinal plants were used for their great antidotal properties that countered the horrific effects of the poison.]

If a hundred Brahmins are initiated, then the person who practices this esoteric knowledge becomes so mystically empowered that he can neutralize the poison by merely his magical sight. [That is, if he merely sees a man bitten by a poisonous snake, the bitten man begins to recover as if by magic, such strong and effective becomes his sight. His sight acquires such mystical powers that they help to burn the affected cells and prevent the poison from spreading and harming the other parts of the body. In modern age we have examples of such rays that can help burn cancerous tissues in the body so that the rest of the body is prevented from undergoing more harm.]

If a thousand Brahmins are initiated, then the person who practices this esoteric knowledge becomes so mystically empowered that he can neutralize the poison by merely determining to do so. [That is, he would not even need to see the patient or use any kind of herbs in order to antidote the poison.]

The poisonous effect of a serpent's bite is not so easily countered or neutralized or anti-doted by merely the use of water, herbs, medicinal twigs and wood or bark of such medicinal plants (without the help of magical occult powers obtained by mastering the technique of doing so by becoming an expert in this Upanishad's esoteric knowledge). [That is, poison cannot be neutralized by merely washing the wound with water or applying any herbal medicines. Some divine intercession is necessary to actually give relief from the poison. And the Mantras of this Upanishad come in very handy here.]

This is how the creator Brahma had revealed this great Upanishad to the assembled sages and seers for the general good of the creation at large. Amen! (25).

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---Shanti Paath---

-----*****THE END-----*****-----

Appendix no. 1

The Śānti Pāṭha of Atharva Veda:

ॐ_भद्रं_कर्णेभिः_शृणुयाम_देवा_भद्रं_पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः_।_।_
 स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाꣳसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम_देवहितं_यदायुः_।।_
 स्वस्ति_न_इन्द्रो_वृद्धश्रवाः_स्वस्ति_नः_पूषा_विश्ववेदाः_।_
 स्वस्ति_नस्ताक्ष्यो_अरिष्टनेमिः_स्वस्ति_नो_बृहस्पतिर्दधातु_।।_
 ॐ_शान्तिः_!_शान्तिः_!!_शान्तिः_!!!_

om bhadraṃ karṇēbhiḥ śṛṇuyāma dēvāḥ bhadraṃ paśyēmākṣabhiryajatrāḥ /
 sthiraṅgaistuṣṭuvāṁsastanūbhirvyāśēma dēvahitaṃ yadāyuh //
 svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḥ svasti naḥ pūṣā viśvavēdāḥ /
 svasti nastākṣyo ariṣṭanēmiḥ svasti no bṛhaspatirdadhātu //

om śāntiḥ! śāntiḥ!! śāntiḥ!!!

The Shanti Paath has the following meaning—‘OM salutations! The disciples who are studying the scriptures at the place of their Guru (teacher, moral preceptor, guide) remember the Gods and pray to them for the welfare and good of their teacher, their fellow students as well as the human race as a whole— ‘Oh Gods! Let us hear auspicious and noble things with our ears. Criticism of others, finding faults with them, useless gossip, cynicism, cursing and use of foul as well as abusive language, profanities, expletives and all other types of non-righteous, uncultured, uncivilised and unwarranted sinful words should not enter our ears. Let our lives be devoted to and focused on the Lord God! Let us spend our time in his worship and honour. Not only the ears, but let our eyes too see good things only. Let not our eyes be ever attracted towards or enchanted by any sight or scene that is inauspicious, unrighteous, un-virtuous, detestable, abhorable, corruptible and degrading, perverting or depraving for the mind-heart-intellect complex. In short, let our views and sights be pure. Let our body, every part of it, be able, strong and healthy so that we can be fit enough to praise, worship, honour, serve and revere the Lord God (because an unfit, diseased and decrepit body is a great burden and hindrance in life of the seeker/aspirant). Let our age and life not be spent in the gratification of the sense organs or enjoyment of the materialistic world, or be frittered away in indolence and lethargy. Our lives should be used for the work of the Lord God (i.e., we can do righteous and selfless deeds of all kinds). They whose fame is spread in all the direction, i.e., the king of Gods named Indra, the all-knowing Pusha, the bird who can eliminate/remove all sorrows, misers, distresses, troubles and tribulations of all kinds, i.e. Garud, the legendary eagle/heron, as well as the Lord of wisdom and intelligence, Lord Brihaspati—all of them are the various manifestations and extension of the Lord’s excellence, majesty, magnificent glories, stupendous powers and supreme dignity. Let

them all sustain, enhance and nourish all that which is good for us. Their grace and kindness will give well-being and auspiciousness to all the creatures including us. Let all the torments pertaining to this existence be calmed down. [The so-called three 'Traitaps' are the torments that the creature is subjected to due to his body such as illness, old age; due to other worldly creatures such as fear from the king, thieves etc.; due to the malignant stars and opposed Gods.]

Let us have peace. Let us have peace. Let us have peace.'

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Appendix no. 2

Pran Sukta

The 'Pran Sukta' is the fourth Sukta (hymn) of the eleventh Kanda (Canto or Section) of the Atharva Veda. It has a total of twenty-six verses. In relation to the Upanishads, the word 'Pran' has a universal application and a special relevance and significance. Technically the word 'Pran' means anything that injects or infuses 'life-consciousness' in this creation. So all those entities that do so, and upon which life depends in this creation, come under the ambit and definition of 'Pran'. For instance, such eclectic entities as Brahm, Atma and the vital winds are implied when we use the term Pran. Since Pran also means something which is very dear to someone, something that is the essence and the fundamental basis or the foundation of everything else, these entities fit in very well with the definition of Pran. Nothing can live or survive without the Pran. It is the Pran that gives happiness, joy and cheer to the world. Personified as a supreme God, it is the center of creation around which the existence of the rest of the Gods personifying other factors of creation rests. The Pran is like the hub of the wheel of creation.

In the context of the present volume of the Atharva Veda Upanishads, this 'Pran Sukta' has special relevance to the Prashna Upanishad which is its Chapter 1. In this Upanishad, the importance and significance of the Pran in its different connotations has been explained.

In this Sukta, Pran, the life-conscious factor in this creation revealed in the form of 'vital winds', is treated as being synonymous with the Supreme Being and shown equal reverence because without Pran no life is tenable in this world. The Rishi of this Sukta, i.e. the sage who had first conceptualized or formulated this hymn, was Bhargava Vaidarbhi.

Pran has been lauded as the most exalted and powerful of all the elements in creation, as being all-pervading and omnipresent in the living world, as being the entity that injects life and consciousness in this creation, and as being the essence life-sustaining force present in all herbs and food that sustain life in this world. Therefore, it deserves the greatest of respect and honour.

This omnipresent and universal form of the Supreme Being known as the 'Pran' though assumes many forms, such as the main Pran, and other forms of it, such as Apaana, Samaana, Vyan and Udaan, in order to smoothly carry out multifarious activities of this creation. Obviously therefore, all the aspects of Pran are like various manifestations of the same Lord that he took to effectively regulate and keep the wheel of life turning without a hitch. Perhaps this was the first instance of the doctrine of 'delegation of authority' whereby the Supreme Being first appointed an entity known as Pran to supervise 'life' in this creation on his behalf, vested it with full powers and authority that were no less than the Lord exercising them directly, then created various subsidiary Prans to help the main Pran to smoothly carry out its functions and duties. All of them acted on behalf of the Supreme Being, and therefore represented him.

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1. I bow before Pran on which the whole world is dependant for its survival. It is the Lord of all life in this creation; the entire world lives or survives due to it (1).

2. Salutations to Pran; I bow before you. I bow before Pran that roars and thunders. I bow before Pran that rumbles and reverberates as the thunder of the cloud. I bow before Pran that shines brilliantly and dazzles in the clouds as lightening. I bow before Pran that inspires rains to fall, or which itself falls as rain (to inject life in earth). (2).

3. Oh Pran! When you rumble and thunder in the clouds in the presence of medicinal herbs, the latter are invigorated; they feel a surge in their inherent curative properties, energy, strength and dynamism that sustains a healthy life on earth; they become pregnant (rich) with such virtues; they grow and develop in various ways.

[In other words, the plants with curative and medicinal properties, symbolizing all life-sustaining plants on earth, are rejuvenated when it is time for rainfall, or during the rainy season. The appearance of clouds that bring rain as a harbinger of life injects new cheer in them. They flourish in the presence of rains; they develop and grow when it starts to rain during the rainy season. In fact, all life on earth is directly dependant upon rainfall, and the rumbling in the clouds is a sign of the cloud harboring the unique life-conscious factor known as 'Pran' in its bosom. This ability of the clouds to inject life into this world makes them equivalent to the Supreme Being who does the same.] (3).

4. Oh Pran! As soon as the rainy season approaches, you become excited and active, roaring enthusiastically and girdling yourself to actively participate in activating and supporting the various life-sustaining elements that were hitherto lying dormant in the medicinal plants that sustain life on earth. [That is, with the approach of the rainy season, the vital life-sustaining factors in the plants find renewed energy and vigour. They are activated and the plants flourish with new life injected in them when the heat and parched conditions of the previous summer are replaced with abundant rainfall and vibrant greenery. All the life-supporting factors thrive and flourish during the rainy season.]

When this happens, all forms of life and whatever that exists on earth feel extremely fortunate, exhilarated and happy (because they are injected with fresh vigour and a resurgence of life-supporting energy) (4).

5. When Pran (i.e. the Supreme Being) showers his munificence and benevolence upon this earth in the form of rainfall, all animals are extremely exhilarated, thinking that now they would certainly be able to grow and multiply. [This is because with abundant rainfall, there would be an abundant supply of fresh grass and other green plants upon which the animals depend for food and nourishment that is needed for their survival and growth.] (5).

6. When rain falls upon the medicinal plants (herbs and other green plants that are essential for healthy life on earth), the latter offer their thanks to the Pran (the Supreme Being), saying, 'Oh Pran! You have enhanced our lives and made us fragrant. You have helped us flourish, rejuvenated us, and infused a fresh lease of life in us; we would have withered and died had there been no rain. So we thank you very much for your graciousness, compassion, benevolence and munificence.' (6).

7. I bow and pay my obeisance to the Pran that comes in, as well as the Pran that goes out. [This has reference to 'breath', both inhalation and exhalation respectively, that sustain life inside the creature's body.]

I bow and pay my obeisance to the Pran that does not move, and the Pran that sits quietly. [This has reference to the other forms of vital winds inside the creature's body that sustain life in it besides the vital wind known as 'breath' or Pran. These other forms of Pran are known as Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyana. They are said to be 'sitting quietly' or 'not moving' because unlike the breath whose movement in and out of the body can be actually observed and experienced, the activities of the other Prans are very subtle, secret and indiscernible. Every one of us can actually feel the way the breath comes in and goes out of the body, and its movement is clearly marked by the expansion and contraction of the chest, but the movement of the other vital winds inside the body can never be experienced or felt, though they are also constantly active and perpetually on the move.] (7).

8. Salutations to Pran. I bow before you who do everything in this life and enable the creature to do everything that he wants to do. I bow before you (Pran) who does the work described as being done by Apaana wind. I bow before the Pran which moves forward and backward (as breath). I offer my obeisance to you who does everything in this world (8).

[Note—See note of verse no. 9 below.]

9. Oh Pran! Please grant me a long life by sustaining this body that is so dear to me. At the same time, keep your various forms or manifestations that are life-sustaining also active and performing in their prime shape for an equally long time.

[All the activities of the body are directly or indirectly controlled and regulated by the vital winds collectively known as Pran. So if one wishes to have a long and healthy life, it is imperative that his vital winds too function normally and healthily. Life and Pran go hand-in-hand; one cannot live divorced from the other.]

Please also bless me for lifetime with your curative and healing powers (9).

[Note—'Pran' is a general term used to designate the vital wind that is present in the creature's body and supports life in it. It has been given many names depending upon the functions that the vital wind performs inside the body. Basically, there are five names given to Pran—they are (i) 'Pran', (ii) 'Apaana', (iii) 'Vyana', (iv) 'Udaana', and (v) 'Samaana'.

(i) The 'Pran' wind is responsible for breath and expelling mucous in the form of cough. (ii) The 'Apaana' wind is responsible for expelling stool and urine from the body, thereby eliminating toxic wastes which would poison the body if allowed to remain in it. It also helps in the movement of food in the intestines and therefore its digestion. (iii) The 'Vyana' wind is responsible for accepting or giving away anything. (iv) The 'Udaana' wind is responsible for lifting the body. (v) The 'Samaana' wind is responsible for nourishing the body (as it takes the nutrients to all the parts of the body), and maintaining uniformity and balance in the body. (vi) The 'Naaga' wind is responsible for belching and excreting of contaminated or polluted wind through the throat and mouth. (vii) The 'Kurma' wind is responsible for closing and opening of the eyelids. (viii) The 'Krikan' wind is responsible for hunger and appetite. (ix) The 'Devadutta' wind is responsible for creating laziness, lethargy and inertia. (x) The 'Dhananjaya' wind is responsible for creating cough and other types of mucous that help to expel infection from the body (in association with the Apaana, the Naaga and the Pran winds.)

10. Just like a father lives with his sons who are very dear and compatible to him, the Pran too lives happily with all his subjects, whether they are mobile (such as animals) or immobile (such as plants). Pran is the de-facto Lord and God for all of them. [No life is tenable in this world without Pran. Hence, Pran is as revered and important as God, and is always shown the greatest of respect as one would show to one's Lord.] (10).

11. Pran is 'death' as well as 'the life and its strength, vitality and dynamism'.

[Pran is 'death' as proved when accumulation of wind inside the body makes it bloat and eventually cause death of the creature. If Pran leaves one single organ, it 'dies' or becomes paralyzed inspite of the rest of the body remaining alive and active. Pran also is the only factor without which the body would not be able to live and do anything, and therefore Pran is its life and vitality.

This fact has been excellently brought out in the Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 5, section 1, and the Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 1, Brahman 3, and Canto 6, Brahman 1, verse nos. 8-14.]

This is why all the Gods pay their respects to Pran and offer their prayers to it. It is the Pran that takes a truthful person to the most exalted stature amongst his peers, or to an abode that is equivalent to attaining God-hood.

[This refers to various methods by which a spiritual aspirant performs auspicious and righteous deeds which enhance his spiritual stature. All activities need an active participation of Pran or vital winds in the body to enable the body to actually implement the desire of the creature. If the Pran fails to help the creature then no matter how auspicious and noble his thoughts and desires are he would not be able to implement any of them. Even to worship Gods, the Pran is needed; even to do Yagya (fire sacrifices) and Yoga (meditation), the Pran plays vital role.] (11).

12. Pran has special radiance and energy. Pran is the universal inspirer and motivator. This is why all worship and honour Pran. The Sun, the Moon and Prajapati (Brahma the creator or those senior Gods who look after the well-being of this creation) are manifestations of Pran. [This is because they help sustain life in this world.] (12).

13. Pran and Apaana are like rice and barley. The main Pran (breath) is like the bull. Barley is like 'Pran' while rice is akin to 'Apaana'. That is, both are the two sides of the same coin.

[Pran and Apaana are the two essential vital winds in the creature's body that help it to survive just like the cereals barley and rice that help the man to survive by providing the basic staple food and nutrition to him. The main Pran, i.e. the breath, is like a 'bull' as it is the breath that is the driving force inside the body that is primarily responsible for its life, for no one can live if the breath is suffocated, just like the bull which is primarily responsible for harvesting and thrashing of grain. It must be remembered that in ancient times when these hymns were written, the society was primarily agrarian, depending upon old methods of cultivation and harvesting of crops. The bull and the plough were the only means available to the farmer, and hence if there was no bull there would be no rice or barley because there will be no cultivation and no harvest. As a matter of fact, without the bull there would be nothing to eat as no crops would be grown and harvested.

The main Pran cited here is the 'breath' for obvious reasons—if one stops to breathe, the body dies and no other wind is able to keep it alive. A dead body neither needs any food nor has it got any value for the other winds. Therefore, the breath

known as the Chief Pran is compared to the ‘bull’ without which the plough of life cannot be pulled.] (13).

14. All living beings take and give (like a commercial transaction) the two vital winds known as Pran and Apaana while he lives inside a mother’s womb. Oh Pran! It is when you motivate or impel him that he takes birth as a new-born infant in this world.

[Just like people depend upon essential commodities for doing commerce in order to gain wealth and prosperity as well as for their financial well-being and survival, the creature depends upon the two vital winds known as Pran and Apaana for his own survival, growth and development in a mother’s womb. When the time is ripe for birth, the creature is ejected from the mother’s womb out into the world by the joint efforts of the vital winds of the mother’s body that generate sufficient pressure and energy to help the infant come out of the womb, and the vital winds present inside the body of the unborn infant which help him to make its own efforts to wriggle out of the dark cavern-like environs of the womb.

The vital winds continue to play important role in the newly born infant’s life as they enable the latter to survive independently once it comes out of the womb.

The body of the infant is very delicate and fragile, and had the vital winds not given it their support the infant would die within seconds of birth. No mother can save the child if the latter is not supported by the vital winds from the inside.] (14).

15. Pran is known as ‘Maatarishwa’¹, and vital winds (that sustain life) are collectively known as Pran. Whatever that existed in the past, shall exist in the future, and that exists in the present—all have their existence due to Pran (15).

[Note—¹*Maatarishwa*—He is one of the forms of the Fire God. The Devi Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 14 asserts that he is one of the revealed form of Mother Goddess representing the dynamic powers of Brahm as revealed in the Fire God himself.]

16. It is only till the time you provide the energy, the impetus and the inspiration that medicines or remedies known as Aatharvani (those discovered by sage Aatharvan), as Aangirasi (those discovered by sage Aangiras), and as Daivi (those produced by Gods and Mother Nature), as well as those that have been described as human discoveries or creations give the desired result.

[That is, only when the Supreme Being in the form of Pran so wishes that any given medicine, no matter how well selected and potent it is, would cure a disease. Otherwise nothing works. There is another interpretation—it is only till the time that the vital winds function in a well-balanced manner in the body of the creature that any sudden afflictions of the body such as infections or injuries can be cured by administering of medicines. If the vital life forces in a man’s body have become sluggish or have stopped being active, then no matter which medicine is given to him he would never recover. It is not the credit or the discredit of a medicine that the man is cured or remains sick, but everything depends upon the grace and benevolence of the Pran representing the Supreme Being.] (16).

17. When Pran showers rain on this vast earth, all the herbs and plants develop and grow to their best abilities.

[Here, the word ‘Pran’ refers both to the life-infusing factors contained in rain-water as well as to the wind element because it is the latter that is responsible for

movement of clouds from place to place so that rain can fall on vast areas of the earth, thereby spraying it with the elixir of life known as water.] (17).

18. Oh Pran! Those who recognize your exalted position and dynamic powers, and in whom you are well established and active, such persons are indeed shown great respect and honour even in the highest places in creation (18).

19. All your subjects (i.e. all living beings) show great respect for you, and they show similar respect to those who are well-acquainted with your divinity and supreme authority, to those who attain great fame (as wise and learned ones) with the acquisition of the esoteric knowledge pertaining to you, and to those who even listen to your glories. These subjects offer their sacrifices (i.e. oblations, respects, regards, honour, obeisance) to you as well as to such wise persons (19).

20. The vital wind known as Pran that is extensively spread in all the organs of the creature's physical body, sustaining the organs and lending them life, energy, dynamism and vitality, is the same wind that is also present in the creature's nascent body while it is still in the mother's womb. It is the same Pran that had made its appearance as 'life' in the mother's womb which also takes birth or makes its appearance as 'life' in the external world. [Refer verse no. 14.]

It is the same Pran that 'lived' in the past, that 'lives' in the present, and would 'live' in the future. [This is because the world sans the Pran is a 'non-living' entity.]

Just like a father subtly lives inside his son (in the form of the genes that are transferred from the father to the son by the medium of the sperm, and which would eventually govern all the special character traits that the son inherits from his father), the Supreme Being enters the body of his off spring (creation) with his full force, authority and dynamism in the form of the Pran. [And therefore, 'Pran' represents the Supreme Being. We come to the conclusion that the factor that lives inside the body of any living creature or organism, a factor which is generally referred to as 'Pran' or 'life-consciousness' in the body, is actually the Supreme Being known as 'Brahm' personified in this subtle form.] (20).

21. When the 'Hans' (Swan) comes to the surface of water (on a lake), it does not lift one of its legs. [That is, it always keeps one leg inside water.]

Oh dear! Should it do so (i.e. should it withdraw its legs and take off from water to fly away into the sky), then there would be no 'today', no 'tomorrow', no 'night and day', and no 'light and darkness'. (21).

[Note—The word 'Hans' is a metaphor used in the Upanishads to imply the Atma or soul of the creature. This Hans is also regarded as a synonym of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, and the cosmic Consciousness representing the Supreme Being. The idea expressed here is that when this Atma or the 'self' of the creature decides to lift its self from the entrapping gross body as well as the surrounding world in which the creature lives trapped, and find permanent freedom from their snare, it has to do so comprehensively by lifting its self completely and finally, and not making a half-hearted attempt to find salvation and emancipation while still sticking to this body and the world or remaining uncertain which is the better option for him!]

This situation is metaphorically explained by the example of the Swan. When this bird attempts to lift in the sky and fly away, it cannot do so because it has the nasty habit ingrained into its mind which forces it, involuntarily though, to keep one leg anchored in the water, perhaps out of fear of falling or out of lack of confidence that it can actually fly in the air. The result is that it never is able to leave the water; it

remains grounded and stuck for life in the dirty water of the lake though the irony of the situation is that the same Hans is regarded as the wisest amongst the birds and cited as a metaphor for wisdom, the best of knowledge, purity and cleanliness. It is not without reason that amongst all the animals, the Hans is chosen by Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, wisdom and learning, to be her mount. In spite of such exalted status, the Hans is so stupid that it prefers to remain grounded and trapped for life in the unclean environment in which it has forced itself to live out of ignorance and its attendant delusions.

‘Hans’ is also regarded as a metaphor for Pran or ‘life’ in the creature’s body. This is because the Atma and Pran are two aspects of the same Divine Being known as Brahm, the Supreme Being, that actually lends both the factors of consciousness or Atma, and life or Pran to the creature’s body.

So simply put this verse means that when wise and enlightened persons decide to find true liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, or what is known as ‘Mukti or Moksha’, they would have to completely cut-off all vestiges of contacts and connections with both the body and the world. This is like saying the Hans lifting both its legs from the water when it comes to the surface, instead of keeping one leg inside the water. Otherwise, they would remain trapped perpetually in the cycle of birth and death much like the Hans coming to the surface of the water umpteen numbers of time during its lifetime but still not being able to fly off to freedom.

Now, when true freedom is obtained by the Atma (Hans), when one is freed from the cycle of having to take birth and then dying, obviously there would be no night and day, no today and tomorrow, and no light and darkness for him. The physical world of which these are characteristic features would cease to exist and stop mattering for him. This can also happen even when a wise man is alive, as is the case when he becomes fully self-realised and enlightened. This is technically known as ‘Jivan Mukti’—or finding spiritual liberation even while one is still alive.]

22. The unknown and most mysterious divine entity (the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness) is surrounded by eight ‘Chakras’ (whirling wheels; energized circles of dynamic energy). All these Chakras have one ‘Nemi’ (circumference; the framework of a well) with thousands of bricks as building blocks just like the limited number of letters of any language, known as ‘Akshars’, help build thousands of words¹ of a language.

This Pran (life infusing vital wind) that creates the entire known creation with half of its fraction has one half still unknown. What does it refer to?² (22).

[Note—¹Refer also to the Atharva Veda’s *Prashna Upanishad*, Canto 6, verse no. 6, and *Naradparivrajak Upanishad*, Canto 9, verse no. 4, as well as to Krishna Yajur Veda’s *Shwetashwatar Upanishad*, Canto 1, verse nos. 4, 6; Canto 6, verse nos. 1-3.

From the perspective of Yoga, the word ‘Chakra’ refers to the subtle energy centers present inside the body. According to Yoga texts, when the vital energy trapped in these Chakras are activated, a person acquires immense potentials, including spiritual and mystical powers. They have been elaborately described in Upanishads dealing with Yoga and mystical forms of ritualistic worship involving meditative practices in order to enable to practitioner acquire astounding mystical and supernatural powers.

The Upanishads variously describe these Chakras as being *six to ten* in number.

The main six Chakras are the six main subtle energy centers of the body which act as power houses which supply energy for the various functions of the body. They are the following—(1) The ‘Mooladhar Chakra’ is located between genitals and anus in the area called the perineum. It is also here that the ascetic hears the Naad. It is said to be a symbol of Shakti or the dynamic powers of Shiva principle. The Ganapati Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, verse no. 6 says that Lord Ganapati or Ganesh is established here.

(2) The 'Swadhisthan Chakra' is located in the region of the groins of males and the Bhug (genital) area of females. It has a 5-headed male phallus like a sprouting seed and its counterpart in the female is the clitoris.

(3) The 'Manipur Chakra' is located in the navel area, is shaped like a gem and is surrounded by the network of Naadis (nerves) called solar plexus. It is also the site of the Sun energy.

(4) The 'Anahat Chakra' is located in the chest between the heart and lung area and it is shaped like a swan looking downwards. It is also assumed to be like an 8-petal lotus facing down. It is also called the Hridaya Chakra because of its close proximity to the heart and close association with it as the Atma or pure consciousness resides in the subtle space of the heart.

(5) The 'Vishuddha Chakra/Kanth Chakra' is located in the pit of the throat. To the left of it passes the Eda nerve representing the moon, to its right goes the Pingla nerve representing the sun, and in the center is the Sushumna nerve through which the Kundalini energy rises up from the base of the spine to the skull.

(6) The 'Agya Chakra or Bhru Chakra' is located between the eyebrows and root of the nose. It is also called the third eye of enlightenment and wisdom. It represents the 'Mahat' (that which transcends the elements) and its Beej (i.e. its root syllable) is the Sanskrit monosyllabic word OM.

Besides these six, there are some other important Chakras, and they are the following—

(7) The 'Brahm Rahandra Chakra or Sahasraar Chakra' is located in the head below the cranium and has the form of a grey cloud or smoke. It is the hair-like spilt in the top of the skull from where the vital wind called 'Pran' makes its exit from the body of a Yogi (ascetic) at the time of his death.

(8) The 'Vyom Chakra' is symbolic of the sky and it is shaped like a 10-petal lotus located at the top of the head.

There is another interpretation of this stanza. The word 'Nemi' in the text also means a person who observes strict religious rites or routine. If this meaning is taken into account, the stanza would refer to the worship instrument called 'Yantra' used in formal forms of worship and ritualistic practices. Some of such instruments have been elaborately described in various Upanishads of this volume—e.g. Ram Tapini Upanishad etc. Now, if we have a look at these Yantras we would observe that they are like wheels, having multi-layered circular structure. Usually, there are eight such circles—hence the reference to 'eight Chakras' in the present verse. On the outer periphery is a boundary that encloses the entire structure—this corresponds to the word 'Nemi' used in the text. The various 'Beej Mantras' or seed letters related to the deity worshipped as well as many other gods and goddesses are marked on the Yantra—which correspond to the word 'Akshar' or letter of the verse. The main deity that is offered worship has its Beej Mantra written in the center of the Yantra, which is then surrounded by concentric layers of rings or circles. This deity may have different names and forms, but ultimately it is the Supreme Being who is being offered worship. The presence of this deity representing the Supreme Being in this Yantra is what infuses 'Pran' or life, mystical strength, dynamism, occult powers and vitality to the otherwise lifeless drawing consisting of lines and letters. If the main Beej Mantra is removed then the whole structure loses its meaning and effectiveness. This is what is implied in this verse—if Pran standing for life-consciousness and the personified form of the Supreme Being is removed from the world, the latter would simply have no meaning. Put simply it means that the world follows the Supreme Being faithfully like the subjects that loyally follow the king or emperor.

²The 'known' part of the creation is the revealed half of the Supreme Being, and the other half is the unrevealed aspect of the Supreme Being that is transcendental and beyond imagination or comprehension. It is from the 'other unrevealed' or 'Avyakta' aspect of life-consciousness known as Brahm that the 'revealed' or 'Vyakta' aspect of life-consciousness has come into being. There is fundamentally no

difference between the two, except that one is revealed and describable with words, and the other is unrevealed and indescribable.]

23. You, the Pran, are the 'Isha' or the Lord that gives birth to all life forms in this creation, and to the whole world characterized by movement¹.

It is you who is the most agile, most active and quick to move amongst all the elements of creation (23).

[Note—¹'Movement' is a characteristic feature of life, while 'stagnancy' is tantamount to decay and ultimate death. Movement does not only mean physical movement of the body. Its broad implication covers all changes and transitions. The world is 'living' because it is known to be ever-changing. The term 'movement' therefore incorporates such concept as change, transience, impermanence, instability, volatility etc. Movement also means 'doing deeds and taking actions' which are an inseparable and an integral part of a living world—because not only do they require physical movement of the body but involves change of the present to something different in the future.

In the Upanishads, the creation has been compared to a wheel, and 'movement' is a typical character of the wheel. So if the world is like a wheel which moves continuously, the Pran is its hub around which it rotates.

Not only life on earth but even the unknown reaches of this creation show constant movement as proved by modern science that has established that the universe is constantly expanding and changing—or showing 'movement' instead of stagnancy.]

24. The Pran who is the Lord (Isha) of all entities in creation that take a birth and show movement, let that courageous, tolerant and patient Pran be free from all traces of indolence, lethargy, inertia and laziness. Let it be empowered with the dynamism and energy of the Spirit or the Atma that injects 'consciousness' in the form of the vital spark of life in me. Let such an exalted and mystical entity known as 'Pran' be my constant companion; let it never abandon me (24).

25. Even when the rest of the world sleeps, the Pran never sleeps. It remains standing, being always alert and wide awake (like a sentinel guarding the ramparts and the gates of the fort while the rest of the population sleeps peacefully in the city). It never feels sleepy or tired or exhausted so as to lose sight of its moral duty to guard life under its protection. It never totters; it never stumbles, it never falters or drags its feet and falls sideways out of fatigue, weariness, drowsiness, despondency or carelessness. [Even when the external organs become unconscious and inactive when the man sleeps as if the body was dead, the man is kept alive and well because the vital winds do not sleep but remain alert and active. They ensure that the man does not die when he sleeps and there is no physical activity. The Pran acts as the loyal sentinel who guards the fort even while the rest of the city sleeps soundly, or the body-guard of the king who guards the latter even while he sleeps. The Pran never drops its guard, it never compromises on its level of alertness, and it never ever lets its arms down or becomes careless in its duties of giving protection to its 'ward', which in the present case is the living being, while the latter rests.]

No one has ever heard that Pran ever sleeps or takes rest even while the rest of the creation needs sleep or take some rest to re-energize its self. [That is, Pran is never fatigued; it needs nothing to rejuvenate its self. It is perpetually energized and rejuvenated. This is why it is a synonym of the Supreme Being who never fatigues from the onerous task of taking care of this huge world full of complexities.] (25).

26. Pran, do not ever separate your-self from me. Do not go far from me. Like the 'water' that inherently harbours life in its bosom, I too harbour Pran in my body to protect life in it. [That is, Pran naturally lives inside my body to keep it alive just like it lives in the water to give it its unique virtue of conceiving and sustaining life in all its forms. Just like no life is thinkable without the presence of water, my existence is also not imaginable without the presence of Pran inside my body.] (26).

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Appendix no. 3

Neel Rudra Upanishad

This is a minor Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition, having three short Khandas or Cantos. It basically narrates the 'Raudra' (angry) form of Lord Shiva who is known as 'Neel-Kantha Rudra' because of the fact that his throat is permanently tinged purple or dark blue.

In the first Canto, prayer is made to Lord Rudra to shed aside his angry form, and instead adopt a form which is calm, pleasing and auspicious.

In the second Canto, it is visualized that Lord Rudra is in the affectionate form of Gopal, one of the names of Lord Krishna, who is bewitching with the trademark peacock's feather stuck in the lock of hairs on his head. Rudra is also said to be Indra, the king of Gods. This Canto also narrates the most potent weapons of Rudra in his form as Indra because the latter needed these weapons to rule over this world.

And finally, Canto three narrates the 'Neel-Kanth' form of Rudra, or the form of Lord Shiva with a dark-blue tinged throat. This colour of the throat shows that the Lord is so merciful that he did not care about his own welfare but gulped the 'Halaal poison', the most corroding and fierce poison that was produced at the time of the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal life and bliss.

Neel Kanth Rudra or Shiva with the blue/purple throat is also known by other names, such as Kedareshwar (the Lord of Kedar, the mountainous abode of Shiva), Virupaksha (the Lord with three eyes, hence looking most unconventional) etc.

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Khanda/Canto 1

1-3. Oh Lord 'Neel Griva' (i.e. the Lord with a blue or purple throat)! We visualize you coming down on earth from your divine abode in the high heaven. We have a divine vision of your cosmic form that is known as 'Rudra', literally the form that is most awe-inspiring, foreboding, formidable, furious, angry and uncompromising. This magnificent and most enigmatic cosmic form of yours bears the 'Antariksha' (the vast and fathomless recesses of the sky) on its head as if it was a crown adorned with a peacock's feather tucked in it. This is because you are the Lord of the earth (mortal creation) who bears this crown of the sky on your head. [This is the cosmic form of Brahm revealed in the form of Rudra.]

Oh human beings! Have a divine sight of Lord Neel-Griva with a reddish countenance.

Lord Rudra enters water and medicinal herbs as their magnificent ability to fight and defeat (cure) diseases. It is the Lord's desire to give protection to his subjects (creation)—by slaying (eliminating; destroying) formidable enemies in the form of countless diseases afflicting the creatures of this world—that has manifested itself as the dynamic curative powers that are inherently present in the water and medicinal plants which enable them to fight the menace of various diseases representing the evil consequences of sins and misdeeds of the creature.

[Diseases are caused by strong evil forces of Nature that are so powerful that they are able to overcome the resistance offered by the Gods who symbolically live in subtle forms in the body of the living being. Therefore if these evil forces are to be defeated then a force stronger than these evil conquering forces is needed. This countering force is represented by Lord Rudra who is the most powerful form of the Supreme Being as far as enforcing order and punishing the guilty is concerned.

Diseases are cured by the medicinal qualities of the various herbs as well as the ability of water to become a medium by which the curative ingredients of the herbs are transported to the various tissues of the body so that the negative forces that have created the disease can be nullified and dispensed with. The water then helps to eliminate the toxin left behind by the retreating enemy (representing the disease-causing factors) from the body, thereby restoring the general health and well-being of the Gods who were suffering previously.

Thus, Lord Rudra in this sense represents the formidable strength of Brahm, the Supreme Being, to overcome negative or evil factors of creation, and protect life that is being tormented by such factors.]

The Lord (Rudra), therefore, is a provider of solace and succour to all the living beings; the Lord is the basis and foundation upon which life rests in this world.

Let the Lord (Neel-Griva; Shiva; Rudra) arrive in our midst to end all our misfortunes, inconveniences, troubles and miseries, and instead provide us with all the conveniences, all the things and all the means that are conducive for our welfare and well-being which are not available to us or are beyond our reach at the present. [1-3].

[Note—One must clearly see the paradox of the situation—and the fact that the same Lord plays different roles, as well as the fact that the same action or deed can acquire different meanings under different set of conditions.

Lord Rudra is that form of the Supreme Being which brings about conclusion of creation. But when it becomes necessary to use the same ferocity, the same strength and the same power that the Lord employs to bring about the conclusion of creation in a swift move for the welfare of the same creation that he concludes, the Lord does not hesitate for a second. This explains the idea of the curative properties of the medicines and herbs as being personifications of Lord Rudra—these herbs and medicines have to fight formidable negative forces of Nature that bring about destruction and ruin in the form of various diseases. So the curative properties of herbs represent Rudra with all his potentials and powers employed to give protection to the creature instead of employing these potentials and powers to bring about death and destruction. For once, Lord Rudra plays the role of a sustainer and protector of creation like Vishnu, instead of being its concluder and annihilator.]

4-5. We bow most reverentially to Lord Bhava (Shiva; Rudra) who has an angry and formidable form.

We bow to Isha (Lord) who has two arms that hold arrows (and a bow).

Oh the Lord of the Holy Mountain (i.e. Kailash, the mountainous abode of Shiva). You provide auspiciousness, happiness and benediction to, and look after the welfare and ensure the well-being of all the living beings on this earth (i.e. on the vast stretches of the plains where the majority of the creatures live) though you live far away on the mountain.

Oh Lord Shiva who is known as ‘Giritra’ (the protector of mountains and their inhabitants)! The arrow that you hold for the destruction and the vanquishing of the wicked and evil ones—let the same arrow provide us humans with its protection, benediction and reassurance. Do not harm our kith and kin with it; let us humans be spared from the wrath of your arrow. [4-5].

6-7. Oh Lord Shiva who is honoured as the ‘Isha’ (Lord of creation) as well as the ‘Girish’ (the Lord of the Mountains; the Lord who has his divine abode in the mountains)! We sing your divine glories with all sincerity and devotion that our voice and words can command. With this song, the whole world around us becomes free from all miseries and misfortunes, and instead becomes favourable and helpful for us.

Your bow, its string and your arrow—all of them provide reassurance and auspiciousness to us. [That is, instead of feeling any sort of fear by their menacing presence, we feel reassured and happy that they are there to afford us with all-round protection and loving care against all evil forces of creation.]

Oh Lord Shiva who is also known as Lord Mrida! You are an image of auspiciousness, benediction and munificence. Provide our lives with all your arms and armaments.

[In other words, you are our patron deity. So whenever we are in distress and pain and need your help, you must come forward immediately with all your might to support us like an Emperor who makes all his armory and army available to his subjects when they need them for their protection against enemies.] [6-7].

8-9. Oh Lord Rudra Shiva! In spite of living high up and away in the mountains you still are eager in providing for and ensuring our welfare and happiness.

Provide us with light and illumination from all sides with your auspicious, divine and holy form that is benevolent and munificent as well as a vanquisher and eliminator of sins.

The numerous forms of yours that exist in all the different directions, forms that are of a copper colour, of a reddish hue, of a grey colour, of deep red colour like that of rusted iron as well as thousands of other forms that are as glorious, dynamic, radiant and splendid as thousands of the rays of the sun—we sincerely invoke them and offer our prayerful respects to all of them when we sing the hymns in your (Rudra Shiva’s) honour.

[This stanza has two possible inferences. One is that it refers to the numerous forms as Gods, or even Lord Shiva in his different forms having different names, in which the same Supreme Being is worshipped in this creation. Another inference is that all the creatures with numerous complexions and countenances that live in this world are actually an image of the same Supreme Being who exists in as many forms. The worshipper offers his respects to all of them.] [8-9].

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Kanda/Canto 2

1-2. Oh Lord Neel-Griva (the Lord with a blue/purple throat; Shiva) who has a red complexion! We have had the good fortune of sighting your divine and glorious form as it descended upon the earth from heaven.

That divine and most enigmatic form of yours was seen by the cowherds (of Vrindavan), the milkmaids as well as all other living beings in this world.

[This stanza means that Lord Rudra Shiva was the one who had manifested as Lord Krishna of Vrindavan. Krishna is the Lord whose incarnation has been described in detail in the epic Puran known as Srimad Bhagwat. This has a great significance because Krishna is universally regarded as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of creation, and not of Rudra. Hence, the present Upanishad establishes that Vishnu and Rudra are the same Supreme Being known as Brahm in two different forms and having two separate names.

There is another very pertinent and important implication here. Vishnu is the universal protector and sustainer of creation, and not its slayer or killer. This latter role is that of Shiva in his fierce form as Rudra. Now, when we look closely we discover that Lord Krishna performed both these roles—on the one hand he offered his protection to the humble cowherds of Mathura and Vrindavan against the tyranny of his maternal uncle Kansha who was demonic in his temperament and nature, a role specific of Vishnu, and on the other hand Krishna had ruthlessly killed fierce demons with his bare hands, even as a child, without employing any weapon, something that only Rudra can achieve.

It is thus evident that Krishna embodied in his divine body the combined forms of Vishnu of whom he is usually regarded as being an incarnation, as well as of Rudra as proved by this Upanishad. Krishna combined in him the cosmic powers of Vishnu as well as Rudra.

When we compare Lord Krishna with Lord Ram who is another incarnation of Vishnu, we find a stark difference. Lord Ram had never killed any demon with his 'bare hands' like Krishna had done. Ram had always employed his arrows to slay the demons. Now, the question arises 'what form did Rudra take during the incarnation of Vishnu as Ram?' Well, the answer is 'Hanuman', the monkey-faced warrior devotee of the Lord who was instrumental in the Lord's slaying of the ferocious demons led by their king Ravana of Lanka.]

We reverentially bow before this glorious and divine form of the Lord (Rudra Shiva as Krishna).

Oh the Lord who wears the blue feather of the peacock (tucked in the lock of hairs) on his head (as a tiara)! [This has clear reference to Lord Krishna.] We bow most reverentially before you¹.

It is you who has revealed himself as 'Sahastraaksha' (literally the one with a thousand eyes; here meaning Indra, the king of Gods) who is most powerful and strong. Actually, Indra represents that cosmic form of yours which reveals its self before your devotees with thousands of eyes.

[This stanza refers to the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm. This form is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm from which the rest of the creation has emerged. All the creatures are deemed to be microcosmic images of this Viraat Purush. The term 'thousands of eyes' is a figure of speech to imply that all living beings that have eyes—i.e. the creatures who can see—have the same Brahm residing in their gross bodies as their 'true self' known as the Atma.

It also means that the Lord sees everything everywhere, and nothing is hidden or secret from his eyes.] [1-2].

[Note—¹There are two Upanishads dedicated to Lord Krishna in this volume—one is the Gopal Tapini Upanishad which is Chapter 27, and the other is Krishna Upanishad which is Chapter 28.]

3-4. This divine form of yours that has a gross visible aspect and which is accompanied by cowherds and milkmaids with clean minds and hearts—we offer our obeisance to it, we bow before it.

We offer our repeated respects to, and we repeatedly bow before, all your arms and armaments that are very potent and powerful but are not being used by you at the moment. We bow before your formidable and powerful bow with folded hands.

Unfasten the string of your bow (i.e. deactivate this powerful weapon) and become neutral in relation to the creatures whom you had wished to protect with this bow as well as the creatures whom you had wished to punish and kill. That is, please become calm and graceful; please eliminate the chances of war, strife, violence, hatred, ill-will and animosity. [Let there be peace and tranquility along with happiness and brotherhood everywhere in this world.] [3-4].

5-6. Oh the Lord with thousand eyes who wears the peacock feather! Return the arrow in your hand to its quiver. You can mount hundreds of arrow on your formidable bow simultaneously. For our welfare and happiness as well as granting protection to us from our enemies, sharpen the tip of your arrow and mount it on your bow.

Once all our fears are dispelled and enemies vanquished, unfasten the string of your bow. Let the arrow abandon its natural habit of inflicting horror and torment (on the evil and wicked ones), and instead return calmly to its quiver. [Let there be peace and tranquility everywhere.] [5-6].

7. Let your most potent and powerful arrow that is so sharp that it easily pierces through huge mountains return to its quiver. [7].

8. Let your arrow that is mounted on the bow give us protection from all sides. Once this aim is achieved, return the arrow to the quiver. [8].

9. Oh Lord who is most merciful and benevolent! Protect us from all sides with your arrow that is formidable, indestructible and invincible, along with its companion, the bow.

We bow with respects to all the serpents (or all those creatures who inflict unnecessary miseries and torments upon others) that live on the surface of earth. [That is, we pay our obeisance to them and request them to spare us from their wrath, to grant us immunity from their bite as well as from all kinds of miseries and troubles they can cause for us. Since Lord Shiva is also regarded as the Lord of serpents as is evident from his image that shows him wearing serpents as garlands, arm-bands, head-gear etc., in this verse he is requested to grant protection to the worshipper from snake bite.] [9].

10-11. We bow to all the serpents (and other malicious creatures) who live in the sky as well as in the heaven. [This refers to all unfavourable stars, gods, spirits etc. that may create unnecessary problems for the worshipper.]

We bow to all the serpents (representing all evil and tormenting forces of Nature) that live in those worlds that are illuminated, as well as those that live in the rays of the sun and in water.

We bow to all the serpents that represent the arrows of demons (or of demonic, evil and wicked forces of creation) that live in crevices, furrows and holes as well as in trees, plants, shrubs and twigs etc. [10-11].

[Note—In connection with verse nos. 9-11 it is pertinent to note that the Garud Upanishad, which is Chapter no. 31 of this volume, also describes how the evil effects of various poisons can be countered or antidoted.]

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Khanda/Canto 3

1. The Lord (Shiva)—who is known as ‘Neel Griva’ (one with a blue/purple throat) because he had drunk the corrosive and fierce poison (known as ‘Halaal’ that had emerged when the ocean was being churned by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternity and bliss) to protect his subjects (creatures of this creation; or his devotees) from being scorched and scalded by its ferocity—is the same Lord who has also manifested as Lord Hari (Vishnu) who is the universal sustainer, protector and nourisher of the same subjects (creatures; devotees) of this creation.

[In other words, both the forms of the Lord, as Neel Griva or Neel Kantha as well as Hari or Vishnu, have one aim in mind, and it is to grant protection to this creation. Hence, Shiva and Vishnu are the same; there is no difference or dichotomy between them.]

Oh medicinal plants and herbs! Be quickly empowered with stupendous strength, energy, dynamism and vitality for the purpose of serving the one who has a black tail (i.e. the bull known as Nandi, which is the mount of Lord Shiva).

[This prayer is meant for the plants and the green grass upon which Nandi, the bull which is Lord Shiva’s mount, depends for its food. If the mount is well-fed, healthy, energetic and active, the master too would get immense happiness and pleasure when he sees it well-fed, healthy, happy and contented. Besides this emotional aspect, when the devotee ever needs the help of the Lord, it is this mount known as Nandi with the black tail that would bring Shiva to his aid. A healthy and well-fed bull is therefore most desirable as far as extending instant protection to this creation against evil forces is concerned where intercession of Lord Shiva is needed quickly.] [1].

2. The Lord known as Neel Griva (i.e. Shiva) has a blue/purple throat but the complexion of the rest of his body, including the ears, is fair¹. [Special reference is made of the ‘ear’ to highlight the fact that the blue or purple colour of the throat has not at all affected the Lord’s face and its parts, such as the ear.]

The Lord is all-pervading, all-encompassing and omnipresent. He is manifested or revealed in all forms in which this vast and multifarious world exists. [There is nothing that is not Lord Shiva.]

It is this Lord known as the Neel Kantha (i.e. the Lord with a blue/purple throat) who is the father of the Wind God known as Marut. [2].

[Note—¹It will be noted that here his complexion is said to be ‘fair’ while earlier in Canto 2, verse no. 1-2 it has been described as being ‘red coloured’. Well, there is no confusion if we take a broader and holistic look at what the colour of Rudra stands for. Canto 1, verse nos. 8-9 emphasizes the cosmic form of Lord Rudra is like the rays of the Sun, and the sunlight is known to consist of different shades of colours though overall it appears to be white.

The 'red' colour is associated with anger, while the 'white' colour is associated with peace that comes with enlightenment and wisdom. So, the form of Rudra with red colour was when he took the decision to get rid of the evil forces represented by the demons when the Lord manifested as Krishna as mentioned in Canto 2, while he assumed a white colour when he manifested as Shiva, the enlightened Lord with the third eye of wisdom as mentioned in the present Canto 3.]

3. It is this Lord with unconventional (odd) set of (three) eyes who slays or kills (i.e. trounces, eliminates or destroys) those who speak arrogantly and haughtily (i.e. those who are proud and egoistic, those who are boastful and pretentious, those who are arrogant of their strength and valour, are crushed or punished by Lord Shiva).

[Lord Shiva has three eyes, two normal eyes like all human forms, and one odd eye located in the middle of the eyebrows above the nose. This third eye gives Shiva a most odd, awe-inspiring and unconventional appearance. This third eye is however what makes Shiva so unique—it is called the eye of wisdom and enlightenment. It is here that the Agya Chakra, the whirling center of energy that opens the window of enlightenment, wisdom and knowledge in the creature, is located. That is why Shiva is regarded as the most wise and enlightened God amongst them all.

Since the Lord is highly self-realised, enlightened and wise, he is deemed to be an enemy of, or inimical to such negative character traits as pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness etc. that are symbolized by the term 'speaking loudly' which means speaking boastfully and pretentiously. The Lord does not tolerate loud-mouthed people who are arrogant, haughty, boastful and deceitful. He immediately brings them to book.]

Oh brave people! One must always see him playing a subtle role in all deeds and actions. One must realise that it is the universal Lord who is the doer of all deeds.

[That is, one must not be boastful of one's achievements, but be humble and soft-spoken instead. One must do deeds dispassionately as if one is simply carrying out the Lord's orders. One must realise that it is the Supreme Being living inside the body as the Atma and Pran that enables the gross and inane body to do anything, and nothing can be done if the Supreme Being does not wish it to be done. So there is no ground and locus standi for being arrogant, haughty, boastful, pretentious and loud-mouthed.] [3].

4. One should discard all doubts and confusions about him (i.e. the Lord known as Neel Griva, i.e. Lord Shiva); one should abandon all inclination to enquire about the Lord and verify his authenticity and divinity.

It is out of ignorance and its attendant delusions that we treat the world as being separate and different from him; this is a completely erroneous notion. [This is because Lord Neel Griva is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm himself, and it is this Brahm who has not only created this world out of his own being but also pervades throughout it uniformly, completely soaking it from all sides. This world is but a visible and qualified image of Brahm that is otherwise invisible and unqualified.]

We bow most reverentially to Lord Bhava (who is the cause for this creation coming into being).

We bow most reverentially to the Lord (known as Rudra) who is the annihilator and concluder of everything that exists in this creation.

We bow most reverentially to the Lord who appeared as a young groom at the marriage venue in the city of Daksha Prajapati (his earlier father-in-law) where his

presence lent great glory, beauty, glamour, magnificence and majesty to the auspicious occasion, and gave immense contentedness, joy and happiness to the assembly. [The occasion was Lord Shiva's marriage with Sati, the daughter of Daksha Prajapati.]

It is from this Lord Neel Griva in his form as the divine Bull (known as the Nandi) that horses, donkeys and all those four-footed creatures who run around (roam) here and there on this earth came into being.

We bow most reverentially to this Lord Neel Griva, i.e. the Lord with the blue throat, who wears the blue-tinged feather of the peacock on his head.

We once again bow most reverentially to Lord Neel Griva, i.e. the Lord with the blue throat, who wears the blue-tinged feather of the peacock on his head. [4].

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Appendix no. 4

Surya Sukta

The 'Surya Sukta' is a hymn dedicated to the Sun God known as Surya. It lauds Surya as being the eye of the whole world, providing the latter with light and the consequent ability to see. Surya infuses life in this world by the way of providing it with energy, light, heat, vitality and dynamism without which no life is ever sustainable. Hence, it is equivalent to being the Atma or soul of the whole world; the world depends upon Surya for its survival and nourishment. Surya inspires the living being towards auspiciousness and righteousness as symbolized by the 'light' that it provides—i.e. it removes the darkness of ignorance and its attendant delusions and accompanying ghosts, and instead illuminates the correct path, symbolized by wisdom, erudition, knowledge and intelligence, for the creature to follow in order to reach his desired destination. The Sun blesses the creation with energy, vitality, health and nourishment; the Sun controls the seasons and rainfall; the Sun helps growth and development of plants and crops.

The Sun has special importance for those who seek to worship the 'Supreme Being' as it is the most splendorous and vivid evidence of the truthful Lord. Nothing else in this creation matches the Sun in its astounding dynamism and eternal energy, its magical life-injecting and life-sustaining abilities, its stupendous brilliance, radiance, splendour, majestic glory and magnificence that can be equated with those of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being. In fact, for all practical purposes for this world, Sun is a visible manifestation of Brahm, the Supreme Being; it is a personification of Brahm.

The Sun, at the same time, is an excellent metaphor for the majestic glory, the magnificence, the brilliance, the splendour, the power, the energy and the authority of 'Truth'. The Sun is a brilliant image of the illumination and the light that 'Truth' provides this world. Therefore, those who seek the 'Truth' offer their obeisance to the Sun.

Hence, Surya is an object of great reverence and adoration for all living beings; Surya is the de-facto Lord of creation.

This hymn was first conceptualized by sage Kutsa Aangiras, hence this sage is its Rishi. Its patron deity or Devta is obviously the Sun God, and its style of

composition known as the Chanda is Trishtup. It has special relevance to the Surya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, which is Chapter 17 of the present volume. Since its primary formulator is sage Kutsa Aangiras who was one of the sages tracing their roots to the ancient sages Atharvan and Aangiras who are credited as being great exponents of the Atharva Veda, its relevance to this volume is evident though the Sukta itself belongs to the Rig Veda, 1/115.

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1. All the divine Gods who are radiant and glorious, all the auspicious, holy, divine, glorious and sublime virtues in creation, all the virtues that 'Truth' represents, are rising and making their appearance visible in this world in the form of the rising Sun in the heaven.

The Sun God known as Surya is the symbolic eye of Mitra (a God who is friendly to all other Gods as well as to this creation), Varun (the Water God) and Agni (the Fire God), the eye that provides them as well as the rest of the world with light; the Surya is the one who illuminates the creation and enables these Gods to see and take care of it.

The Sun God has completely covered the whole creation consisting of the terrestrial world, the heavenly world and the nether world with his magnificent light, radiance and splendour.

The visible Sun seen in the sky is a manifestation of the almighty Supreme Being who is the inspirer and motivator (creator) as well as the sustainer of everything in this creation. The Sun therefore is a representative of the Atma or pure consciousness that is not only an image of this Supreme Being living inside each living entity in this creation but is also the driving force of all life forms in this world, both those forms that are mobile (such as the members of the animal kingdom) as well as those that are immobile (such as the members of the plant kingdom). [1].

2. Surya follows the virtuous and radiant Usha Devi (literally a goddess named 'Usha' who actually represents the brilliant rays of the light of the Sun which precedes the arrival of the Sun itself) like a man follows a virtuous and extremely beautiful lady.

When the goddess Usha makes her appearance, those who are faithful, dutiful and diligent rise up and engage themselves, faithfully and diligently, in doing duties assigned to them as a token of their respect for the approaching Sun God who follows this goddess.

[When the Emperor is about to come and the herald announces this, the subjects of the empire become alert and sort out their pending affairs to be ready to welcome their Lord. Similarly, all living beings who are of a noble temperament and character get up early in the morning when the first rays of sunlight, here called Usha Devi, appear in the distant horizon to herald the coming of the Sun and the approach of a new day as metaphors for new phase of hope and light in their lives. Such wise creatures girdle themselves up and prepare to welcome the Sun as a harbinger of change and a prophet of new lease of life that gives opportunity and hope. The Sun is a metaphor for light, energy and dynamism that drives the wheel of creation. The rays of the Sun represent the messengers of an Emperor who carry the orders of the latter to his subjects. The rays of the Sun carry the 'Shakti', or the power and dynamic energy of the Sun that infuse and sustain life on this earth, from the source, i.e. the

Sun God, to the subjects, i.e. the creatures of this world, for whom the Lord gives his Shakti and who are meant to be benefited from this Shakti.]

Surya is an image of, or a metaphor for auspiciousness, good fortunes, hope, opportunity, good tidings and all-round welfare. Hence, those who worship him, those who adore him and regard him as their idol and follow his ideals are also able to attain these glorious virtues for which Surya stands. [2].

3. The ring of brilliant rays which are extremely magnificent, splendid, magical and colourful as well as harbingers of welfare, happiness, good fortunes, auspicious and good luck that surrounds the Surya is like the horse (of an Emperor) that helps the Lord (the Sun God) to go and reach everywhere (i.e. to spread light, energy, warmth and other life-sustaining factors to all corners of this world).

[It is the rays of the Sun that take its light, energy, heat and the dynamic life-sustaining properties of the Sun to every nook and corner of the world though the disc of the Sun itself is located in a very limited area of the sky. It is just like the case of the horse of the Emperor that helps his trusted messenger to take his message faithfully, without distortion and as fast as is feasible, to the farthest corners of his empire.]

The Sun always treads carefully its well established path, without deviating for an instant from it. That is why it is worthy of worship and honour.

[This is a metaphoric way of saying that those who are righteous and noble always follow the correct path of truthfulness, morality and ethics as prescribed in the scriptures; they never deviate from it no matter what the provocation or temptation is. They are steady in their noble path and righteous pursuits; they are always truthful and honest. Such men are indeed worthy of respect like the Sun, and they show the rest of the world the path to follow by their own conduct like the Sun lighting up the world for the creature by its own light.]

The Sun inspires all the living beings to be humble and righteous, to lead the path or follow a life of truthfulness, auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety, charity and magnanimity honesty that would act as a beacon for others to follow.

[The Sun is never proud of the fact that it is the only one who showers such huge blessings upon this world so much so that should it wink for a moment there would be absolute chaos and horror of death and annihilation in this world. Even if no one bothers to show any respect to the Sun and thank it for all the goodness that it gives selflessly to this world, the Sun would not stop showering its graceful and benevolent largesse of energy, warmth, light and dynamism upon the world, and would continue to do so eternally. The Sun is steady in its path, signifying that one should remain steadfast in his chosen path of virtuousness, righteousness and truthfulness. It should also be kept in mind while choosing the path that it should be holy, truthful and auspicious as well as inspiring for others as symbolized by the path of the Sun that is brilliantly illuminated instead of being dark, ominous and foreboding.]

The Sun lives high up in the Duloka or the heaven which is brilliantly illuminated.

[This is because the Sun possesses all the enormously glorious virtues as enumerated in this Sukta. Any person who possesses equivalent virtues would also be respected in the world like the Sun; he would also attain a high stature in life that would be as glorious and laudable as that possessed by the Sun high up in the sky.]

The Sun has such great stride and agility that it can go around the vast circumference of the earth as well as reach the deep corners of the vast space in an instant.

[This of course refers to the sunlight, because as soon as the Sun appears on the horizon, its light instantly covers huge swathes of earth and spreads to the remotest corners of the sky in an instant. From the perspective of the living being or a spiritual aspirant, the implication is that the light and glory of the knowledge and the virtues that he possesses, the fame that comes to him due to this knowledge and virtue, have a far-reaching impact and help to spread his good name and glories very quickly to even the remotest parts of the world where he may never be able to go personally.] [3].

4. It is a measure and sign of the Sun's total detachment from everything, its non-involvement in anything, and its profound neutrality that are equivalent to these grand spiritual virtues displayed by the Supreme Being (Brahm) that when it goes to rest and sets down in the horizon at the end of the day, it withdraws its rays into its self and dispassionately leaves behind the world which it had so meticulously and diligently cared for during the daytime as if it is not at all bothered about what would happen to this world or the life in it once it goes away and sets in the horizon at the time of sunset.

[The supreme Creator creates this world and fully engages himself in looking about its day-to-day welfare. But it does not mean that he is attached to this creation, for when the time comes to wind up he has no second thoughts and no compunctions before cleaning up the mess. The metaphor of the Sun setting in the horizon in the evening without looking back at the world which it had so assiduously looked after and fostered for the whole of the day is used to show how a wise and enlightened man does his assigned duties diligently in this world as long as he is alive, but remains internally unattached to the deeds done by him in the sense that he does not expect any rewards for these deeds nor does he wish to enjoy these rewards so much so that when the time comes for his departure from this world, i.e. when he dies, he has no desires left in him, he would never regret that some work was still incomplete or some reward was still due to him. Such a dispassionate man dies peacefully; he has no yearnings and frustrations at the time of death; he never weeps and wails or worries about his unfinished tasks or the fate of the kith and kin or the property that he leaves behind in the world.

He simply withdraws his 'self' from this world. Since his 'self' is represented by his Atma (soul that is his pure consciousness) as well as his Pran (which are the vital life-sustaining forces in his body), it means that the person leaves the gross body as one leaves a hotel room, and makes his exit from the body most peacefully. It is just like the Sun calmly withdrawing its rays and setting in the horizon as it leaves the world with its hustle and bustle behind.]

When the Sun God goes down in the horizon, he assigns his horses and the chariot to some other world. The result is that the night covers the world with its shroud of darkness. [In other words, if one loses wisdom and intelligence, he would be surrounded by an overwhelming thick veil of ignorance and delusions.] [4].

5. The universal inspirer that the Sun God is, his appearance in the eastern horizon is to show light and give inspiration to Mitra God, Varun or Water God, and Agni or Fire God, who are the guardians of creation, to become active and carry out their assigned duties diligently.

The brilliant rays of the Sun God are so sharp and the green horses of his chariot are so powerful and strong that they vanquish in an instant the darkness of the night and cut through its thick veil without the least effort. It is only when they go somewhere else that the world is plunged in darkness.

[From the perspective of the creature it means that only when the Atma or the pure conscious soul leaves the body of the creature does the latter dies. It can also mean that only when the light of wisdom and erudition leaves the man is he engulfed in the darkness of ignorance and delusions. And therefore, as soon as wisdom and erudition reappear, this darkness vanishes instantly.] [5].

6. Oh the splendid Rays of the Sun! [Here, the 'rays' are regarded as a personified form of the dynamic Shakti, or the authority, energy, power and strength, of the Sun God.]

Extricate us from sins and grant us your protection against them when you make your appearance and spread everywhere at the time of arrival of the Sun at dawn. Not only sins, but grant us your protection also from all that is unworthy, evil and denigrating, all that is unacceptable and worthy of abandonment, along with all sorts of sorrows, grief, afflictions, troubles and tribulations.

Whatever we have said (requested or prayed for) should also be endorsed by, accepted by and honoured by Mitra (the God who is a universal friend of all), Varun (the Water God), Aditi (the mother of Gods), Sindhu (ocean as a personified form of the Water God), Prithivi (Mother Earth), and the immortal Gods who inhabit the Duloka (the heavens). Let them also extend their patronage and protection to us. [6].

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Appendix no. 5

Griha Sukta

This Sukta or hymn appears in the Pippalaad branch of the Atharva Veda. In the context of our present volume of the Upanishads of this Veda it especially relates to Brahman 3, verse no. 11 of the Brihajjabal Upanishad which is Chapter 6 of this volume.

Primarily it is a prayer said by a householder for his all round welfare and well-being. It outlines and extols in brief the grand and auspicious characteristics of a noble and virtuous household. It has a total of six two-line verses.

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1. I come proudly to my house with a cheerful mind and full of energy. My mind has auspicious thoughts, and I have a good reputation and fame.

I look at my household with eyes which always look at others with a friendly and auspicious disposition. I employ my eyes to see and accept the invigorating sight that accompanies such thoughts and feelings.

[That is, I enter my home willingly and cheerfully to see happiness and well-being all around me. Since I am a righteous man, good and auspicious circumstances always surround me and follow me to my house. My home gives positive vibes; it

radiates happiness and effuses holiness. It is welcoming and comforting for me. The atmosphere of my house is light with smile, laughter and rejoicing, instead of one that is heavy with gloom and grief. When I come back home after the day's toil, I feel warmly welcomed and feel comforted. My house gives out positive signals of happiness, joys and cheerfulness because I have led a life of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety and truthfulness. I bring along only good energy inside the house, leaving negativity outside it.] [1]

2. Such households are full of pleasure, comfort and well-being; they are full of grains and wealth; there is no shortage of butter and milk (i.e. there is no dearth of wholesome food; the granary is always full, and so is the larder).

[That is, there is no shortage of anything in my household.]

Let these auspicious and beautiful homes be dear to us and welcome us; let them be close to us and be a part of our lives. Let us understand them better.

[That is, let us understand the secret reason why such homes are auspicious and friendly, why they are full of all the necessities of life, why we find great rest in them, why we find them auspicious and welcoming, why are we proud of them, and why do we generally feel most comfortable living in them. The answer is given in verse nos. 1 and 3.] [2]

3. Let there be no fear, agony and misery in those houses or homes (households) where the residents are friendly with each other, and speak courteously, sweetly and pleasantly among themselves, where all noble, auspicious and righteous virtues that bring all round welfare to its residents are found in abundance, where guests are most welcome and cordially invited to eat and drink, where there is happiness, joy, cheer and laughter in the atmosphere, and where there is no hunger and thirst (because of abundance of food and drink, as well as due to the charitable, friendly, compatible and compassionate nature of all its inhabitants). [3]

4. It is such a home (household) that we remember so fondly when we live outside and far away from it. Such homes that are welcoming and are literally mines (i.e. full of) the grand virtues of friendliness, brotherhood, amiability and cordiality—indeed, we remember such homes and long for them. Let such homes welcome us when we come back to them from the outside.

[That is, let there be a friendly atmosphere in the house where all its inhabitants live together happily like compatible brothers who care and love each other. Let there be no quarrels and fights in the household as it vitiates the atmosphere. So, when we come back after the day's toil, we feel happy and comforted to be home, instead of regretting to have to come to it or feeling scared at the prospect of having to go back to it for the night.] [4]

5. These households of ours have abundant milk-giving cows, besides other cattle such as sheep, goat and other domesticated animals which are in great numbers. All those spices and juices that make the food delicious and nectar-like are also available in these households in abundance.

[That is, there is either no shortage of livestock or of food in such households.] [5]

6. Many rich and well-off friends and guests visit such households. They join us (the residents) cheerfully and happily in sharing food and drink.

Oh our auspicious homes and houses (households)! Let all those who live in you be always free from diseases and miseries; let them have a long life; let them not be subjected to decay and destruction. [In other words, let there be peace and happiness in the family.

Let there be good health and all round well-being in the household.

Let us all enjoy prosperity, happiness, peace and comfort in our lives as a householder.

Let us not suffer from pain, death and miseries of any kind.

Let there be no dearth of food, drink, cattle, wealth, happiness and comfort of any kind in our homes.] [6]

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Appendix no. 6

References to Books by the Author that explain various Concepts & Terms appearing in the main text of the Upanishads:-

My esteemed reader is informed here that the different metaphysical and spiritual concepts that are an integral part of the Upanishads, and need more elaboration, analysis and a detailed explanation, have been published by this author (Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia) as independent Books. Their titles and links are mentioned below. Those readers who may like to have a further reading on the topics and subjects related to concepts of metaphysics, theology and spiritualism as envisioned in the Upanishads may download these Books from the following two websites:

- (i) Internet Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia
- (ii) www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com

Title of relevant Books as referred to herein above:

- (1) Title : 'Brahm' in the eyes of the Upanishads

Page URL :-

- (i) <https://archive.org/details/6-brahm-in-the-eyes-of-the-upanishads>
- (ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/brahm_in_the_eyes_of_the_upanishads.pdf

- (2) Title : SANYAS with Vairagya Shatakam of Bhartrihari

Page URL :-

- (i) <https://archive.org/details/9-sanyas-with-vairagya-shatkam-of-bhartihari>
- (ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/sanyas-with_vairagya_shatkam_of_bhartihari.pdf

(3) Title : Tattvas (elements) and Gunas (qualities): According to the Upanishads

Page URL :-

(i) <https://archive.org/details/11-tattvas-gunas-according-to-upanishads>

(ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/tattvas_and_gunas_of_creation_according_to_upanishads.pdf

(4) Title : ‘Maya’ The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation As elucidated in the ‘Upanishads’ & ‘Ram Charit Manas’

Page URL :-

(i) <https://archive.org/details/13-maya-the-whirlpool-of-delusions-in-creation>

(ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/maya-the_whirlpool_of_delusions_in_creation.pdf

(5) Title : The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads

Page URL :-

(i) <https://archive.org/details/18-the-metaphor-of-the-hansa-in-the-upanishads>

(ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/the_metaphor_of_the_hansa_in_the_upanishads.pdf

(6) Title: OM and NAAD—The Cosmic Manifestation of the Supreme Consciousness According to the Upanishads

Page URL :-

(i) <https://archive.org/details/48-om-and-naad-the-cosmic-manifestation-of-the-supreme-consciousness-according-to-the-upanishads>

(ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/om_and_naad-the_cosmic_manifestation_of_the_supreme_consciousness_according_to_the_upanishads.pdf

(7) Title : Metaphysical & Spiritual Concepts of the Upanishads Explained. [This book covers the following topics: 1—Atma and the various Sheaths; 2—The Body of the creature (The body of the living being consists of Bhuts, Dhaatus, Tattvas etc.); 3—The various States of Existence of Consciousness; 4—Macrocosm and Microcosm; 5—Vrittis and Vasanas; 6—The Gunas; 7—Mental Flux; 8—The Five Basic Elements; 9—Brahm Randhra, Brahm Dwar and Brahm Vivar; 10—Meditation and contemplation; 11—Spirituality; 12—Dhyan (Dhyaan); 13—Upasana; 14—Mukti; 15—Maya; 16—Prakriti (Nature); 17—The Vital Winds or Prans; 18—Kalaa; 19—The Tattvas; 20—Theory of Karma; 21—Akash (Sky element and its subtlety); 22—Sat-Chit-Anand; 23—Bhumika; 24—Scientific view; 25—Diagrams and Sketches.]

Page URL :-

(i) <https://archive.org/details/51-metaphysical-spiritual-concepts-of-the-upanishads-explained>

(ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/metaphysical_concepts_of_upanishads_explained.pdf

(8) Page Title : Concepts of Mantra, Japa, Tantra and Yantra According to the Upanishads

Page URL :-

(i) <https://archive.org/details/52-concepts-of-mantra-japa-tantra-and-yantra-according-to-the-upanishads>

(ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/mantra_japa_yantra_tantra_according_to_upanishads.pdf

(9) Page Title : Chakras and Naadis in the Body

Page URL :-

(i) https://archive.org/details/53-chakras-naadis-in-the-body_202205

(ii) https://tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com/uploads/2/1/7/4/21746472/chakras_naadis_in_body.pdf

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Appendix no. 7

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NOTE: Author's Books are available at:—

(1) www.amazon.com in its Kindle + Paper-Back Print Editions.

(2) www.pothi.com in a Print edition.

(3) www.draft2digital.com and its various vendors' platforms in E-Book edition:

URL: <https://www.draft2digital.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia>

(4) www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com

(5) Internet Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia

(6) Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia

There are countless books based on Indian scriptures and their spiritual, metaphysical and theological principles written in English by Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia with a missionary zeal as his humble service to his beloved Lord Sri Ram.

These books are a ‘book lover’s dream come true’ and stand out heads-over-shoulders in the realm of metaphysical, philosophical, devotional, spiritual and classical literature of India. Such as for example, there are Goswami Tulsidas’ myriad works with Sri Ram as the central theme which are glittering like gems, poetically told, stupendous in beauty, marvelously narrated and contain a treasury of fathomless wisdom and deep insight into spiritualism, metaphysics and philosophy. Then there is Veda Vyas’ glorious narration of the epic story of Sri Ram in Adhyatma Ramayan and Devi Puran Maha Bhagwat Ramayan. The Upanishads represent the epitome of Indian philosophical, metaphysical and spiritual treatises— the marvellous highest pinnacle that human thought can possibly reach. They are acclaimed the world over as highly evolved and intellectually enlightening books. The Vedas, on the other hand, are believed to be revealed books. The two form the two legs of Hinduism.

The author has presented a simple, day to day bilingual version (Hindi and English) of these stupendous texts. A huge array of information on Sri Ram and Hanuman culled from the Vedas, Upanishads, Purans, and myriad other sources have been systematically presented by the author in lucid, florid, easy flowing, vibrant and captivating English language— useful to a layman, a devotee, curious people, research scholars, casual as well as serious readers, plain book lovers or connoisseurs of classical literature. A must read for everyone.

All the books have original text with line-to-line easy flowing English version with necessary explanatory notes, appendices, etc.

The list of books are as follows:

Detailed English versions with commentary on Books of ‘Goswami Tulsidas’:

- * Vairagya Sandipani of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Vinai Patrika of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Geetawali of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Kavitali of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Dohawali of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Janki Mangal of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Ram Lala Nahachu of Goswami Tulsidas
- * Parvati Mangal of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Barvai Ramayan of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand (Canto 1) [The other 6 Cantos, i.e. Ayodhya Kand, Aranya Kand, Kishkindha Kand, Sundar Kand, Lanka Kand, and Uttar Kand, are in the process of writing, and would be made available, one by one, as soon as they are ready for publication.]

Detailed English Books based on original texts of Goswami Tulsidas, with extensive commentary:

- * Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka Told in Slow Motion: in 2 Volumes (5Parts)
- * 'Sundar Kand' of Ram Charit Manas
- * The Kaagbhusund Ramayan or The Aadi Ramayan
- * The Divine Story of Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati (based on Ram Charit Manas, Parvati Mangal & Vinai Patrika)
- * Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Ram Charit Manas).
- * Ram Geeta: The Gospel of Lord Ram.
- * A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord's Holy Name.

Other Books on the theme of Lord Ram:

- * Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns
- * Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram.
- * Upanishads dedicated to Lord Ram & their Philosophy.
- * Saint Surdas' "Ram Charitawali".
- * The Chariot of God—Dharma Rath.
- * Bhakti—Devotion for Lord God.
- * Saints and Non-Saints, Their Character and Comparison.
- * 'Ram Charit Manas' (the holy lake containing the ambrosia in the form of the divine story describing the deeds and acts of Lord Ram who was an incarnation of the Supreme Being upon earth) by Goswami Tulsidas—full text with English introduction.
- * Life sketch of Goswami Tulsidas.

The Trilogy of Books on the epic known as the 'Ramayan':

- * English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
- * English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
- * English rendering of Devi Puran's Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.

English Books dedicated to Lord Shiva:

- * Book 1= Marriage of Lord Shiva with Parvati
- * Book 2= Sacred Hymns of Lord Shiva.
- * Book 3= Lord Shiva—His legend, Upanishads, Puran, Hymns & Parvati Mangal.

A Book in English dedicated to Lord Hanuman:

- * The Legendary Glory of Hanuman.

English Books explaining various spiritual and metaphysical concepts based on the Upanishads:

- * Chakras and Naadis in the human body.
- * Metaphysical & Spiritual Concepts of the Upanishads Explained
- * Concepts of Mantra, Japa, Tantra and Yantra According to the Upanishads
- * A True Guru (The Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor).
- * Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation.
- * The Triumvirate of Creation: According to the Upanishads.
- * The 'Pentagon of Creation'—The Panch Tattvas, Panch Bhuts, Panch Prans & Panch Koshas.
- * Revelation of Creation as envisioned in the Upanishads.
- * YOGA—Its Practice & Philosophy according to the Upanishads.
- * Who is a Guru?

- * The 24 Avtaars (incarnations) of Lord Vishnu.
- * The Viraat Purush—the cosmic, all-embracing form of the Supreme Being: as conceived in the Upanishads, Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, and Ram Charit Manas of Goswami Tulsidas.
- * OM and NAAD: the cosmic revelation of Super Consciousness extensively explained and compiled from the Upanishads.
- * Vaak (spoken word), Akshar (alphabet) & Sristi (creation).
- * The concept of 'Kalaa'.
- * 'Brahm' in the eyes of the Upanishads.
- * 'Sanyas' with 'Vairagya Shatkam' of Bhartiari.
- * The 'Mahavakyas' (Great Sayings) of the Upanishads.
- * The 'Tattwas' (elements) and the Gunas (qualities) According to the Upanishads.
- * The Fundamental Elements and Character Traits of Creation as Enunciated in the Upanishads {available only on www.draft2digital.com }
- * The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

Other English Books on Hinduism and its Spiritual Philosophy (by Ajai kumar Chhawchharia):

- * Bhakti Sutra Mala
- * Shandilya Bhakti Sutra
- * Narad Bhakti Sutra
- * 'Vairagya Shatkam' of king-sage Bhartiari.
- * The great ancient sages, seers, saints and enlightened kings of India.
- * The great sages, seers, saints and enlightened kings of ancient India {available only on www.draft2digital.com }
- * 'Arunachal Pancharatna & Rudra Ashtak'. {In English, co-produced by Rev. Janardan Kalianand-Swami of USA and Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia. }

***Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition.**

Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads;

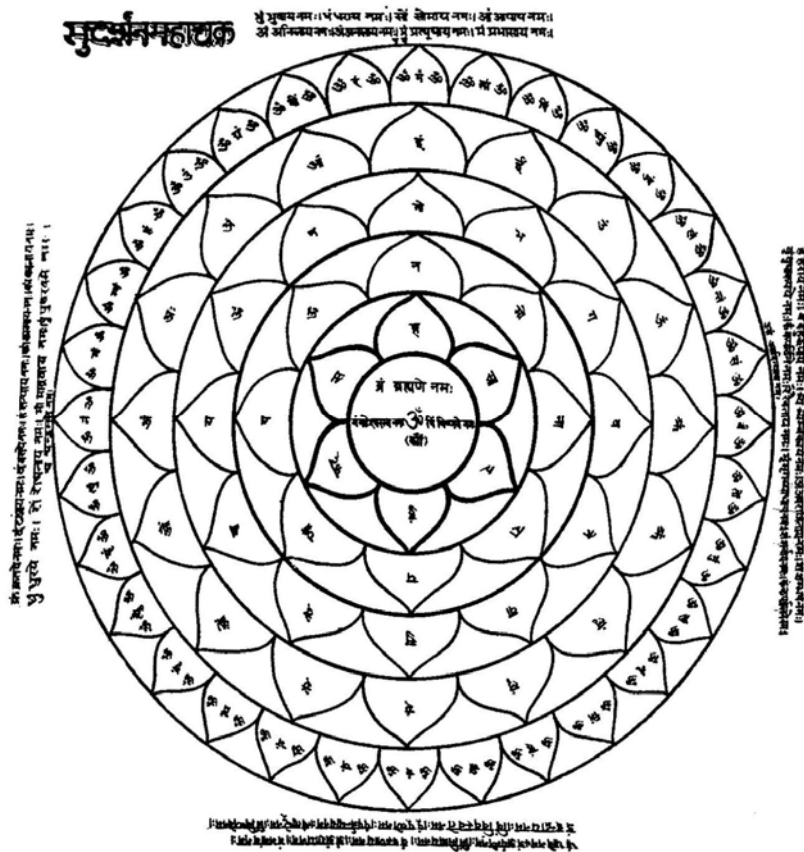
NOTE: A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas' is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

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Appendix no. 8

Diagrams and Sketches

Diagrammatic Representation of the Sudarshn Chakra Refer Chapter 11— Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad



**Diagrams / Sketches related to
Chapter no. 12— Ram Rahasya Upanishad (1)**

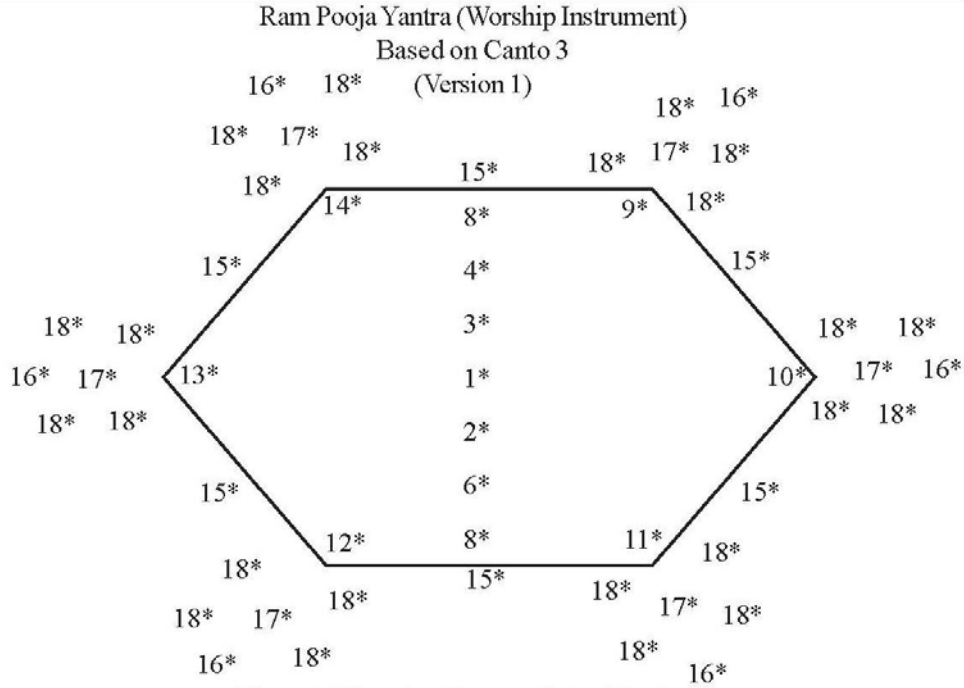


Figure 1 (Based on Paragraph A of Canto 3)

- 1* Beej Mantra Sring Rang (श्रीं रं)
- 2* Beej Mantra for work to be done (objective case)
- 3* Beej Mantra for name of worshipper (possessive case)
- 4* Beej Mantra for Jiva (living entity)
- 5* Beej Mantra for Pran (life)
- 6* Beej Mantra for Shakti (energy, strenght, vitality)
- 7* Beej Mantra for Vashya (to control, hypnotise)
- 8* Beej Mantra for OM
- 9* Beej Mantra Rang (रं)
- 10* Beej Mantra Ring (रीं)
- 11* Beej Mantra Rung (रुं)
- 12* Beej Mantra Raing (रैं)
- 13* Beej Mantra Raung (रौं)
- 14* Beej Mantra Raha (रः)
- 15* Beej Mantra Sring Hrim/Hring (श्रीं ह्रीं)
- 16* Beej Mantra Hum (ह्रम्)
- 17* Beej Mantra Kling (कलीं)
- 18* Beej Mantra Aiyang (ऐं)

Chapter no. 12— Ram Rahasya Upanishad (2)

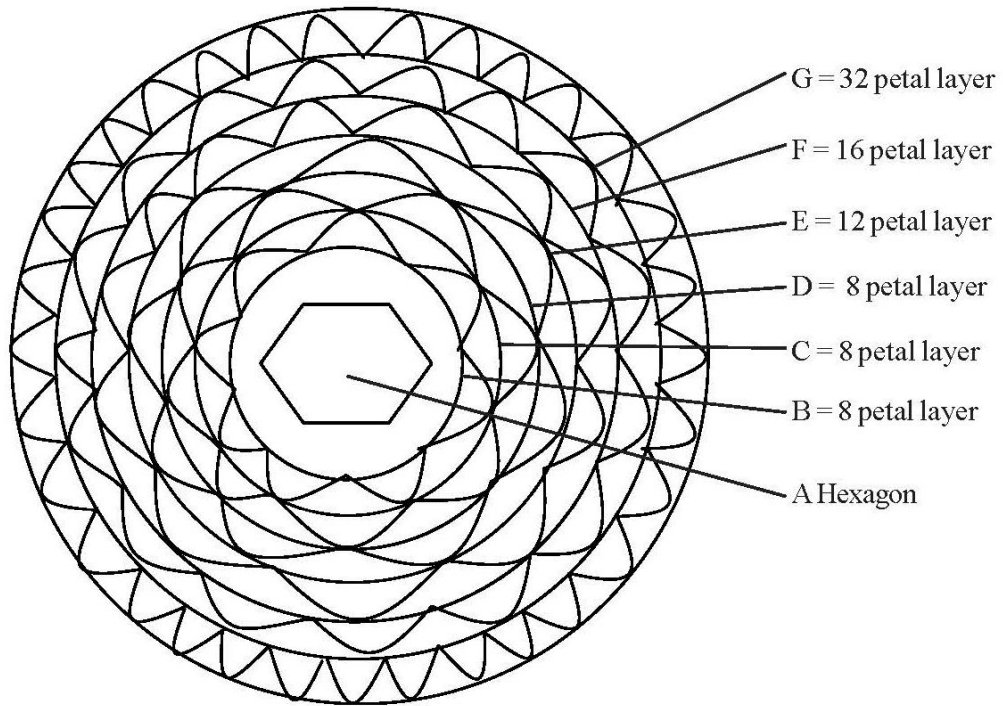


Figure 2 (Based on Paragraph B-E of Canto 3)

A = Hexagon as described in Figure 1.

B-D = 3 rings of 8 petals each

E = 1 ring of 12 petals

F = 1 ring of 16 petals

G = 1 ring of 32 petals

Note :- The Mantras appearing in each of these rings have been elaborately described in the text in paragraphs B-E of the text of Canto 3.

Chapter no. 12— Ram Rahasya Upanishad (3)

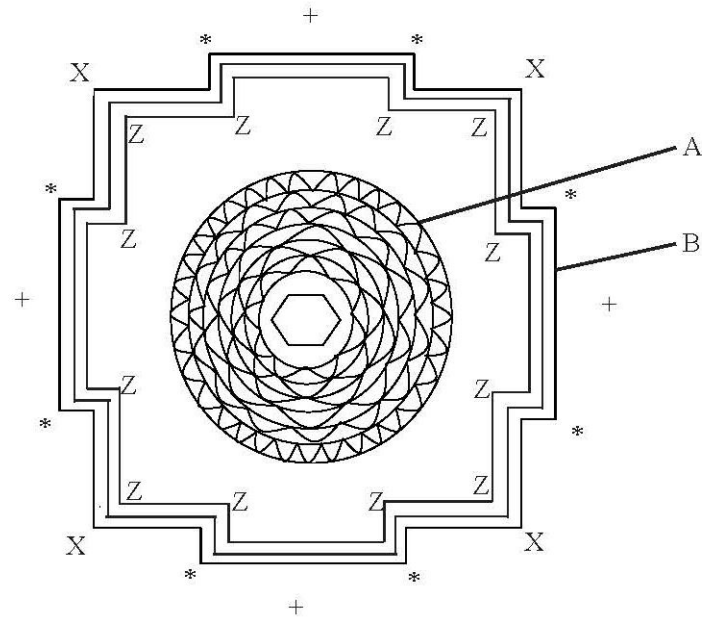


Figure 3 (Based on Paragraph F of Canto 3)

- A = The Pooja Yantra (worship instrument) as described in fig. 2.
- B = The Bhupur Yantra
- * = 8 Naags
- + = Beej Mantra Kshraoung (ॐ) for Narsingh God
- X = Beej Mantra Hum (ॐ) for Varaha God
- Z = 12 signs of the Zodiac

Chapter no. 12— Ram Rahasya Upanishad (4)

Ram Pooja Yantra (Worship Instrument)
Based on Canto 3
(Version 2)

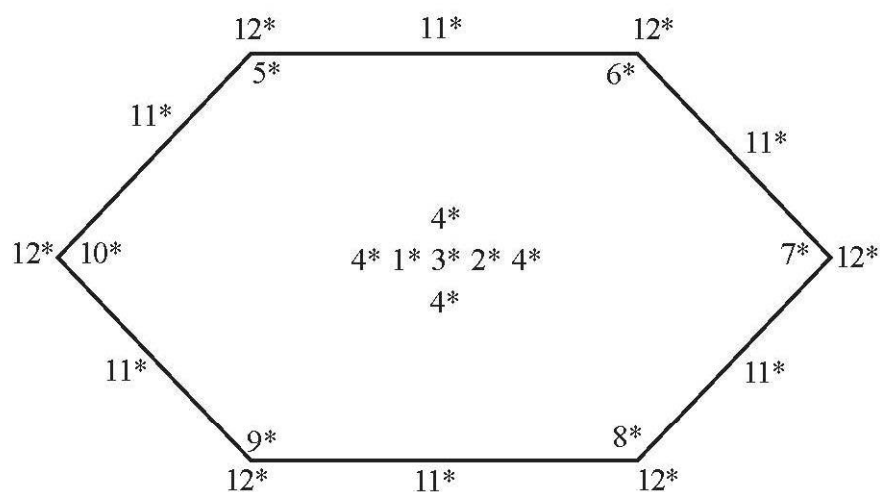


Figure 4 (Based on Paragraph H of Canto 3)

- 1* Beej Mantra Sring (श्री)
- 2* Beej Mantra Rang (र)
- 3* Work to be done (objective case)
- 4* Beej Mantra Kling (क्ली)
- 5*-10* As in S.No. 9* to 14* of Fig. no. 1.
- 11* Beej Mantra Sring Hrim/Hring (श्री ह्रीं)
- 12* Beej Mantra Kam/Kang (कं)

Chapter no. 12— Ram Rahasya Upanishad (5)

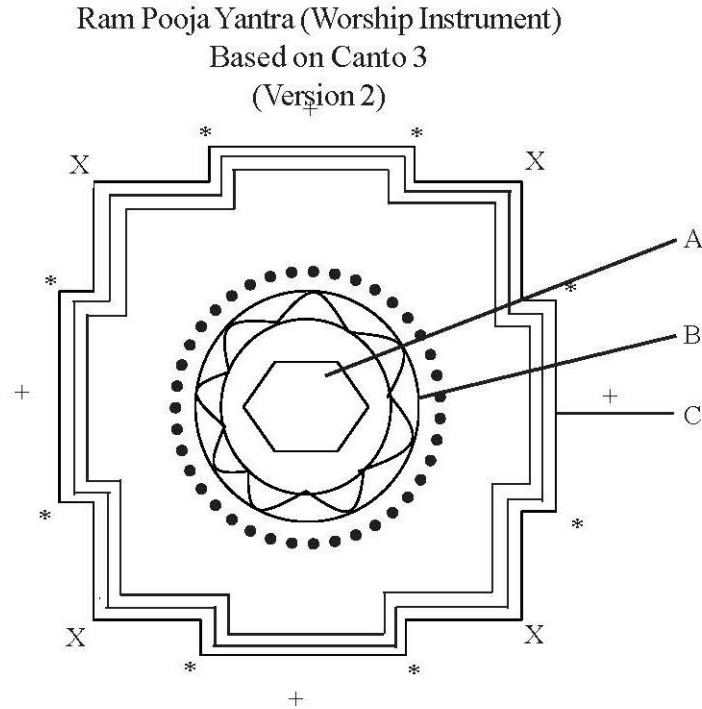


Figure 5 (Based on Paragraph I of Canto 3)

- A = Hexagon as described in Fig. no. 4
- B = The Pooja Yantra (worship instrument)
- C = The Bhupur Yantra
- = The alphabets of the Sanskrit language as Beej Mantras
- * = Name of 8 Vasus
- +
- X = Beej Mantra Hum (ॐ) for Varaha God

Diagram / Sketch related to
Chapter no. 13— Ram Tapini Upanishad

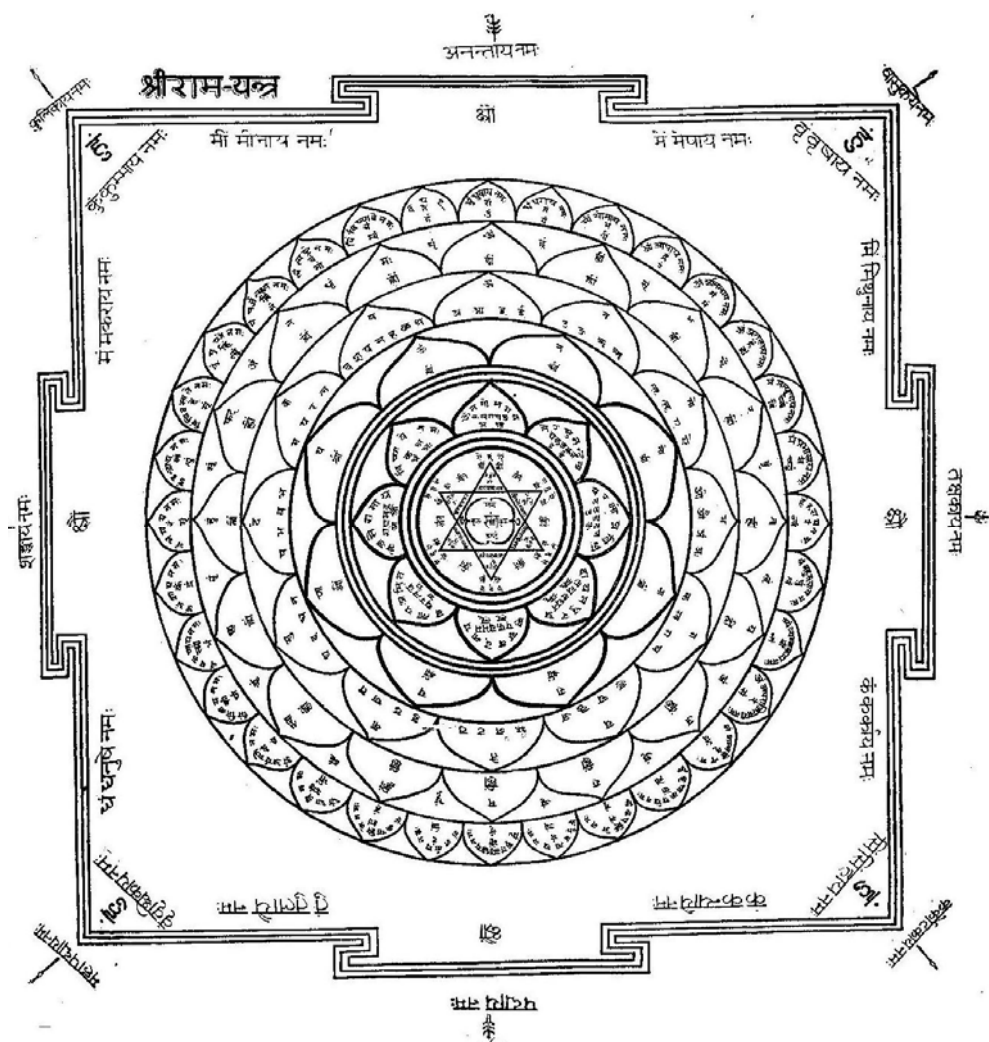


Diagram / Sketch related to
Chapter no. 21—Tripura Tapini Upanishad

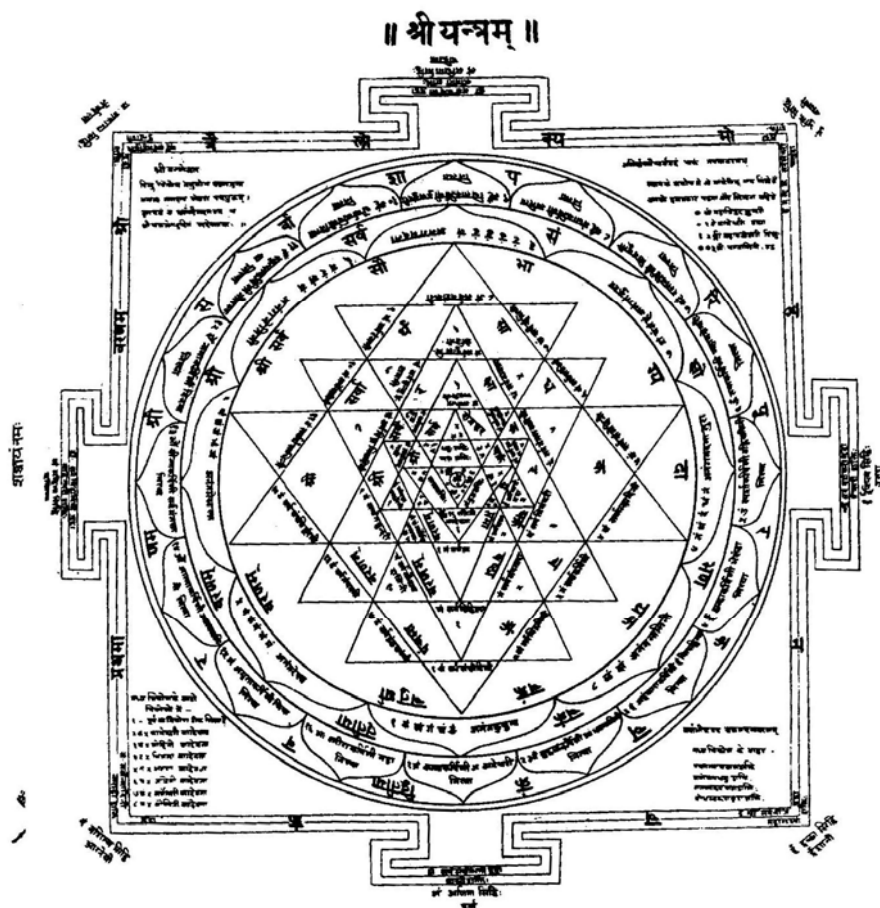
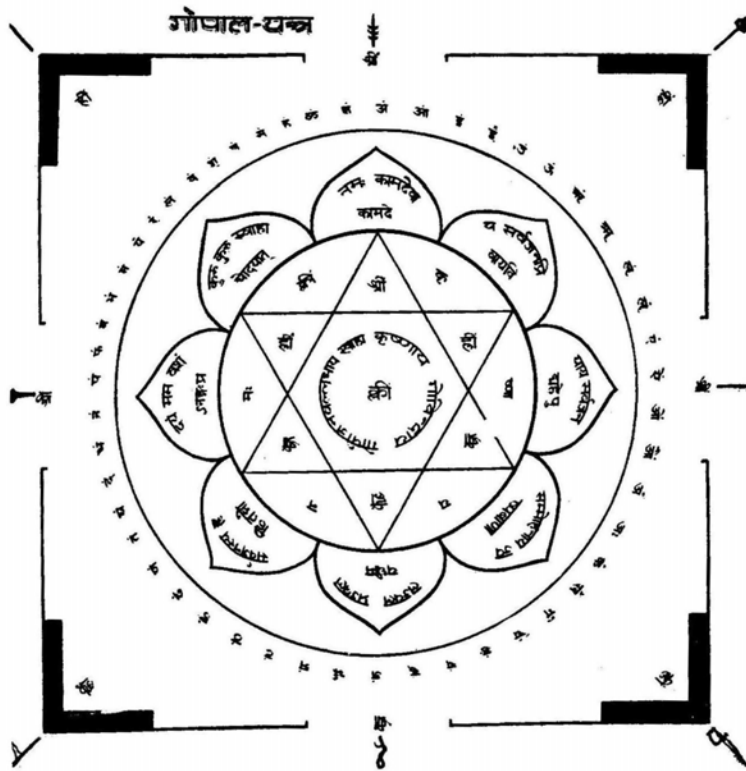


Diagram / Sketch related to
Chapter no. 27— Gopal Tapini Upanishad



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